

# CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION EVALUATION REPORT

## Eisenhower High School Baseball Field Lighting

February 2024

This Categorical Exemption Evaluation Report (CE Evaluation) documents the eligibility of Rialto Unified School District's (District) proposed baseball field lighting improvements at Eisenhower High School (proposed 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.

### 1. Location

The Project is proposed at the existing varsity baseball field in the northeast portion of the Eisenhower High School campus at 1321 North Lilac Avenue in the City of Rialto (City) in San Bernardino County, California. The school is bounded by residential uses to the north, North Willow Avenue to the east, West Baseline Road to the south, and North Lilac Avenue to the west. Regional access is provided by Interstate 210, approximately 0.7 miles to the north. The Eisenhower High School campus encompasses Assessor's Parcel Numbers 0127-221-01, 0127-221-02, 0127-271-01, 0127-271-02, 0127-271-03, 0127-271-04, and 0127-271-05. The Project site is located on Assessor's Parcel Numbers 0127-221-01 and 0127-221-02. *Figure 1, Project Site and Regional Location* shows the Project site location and surrounding areas.

### 2. Existing Setting

#### a. Existing Uses

The Eisenhower High School campus encompasses 41.3 acres on a generally flat, rectangular parcel at an elevation of approximately 1,360 feet above mean sea level.<sup>1</sup> The school was originally built in 1959 and has been improved over the years with permanent structures, landscaping, solar panels, and athletic facilities. Eisenhower High School operates a traditional high school program, with an enrollment of approximately 2,207 students in the 2022-2023 school year.<sup>2</sup>

As shown in *Figure 1, Project Site and Regional Location*, North Lilac Avenue bisects the Eisenhower High School campus. The main campus is on the east side of North Lilac Avenue; to the west of North Lilac Avenue lie two softball fields.

School buildings are located in the mid-western portion of the main campus. Staff parking is along the northern perimeter and also to the west across North Lilac Avenue. Visitor parking is along the western perimeter of the campus, in the vicinity of the school's main entrance. Student parking is in the southwest portion of the campus, which is currently being used for equipment and materials staging for construction

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1 United States Geological Survey, Fontana 7.5' Quadrangle, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/Prodesc/proddesc\\_61860.htm](https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/Prodesc/proddesc_61860.htm).

2 California Department of Education, DataQuest, 2022-23 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=36678503633005&agglevel=school&year=2022-23>.

of two two-story classroom buildings—one south of the library that will face North Lilac Avenue and the other north of the student/visitor parking lot—to replace portable classroom facilities in this area of the campus.

The school’s athletic facilities are generally in the eastern portion of the main campus. Tennis courts and asphalt courts are in the north-central portion. Two baseball fields are in the east/northeast portion of the campus. The running track and football stadium are in the southeast portion of the campus, adjacent to West Baseline Road and North Willow Avenue. The swimming pool is directly west of the track. Two softball fields are on the west side of North Lilac Avenue.

The Project site is the northern of the two baseball fields, which is the varsity baseball field, located in the northeast portion of the campus; refer to *Figure 1, Project Site and Regional Location*. It is surrounded by chain link fencing on all sides and developed with a grass field; home and visitor bleachers, dugouts, and bullpens; and a scoreboard on the southeast corner. A drinking fountain is located on the west side of the field, between the dugout and bleachers. There are no existing field lights. *Figure 2, Site Photographs*, shows the condition of the existing baseball field.

#### b. Surrounding Land Uses

The Eisenhower High School campus is surrounded by a mix of land uses. Residential uses are located to the north of the school, west/northwest across North Lilac Avenue, and east across North Willow Avenue. Commercial uses are east of North Willow Avenue and south of West Baseline Road to the west and east of the high school. Religious facilities are northeast across North Willow Avenue and west across North Lilac Avenue.

The school’s tennis and asphalt courts lie to the west of the Project site, with the junior varsity baseball field adjacent to the south. There are several mature ornamental trees between the two fields. The residential uses to the north are separated from the site by a 10-foot masonry wall (on the adjacent property) and an egress-only driveway. North Willow Avenue and a church are directly east of the Project site.

