

# SAN MATEO HIGH SCHOOL KILN CANOPY PROJECT

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION DISCUSSION

### **Project Description**

#### *Existing Facilities*

San Mateo High School, located at 506 North Delaware Street in San Mateo is owned and operated by the San Mateo Union High School District. The school is in a mixed multiple- and single-family residential neighborhood. The project would be located adjacent to the Music/Shop Building, which is near the school's East Poplar Ave. parking lot.

#### *Proposed Project*

The District proposes to install a new outdoor electric pottery kiln adjacent to the Music/Shop Building at the school. The kiln would be outdoors, but would be covered by an approximately 8' x 16' steel canopy and would be further enclosed by a 7-foot-high chain-link fence and gates. The sloping canopy would be supported on 4 steel columns and would range from about 8.5 to 10.5 feet in height. The project also would include venting, fencing, electrical equipment, and signage associated with the kiln. The project would be constructed over an 8 week period with anticipation of November to December, 2024. No new or expanded uses of the school facilities are proposed as part of this project.

### **Categorical Exemption Analysis**

The work may qualify for exemption under CEQA Categorical Exemptions, Class 1, which applies to changes to existing facilities, and/or the CEQA General Rule Exemption (assuming no exceptions to the exemptions apply).

#### *Class 1 Exemption*

The CEQA Class 1 Exemption (Class 1-Existing Facilities [CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301]) applies to the "maintenance...or minor alteration of existing mechanical equipment" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(a) and 15301(d)). The proposed project would consist of the replacement of mechanical equipment to improve the comfort and safety of the building. Therefore, this exemption would apply.

#### *Analysis of Possible Exceptions to Class 1 Exemption*

The exemption is subject to the following exceptions:

- **Cumulative Impact.** This exception would apply if the project were to contribute to significant impacts to a resource in combination with other proposed new development

nearby. Other substantive projects are proposed for the school campus that may overlap parts of the project construction period are a parking lot solar project and a public EV charging station project. The proposed project would not have the potential for any substantial overlapping environmental impacts with those projects of because of its very small scale. In addition, the project area is a fully-developed residential and commercial neighborhood, and no substantial offsite cumulative development is likely to occur. Therefore, no potentially significant cumulative impacts would occur.

- **Scenic Highways.** This exception would apply if the project were to result in damage to scenic resources within a State-designated Scenic Highway corridor. The project would be interior to the school campus and would not be visible from off-campus areas. In addition, there are no State Scenic Highways in the project area. Therefore this exception would not apply.
- **Hazardous Waste Sites.** This exception would apply if the project were to be located on a hazardous waste site listed pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5. A search of the State Envirostor database conducted on July 1, 2024, found that a schools investigation has been conducted on the site, and no listed hazardous wastes sites were identified on or near the school site. In addition, no past uses that caused contamination, or actual potential contamination, are known for the school ([https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?global\\_id=21880002](https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?global_id=21880002))
- **Historical Resources.** This exception would apply if the project were to potentially affect a historical resource in a significantly adverse manner. The proposed project includes a minimal alteration to existing indoor and outdoor facilities on the school's campus and therefore would not have the potential to adversely affect any historical resources.
- **Significant Effect.** The exception would apply if the project would have the potential for a significant effect to the environment due to unusual circumstances. Unusual circumstances may include historic structures, hazardous materials contamination, protected species or habitats, and other similar conditions. There are no unusual circumstances on the existing developed site and there is no potential for significant effect, therefore this exception would not apply.

### *General Rule Exemption*

Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to environmental review. In such cases, the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)). CEQA Categorical Exemption exceptions do not apply to this exemption. As described above, the proposed project does not have any potential to result in a significant impact to the physical environment. Therefore, this exemption would apply.

## **Conclusions**

As discussed above, the project is within the parameters of the Class 1 Exemption and none of the exceptions to that exemption would apply. In addition, as described above, there is no potential for any significant impacts, so the CEQA General Rule Exemption also would apply to the proposed project.