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FILED
Apr 29, 2024 09:16 AM
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File # 2024-000345
State Receipt # 37042920240326

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Project Title

TORREY PINES HIGH SCHOOL NEW AQUATIC CENTER

Check Document being Filed:

- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
- Notice of Exemption (NOE)
- Other (Please fill in type):

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Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: San Dieguito Union High School District
710 Encinitas Boulevard
Encinitas, CA 92024

County Clerk, San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway, #280
San Diego, CA 92101

Torrey Pines High School New Aquatic Center

Project Title

3710 Del Mar Heights Road (Assessor's Parcel Number 304-062-01)

Project Location – Specific

San Diego

San Diego

Project Location – City

Project Location – County

The San Dieguito Union High School District (District) proposes a new aquatic center at Torrey Pines High School. The facility would meet California Interscholastic Federation standards for competitive swimming, diving, and water polo. A swimming pool and two buildings would be constructed. The swimming pool would be 37 meters long by 25 yards wide (122 feet by 75 feet) and include 15 swim lanes. Building 1, on the western end of the aquatic center, would be approximately 5,210 square feet. Building 2, on the eastern end of the facility, would be approximately 1,900 square feet. The buildings would include girls' and boys' locker and restroom facilities, team rooms, offices, concessions, and pool equipment rooms. The proposed aquatic center would include portable bleacher seating, lighting for morning and nighttime use, an LED matrix scoreboard, and a sound system. The aquatic center would accommodate the existing water athletic programs offered at Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy (a District high school at 5951 Village Center Loop Road, approximately 2.5 miles east of the Project Site). When not used by the high schools, the facility would be available for other users pursuant to the Civic Center Act and adopted Board Policies.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

San Dieguito Union High School District

Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Same as above.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption – Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land (CEQA Guidelines §15304) and Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines §15314). The Class 4 exemption applies as the Project would occur on graded land with a slope of less than 10 percent that is not within a waterway, wetlands, and/or areas of severe geologic hazards. Disturbed areas would be restored with new structures, pavement, and/or ground cover/landscaping. No trees would be removed for Project implementation. The Class 14 exemption applies as the proposed addition of the aquatic center to the high school campus is minor in scope and would not increase operations at Torrey Pines High School by the limit of 10 classrooms or 25 percent student capacity. Moreover, none of the exceptions under CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 apply to the Project.

Reasons why project is exempt

Daniel Young, Director of Planning Services

(760) 753-6491 ext. 5618

Lead Agency Contact Person

Telephone/Extension

If filed by applicant

1. Attach certified document of exemption findings

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?

Yes

No

Signature: *Daniel Young* Date: 4-25-24 Title: Superintendent

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION EVALUATION REPORT

Torrey Pines High School New Aquatic Center Project

April 2024

This Categorical Exemption Evaluation Report documents the eligibility of the San Dieguito UNION High School District's (District) proposed new aquatic center at Torrey Pines High School (Project) to be exempt from expanded environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under California Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21084 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15061(b)(2) and 15300 et seq.

1. Location

The Project is proposed in the southeast portion of the Torrey Pines High School campus located at 3710 Del Mar Heights Road in the City of San Diego (City), San Diego County. The high school campus is associated with County Assessor Parcel Number 304-062-01,¹ and is west of Torrey Highlands Park Road, north of Del Mar Heights Road, and east of Torrington Street. Regional access is from Interstate 5 (I-5), approximately one mile west of the school. Figure 1, *Local/Regional Vicinity*, shows the location of Torrey Pines High School and the surrounding uses.

2. Existing Setting

A. Existing Uses

School Facilities

Torrey Pines High School encompasses approximately 60 acres at an elevation between approximately 300 and 360 feet above mean sea level.² The school was originally built in 1974, and various additions, including the stadium, classroom and food service buildings, and staff parking lot, were made to the school in 1980, 1999, and 2003. The weightroom was later added in 2015, and the Performing Arts Center in 2017.

School buildings are primarily in the central portion of the campus and include permanent and portable classrooms. Parking is provided in the northwest portion of the campus and along the southern perimeter near Del Mar Heights Road. The approximate eastern one-third of the campus comprises the school's outdoor athletic facilities, including a track and football field stadium, varsity and junior varsity baseball and multipurpose fields, hardscape basketball courts, and tennis courts.

