

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION EVALUATION REPORT

Whittier Union High School District Performing Arts Center

November 2023

This Categorical Exemption Evaluation Report documents the eligibility of Whittier Union High School (HS) District's (District) proposed construction of a new performing arts center (Project) to be exempt from expanded environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under California Public Resources Code Section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15061(b)(2) and 15300 et seq.

Location

The Project is proposed in the mid-western portion of the larger Sierra Education Center campus located at 9401 South Painter Avenue in the City of Whittier (City), Los Angeles County, California, and associated with County Assessor's Parcel Number 816-70-169-00 (Project Site). The District-owned property is south of Mulberry Drive, east of Greenleaf Avenue, and west of Painter Avenue. Regional access is provided from State Route 605, approximately 2.25 miles to the west, and Interstate 5, approximately 2.75 miles to the south. Figure 1, *Local Vicinity*, shows the location of the Project Site.

Existing Setting

The District operates seven high schools and an adult school. Existing performance programs for all District high schools are offered at the District-owned Vic Lopez Auditorium, located at Whittier High School at 12417 East Philadelphia Street, in Whittier. The existing theater can seat up to 2,448 spectators, including 748 spectators in the balcony. When not used by the high schools and District, the facility is available for public use via the Civic Center Act.¹ Organizations that use the facility include other school districts and community entities for graduation, concerts, rehearsals and recitals, music festivals, and meetings.

The Project is proposed at the District's Sierra Education Center, which is a 44-acre campus that contains Frontier HS, Sierra Vista HS, Whittier Union Adult School, and District administrative and business operations. Buildings are generally located in the north and east areas of the campus. Recreational spaces, including a track and field and soccer fields, are in the south and southwest portions, respectively.

Frontier HS provides alternative education and Sierra Vista HS is an independent study program. These schools had respective enrollments of 476 and 324 students during the 2022-23 school year. The HS programs are generally located in the center of the campus. The adult school operates in portable classrooms in the southwest portion of the campus.

The District transportation department, including its bus yard, is located in the north quadrant of the campus. The maintenance and operations, facilities, and warehouse and purchasing departments are in the northcentral portion, separating the transportation department from the schools and business and administrative operations, which are mostly along Painter Avenue in the southeast portion of the campus.

¹ Education Code Section 38134 et seq.

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The different operations and programs on the campus are delineated by fencing, which also limits trespassing.

The Project Site would affect approximately 5.5 acres of the campus that is developed with natural turf and an automobile/small school bus parking lot used by the transportation and maintenance and operations departments. The field portion of the Project Site is part of a larger field that is underutilized and mostly used by soccer leagues. The turf area can accommodate three soccer fields, including two 100-yard by 60-yard fields. There is nighttime field lighting and an automatic water sprinkler system. Two utility boxes are along the western perimeter of the Project Site, along Greenleaf Avenue. There are no existing trees on the Project Site.

Surrounding Uses

Greenleaf Avenue and logistic warehouse facilities are west of the Project Site; surface parking and the District's transportation department are on the north; the District maintenance and operations offices and reprographics department and adult school are on the east; and the natural turf fields are on the south. The segment of Greenleaf Avenue adjacent to the Project Site is striped with two southbound lanes, a center lane, and one northbound lane; parking is allowed on the east side of the road, adjacent to the Project Site. City-maintained trees and streetlights are present along the sidewalk adjacent to the Project Site along Greenleaf Avenue. Refer also to Figure 2, *Site Photographs*.