#### c. Land Use and Zoning

According to the City of Rialto General Plan, the campus has a land use designation of School Facility; the site is zoned Single Family Residential (R1-D). Permitted uses in all R1 zones include public buildings and uses, including schools offering full curricula as required by state law, libraries, museums, parks, playgrounds, community centers, and fire and police stations.<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to California Government Code Section 53094 et seq., the governing board of a school district may render city or county zoning ordinances and general plan requirements inapplicable. The District’s Board of Education may exempt the Project and campus from any zoning ordinances or regulations of the City of Rialto, including, without limitation, the City’s Code of Ordinances, General Plan, and related ordinances and regulations that otherwise would be applicable.

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<sup>3</sup> City of Rialto, Code of Ordinances, Chapter 18.10 – R-1, Single-Family Zones, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO\\_CH18.10SIFAZO](https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO_CH18.10SIFAZO).

### 3. Project Description

#### a. Project Characteristics

The District proposes the installation of new nighttime lighting and related field improvements at the varsity baseball field on the Eisenhower High School campus. The location of the improvements are shown in *Figure 3, Site Plan*.

All improvements would be designed and constructed to comply with the 2022 Title 24 California Building Standards Code, which includes the Building Code (Part 2), Energy Code (Part 6), and Green Building Code (Part 11), as well as with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and District design and construction standards.

#### Lighting

Seven new light poles would be installed along the perimeter of the existing baseball field. One pole would be installed along the eastern side of the field, and two poles would be installed on the western, southern, and northern sides of the field for a total of seven poles. The two poles near the first and third bases of the field would be 80 feet in height. The other five poles would be 70 feet in height. Light fixtures would be mounted at various heights on the poles to provide infield and outfield lighting, as well as security and safety lighting along walkways. All fixtures would be shielded to limit glare and ensure lighting levels at the adjacent residential uses to the north remain below the City of Rialto's threshold of 0.5 footcandle at a residential property line.<sup>4</sup> The residential uses are separated from the baseball field by a 10-foot masonry wall.

#### Fencing

The existing fencing along the west-northwestern, northern, and eastern perimeters of the field would be removed, and new fencing would be installed. A new chain-link fence backstop, 20 feet in height, would be installed and would include chain-link netting over the batting area. The 20-foot-high fence would extend eastward to the end of the visitor dugout. It would also extend southward, to the north end of the home dugout. The existing three-sided fencing behind the home and visitor dugouts would be removed and new 10-foot-high chain-link fencing would be constructed. New gates would be installed for access in and out of the dugouts. From the eastern end of the visitor dugout, a new 8-foot-high ornamental metal fence would be constructed to the northeast corner of the field. A new 20-foot-high ornamental metal fence would be constructed from the northeast corner of the field to the scoreboard, along the eastern perimeter of the field.

#### Bleachers

The existing home and visitor bleachers would be removed and discarded. New home and visitor metal bleachers would be installed in the place of the existing metal bleachers. The home bleachers would be 5 tiers and 40 feet long by 9 feet, 6 inches wide, which is the same as the existing bleachers. The visitor bleachers would be 3 tiers and 40 feet long by 4 feet, 9 inches wide, which is smaller than the existing bleachers (5 tiers and 30 feet long). Assuming a comfortable seating space of 24 inches, the home

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<sup>4</sup> City of Rialto, Code of Ordinances, Section 18.61.140(H)- Lighting, accessed January 24, 2024, [https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO\\_CH18.61DEGU\\_18.61.140LI](https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO_CH18.61DEGU_18.61.140LI).

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bleachers would seat 100 spectators, and the visitor bleachers would seat 60 spectators. The Project would result in 15 fewer visitor seats.

#### Walkway

A new decomposed granite path would be constructed between the front of the home dugout and the home bullpen. The path would align with the 20-foot-high fence, north of the dugout, and be level with the existing asphalt paving and concrete at the home dugout area. The proposed path would replace the existing lawn, which would be removed only within the area where the path would be constructed.

#### Scoreboard

The existing scoreboard would be removed and replaced with a new scoreboard. The steel supports of the existing scoreboard would remain, and the new scoreboard would be in the same location as the existing scoreboard.

#### Drinking Fountain

The existing drinking fountain on the western edge of the site, south of the home bleachers, would be removed. A new drinking fountain would be constructed in the same place using the existing plumbing line.