The proposed improvements would be developed in an approximately 0.75-acre area in the southeast portion of the campus located south of the football field stadium, east of "Science Building J," and north of the multipurpose field and varsity baseball field (Project Site). This area is developed with asphalt, concrete, and landscaping. It is underutilized space on the campus, for which a portion is currently fenced and secured for construction staging and loading of ongoing construction activities at the campus. The Project Site was also used for interim portable classroom facilities during campus improvements between 2014 and 2022. Figure 2, *Site Photographs*, shows the conditions of the Project Site.

¹San Diego Association of Governments, Parcel Look Up Tool and Geographic Boundary Viewer, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://sdgis.sandag.org>

²US Geological Survey, Del Mar Quadrangle, California - San Diego County, 7.5-Minute Series, 2021, https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/hazbin/tv_browse.pl?Id=a1f2e2a127601caee7f1efe81636f3a

School Programs

Torrey Pines High School operates a comprehensive high school program for ninth through twelfth grade students. The school has an enrollment capacity of 3,000 seats. During the 2022-23 school year, 2,614 students were enrolled at the school. Over the last 10 years, enrollment peaked in the 2021-2022 school year with 2,649 students; the lowest enrollment occurred in 2017-18 with 2,418 students.³

Torrey Pines High School offers a range of academic and athletic programs. Most programs are held at the campus. However, as the campus does not have a swimming pool (similar to the District's three other comprehensive high schools), the school's aquatic programs' practices, home games, and hosted tournaments for the varsity and junior varsity teams are held at off-site facilities, including at the following locations:

- Cathedral Catholic High School at 5555 Del Mar Heights Road, San Diego (1.3 miles east of Torrey Pines High School).
- Pardee Aquatic Center (Boys and Girls Clubs) at 533 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, Solana Beach (3.4 miles northwest of Torrey Pines High School).
- Mt. Carmel High School at 9550 Carmel Mountain Road, San Diego (6 miles east/northeast of Torrey Pines High School).
- UC San Diego's Canyonview Aquatic Center at 3428 Voigt Drive, La Jolla (7.3 miles south of Torrey Pines High School).
- Rancho Bernardo High School at 13010 Paseo Lucido, San Diego (1.3 miles east/northeast of Torrey Pines High School).

Water Polo

The boys' water polo season is from approximately the end of July to mid-November. The team consists of 25-35 varsity and junior varsity athletes. During the first two weeks of the season, practice is held twice per day, once in the morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.) and once in the evening (7:00-9:00 p.m.), on every other day. After the first two weeks, practices occur from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Competitions typically occur once to twice per week. There are a maximum of 28 games during the season, with 3 to 4 weekend tournaments per level. When Torrey Pines High School hosts, competitions generally occur at 7:00 p.m. for varsity events and 8:00 p.m. for junior varsity events.

The girls' water polo season typically starts the first weekend in November and ends the third week in February. The team consists of 25-35 varsity and junior varsity athletes. Practice typically occurs from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Competitions typically occur once to twice per week. There are a maximum of 28 games per season, including 3-4 weekend tournaments per level. When hosted by Torrey Pines High School, competitions are generally at 7:00 p.m. for varsity events and 8:00 p.m. for junior varsity events.

During the off-season (approximately the end of February through most of July), the boys' and girls' water polo teams work out twice per week. Practices typically occur from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. for a period of six weeks.

³ California Department of Education, DataQuest – Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Grade, Torrey Pines High Report (17-18346-3730033), accessed December 8, 2023.
<https://dq.x04.ca.gov/dataquest/dqconsensus/EnrGrdYears.aspx?cids=37683463710083&agglevel=school&year=2022-23>.

Swim and Dive Teams

The boys' and girls' swim season is typically from mid-February to mid-May. There are usually approximately 70 to 80 athletes at the varsity and junior varsity levels. Practices occur on a daily basis between 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. and/or between 8:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Swim meets are typically held once per week, depending on the availability of the community pools. Torrey Pines High School has been holding meets at Rancho Bernardo High School on Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Up to 10 swim meets have been held during the swim season.