Land Use and Zoning

According to the City of Whittier General Plan Land Use Policy Map,² the Sierra Education Center campus, including the Project Site, is designated Public and Quasi-Public. Public and Quasi-Public applies to land uses operated and maintained for public administration. This land use designation accommodates government, trails, civic, cultural, schools, public library, post offices, public utility, public parking, religious institution, and infrastructure uses that support community needs. The Project Site is zoned single-family residential (R-1),³ and educational institutions are conditionally permitted within this zone.⁴

Project Description

Performing Arts Center

The District proposes a new performing arts center in an underutilized area of the Sierra Education Center campus to serve its high school performance programming needs. As shown in Figure 3, *Site Plan*, the new building would be roughly rectangular in shape and developed immediately south of the transportation and maintenance and operations parking lot. The building would provide approximately 30,000 square feet of new programming space and would be two stories in height. At its tallest point, the structure would measure 61 feet and 4 inches in height. Access to the Site would be provided via a newly constructed entry driveway along Greenleaf Avenue.

² City of Whittier, Whittier General Plan, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://www.cityofwhittier.org/government/community-development/planning-services/general-plan>.

³ ArcGIS, City of Whittier Zoning and Land Use, accessed July 20, 2023, <https://whittier.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=54411bb0f4a54da2985985b75cc199fd>.

⁴ City of Whittier, Municipal Code, Title 18, Zoning, Division 1, Chapter 18.16.020 and Chapter 18.52, Variances and Conditional Use Permits, Article II, Section 18.52.030, Required for Designated Uses, https://library.municode.com/ca/whittier/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO_DIVIZO_CH18.52VACOUSPE_ARTIICOUSPE_18.52.030REDEUS.

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The main entrance would be from an outdoor plaza at the southwest corner of the building, near the driveway entrance along Greenleaf Avenue. As shown in Figure 4, *Project Rendering*, the entrance would lead to the lobby, which would be developed with a glass wall along Greenleaf Avenue. The performance theater would be in the northwest portion of the building and accessed from the lobby. The theater would have a capacity of 450 spectators and would include supporting spaces, such as a stage with a fly loft system and an orchestra pit. Stairs and an elevator located in the northeast corner of the lobby would provide access to the mezzanine, which would include spectator seats, a light booth, audio-video rooms, and projector and storage rooms. Restroom facilities, offices, dressing rooms, and electrical and storage rooms would be provided on the ground floor, south of and separated from the theater by a hallway. The eastern end of the building would include a rehearsal warm-up room, a chorus/green room, various storage rooms, and a production support room in the northeast corner of the building with access to a loading dock.

Outdoor seating would be provided on the west, south, and east sides of the building. The area west of the lobby would be an outdoor intermission garden. An entry gate would be located in this area with access to the existing parking lot. A mix of ornamental trees and shrubs, including sycamore, willow, and oak trees, would be strategically planted in these areas and in the medians of the new south and east lots.

Parking would be provided south and east of the new building. A new curb-cut would be created for the development of a new driveway, proposed southeast of the intersection of Greenleaf Avenue and Busch Place. The driveway would provide access to the proposed parking lots south and east of the building. The driveway would continue behind the building to the loading dock and a new gate with access to the existing parking lot north of the proposed building, which are used by the transportation and maintenance and operations departments. As part of the Project, this lot would be repaired and slurry-coated. A total of 340 parking stalls, including 162 stalls from the existing lot, would be available to serve the Project. Additional parking, if required, would be available in other areas of the campus.

New wet and dry utility connections would be installed to serve the proposed improvements. Stormwater runoff from the Project would be intercepted by roof drains and inlets and catch basins installed on paved and landscaped areas and conveyed through a new underground drainage system that would discharge to an existing vegetated swale in the southcentral perimeter of the campus, near the track and field. The runoff would be filtered through biofiltration systems, including one in the southeast corner of the Project Site. Trash and debris would be captured, and the stormwater would be pretreated in chambers before entering a new drainpipe that would be extended along the eastern perimeter of the existing turf field to the new headwall and rip rap at the existing vegetated swale.

Electricity for the new performing arts center would be pulled from existing nodes on the campus, near the maintenance and operations buildings. Water would also be pulled from existing lines, near the Frontier and Sierra Vista HS classroom facilities. A new sewer line would be installed from the new building and extended southward, along the western perimeter of the campus, to an existing manhole on a Los Angeles County trunk sewer that runs along the southern property line of the campus.

