

JUN 09 2025

Hillsborough City School District  
**Notice of Exemption**

MARK CHURCH, County Clerk  
By Henry Salgado  
Deputy Clerk

**Submitted to:**

San Mateo County Clerk-Recorder's Office  
555 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Office of Planning and Research  
*Submitted electronically via CEQASubmit*

**From:** Hillsborough City School District

300 El Cerrito Ave, Hillsborough, CA 94010

**PROJECT TITLE:** West Hillsborough Elementary School MPR

**Project Address:**

West Hillsborough Elementary School  
376 Barbara Way  
Hillsborough CA 94010

**Assessor's Parcel Numbers:**

APN 030-141-140  
**County of:**  
San Mateo

**Project Description:** The project will construct a new 7,800 square foot Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) with an outdoor dining patio and canopy. The project will also renovate the existing staff lounge and restrooms adjacent to the current MPR. Renovation of the existing staff restroom includes new lighting and replacement of restroom fixtures; renovation of the existing outdoor staff lounge includes new tables and seating. Site improvements include an expansion of the parking lot, landscaping (benches, group chairs, tables, trees, boulders, new plantings, concrete paving, and lights), and stormwater improvements.

The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or student capacity. The new MPR will include functional spaces for various activities, supporting both educational and community gatherings, and will primarily be used for play, assemblies, dining, and storage.

Adjacent parcels support single-family residential land uses.

The project includes the following elements:

- **Demolition and grading**
  - **Demolition:** Three buildings (two portable buildings and a shed) with a total of 2,492 square feet will be demolished. Approximately 29,430 square feet of asphalt and approximately 265 square feet of concrete will be removed. Clearing and grubbing will occur in an existing landscape area of approximately 2,330 square feet. Two trees (one with a 24-inch diameter and one with a 34-inch diameter), bark, and playground equipment will be removed from an approximately 860-square-foot area. Fences, utility infrastructure, storm drains, one backstop and one basketball hoop will also be removed. The existing playground adjacent to the existing MRP will be retained.
  - **Erosion and Dust Control:** Erosion control measures to be implemented include a construction entrance with a rumble plate, fiber rolls, a chain-link fence (for construction only), and inlet protection. Dust control measures to be implemented include watering the site, covering and watering material stockpiles, covering truck beds that are removing dirt and debris from the site, and removing dirt and debris associated with demolition and site preparation activities from public streets.
  - **Grading:** Grading will adjust impacted utilities to match the proposed finish floor. Landscape shoulders will slope away from hardscape and towards the nearest area drain with a minimum 3% slope for proper drainage.

- **New MPR Building:**
  - The project will construct a new 7,800 square foot MPR with an 1,840-square-foot outdoor dining patio and canopy located between the new and existing MPRs.
  - Functional spaces will include storage space, a warming kitchen, stage, and all-gender restrooms for both students and staff.
- **Existing Staff Lounge and Restroom Renovation:**
  - The project will renovate the existing staff lounge and restrooms, located in the existing MPR building.
  - The renovation will include new lighting, upgrades to the existing staff lounge restrooms, and upgrades to the existing approximately 210 square foot outdoor adjacent staff lounge by providing new tables and a new shade structure.
- **Site Improvements:**
  - Parking: The existing parking along the site's eastern boundary will be reconfigured. There are currently 16 standard parking spaces along the fence line, 2 Americans with Disability Act (ADA) parking spaces adjacent to the existing MPR, and 6 standard parking spaces on the north and south sides of the playground adjacent to the existing MPR. The parking lot reconfiguration will result in a total of 11 parking spaces along the fence line, with three landscaped areas that will be planted with shade trees spaced between these spaces. Four of the parking spaces will be equipped with electric vehicle charging stations. The parking lot will also provide two ADA parking spaces adjacent to the existing MPR.
  - Landscaping: Benches, chairs, tables, trees, boulders, new plantings, concrete paving, and lights will be installed along the new MPR building and staff lounges.
  - Stormwater Improvements: Stormwater improvements meeting the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program requirements will be installed. These include four flow-through planters with a total area of approximately 714 square feet, an approximately 100-square-foot bioretention basin, and approximately 840 square feet of self-retaining landscape areas.
- **Regulatory Compliance Actions:** the project includes the following actions to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal environmental regulations.
  - Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Survey – There are existing trees and shrubs vegetation within and surrounding the project site that could support nesting birds. Nesting birds are present throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). HCSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by removing vegetation outside of the bird nesting season (February 1 to September 30) when feasible and/or by retaining a qualified biologist to conduct a preconstruction nesting survey when construction would begin during the nesting season. If this occurs, HCSD and its contractors will ensure that the survey occurs no sooner than 7 days prior to construction and upon the direction of the qualified biologist, construction activities proximate to any active nests are postponed until young have fledged.
  - Pre-Construction Roosting Bat Survey – There are existing trees and buildings in and within 50 feet of the project site that could support maternity roosting or overwintering bats. Bats are present throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). HCSD and its contractors will ensure that

