

Live Oak High School Turf Replacement CEQA Exemption

Morgan Hill Unified School District

Prepared for:

Morgan Hill Unified School District

Contact: Robert Orlando, Construction Manager
15600 Concord Circle
Morgan Hill, CA 95037
(408) 710-1538
orlandor@mhusd.org

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Contact: Steve Noack
2040 Bancroft, Suite 400
Berkeley, California 94704
(510) 848-3815
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com

May 2024

Section	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	3
2.1 LOCATION.....	3
2.2 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS.....	3
2.3 LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS.....	3
2.4 PROPOSED PROJECT.....	6
3. EXEMPTIONS.....	8
3.1 SECTION 15301: EXISTING FACILITIES CONSISTENCY.....	8
3.2 SECTION 15314: MINOR ADDITION TO SCHOOLS CONSISTENCY.....	8
4. EXCEPTIONS.....	9
4.1 SECTION 15300.2(A): LOCATION.....	9
4.2 SECTION 15300.2(B): CUMULATIVE IMPACT.....	9
4.3 SECTION 15300.2(C): SIGNIFICANT EFFECT.....	10
4.4 SECTION 15300.2(D): SCENIC HIGHWAYS.....	10
4.5 SECTION 15300.2(E): HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES.....	10
4.6 SECTION 15300.2(F): HISTORICAL RESOURCES.....	11
5. CONCLUSION.....	12
6. LIST OF PREPARERS.....	13
MORGAN HILL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.....	13
PLACEWORKS.....	13

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Article 19 (Categorical Exemptions) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines includes, as required by CEQA Section 21084 (List of Exempt Classes of Projects; Projects Damaging Scenic Resources), a list of classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and, as a result, are exempt from review under CEQA. This document has been prepared to demonstrate CEQA compliance as it pertains to the upgrades to the main athletic field at Live Oak High School, including turf replacement, lighting improvements, and replacing the existing public address system, as well as Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility upgrades around the field, referred to as the proposed project, and provides information to decision makers regarding a finding that the proposed project is exempt under CEQA.

This document describes how the proposed project qualifies for a Class 1 CEQA Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities), which consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The proposed project would also qualify for a Class 14 CEQA Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15314 (Minor Addition to Schools), which 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.

In addition, this document demonstrates that none of the exceptions to categorical exemptions apply pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 (Exceptions), which are based on the following:

- (a) the project is not located within a sensitive environment;
- (b) there would be no cumulative impacts;
- (c) there would be no significant effects on the environment due to an unusual circumstance;
- (d) there would be no impacts to a scenic highway;
- (e) the project site is not located on a hazardous waste site; and
- (f) there would be no impacts to historical resources.

2. Project Description

Morgan Hill Unified School District (District) is proposing upgrades to the main athletic field, including turf replacement, lighting improvements, and replacing the existing public address (PA) system, as well as ADA accessibility upgrades around the field (proposed project). A detailed description of the improvements is provided in Section 2.4, *Proposed Project*.

2.1 LOCATION

As shown on Figure 2-1, *Regional and Vicinity Map*, the project site is on the existing Live Oak High School campus at 1505 East Main Avenue on the eastern side of the City of Morgan Hill. The athletic field is on the northwest corner of the project site, adjacent to Half Road. The City is approximately 5 miles south of the City of San Jose and approximately 10 miles north of the City of Gilroy in Santa Clara County. Regional access to the project site is provided by US Route 101 (Highway 101) via East Main Avenue.

Sensitive receptors near the project site include residences to the south and west fronting Half Road. These properties are set back away from the direction of the project site.

2.2 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

Live Oak High School is an active high school with an enrollment of approximately 1,200 ninth through twelfth graders.¹ The athletic field is currently a standard-sized football field surrounded by a track that currently supports football, soccer, track and field, lacrosse, and field hockey games. It includes a scoreboard, sound system, and field lighting with bleachers on the east and west sides of the field. To the south of the field, towards the main campus, is a snack shack, restrooms, and the parking lot.

2.3 LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The project site is a part of Live Oak High School, assigned Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 728-28-014, and has a zoning and land use designation of Public Facilities (PF). The project site is surrounded by parcels outside of the city boundary in unincorporated Santa Clara County that include residential and commercial properties to the north and west. The surrounding areas are designated as Agriculture Large Scale or Medium Scale in the Santa Clara County General Plan Land Use Map. Additionally, the area to the north and

¹ Live Oak High School, About, 2024, <https://liveoak.mhusd.org/about#:~:text=Since%20then%2C%20Live%20Oak%20has,to%20student%20achievement%20and%20excellence>, accessed March 27, 2024.

2. Project Description

south of the campus is designated as Potential Open Space/Heritage Agricultural Site in the Morgan Hill General Plan Land Use Map

2. Project Description



Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2024.

Figure 2-1
Regional and Vicinity Map

2. Project Description

2.4 PROPOSED PROJECT

The District proposes to replace the turf on the existing athletic field as well as provide accessibility upgrades surrounding the field. The hours of operation and number of games played on the field would not change because of the proposed project. The proposed project does not include changes to student enrollment or visitor capacity at the games.