The Project would comply with the 2022 Title 24 Building Standards Code, which includes the Building Code (Part 2), Fire Code (Part 9), Energy Code (Part 6), and CALGreen Code (Part 11), as well as with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and District construction and design standards. The Project would include the following sustainable features:

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- Increased insulation values in walls and attic spaces.
- Installation of high-efficiency windows and doors.
- Installation of efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.
- Use of Energy Star products.
- Installation of low-flow, water-efficient plumbing fixtures for toilets and sinks.
- Installation of tankless water heater systems.
- Installation of light-emitting diode technology for interior and exterior building areas.
- Use of drought-tolerant plants in landscape design to minimize irrigation on-site.
- Installation of low-water irrigation systems with smart sensor controls.

Operation

The proposed performing arts center would offer similar programs as those at the Vic Lopez Auditorium, including band, orchestra, chorus, musical theater, and drama. Events would be scheduled similar to those at the Vic Lopez Auditorium. Productions with a large audience (i.e., greater attendance than the seating capacity of 450 at the proposed facility) would continue to use the Vic Lopez Auditorium. Each school's performing arts program and students would be transported to the proposed facility in a manner similar to existing operations, either via school bus or personal vehicle.

The District expects the new performing arts center to be mostly vacant during the school day and used as needed in the evenings. Most student groups would arrive after school, likely after 3:30 p.m., to assemble sets, rehearse, and ultimately perform in the evening. There may be a weekend matinee show and an evening performance. When not used by the District, the proposed facility would be available for use by partner school districts and the community, similar to current operations at the Vic Lopez Auditorium.

The schools on the campus and soccer leagues that currently use the Project Site would be able to use the fields to the south of the proposed performing arts center. None of the existing uses would be displaced off-site, and no improvements to the fields would be required to accommodate the relocated uses.

Construction

Project construction would include site preparation, grading, construction, and paving, beginning the third quarter of 2024 and lasting 18 months, and concluding near the end of the fourth quarter of 2025, as follows:

- Site preparation: Third quarter 2024
- Grading: Third quarter 2024
- Construction: Fourth quarter 2024 through third quarter 2025
- Paving: Fourth quarter 2025

Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Regulatory Compliance

Construction staging and laydown would occur in the new parking areas and a portion of the existing parking lot, north of the proposed building. The construction site and staging and storage areas would be fenced with green screening and gated to limit trespassing and vandalism. Fiber rolls would be placed along the interior perimeters of the fenced areas. Existing storm drain inlets would be protected, and driveways providing construction access would be stabilized and installed with a tire wash.

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As the construction area would be greater than 1 acre, the Project would be required to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Construction General Permit (Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ). This permit requires the District and/or its construction contractor to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which would identify BMPs to be implemented during all construction activities to control and reduce pollutants from discharging into waterways. The BMPs would address erosion control, perimeter control, wind erosion control, storm drain inlet protection, tracking control, and general site management. Adherence to the SWPPP would reduce potential effects of Project construction on water quality to acceptable standards.

To avoid potential direct and/or indirect impacts to active bird nests and/or nesting birds, and in compliance with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code, the District will conduct preconstruction clearance surveys as a BMP, prior to ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities, as follows:

Migratory Bird Treaty Act/California Fish and Game Code Preconstruction Clearance Surveys – In compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code, if Project-related activities are initiated during bird nesting season (February 15 to August 31), the District and/or its construction contractor shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a preconstruction nesting bird clearance survey no more than three days prior to the start of any vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities. The qualified biologist shall survey all trees within 50 feet of the construction area. If no active bird nests are detected during the clearance survey, Project construction activities may begin, and no additional avoidance and minimization measures shall be required. If an active bird nest is found, the species shall be identified, and a “no-disturbance” buffer shall be established around the active nest. The size of the no-disturbance buffer shall be increased or decreased based on the judgement of the qualified biologist and level of activity and sensitivity of the species. The qualified biologist shall periodically monitor any active bird nests identified to determine if Project-related activities occurring outside the no-disturbance buffer disturb the birds and if the buffer needs to be increased. Once the young have fledged and left the nest, or the nest otherwise becomes inactive under natural conditions, Project activities within the no-disturbance buffer may occur following an additional survey by the qualified biologist to search for any new bird nests in the restricted area.