The boys' and girls' dive season coincides with the swim season, from mid-February to mid-May. The dive team includes only varsity level athletes with 3-5 athletes per gender. Practices typically occur from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., three times per week, with athletes competing on a weekly basis during the season.

B. Surrounding Uses

As shown in Figure 1, school facilities surround the Project Site. Surrounding the high school campus are single- and multifamily residential uses to the south, across Del Mar Heights Road; single-family residential uses, Torrey Pines Assisted and Senior Living Facility, and Del Mar Pines School (elementary school) to the west; single-family residential uses to the north and east; and Torrey Highlands Park and open space lands to the north/northeast/east, across Torrey Highlands Park Road. A San Diego Gas & Electric substation is also located to the east. The closest residential use is approximately 570 feet south of the proposed aquatic center.

C. Land Use and Zoning

According to the City of San Diego General Plan, the campus is located in the Carmel Valley Planning Area and has an Institutional & Public and Semi-Public Facilities land use designation.⁴ This designation applies to uses that offer public and semi-public services to the community and may include, but are not limited to, airports, military facilities, community colleges, university campuses, landfills, communication and utilities, transit centers, water sanitation plants, schools, libraries, police and fire facilities, cemeteries, post offices, hospitals, park-and-ride lots, government offices, and civic centers.⁵ The high school is located within the Carmel Valley Planned District and is zoned Educational and Park Area,⁶ which permits elementary, junior high, and senior high school uses and/or neighborhood or community parks.⁷

3. Project Description

The Project involves the development of a new aquatic center at Torrey Pines High School to support the existing aquatic programs offered by Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy, another District school located at 5951 Village Center Loop Road, San Diego, approximately 2.5 miles east.

A. Proposed Improvements

The proposed aquatic center would include one swimming pool in an east-west orientation and two buildings on the west and east ends of the pool. Figure 3, *Conceptual Site Plan*, shows the proposed facility,

⁴ City of San Diego General Plan – Land Use and Community Planning Element, Figure LU-2, General Plan Land Use and Street System, 2020, https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/lu2_general_plan_land_use_wstreetsystem_sept2020.pdf

⁵ City of San Diego General Plan – Land Use and Community Planning Element, 2015, https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/lu_2015.pdf.

⁶ City of San Diego, Zoning and Parcel Information Portal (ZAPP), accessed December 8, 2023, <https://sandiego.maps.arcgis.com/apps/insight/sidebar/index.html?appid=7516a5d68aee401170ff48240bcaa1219>.

⁷ City of San Diego, Municipal Code, Chapter 15: Planned Districts, Article 3: Carmel Valley Planned District, Division 3: Zones, §153.030B, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://docs.sandiego.gov/municode/MuniCodeChapter15/Ch15Art03Division03.pdf>.

which would comply with the latest applicable Title 24 California Building Standards Code, which includes the Building Code (Part 2), Energy Code (Part 6), and Green Building Code (Part 11).

The proposed swimming pool would meet California Interscholastic Federation standards for competitive swimming, dive, and water polo. It would be 37 meters long by 25 yards wide (122 feet by 75 feet) and include 15 swim lanes. The western end of the pool would have 3 lanes and be 3.5 feet to 4.5 feet deep. The main body of the pool would have 11 lanes and be 7 feet deep to support competitive swim and water polo. The deep end of the pool would be approximately 12 feet deep to support one-meter springboard diving. The pool would include a transition-depth lane between the competitive swim area and deep end.

Building 1 on the western end of the pool would be L-shaped and approximately 5,210 square feet. The main entrance into Building 1 would be from the northwest corner, which would have an extended roof awning. The entry would provide access to a lobby and one of two team rooms, an office, restroom facilities, a first aid room, and the swimming pool. All other areas of the L-shape building would be accessed only from the interior of the aquatic center. The boys' and girls' lockers and restroom facilities would be on the west side of the pool. Exterior shower facilities would be available under a cantilever awning facing the pool. The second team room, another office, and storage and electrical rooms would be on the north side of Building 1, facing the pool.

Building 2 would be approximately 1,900 square feet and on the eastern end of the pool. Building 2 would be rectangular in shape and would house the pool and equipment rooms and include a concessions room, an all-gender restroom facility, and storage spaces. All uses of Building 2 would be accessed from the exterior of the aquatic center. The concessions area would have an extended cantilever shade awning.