#### Utilities

Electrical conduits would be installed underground from the school's existing electrical system located behind the home bullpen, and extended along the exterior perimeters of the field to the proposed field lights.

### b. Operation

The Project would not change Eisenhower High School's existing programs, including those related to the varsity baseball field. However, with the execution of Senate Bill 328, passed in 2019, which requires all high schools to start classes no earlier than 8:30 a.m., the proposed lighting would allow practices and games to be extended beyond dusk. The Project would result in 15 fewer visitor seats. The modernized facility would not draw more events or spectators to events at the baseball field. The baseball field would be available for community use in accordance with the Civic Center Act as already occurs under existing conditions.<sup>5</sup> The Project would not increase the classroom count or enrollment capacity of Eisenhower High School. No additional school-sponsored programming is proposed that would increase athlete participation or spectator attendance beyond existing conditions.

### c. Construction

Construction would begin in April 2024 and last approximately nine months. The proposed improvements would be available for use in January 2025, after winter break.

Construction staging would occur either on the grass portion of the existing baseball field or the adjacent parking lot to the northwest. The staging area would be fenced with green screening and gated to limit trespassing and vandalism. If the staging area is in the parking lot, fiber rolls would be placed along the

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<sup>5</sup> Education Code Sections 38134, et seq.

interior perimeters of the fenced area. Existing storm drain inlets would be protected, and the driveways providing construction access would be stabilized and installed with a tire wash.

#### d. Best Management Practices and Regulatory Compliance

The Project will implement the following construction best management practices (BMPs) and adopted regulations:

- **Construction Noise.** The District will adhere to the City of Rialto’s construction work hours provided in Chapter 9.50, Noise Control, of the City’s Code of Ordinances:<sup>6</sup>

October 1–April 30

Monday–Friday                      7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Saturday                                8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

May 1–September 30

Monday–Friday                      6:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Saturday                                8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

- **Migratory Bird Treaty Act.** A biological habitat assessment was prepared for the Project (Attachment A). To avoid potential direct and/or indirect impacts to active bird nests and/or nesting birds, the District will comply with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) and conduct preconstruction clearance surveys, prior to ground disturbance, as follows:

**MBTA/CFGC Preconstruction Clearance Surveys** – If construction commences during the bird breeding season (February 15–September 15), a qualified biologist must be retained to conduct a nesting bird survey. The survey must be conducted three days prior to the start of any work occurring within 50 feet of any tree. If an active nest is found, no work may occur within 25 feet of the nest until nesting activity has ceased. Anytime construction activities have ceased for more than seven days, a new nesting bird survey must be prepared.

- **Clean Air Act.** Under federal and state law, the California Air Resources Board oversees the compliance of the federal Clean Air Act through State Implementation Plans. Local districts, including the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), enforce air pollution regulations. These regulations are primarily meant to ensure that the surrounding (or ambient) air meets federal and state air quality standards and include 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

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<sup>6</sup> City of Rialto, Code of Ordinances, Section 9.50.070(B) – Disturbances from Construction Activity, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9PUPESAMO\\_DIVVOFAGPUPE\\_CH9.50NOCO\\_9.50.070DICOAC](https://library.municode.com/ca/rialto/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9PUPESAMO_DIVVOFAGPUPE_CH9.50NOCO_9.50.070DICOAC).

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 (PM<sub>10</sub>) emissions from any transportation, handling, construction, or storage activity that has the potential to generate fugitive dust. Potential PM<sub>10</sub> 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 gases (ROG) emissions from the use of these coatings, primarily by placing limits on the ROG content of various coating categories.

## 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

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 minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored. (CEQA Guidelines § 15304[f])

The Project would require alterations to the varsity baseball field, including minor excavation and trenching to install the proposed new field lights and electrical conduits, replacement fencing, and new walkway. Disturbed surfaces would be backfilled and restored with the proposed facilities and, where

needed, reseeded for grass. No trees would be removed by the Project. The Project meets the requirements of Class 4.

#### Class 14, Minor Additions to School

Class 14, Minor Additions to School, 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 ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption. (CEQA Guidelines § 15314)

The Project would improve an existing outdoor instructional area (baseball field and supporting facilities) and would not add new classrooms or change the number of classrooms at Eisenhower High School. The Project would not introduce any new athletic programs or sports at the school. Therefore, the school enrollment capacity would remain the same as under existing conditions. The Project meets the requirements 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.

