

Merced Union High School District
Buhach Colony High School Stadium Project
NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: December 13, 2022

To: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies,
Other Public Agencies, Organizations, and
Interested Persons

From: Merced Union High School District
2130 Spacecraft Drive
Atwater, CA 95301

Lead Agency Contact:

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Environmental Impact Report: Notice is hereby given that Merced Union High School District (“District”) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed Buhach Colony High School Stadium Project (“project”).

The EIR will be prepared under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, and it will describe and analyze the significant environmental effects of the project and discuss ways to mitigate or avoid the effects.

Notice of Preparation: The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit guidance from agencies and individuals as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Responsible, trustee, and other agencies should provide the District with input on the scope and content of environmental information related to the agency’s area of responsibility that should be included in the Draft EIR. If you are a property owner or resident, we invite your comments on the impacts that the project may have upon your property or upon the environment. An electronic copy of this NOP is available at: <https://www.muhsd.org/departments/district-operations/facilities>.

Comment Period and Response Deadline: Due to time limits mandated by State law, please send your response to the NOP to Melissa Miller, Facilities Planning Manager, via email at mmiller@muhsd.org by Friday, January 13, 2023, or 30 days after the receipt of this notice, whichever is later.

Project Location and Description: The proposed stadium project will be located on the existing Buhach Colony High School campus, addressed at 1800 Buhach Road in the City of Atwater, California. The stadium site is located within the interior of the existing campus in an area that is currently occupied by existing campus athletic facilities (a football field, running track, and baseball/softball fields). The area surrounding the project site consists of other existing school facilities at the Buhach Colony campus, single-family residential development, a fire station, a drainage basin, and agricultural fields and orchards. The project does not entail an expansion of the existing campus boundaries. (See Figures 1 and 2 for a map of the project’s regional location and an aerial view of the project site boundaries and vicinity.)

The project includes construction and operation of a 3,000-seat athletic stadium which would serve Buhach Colony High School’s athletic programs. Facilities planned as part of the project include bleacher seating, monument entry, a ticket booth, an announcer’s booth, two concession/team room/restroom buildings, a natural turf competition field, a rubberized running track, and a scoreboard (see Figure 3, Site Plan). The stadium would be lighted using state-of-the-art LED light fixtures mounted on four 90-foot-tall

poles. The lighting would be designed and oriented to light the field and project areas adjacent to the field that need to be lighted with little or no light trespass on non-project areas. Additionally, the project includes landscaping features and new concrete-paved areas within the campus.

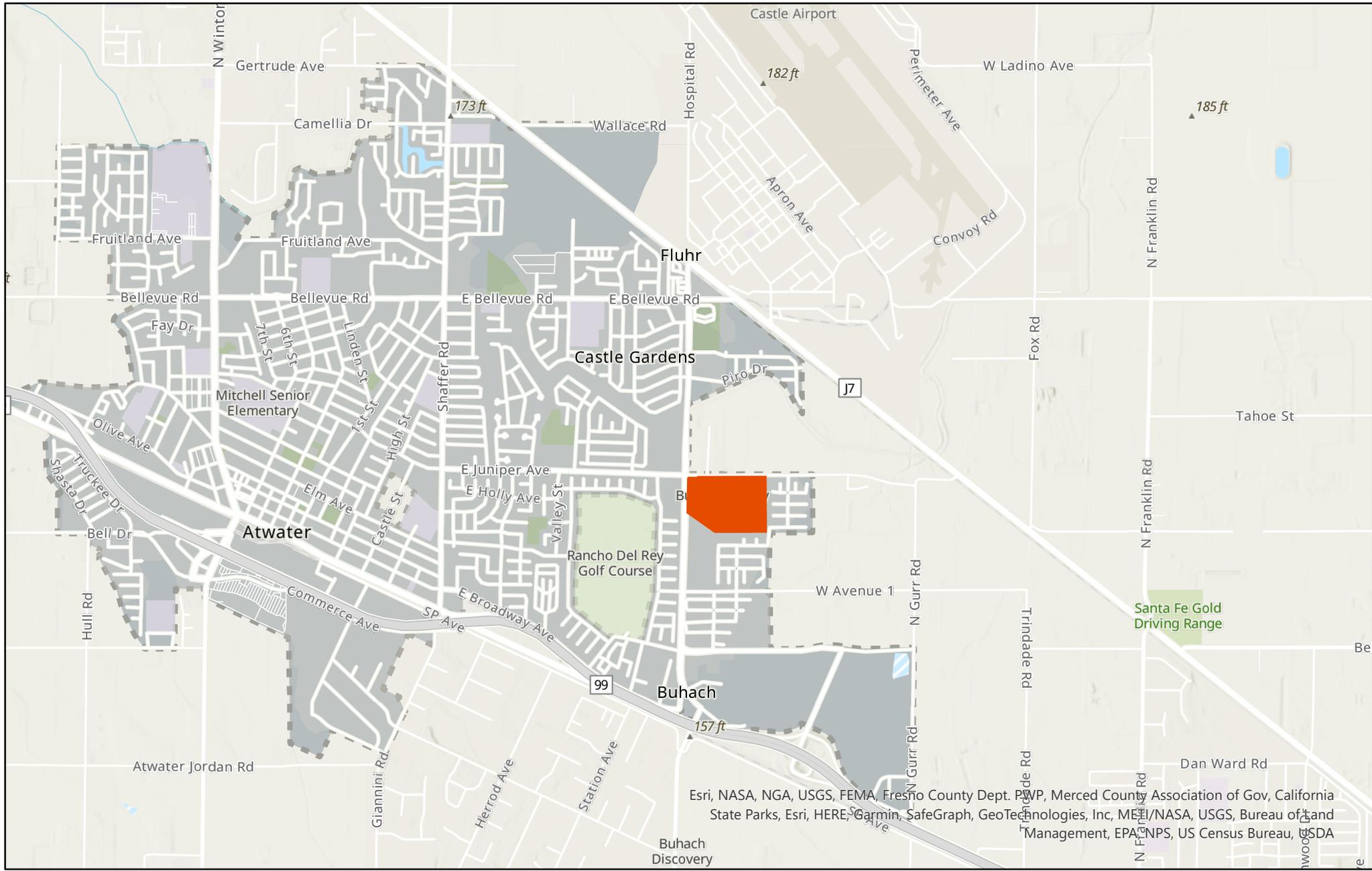
Transportation access for the project will be provided via existing access points at the Buhach Colony campus, which are located on Avenue Two and on Buhach Road. For parking, the project will use existing surface parking lots at the campus.