The pool would be surrounded by a concrete deck. Two three-tier aluminum portable bleachers with seating for up to 192 spectators would be installed on the east and south sides of the pool. The southern bleachers would include a shade canopy structure. Eight-foot-high ornamental metal fencing would be installed on the north side of the aquatic center, between the two buildings, and an eight-foot-high chain link fence would also be installed on the south side of the aquatic center, between the two buildings. The buildings and fencing would enclose the aquatic center. The main entrance to the pool would be from double gates on the north side of the aquatic center, next to Building 1. Emergency egress-only access gates would be available in the southeast and southwest corners of the facility. A free-standing, light-emitting diode (LED) matrix scoreboard would be installed on the north side of the pool, next to the main entrance.

Lighting would be installed for morning and evening use of the aquatic center. Four 50-foot-high light poles would be installed near the four corners of the pool. The lights would be directed down towards the areas intended to be lit and shielded to prevent glare and spill light beyond the school property lines. Underwater lights would also be installed on the walls of the pool. The proposed lighting system would ensure all areas of the pool would be lit and eliminate shadows within the pool. A sound system speaker would be installed on each of the four light poles.

A new walkway would be installed from the main campus near Science Building J to the new aquatic center. Concrete paths would also be installed on the northern, western, and eastern perimeters of the new aquatic center. Landscaping with drought-tolerant plants would be planted on the north side of Building 1.

New utility lines and systems would be installed for the proposed facility. The new infrastructure, including storm drain, potable water, sewer, gas, electricity, fire alarm, and communications, would tie into the existing systems on the campus.

The Project would be designed to include the following sustainable features:

- Increased insulation values in walls.
- 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 LED 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.

B. Proposed Operations

The proposed aquatic center would accommodate the existing aquatic programs offered at Torrey Pines High School. Students participating in Torrey Pines High School's existing varsity and junior varsity water polo, swimming, and dive programs would no longer be required to travel off the campus for practice, home games, and hosted tournaments. Athletes from other sports programs, such as cross country and track, may also use the aquatic center for alternative workouts and meetings.

The proposed aquatic center would also support the existing aquatic programs offered at Canyon Crest Academy. Similar to Torrey Pines High School, Canyon Crest Academy does not have a swimming pool and is required to use off-site facilities. In addition to the aquatic facilities listed in Section 2A, Canyon Crest Academy also uses the swimming pools at Del Norte High School (16601 Nighthawk Lane, San Diego) and Bay Club Carmel Valley (12000 Carmel Country Road, San Diego). The proposed aquatic center would become Canyon Crest Academy's home facility for its varsity and junior varsity water polo, swim, and dive teams. Student athletes from Canyon Crest Academy would commute to Torrey Pines High School for all practices and host home games and tournaments.

Beyond the existing aquatic programs at Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy, the District has not identified any other users of the proposed aquatic center at this time. However, the new facility would be available to accommodate other District, feeder school districts, and potential joint partners' aquatic programming needs. The selection of a potential joint use partner would be consistent with Board Policy 1330.1, which requires the joint use to benefit students and the community. The District would prioritize the scheduling of District programs and use. District users may include, but are not limited to, La Costa Canyon High School and San Dieguito High School Academy's aquatic programs, as well as future education and aquatic programs that may be developed, including for the existing health education, physical education, and special education programs to teach students water safety and learn-to-swim. When the proposed aquatic center is not used by the District, feeder school districts, and/or joint partners, as with all District school facilities, it would be available for community rental and operation, pursuant to the Civic Center Act⁸ and San Dieguito Union High School District Board Policy 1330 and Administrative Regulation 1330. The District has not developed an operational schedule for the proposed aquatic center. However, it is possible the facility is operated every day, year-round. During the school year, the facility would be used before, during, and after normal school hours, with similar morning and afternoon practices,

⁸ California Education Code Section 38130 et seq., known as the Civic Center Act, states that every public school in the state must be available as a "civic center" for community use.

meets, and competitions as those currently held offsite (see Section 2A) by both Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy's aquatic programs. When not used by these existing programs, it would be available for other users, including those mentioned above. The facility could be used as early as 6 AM, such as for early morning lap swimming to 10 PM to accommodate events. During weekends and school breaks, the proposed aquatic center would be available for operation during the same hours as the school day.