Project construction may have the potential to release pollution into the air and waterways. To minimize potential Project effects on air quality, the Project would be subject to rules and regulations enforced by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), including the following:

Rule 402 (Nuisance) – This rule prohibits the discharge “from any source whatsoever in such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property.” This rule does not apply to odors emanating from agricultural operations necessary for the growing of crops or the raising of fowl or animals.

Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust) – This rule requires fugitive dust sources to implement best available control measures for all sources and prohibits all forms of visible particulate matter (PM) from crossing any property line. This rule is intended to reduce coarse PM (PM₁₀) emissions from any transportation, handling, construction, or storage activity that has the potential to generate fugitive dust. Potential PM₁₀ suppression techniques are summarized below.

- Portions of a construction site to remain inactive longer than a period of three months will be seeded and watered until grass cover is grown or otherwise stabilized.
- All on-site roads will be paved as soon as feasible or watered periodically or chemically stabilized.
- All material transported off-site will be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- The area disturbed by clearing, grading, earthmoving, or excavation operations will be minimized at all times.
- Where vehicles leave a construction site and enter adjacent public streets, the streets will be swept daily or washed down at the end of the workday to remove soil tracked onto the paved surface.

Rule 1113 (Architectural Coatings) – This rule requires manufacturers, distributors, and end users of architectural and industrial maintenance coatings to reduce reactive organic gas (ROG) emissions from the use of these coatings, primarily by placing limits on the ROG content of various coating categories.

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Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL



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Feet

WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT: PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Local Vicinity