### 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 Rialto General Plan, the Project Site is not within any areas of unique sensitive environment of hazardous or critical concern, including 100-year floodplain, Alquist-Priolo Fault zone, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, liquefaction hazard zone, or noise contour, as mapped and/or designated by federal, state, or local agencies.<sup>7</sup> This exception does not apply to the Project.

### b. Cumulative Impact

Exemptions are inapplicable when there is a significant cumulative impact of “successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time (§ 15300.2[b]).”

The District is currently constructing two two-story classroom buildings in the southwest portion of the campus. Construction began in July 2023 and will conclude in May 2025. Project implementation would coincide with the construction of the classroom buildings. Each project would be required to implement construction BMPs and comply with state and local regulations to limit construction-related environmental effects. Moreover, the Project is relatively minor in scope and the improvements would occur within the perimeter of the varsity baseball field. Therefore, any potential overlap of the Project’s

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<sup>7</sup> City of Rialto, Rialto General Plan, Safety and Noise Element, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.yourrialto.com/DocumentCenter/View/4458/2023-Safety-Element?bidId=>

construction activities with the related projects at Eisenhower 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 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 environmental impact. The existing school has operated on the Project site since 1959. The Project would comply with all applicable California laws and regulations related to public school construction. Construction methods would be typical for public schools in the state. The Project will comply with the current California Building Code and the ADA and would be plan-checked by the Division of the State Architect. The Project would implement construction BMPs, as listed in Section 3.d, to reduce potential impacts to biological resources, water quality, air quality, and community noise. Additionally, the proposed field lights would be shielded and directed downward onto the field to minimize the potential for glare and/or sky glow. Spill light at the property lines of adjacent light-sensitive receptors would be below the City's threshold, as shown in *Figure 4, Lighting Photometric Calculations*. The Project does not propose new school-sponsored events or programs at the varsity baseball field, and the proposed replacement bleachers would result in the reduction of 15 bleacher seats. While the varsity baseball field would be used after dusk, the frequency of school-sponsored events and the related effects would not substantially differ from existing use and activity. Therefore, this exception 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 State Route 91, approximately 29.3 miles southwest of the Project site in the City of Anaheim.<sup>8</sup> Due to the distance, Project implementation would not have the ability to devalue the highway. This exception 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

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<sup>8</sup> Caltrans (California Department of Transportation), California State Scenic Highway System Map, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.

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 of the data resources that provide information regarding facilities or sites identified as meeting the Cortese List requirements, including from the Department of Toxic Substances Control and State Water Resources Control Board,<sup>9</sup> determined that the Project site is not listed on any of the databases compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5. Project implementation would not expose hazardous waste to the environment. Therefore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(e) does not apply to the Project.

#### f. Historical 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 historical 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 Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, or California Office of Historic Preservation’s Built Environment Resource Directory.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the City does not classify Eisenhower High School as a historic structure or site.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this exception 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.

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<sup>9</sup> Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese), accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search.asp>; California State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, accessed January 30, 2024,

<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=1321+norh+lilac+avenue+rialto+>

<sup>10</sup> National Park Services, National Register of Historic Places, accessed January 30, 2024,

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Resources, accessed January 30, 2024,

<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=19>; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Landmarks, accessed January 30, 2024, [https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21387](https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21387); Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory, accessed January 30, 2024,

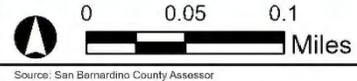
[https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=30338](https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338).

<sup>11</sup> City of Rialto, General Plan, accessed January 25, 2024,

<https://www.yourrialto.com/DocumentCenter/View/1494/2010-General-Plan>.



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Source: San Bernardino County Assessor

## Project Site and Regional Location

Figure 1



**Photo 1.** Looking southeast towards the Project Site, from the northwest corner of the Site.



**Photo 2.** Looking west towards the Project Site from across North Willow Avenue.



**Photo 3.** Looking west towards the existing baseball field from the eastern edge of the Site.



**Photo 4.** Looking east towards the Project Site from the southwest corner of the Site.