C. Construction

Construction of the proposed aquatic center would commence during the summer of 2024 and last 18 months. The proposed improvements would be available for use starting the 2026 swim and dive season, which is in February.

The Project Site and construction staging and laydown areas would be fenced with screening to limit potential views, trespassing, and vandalism. The District and its construction contractor would protect existing storm drain inlets; fiber rolls would be placed along the interior perimeters of the fenced areas. Construction vehicles accessing the staging area and/or construction area(s) would be stabilized and installed with a tire wash to minimize the potential for sediment generated by Project construction activities to be carried off-site or transported to downstream waters during a rain event.

D. Construction Best Management Practices and Regulatory Compliance

The following best management practices (BMPs) and regulatory compliance measures would be implemented during Project construction to reduce the Project's construction-related impacts on the environment, surrounding community, and existing school:

- The construction manager will work with the Torrey Pines High School principal and District administrators to schedule activities in a manner that would be least disruptive to school and classroom operations. To the extent possible, noisy construction activities would be scheduled when students are not on campus.
- Construction hours would adhere to the City of San Diego Municipal Code Section 59.5.0404, which permits construction Monday through Saturday, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and prohibits construction on Sundays and public holidays.
- 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 San Diego Air Pollution Control District, including the following:

Rule 50 (Visible Emissions): Establishes limits to the opacity of emissions within the San Diego Air Pollution Control District.

Rule 51 (Nuisance): Prohibits emissions that 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 injury or damage to business or property.

Rule 52 (Particulate Matter): Establishes limits to the discharge of any particulate matter from nonstationary sources.

Rule 54 (Dust and Fumes): Establishes limits to the amount of dust or fumes discharged into the atmosphere in any single hour.

Rule 55 (Fugitive Dust): Limits fugitive dust emissions.

1. No person shall engage in construction or demolition activity in a manner that discharges visible dust emissions into the atmosphere beyond the property line for a period or periods aggregating more than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period.
2. Visible roadway dust as a result of active operations, spillage from transport trucks, erosion, or track-out/carry-out shall be minimized by the use of any of the equally effective track-out/carry-out and erosion control measures listed in Rule 55 that apply to the project or operation. These measures include track-out grates or gravel beds at each egress point; wheel-washing at each egress during muddy conditions; soil binders, chemical soil stabilizers, geotextiles, mulching, or seeding; watering for dust control; and using secured tarps or cargo covering, watering, or treating of transported material for outbound transport trucks. Erosion control measures must be removed at the conclusion of each workday when active operations cease, or every 24 hours for continuous operations.

Rule 67.0.1 (Architectural Coatings): Requires manufacturers, distributors, and end users of architectural and industrial maintenance coatings to reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from the use of these coatings, primarily by placing limits on the VOC content of various coating categories.

Rule 67.7 (Cutback and Emulsified Asphalts): Prohibits the sale and use of cutback and emulsified asphalt materials for the paving, construction, or maintenance of parking lots, driveways, streets, and highways which exceed the County standards for the percent by volume of VOC that evaporates into the atmosphere under temperate conditions.

4. Applicability of Categorical Exemptions

The CEQA Guidelines include classes of projects that have been determined not to 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

Class 4 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, including but not limited to grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway. In any wetland, in an officially designated scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist (CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(a)).

Project construction would involve the clearing of existing vegetation and debris for the construction of the proposed aquatic center improvements. The improvements would occur on graded land with a slope of less than 10 percent and developed with asphalt, concrete, and landscaping. Based on a site visit and review of the City of San Diego General Plan, Torrey Pines High School is not within a waterway, wetlands, and/or areas of severe geologic hazards as delineated by the State Geologist.⁹ All areas disturbed would be restored with new structures, pavement, and/or ground cover/landscaping, which would minimize the potential for erosion. No trees would be removed as a part of the proposed Project. Accordingly, the Project meets the Class 4 exemption requirements.

⁹ City of San Diego, General Plan – Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element, Figure PF-9 – Geotechnical and Relative Risk Areas, 2008. <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/planning/genplan/pdf/generalplan/pf9geotech.pdf>.

Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools

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 percent or 10 classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15314).