2.4.1 Turf Replacement

The proposed project would include replacement of the existing synthetic turf at the field as part of a regular life-cycle replacement. The turf installation will require minimal grading and will use the existing drainage connections. Football, soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse striping, as well as school logos and end zone demarcations, would be added on top of the replaced turf. The end design would be very similar to existing field conditions.

2.4.2 Lighting and Sound Upgrades

As part of the proposed project, the District proposes adding lighting to the field entry area and around the snack shack. The new lighting would be consistent with existing lighting on campus. The existing field lights would also be replaced with LED lighting. Only the lights would be replaced, and the four existing 80-foot poles would be used. Year-round practice lights' illumination would average 11 lumens across the 4 light poles and 8 fixtures; during football season, illumination would average 42 lumens across the 4 light poles and 40 fixtures; during soccer season, illumination would average 42 lumens; and during track season, illumination would average 18 lumens.² Lighting to the north and east sides of the field and adjacent to other parts of the campus property would be multidirectional to illuminate the campus, whereas lights on the south and west sides of the field, adjacent to private property, would be directed only toward the field. There would be a maximum spillage of 0.06 horizontal lumens and 0.23 vertical lumens onto Half Road and adjacent properties.³ Additionally, the closest sensitive receptor, the residence to the southwest of the project site, is approximately 165 feet away from the edge of the athletic field to the residence and approximately 58 feet from the edge of the athletic field to the edge of the adjacent property line.

When future funding is available, the existing public address system would be replaced with a new system that would be used for announcements during games. The schedule under which the upgraded sound system would operate would be the same as under current conditions. There would be no changes to level or amount of sound with the proposed project.

2.4.3 Accessibility Upgrades

As part of the proposed project, ADA upgrades would be made to the bleachers, restrooms, snack shack, and paths-of-travel. These would include adding ramp handrails to the existing bleachers on each side of the field as well as creating an accessible seating area in the middle of each set of bleachers. The pathways from the parking lot to the field, concession stand, and restroom area would be paved to increase accessibility. Additionally, the water fountain at the concession stand would also be upgraded for ADA accessibility.

² Musco Lighting, 2024, Live Oak High School Morgan Hill, CA, *Project Summary*.

³ Musco Lighting, 2024, Live Oak High School Morgan Hill, CA, *Project Summary, Illumination Summary, and Equipment Layout*.

2. Project Description

2.4.4 Restroom Upgrades

The District proposes to replace the restroom near the concession stand to provide upgraded accessibility and regular life-cycle replacement. The exterior of the existing restroom building and most fixtures would remain. For increased accessibility and to comply with ADA requirements, two toilets, one in each restroom, would be moved and reconnected to existing utilities.

2.4.5 Construction Schedule

The proposed project would begin in fall 2024 or summer 2025, and the turf replacement and light and sound upgrades would be completed prior to classes resuming in August 2025. The accessibility and restroom upgrades would also be completed on this timeline. Should the restroom upgrades not be completed by the first games at the end of August, temporary restrooms would be added to the project site until the proposed project is complete. Grading would be minimal and there is no tree removal or landscaping included as part of the proposed project.

2.4.6 Required Permits and Approvals

Following approval of the CEQA Categorical Exemption by the Morgan Hill Unified School District Board of Education, approval of the construction plans would be submitted for review and approval by the State of California Division of the State Architect (DSA).

3. Exemptions

As stated in the Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this document, Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines includes a list of classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and, as a result, are exempt from review under CEQA. This document has been prepared to serve as the basis for compliance with CEQA as it pertains to the proposed project, and to demonstrate that the project qualifies for a Class 1 and Class 14 CEQA Exemption, consistent with the provisions of CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15314, and 15300.2. Specifically, the information provided shows that:

- The proposed project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1: Existing Facilities) and, as a result, would not have a significant effect on the environment;
- The proposed project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 (Class 14: Minor Addition to Schools) and, as a result, would not have a significant effect on the environment;
- No exceptions to the Existing Facilities or Minor Addition to Schools exemptions, as identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, apply to the proposed project.

3.1 SECTION 15301: EXISTING FACILITIES CONSISTENCY

The proposed project is consistent with a Class 1, Existing Facilities CEQA Exemption, as it would replace the turf on the existing field and add ADA accessibility upgrades to existing facilities around the field. There would be no expansion of use since the student capacity at Live Oak High School would not increase due to the proposed project nor would the amount of home games or spectator capacity.

3.2 SECTION 15314: MINOR ADDITION TO SCHOOLS CONSISTENCY

The proposed project is consistent with a Class 14, Minor Addition to Schools CEQA Exemption. Though path-of-travel additions would be included as part of the proposed project, these would be done within existing school grounds. These changes would have no effect on the student capacity at Live Oak High School and would be made to improve ADA accessibility. The proposed project does not include the addition of classrooms.