The project would operate year-round, with most activity occurring during the fall sports season. Games and practices would be scheduled on weekdays and weekends, and events would be scheduled during daytime and evening hours (not to exceed 10:00 p.m.). The project may also be utilized for hosting occasional non-athletic special events, such as pep rallies and graduation ceremonies.

If approved, the project is anticipated to begin construction in September 2023 and begin operation in September 2024.

Probable Environmental Effects of the Project: The potential environmental effects of the project are listed below. These effects have been identified on a preliminary basis, and may or may not be identified as potentially significant effects once evaluated in the Draft EIR. There may be other environmental effects identified in response to this Notice of Preparation, or during the preparation of the Draft EIR. The EIR will evaluate the probable environmental effects of the project on all resources and conditions listed in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines.

1. The project could result in aesthetic impacts to the campus and its vicinity due to project construction activities, as well as long-term changes resulting from the development of new structures and lighting.
2. Project-related air quality impacts could result from temporary construction emissions and from operational activities. Particulate emissions would be the pollutant of greatest concern during the project construction phase. Operational air emissions would result primarily from project-related transportation, with other emissions occurring from operation of maintenance equipment.
3. The construction and operational phases of the project would consume energy resources, including petroleum-based fuels and lubricants, electricity, and natural gas.
4. The EIR will assess the potential for the project to expose persons to hazards and hazardous materials.
5. Construction and operation of the project would generate greenhouse gas emissions, which would contribute on a cumulative basis to global climate change.
6. The project may expose people to noise levels in excess of adopted standards during construction activities and during operational events.
7. The EIR will assess the potential transportation impacts, including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and the potential for transportation safety issues related to vehicular and pedestrian activity in the vicinity of the site.
8. The EIR will assess the potential for the project to result in impacts on various public utilities and services, such as sewer, water, stormwater drainage, solid waste, law enforcement, and fire protection.



Project Location

Buhach Colony High School Stadium Project
 Merced Union High School District

ODELL Planning & Research, Inc.
 Environmental Planning • School Facility Planning • Demographics

- Project Site
- Atwater City Limits



Figure 1

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Fresno County Dept. PWP, Merced County Association of Gov, California State Parks, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA



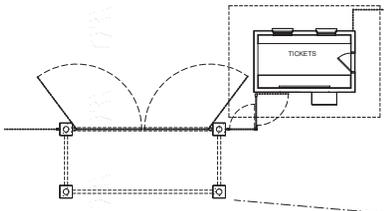
Maxar, Microsoft

Project Site

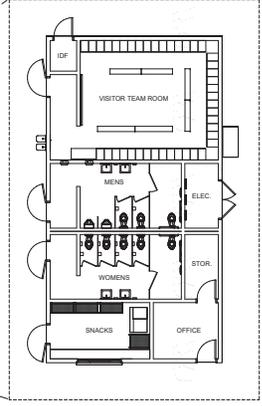
Buhach Colony High School Stadium Project
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 Project Site

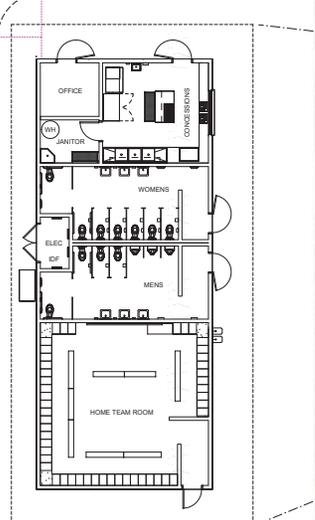
Figure 2



TICKET BOOTH & MONUMENT ENTRY



VISITOR SIDE TOILETS AND SNACK BAR



HOME SIDE CONCESSIONS BLDG