The Project consists of the addition of a new aquatic center within the school grounds at Torrey Pines High School, an existing school. The proposed facility would accommodate existing aquatic programs at Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy and would also allow the District to develop and use the facility for future education and aquatic programs. The Project is considered a minor addition as it would be developed on underutilized space on the campus and would be able to tie into the existing campus utility systems. The Project would accommodate existing aquatic programs and would not increase the number of classrooms or the student enrollment capacity at either Torrey Pines High School or Canyon Crest Academy by 10 classrooms or 25 percent, respectively. Moreover, its operation by any of its users would not be greater than existing daily school operations of up to 3,000 students or events, such as those offered at the District's Performing Arts Center or football stadium. Accordingly, the Project meets the conditions of 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 to the proposed Project.

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 the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern that has been designated, precisely mapped, or officially adopted pursuant to federal, state, or local laws. According to *Berkeley Hills Watershed Coalition v. City of Berkeley*, (2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 880, Section 15300.2(a) concerns effects of the project on the environment, not the impact of the existing environmental conditions on the project or its future residents.

The Project Site includes underutilized space on a high school campus that is developed with asphalt, concrete, and landscaping. No environmental resources were observed during a site visit and as shown in Figure 2. Additionally, based on a review of the City of San Diego General Plan, Torrey Pines High School is not in an area mapped with unique sensitive environments of hazardous or critical concern.¹⁰ Therefore, implementation of the Project would not have the ability to impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern, and 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 Torrey Pines High School Master Plan outlines the District's campus renovation plan for the school. The Master Plan identifies several prospective upgrades at various locations of the campus in project categories that include "Technology Upgrades Only," "Minor Renovations," "Major Renovations," "New

¹⁰City of San Diego, General Plan - Conservation Element, Figure CE-6 - Generalized Mineral Land Classification, 2008. https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/environmental_services/pdf/energy%20conservation%20element.pdf

Construction,” and “Secondary – Wishlist.”¹¹ The District most recently completed Building I, Food Service, Makerspace, CAD Lab, and Digital Arts Classroom, which is part of the Master Plan. There are currently no plans to implement other improvements identified in the Master Plan, and it would be speculative to assume when the other improvements would be implemented, as construction funds are not currently available. As no other improvements from the Master Plan would be implemented, the Project’s environmental effects would not combine with those from these improvements and cause a cumulatively considerable effect.

Separate from the improvements identified in the Master Plan, the District has initiated or plans to initiate the following at Torrey Pines High School:

- **New Solar Carport.** The District initiated a solar carport project in the northwest portion of the campus during the summer of 2023; underground utilities and infrastructure to support this project were installed. The District plans to complete installation of the solar canopies during the summer of 2024.
- **Athletic Facilities Modernization.** The District completed Phase 1 of its athletic facilities modernization project in the summer of 2023. The junior varsity baseball field with soccer markings, softball field with bullpen, and tennis courts along the eastern boundary were modernized. Phase 2 of the athletic facilities modernization project would commence the summer of 2024; this phase would include the redevelopment of the field located in the southwest corner of the school’s outdoor recreation facilities with a practice softball field with soccer markings.
- **Locker Facilities Renovation Project.** The District will renovate the existing locker room facilities in the school gymnasium, from March 2024 through August 2024. The existing 10,910 square-foot boys’ and girls’ locker facilities and the norther exterior perimeter of the locker room would be modernized with new equipment and fixtures and a new walkway to meet current operational needs and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Construction of the Project, starting the summer of 2024 and ending February 2026, would coincide with the above projects. Similar to the Project, each of the above projects would implement construction best management practices and comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, similar to those listed under Section 3.D (above), to limit construction-related environmental effects. Therefore, any potential overlap of the Project’s construction activities with the related projects at Torrey Pines High School would not cause cumulatively considerable environmental effects. CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(b) would 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 Cal4th 1086, 1104).

11) San Diego Unified High School District, Torrey Pines High School Master Plan/Campus Renovation Plan, p. 8, 2011, <https://www.sduhd.net/documents/Facilities%20Planning%20and%20Construction/Master%20Plans/Torrey%20Pines%20Master%20Plan.pdf>.