4. Exceptions

In addition to analyzing the applicability of CEQA Guidelines, Section 15332 (Class 32), this document assesses whether any of the exceptions to categorical exemptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 (Exceptions) apply to the proposed project. The following analysis compares the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 (Exceptions) to the project, and concludes, based on substantial evidence, that none of the exceptions are applicable to the project, and that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 and 15332.

4.1 SECTION 15300.2(A): LOCATION

Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply to all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The proposed project does not qualify for an exemption under Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, or 11. The project site is on an existing school campus in an urban area surrounded by agricultural land and is not in a sensitive environment. In addition, the proposed project would not result in any impacts on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. Therefore, the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) does not apply to the proposed project.

4.2 SECTION 15300.2(B): CUMULATIVE IMPACT

All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

The proposed project would replace the turf field and upgrade facilities around the field on an existing school campus. There would be no changes in student enrollment or visitors. Thus, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts pertaining to traffic, noise, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, water quality, or other cumulative impact areas. Any construction effects would be temporary, confined to the project vicinity, and reduced to the extent feasible by implementing applicable regulatory requirements. Therefore, the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(b) does not apply to the proposed project.

4. Exceptions

4.3 SECTION 15300.2(C): SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

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.

There are no known unusual circumstances that are applicable to the proposed project, and which may result in a significant effect on the environment. The proposed project consists of the replacement of existing turf on an athletic field and associated ADA accessibility upgrades around the field on an existing school campus. The proposed project would not result in a change in the existing use, introduce a new activity to the area, or increase usership that could result in a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15003.2(c) does not apply to the proposed project.

4.4 SECTION 15300.2(D): SCENIC HIGHWAYS

A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

The proposed project would not affect a scenic resource in a designated State Scenic Highway. The nearest State Scenic Highway, State Route (SR) 152 in Merced County, is over 20 miles south of the project site. Therefore, no scenic resources within view of a State Scenic Highway would be altered as part of the project. The nearest eligible State Scenic Highway, SR 152 in Santa Cruz County, is approximately 11 miles southwest of the project site. The project site is not visible from SR 152 in either direction. Additionally, the project site and surrounding area is already developed, and therefore the proposed project would not alter scenic resources. Therefore, no scenic resources within view of a State Scenic Highway would be altered as part of the project and the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15003.2(d) does not apply to the proposed project.

4.5 SECTION 15300.2(E): HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to compile, maintain, and update specified lists of hazardous material release sites. CEQA⁴ requires the lead agency to consult the lists compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 to determine whether a project and any alternatives are identified. The required lists of hazardous material release sites

⁴ California Public Resources Code, Section 21092.6.

4. Exceptions

are contained on internet websites hosted by the boards or departments referenced in the statute, including California Department of Toxic Substance Control's (DTSC's) online EnviroStor database and the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB's) online GeoTracker database. These two databases include hazardous material release sites, along with other categories of sites or facilities specific to each agency's jurisdiction. A search of these online databases found the project site, Live Oak High School, is not on any list pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code or any other list compiled for purposes related to identifying the prior release of hazardous materials.^{5,6} Therefore, the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(e) does not apply to the proposed project.

4.6 SECTION 15300.2(F): HISTORICAL RESOURCES

A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

No historic resources exist in the vicinity of the project site.⁷ There is also no known sensitivity for archaeological or paleontological resources on the site. The site may contain previously unknown subsurface archaeological and paleontological deposits; however, the area has been previously disturbed. Additionally, the proposed project would comply with State and federal historic preservation laws, regulations, and codes, including laws related to archaeological resources. In particular, the proposed project would be required to comply with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e), which specifies procedures to be used in the event of a discovery of Native American human remains on non-federal land. With mandatory compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources, impacts to unknown historic, cultural, or tribal cultural resources would remain *less than significant*. Therefore, the exception under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f) does not apply to the proposed project.

⁵ California Department of Toxic Substances Control. EnviroStor online database, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/>, accessed April 2, 2024.

⁶ California State Water Resources Control Board. GeoTracker online database, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?myaddress=California&from=header&cqid=4401471793>, accessed April 2, 2024.

⁷ City of Morgan Hill, October 2006, *Historic Context Statement for the City of Morgan Hill*, San Francisco, CA: Prepared by CIRCA, accessed April 2, 2024. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.morganhill.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2607/Historic-Context-Statement?bidId=>

5. Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 3, *Exemptions*, of this document, the proposed project meets the criteria for categorical exemptions using Class 1, Existing Facilities, and Class 14, Minor Addition to Schools, in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15314, respectively. Additionally, as explained in Chapter 4, *Exceptions*, none of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply, and the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment. Thus, this analysis finds that an exemption may be used, and a Notice of Exemption prepared for the proposed project.

6. List of Preparers

MORGAN HILL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jackie Schaefer, Bond Program Director

Robert Orlando, Construction Manager

PLACEWORKS

Steve Noack, Principal

Rachel Goren, Project Manager

Vivian Kha, GIS

6. List of Preparers

This page intentionally left blank.