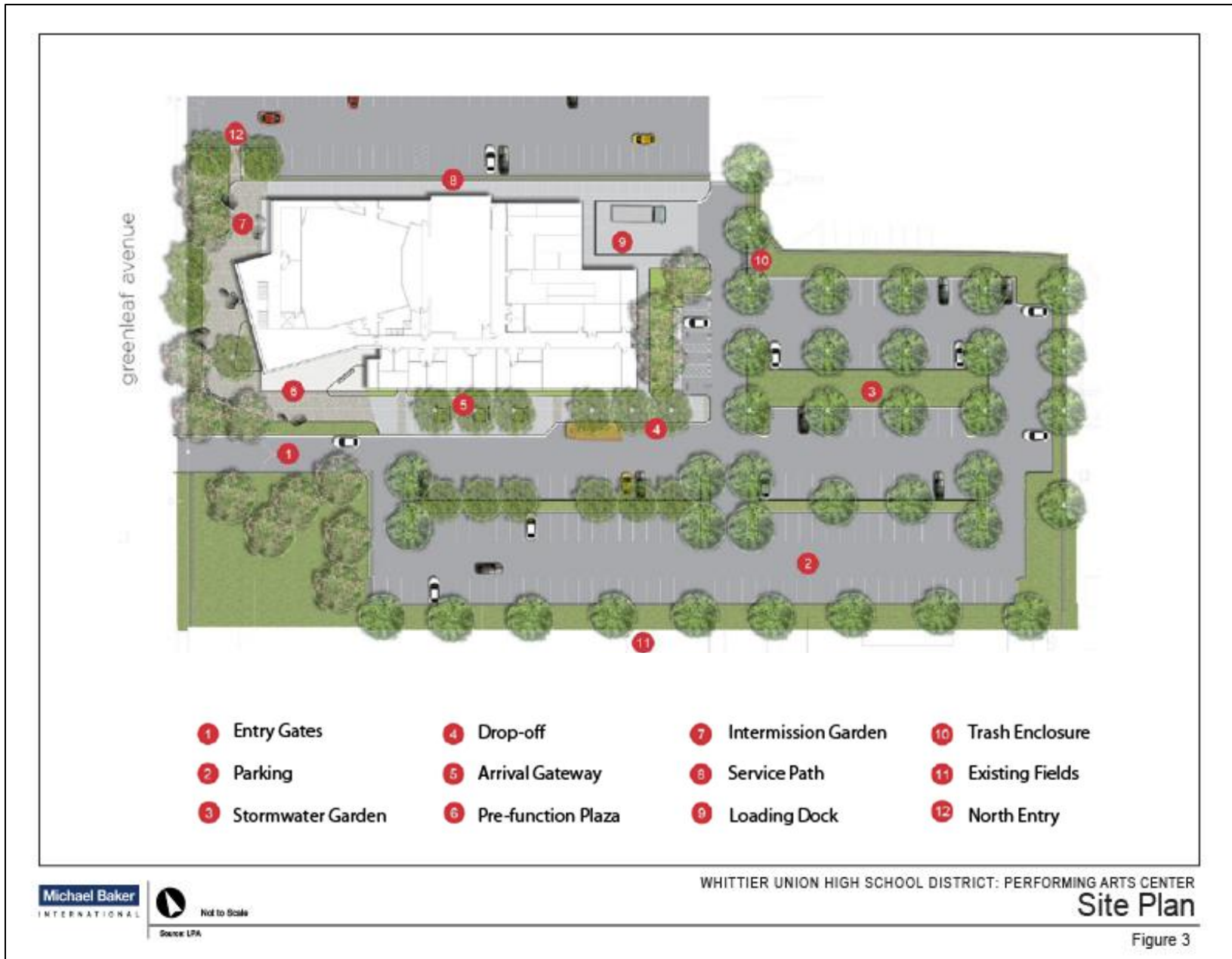
Figure 1



Looking from Greenleaf Avenue towards the northwest corner of the Project Site



Looking from Greenleaf Avenue towards the southern end of the Project Site





Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

Not to Scale

Source: LPA, August 2023.

WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT: PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Project Rendering

Figure 4

4. Applicability of Categorical Exemption

The CEQA Guidelines include classes of projects that have been determined to not have a significant effect on the environment and that can be categorically exempt from extended environmental review. As discussed below, the Project qualifies for a categorical exemption under Classes 4 and 14.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes (CEQA Guidelines Section 15304).

Project construction consists of the clearing of existing improvements and debris within the Project Site and excavation for the construction of the proposed improvements. All areas disturbed would be restored with new improvements, including the proposed building, pavement, and/or landscaping, to minimize erosion. Project implementation would not require the removal of any trees. Therefore, the Project meets the requirements of Class 4.

Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools, consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25 percent or 10 classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15314).

The Project is proposed on an existing campus that currently operates Sierra Vista HS, Frontier HS, Whittier Union Adult School, and District administrative operations. The Project would meet the District’s need to provide a state-of-the-art performing arts center for all seven District schools. The Project would be developed in an underutilized area of the campus and would include a performance theater, rehearsal warm-up room, and a chorus/green room that could be considered instructional areas (or classrooms). Therefore, the Project would result in the addition of three classrooms. As the proposed facility would be auxiliary to the existing campus operations and shared by all District schools, it would not increase a specific school’s classroom count or student enrollment capacity. Nevertheless, assuming the state and District’s maximum loading factors of 27 and 31 students per classroom,⁵ the 3 new classrooms could accommodate up to 81 and 93 students, respectively, and increase the student enrollment capacity at each high school as follows:

Seating Capacity Increase with Proposed Project

	State		District	
	Classroom Capacity ^a	Percent Increase	Classroom Capacity ^a	Percent Increase
California HS	2,952	3%	3,217	3%
La Serna HS	2,321	3%	2,506	4%
Pioneer HS	2,018	4%	1,949	5%
Santa Fe HS	2,681	3%	2,592	4%
Whittier HS	1,968	3%	2,031	5%

⁵ Whittier Union High School District, Long Range Facilities Master Plan, 2019, Figure 18, page 48, https://www.wuhd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=749955&type=d&pREC_ID=2171148.