The Project would not present unusual circumstances and special environmental constraints during its planning, construction, or operation that may lead to a significant impact. Torrey Pines High School has operated at the current location since 1974. The proposed aquatic center would be developed to meet existing aquatic programming and facility needs at both Torrey Pines High School and Canyon Crest Academy. The design and construction of the Project would comply with all applicable California laws and regulations, including the California Building Standards Code; moreover, Project plans would be checked by the Division of the State Architect. Construction methods would be typical for schools and would adhere to standard practices for public school construction. Operation of the proposed facility would neither present unusual circumstances. The number of athletes and spectators attending events at the proposed facility would not be substantially greater than existing normal school operations or events held at the District's Performing Arts Center or football stadium. No unusual circumstances are known that would cause a reasonable possibility to cause a significant environmental impact. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(c) would 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 to Torrey Pines High School is a segment of State Route 163, approximately 15.4 miles to the southeast.¹² Due to the distance from Torrey Pines High School, 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 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, which requires the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency to compile lists of hazardous materials sites and waste facilities, also known as the "Cortese List." A computer search was conducted for data resources that provide information regarding facilities or sites identified as meeting the Cortese List requirements, including from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).¹³

The search identified a former underground storage tank (UST) on the Torrey Pines High School campus that was removed in 1990. Results of soil sampling conducted beneath the former UST indicated petroleum hydrocarbon impacts to soil. The impacted soil was excavated and removed from the site.¹⁴ On October 14, 1992, the case was granted regulatory closure by the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health and Quality, Hazardous Materials Management Division.¹⁵ In 2003, the DTSC reviewed the case and concurred that no further environmental investigation was required at the site. The DTSC granted the Site

¹² ArcGIS, California Scenic Highways, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465d1a3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>

¹³ California Environmental Protection Agency, Cortese List Data Resources, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/cortese/list/>

¹⁴ Brown and Caldwell, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Torrey Pines High School, San Diego, California, 2003, https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/getfile?filename=/public%2Fdeliverable_documents%2F1194935441%2F3710%20Del%20Mar%20Heights%20Torrey%20Pines%20HS_Phase%20I_040903_report.pdf

¹⁵ County of San Diego Department of Health Services, Unauthorized Release #TL798/H23229-001, Torrey Pines High School, 3710 Del Mar Heights Road, Del Mar 92014, 1992, https://documents.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/5949843466/06H1990-LSAM-H23229-001%20Closure%20Documents.pdf

Investigation case regulatory closure on August 15, 2003, and clean-up status was identified as “No Action Required.”¹⁵ The SWRCB GeoTracker Database also identifies Torrey Pines High School as a closed leaking UST site, related to the same above-mentioned UST. Potential contaminants of concern were waste oil/motor/hydraulic fluid, resulting in potential soil contamination. As noted above, the case was closed in October 1992 by the County Division of Hazardous Materials Management and DTSC.

Although Torrey Pines High School was identified on hazardous materials/waste site lists compiled by Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code, the unauthorized release cases were granted regulatory closure by the overseeing regulatory agencies and determined to no longer pose a threat at the site. Moreover, the Project Site is not within the area with previous contamination. Project implementation would not expose the environment to hazards or affect human health. Therefore, 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.

Torrey Pines High School 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.¹⁷ Additionally, the City of San Diego does not classify Torrey Pines High School as a historic property, nor is the school located within a historic district.¹⁸ Therefore, the exception specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f) does not apply to the proposed Project.

6. Conclusion

As documented herein, the 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. Therefore, the Project is exempt from extended environmental review in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.

¹⁵ Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, Torrey Pines High School Expansion, 3710 Del Mar Heights Road, San Diego, San Diego County, accessed December 8, 2023.

https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=37820024.

¹⁷ National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, accessed December 8, 2023.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.html#table>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Resources, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&countyid=19>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Landmarks, accessed December 8, 2023, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21478; Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory, accessed December 8, 2023, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338.

¹⁸ City of San Diego, California Historical Resources Inventory Database, accessed December 8, 2023.

<https://sandiego.chwebtools.com/>; San Diego Cultural Heritage Alliance, Historic Districts, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://www.sdculturalheritage.org/districts.htm>.



Legend

- Torrey Pines High School
- Project Site



View of the Project Site from the southeast corner of Science Building J.

