

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

From: (Public Agency): Grossmont Union High School District
1100 Murray Drive El Cajon, CA 92020

(Address)

Project Title: Helix High School Food Service and Academic Support Building

Project Applicant: Grossmont Union High School District

Project Location - Specific:
7323 University Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91942

Project Location - City: La Mesa Project Location - County: San Diego County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Please see Attachment A.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Grossmont Union High School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Grossmont Union High School District

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: §15302 and §15314
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Please see Attachment A.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Katy Wright Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 619-644-8154

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Katy Wright Date: 6/15/2022 Title: Executive Director
Facility Management

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Helix High School Food Service and Academic Support Building Project Notice of Exemption (NOE)

The Grossmont Union High School District (District), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), proposes to replace the existing food service and academic support building at the Helix High School campus with modern facilities to address campus needs (hereinafter referred to as the “proposed project”).

Project Location:

The proposed project is located on the Helix High School campus at 7323 University Avenue, La Mesa, California. The existing kitchen and academic support building (Building 1600) are centrally located within the campus. All components of the proposed project would occur within the boundaries of the school. Access to the site is available via Yale Avenue.

Existing Conditions:

The Helix High School site is located in a developed residential and commercial neighborhood. To the north of the school is commercial and residential, and the south, east, and west is surrounded by residential and other uses such as a church and other schools. The existing school facilities include 90 classrooms consisting of both permanent classrooms and portable classrooms. The existing food services and academic support building is located within the campus and is surrounded by other classrooms and the athletic stadium.

Description of Project:

The proposed project would include the modernization of existing buildings as described below:

- Demolition –
 - The existing Building 1600 (8,800 square feet) would be demolished.
 - Existing hardscape and planter areas adjacent to the aforementioned facility would also be removed/demolished.
- New Construction –
 - An approximately 3,000-square-foot kitchen building would be constructed with preparation and servicing lines, cooler freezer boxes, and dry storage.
 - An approximately 5,000-square-foot academic building would be constructed and include a new academic support room, a director office, additional office space, a conference room, restrooms, storage space, a lactation room, and a custodial and electric/data room.
 - The kitchen building and academic building will share one roof.
 - An approximately 4,500-square-foot canopy would be provided to connect both proposed buildings.

- Additional site improvements would be implemented to support the new structures, including ADA-compliant accessibility improvements, new irrigation, planting areas, fencing/gates and a new trash enclosure.

The proposed project would serve the existing student enrollment and would not result in an increase in student or program capacity, nor would the project result in an increase of employees at the project site. In addition, there would be no off-site circulation or traffic changes and construction activities would take place on campus. Construction is expected to start in December 2022 and end December 2023.

Applicability of Exempt Status:

The proposed activity is a project subject to CEQA. However, the proposed project is Categorical Exempt. The proposed work at the Helix High School site is Categorical Exempt under Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction and Section 15314 - Minor Additions to Schools. The proposed project is considered categorically exempt for the following reasons.

Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2)

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The proposed project involves the replacement of the existing Building 1600 with the construction of two new buildings. Construction activities would be conducted within the boundaries of the existing school campus. The proposed project would maintain the same purpose and capacity as is currently present at Helix High School. No change in student capacity is contemplated by this project. Therefore, the proposed work at the Helix High School site would be Categorical Exempt under Class 2.

Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14)

Class 14 consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15314).

The proposed project involves the replacement of Building 1600 with two new buildings. The proposed upgrades are intended to serve the existing student body and would not induce any increase in student enrollment. In addition, the proposed project does not include the construction of any new classrooms or other facilities that would increase the student capacity of the campus by more than 25% or ten classrooms.

Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2):

The following summarizes the determination that the proposed project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption.

- (a) **Location.** The proposed project would occur entirely within the boundaries of an existing high school campus in an urbanized community. The site has been developed as a school since 1952. All areas of the project site are either paved or disturbed, and therefore are not environmentally sensitive. Surrounding land uses consist of residential and commercial land uses. However, the proposed project would not extend into any offsite areas. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (b) **Cumulative Impact.** There are no known future projects on the campus or within the surrounding community that, when combined with the proposed project, would result in a cumulatively considerable effect on the environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (c) **Significant Effect.** The proposed project includes the replacement of the existing building 1600 with two new buildings. The project site and surrounding neighborhoods are located within an urbanized area, and no work is proposed offsite that could result in impacts on sensitive vegetation or other environmentally sensitive areas as a result of the proposed project. As such, there is nothing unusual about the project site or surrounding area. Furthermore, there is nothing unusual about the design of the proposed project that could result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances, and this exception does not apply to the project.
- (d) **Scenic Highways.** The proposed project would not result in the demolition of existing structures or the construction of new facilities that would directly or indirectly affect an officially designated scenic highway or scenic resources near a scenic highway. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A search of the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker website and the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor website was conducted on May 18, 2022 to identify if there are any hazardous materials sites on the project site. The EnviroStor site identified an investigation completed on the site for 1,3, Butadiene in the soil. The Department of Toxic Substances approved the Preliminary Environmental Assessment and deemed no further action required on February 5, 2009 (Envirostor 2022). In addition, the GeoTracker identified a case that was closed as of December 28, 2006, for a potential soil concern from heating soil/fuel oil (GeoTracker 2022). Therefore, since the hazardous materials sites are listed as closed or no further action, and construction would be in compliance with applicable regulations, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact related to hazardous materials. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (f) **Historical Resources.** The proposed project includes replacement of the existing building 1600. No buildings or other structures are considered historical resources on the school site. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and this exception does not apply to the project.

References:

EnviroStor. 2022 *Sites and Facilities*. Available at https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=60000862. Accessed on May 18, 2022.

Geotracker. 2022, *Sites and Facilities*. Available at https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report?global_id=T0607301091. Accessed on May 18, 2022.