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	State		District	
	Classroom Capacity ^a	Percent Increase	Classroom Capacity ^a	Percent Increase
Frontier HS and Sierra Vista HS ^b	648	13%	540	17%
a. Whittier Union High School District, Long Range Facilities Master Plan, 2019, Figure 19, page 49. b. The capacities for Frontier HS and Sierra Vista HS programs were combined because the schools are located on the same campus.				

As documented, the additional new classrooms and increase in student capacity would not exceed the limits of 10 classrooms or 25 percent student capacity established by Class 14.

5. Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, Exceptions, lists conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. The discussion below addresses whether these conditions apply.

a. Location

Section 15300.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states that Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of whether a project is located in a uniquely sensitive environment of hazardous or critical concern that has been designated, precisely mapped, or officially adopted pursuant to federal, state, or local laws, i.e., a project that would ordinarily be insignificant may in that particularly sensitive environment be significant.

According to the Whittier General Plan, the Project Site is not within any hazard zones or areas of unique sensitive environments of hazardous or critical concern—including wildfire hazards, 100-year floodplains, inundation hazards, seismic hazards, oil production, and noise—mapped and/or designated by federal, state, or local agencies.⁶ The Project Site is also not within an Alquist-Priolo Zone or a mapped landslide hazards area. However, it is within a liquefaction zone.⁷ A geotechnical investigation was prepared for the Project (American Engineering Laboratories, Inc., June 2023; see Attachment A) which determined that, with the incorporation of recommendations provided therein, the potential liquefiable soils can be improved and the Project is geotechnically feasible. Additionally, the Project would be engineered to comply with the California Building Code Standards concerning liquefaction effects. Moreover, as provided in Sections 5.e and 5.f, below, the Project Site is not on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code or listed on a national, state, or local register as a historical resource. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) does not apply to the Project.

b. Cumulative Impact

Section 15300.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place over time is significant. The District has a Long-Range Facilities Master Plan that identifies desired facility improvements at its campuses. Most of the

⁶ City of Whittier, General Plan: public, safety, noise, and health, 2021, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://www.cityofwhittier.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10936/637944306024570000>.

⁷ GeoHub, Liquefaction zones, accessed July 20, 2023, <https://geohub.lacity.org/datasets/909fd7034cc24a40aa82b3cf0a62da50/explore?location=33.952171%2C-118.042265%2C16.82>.

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improvements identified for the Sierra Education Center have been completed. At this time, funding has been slated for the following improvements at the Sierra Education Center:

- Conversion of two general education classrooms to general earth science labs. This project would rehabilitate the interior of both existing classrooms and would occur during the fourth quarter of 2023.
- Replacement of the fencing at the transportation yard. Construction would start in September 2023 and end in May 2024.
- Construction of a new bus wash station in the transportation yard. Construction started in June 2023 and is anticipated to end in December 2023.
- Roof replacement of the gymnasium. Construction may occur during the summer of 2024, or soon thereafter.

As the Project's construction timeline is from July 2024 to the end of December 2025, only the roof replacement project would overlap with the Project. Replacement of the gymnasium roof would not be a substantial undertaking, and the combined construction effects of the proposed performing arts facility and new gym roof would not be significant. Furthermore, the operational effects of the related improvements at Sierra Education Center would not combine with Project operations to cause considerable operational effects. Therefore, short-term construction and long-term operational impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