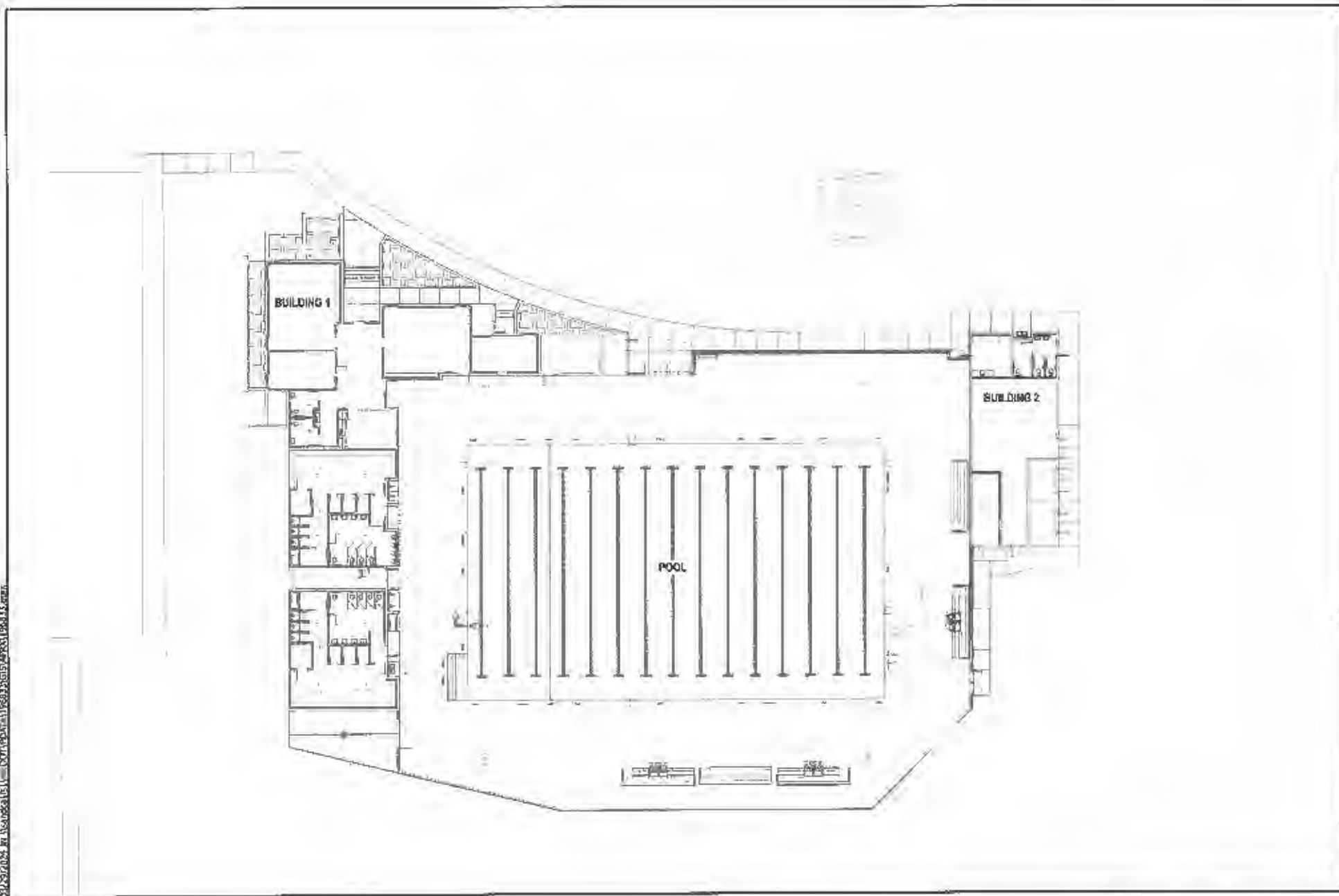
Source: Google Earth Pro 2020.



View of the Project Site from the northeast corner of Science Building J.

Source: Google Earth Pro 2022.

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TORREY PINES HIGH SCHOOL
FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AND MODERNIZATION PROJECT

Conceptual Site Plan

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

NOT TO SCALE

Source: Roesang Nakamura Torres Architects, November 8, 2023

Figure 3

Exhibit B
Notice of Exemption