construction activities comply with California Fish and Game Code Section 4150 by scheduling work outside the bat roosting period (generally from March through September) when feasible and/or by retaining a qualified biologist to conduct a preconstruction bat roosting survey of trees and buildings when site activity would begin during the roosting season. If this occurs, HCSD and its contractors will ensure that the survey occurs no more than 90 days and no less than 30 days prior to the commencement of activities within the project site. If trees or buildings with potential roosting habitat and/or bat sign are identified, the biologist will also conduct an evening visual emergence survey of the roosts from 0.5 hours before to 1-2 hours after sunset for a minimum of two nights, using full-spectrum acoustic detectors to assist in species identification. If evening surveys confirm the presence of an active bat maternity roost, that roost will remain undisturbed with a buffer as determined by the biologist until August 31 or until the biologist has determined that the roost is no longer active.

- Unanticipated Archaeological Resources - Based on geomorphological evidence, the area has a low potential to contain unanticipated archaeological resources. However, it is possible, albeit unlikely, that the remains of previously unknown intact archaeological deposits are present at subsurface levels (Dudek 2025c). This potential occurs throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). HCSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with state law in the event that archaeological resources (sites, features, or artifacts) are exposed during construction activities by requiring that all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or not additional study is warranted and that any recommendations provided by the archaeologist are implemented prior to continuation of project activities within 100 feet of the resource(s).
- Unanticipated Human Remains – There are no known human remains within or adjacent to the project site however it is possible that subsurface human remains could be encountered during ground disturbing activities (Dudek 2025c). This potential occurs throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). HCSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 if human remains are exposed during construction activities by immediately notifying the County Coroner of the discovery, halting all excavation and/or disturbance at the location of the human remains and any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains, and following the procedures and guidance expressed in the Health and Safety Code and/or provided by the County Coroner and Native American Heritage Commission.

This project has been **approved by** and **will be carried out by** the Hillsborough City School District.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** *Ana de Arce, Superintendent*

**Signature:**



**Date:**

*6/6/25*

## EXEMPT STATUS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial Project (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Categorically Exempt <b>Class:</b> Section 15301 and 15314
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Exemption (Code/Section _____)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (15061(b)(3))

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This project consists of the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings on existing HCSD property within the Town of Hillsborough. The project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities (Class 1) and Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14).

The project meets the conditions for these exemptions as explained below.

### Existing Facilities (Class 1).

Class 1 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 project will replace two portable buildings and a shed with a new MPR of less approximately 7,800 square foot MPR and an 1,840-square-foot outdoor dining patio and will renovate the existing staff lounge and restrooms adjacent to the current MPR. The new MPR will include functional spaces for various activities, supporting both educational and community gatherings, and will primarily be used for play, assemblies, indoor dining, and storage. The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or student capacity and thus will not expand the existing use of the campus.

### Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14).

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% or ten classrooms, whichever is less.

The project will construct a new MPR and renovate the existing staff lounge and restrooms adjacent to the current MPR at the elementary school to support typical elementary school activities such as play, assemblies, indoor dining, and storage. The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or student capacity. No new classrooms are included in the project.

**Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption:** The project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption as demonstrated in the following analysis.

- 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 in 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.

This exception does not apply to the project because it does not apply to a Class 1 or Class 14 Exemption. However, it is noted that the Biological Resources Assessment Report demonstrates that the project site is not in a biologically sensitive environment and no critical biological resources have been mapped at or adjacent to the site (Dudek 2025a).

Further, the site is not within an Alquist-Priolo earthquake zone and only the far northern corner of the parcel is mapped within a landslide zone (DOC 2025). All of the project activities will occur in the southeastern portion of the parcel, well outside of the landslide zone.

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- 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.

HCS D does not anticipate any future projects of the same type at this project site. The properties surrounding this parcel are all designated by the Town of Hillsborough for residential land uses and no new development or redevelopment projects are proposed or planned adjacent to the project site (Town of Hillsborough 2025).

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- 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.

The project site and surrounding neighborhood are located within an urbanized area that is relatively flat and has been developed since the 1950s (Dudek 2025b). The project site is not known to contain sensitive biological or cultural resources (Dudek 2025a, 2025c). The site could support nesting birds, roosting or overwintering bats, below-ground archaeological resources, and/or human remains. However, these are common constraints for many projects throughout the State of California and do not represent unusual circumstances. By implementing the Regulatory Compliance Actions included in the project description, HCS D and its contractors will ensure that construction activities:

- comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to ensure there is no disturbance to nesting birds;
- comply with California Fish and Game Code to ensure there is no disturbance to roosting or overwintering bats;
- comply with state law to ensure appropriate treatment of archaeological resources should any be encountered onsite; and
- comply with California Health and Safety Code to ensure appropriate treatment of human remains should any be encountered onsite.

Thus, there are no unusual circumstances or conditions that indicate the project could result in a significant environmental effect at the project site or in the surrounding area.

Furthermore, there is nothing unusual about the design of the proposed MPR and existing staff lounge and restrooms relative to projects that meet the criteria for the Class 1 or Class

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14 Categorical Exemptions that could result in a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project because there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

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- 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.

The project site is approximately 1,500 feet east of Interstate 280 (I-280), where the northbound portion of the highway is an eligible state scenic highway, and the southbound portion is officially designated as a scenic highway (Caltrans 2025). Both portions provide intermittent views of hillsides and the Lower Crystal Springs Reservoir to the west. Views of developed areas within the Town of Hillsborough are generally constrained by topography and vegetation. There are no trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or other scenic elements at the project site that are visible from I-280, thus the project will have no effect on views of scenic resources from I-280.

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- e. Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

According to the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Geotracker database and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Envirostor database, there are no active hazardous materials sites within or adjacent to the project site. Thus, the project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (SWRCB 2025, DTSC 2025) and this exception does not apply to the project.

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- f. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

CEQA requires evaluation of structures and other human-built features for potential historic significance when such features are at least 50 years old. A Built Environment Inventory and Evaluation Report was prepared because the project includes the demolition of existing buildings that are over 45 years old. This report found that the existing buildings at the project site do not meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Properties or California Register of Historic Resources, and thus the buildings are not historic resources (Dudek 2025b). Thus, the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource and this exception does not apply to the project.

#### **REFERENCES CITED**

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2025. California State Scenic Highways System Map. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed April 10, 2025.

California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2025. Envirostor.

<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov>. Accessed April 10, 2025.

California Department of Conservation (DOC). 2025. Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation.

<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/eqzapp/>. Accessed April 10, 2025.

Dudek 2025a. Biological Resources Assessment Report for the West Hillsborough Elementary School

MPR Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.

Dudek 2025b. Built Environment Inventory and Evaluation Report for the West Hillsborough Elementary

School MPR Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.

Dudek 2025c. Archaeological Resources Letter Report for the West Hillsborough Elementary School MPR

Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2025. GeoTracker.

<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>. Accessed April 2025.

Town of Hillsborough. 2025. Current Projects. <https://www.hillsborough.net/258/Current-Projects>.

Accessed April 2025.