The District has also had conceptual conversations with the City of Whittier about upgrading the natural turf south of the Project Site to synthetic turf and adding a shade structure and new restroom facilities. Funding for these improvements has not been identified, and the proposed improvements are considered speculative at this time. Moreover, if approved and implemented, these improvements would occur after Project construction (i.e., after January 2026), and therefore would not combine with the Project to create a cumulatively considerable environmental impact. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(b) does not apply to the Project.

c. Significant Effects

A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The determination of whether this exception applies involves two distinct questions: (1) whether the project presents unusual circumstances, and (2) whether there is a reasonable possibility that a significant environmental impact will result from the unusual circumstances. The lead agency considers the second prong of this test only if it finds that some circumstance of the project is unusual (*Berkeley Hillside Preservation v City of Berkeley* [2015] 60 C4th 1086, 1104).

The Project would not present unusual circumstances or special environmental constraints during Project planning, construction, or operation that may lead to a significant impact. The Project would comply with all applicable California laws and regulations. Construction methods would be typical for school facilities and would comply with standard practices for public school facilities, including the current California Building Code and the ADA. The Project would also comply with applicable water quality and air emissions rules and standards and would implement BMPs required during construction. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(c) does not apply to the Project.

d. Scenic Highways

A categorical exemption cannot be used for a project that may damage scenic resources—including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources—within an officially designated state scenic highway. The closest officially designated state scenic highway is a segment of SR 91, 19 miles to the southeast of the Project Site, near Peralta Hills.⁸ Due to the distance, Project implementation would not have the ability to devalue the highway. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(d) does not apply to the Project.

e. Hazardous Waste Sites

Subsection 15300.2(e) of the CEQA Guidelines states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project on a site that is on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Section 65962.5 specifies lists of hazardous materials sites—hazardous waste facilities; hazardous waste discharges for which the SWRCB has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

To determine if the site is on a list compiled by Section 65962.5, a review of the following data resources, also known as the Cortese list, was conducted:

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control online EnviroStor database⁹
- List of leaking underground storage tank sites from the SWRCB online GeoTracker database¹⁰
- California Environmental Protection Agency:¹¹
 - List of solid waste disposal sites identified by the SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
 - List of “active” Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB.
 - List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control.¹²

The SWRCB GeoTracker Database listed a former Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Cleanup Site at the Sierra Education Center, case T0603703808, which was closed in July 1996. The Project Site is not listed on any other database compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Since the LUST cleanup case on the Project Site is closed, Project implementation would not expose

⁸ ArcGIS, California Scenic Highways, accessed June 28, 2023,

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.

⁹ Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, accessed June 28, 2023, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.

¹⁰ California State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, accessed June 28, 2023, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.

¹¹ California Environmental Protection Agency, Cortese List Data Resources, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>.

¹² Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor: Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese), accessed July 5, 2023,

https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site_type=CSITES,FUDS&status=ACT,BKLG,COM&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+%28CORTESE%29.

hazardous waste to the environment. Impacts are less than significant, and the exception specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(e) does not apply to the Project.

f. Historic Resources

A categorical exemption cannot be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as specified in Public Resources Code Section 21084.1, which defines a resource as one listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and local register of historical resources.

The Project Site is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, or California Office of Historic Preservation's Built Environment Resource Directory.¹³ Additionally, the City of Whittier does not classify the Project Site as a historic location, landmark, or district.¹⁴ Therefore, the exception specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f) does not apply to the proposed Project.

6. Conclusion

As documented herein, the proposed Project meets the requirements of Categorical Exemption Class 4, *Minor Alterations to Land*, and Class 14, *Minor Additions to Schools*, and none of the conditions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, *Exceptions*, apply. Accordingly, the Project is exempt from extended environmental review in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.

¹³ National Park Services, National Register of Historic Places, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Resources, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=19>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Landmarks, accessed July 3, 2023, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21427; Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory, accessed July 3, 2023, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338.

¹⁴ City of Whittier, Whittier General Plan – Historic Preservation, 2021, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://www.cityofwhittier.org/government/community-development/planning-services/historic-preservation>.