

Hillsborough City School District

Notice of Exemption

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

PROJECT TITLE: *Crocker Middle School New Administration and Multi-Purpose Room Buildings*

Project Address:

Crocker Middle School
2600 Ralston Avenue
Hillsborough, CA 94010

Assessor's Parcel Numbers:

APN 028-180-030

County of:

San Mateo

Project Description: This project at Crocker Middle School will demolish the existing Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), construct a new 9,056-square-foot MPR and a new 2,097-square-foot administration building, and reconfigure the parking area along Ralston Avenue to provide a drop-off/pick-up lane.

The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or campus occupant 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, indoor dining, and storage. The new administration building will include a lobby and reception area; offices for the school nurse, assistant principal, and principal; a conference room; a staff workroom; storage areas; a machine room; a custodial closet; and restrooms. The existing administrative offices, which are located in a portion of the classroom building, will be converted to a staff dining room.

Adjacent parcels support single-family residences, the Hillsborough recreation center, and portions of the Burlingame Country Club golf course.

The project includes the following elements:

- **Demolition and grading:**
 - **Site preparation:** Vegetation within the project limits will be removed and disposed of offsite, including removal of 18 trees with a maximum diameter of 7 inches along the western side of the project area. Tree protection fencing will be installed along the northern boundary of the project area and at the southern boundary along the western side of the area to prevent inadvertent damage to trees outside of the project limits. Asphalt, concrete, curbs, fences, and equipment throughout the project area will also be removed and disposed of offsite. Non-contaminated base material may be reused.
 - **Utility removal:** Pipes and structures will be removed or abandoned; remaining utilities will be cut and capped.
 - **Grading:** The project area will be graded for proper drainage and leveling; reusable material may be stockpiled.
 - **Demolition:** One building with a total of 9,685 square feet will be demolished. Approximately 36,033 square feet of asphalt and approximately 14,462 square feet of

concrete will be removed. Clearing and grubbing will occur in existing landscape areas over approximately 35,888 square feet.

- Erosion and Dust Control: Erosion control measures to be implemented include a construction entrance with a rumble plate, silt fencing and fiber rolls, and inlet and catch basin protection. Dust control measures to be implemented are expected to 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.
- **New MPR Building:**
 - The 9,056-square-foot MPR will serve the school's educational and community needs. The building location be shifted slightly to the south and east relative to the existing MRP building, which will provide more separation between the MRP and the classroom building to the north. The area between the MPR and classroom building will contain a mixture of paved and landscaped areas along with seating.
 - Functional spaces will include a lobby, the student store, an instructional space, stage, kitchen and servery, custodial closets, storage, and restrooms.
- **New Administration Building:**
 - The 2,097-square-foot administration building will support the operational and administrative needs of the school. The building will be located between the new MPR and the westernmost building on the campus, which currently houses administrative offices as well as classrooms and the school's library. The area between the classroom/library building and the new administration building will contain a mixture of paved and landscaped areas along with seating.
 - The administration building will include a lobby and reception area; offices for the school nurse, assistant principal, and principal; a conference room; a staff workroom; storage areas; a machine room; a custodial closet; and restrooms.
- **Site Improvements:**
 - Parking and Circulation: The existing parking area along Ralston Avenue will be reconfigured to provide a drop-off/pick-up lane that is separated from the parking lot. The parking area currently contains 21 standard parking spaces and 2 ADA spaces. In addition, the area immediately adjacent to Ralston Avenue that is surfaced with gravel and dirt is used for additional parking and can accommodate approximately 10 vehicles. This area is accessed directly from Ralston Avenue. The reconfigured parking lot will provide 25 standard parking spaces, two of which will have electric vehicle charging stations, and 2 ADA spaces. Two driveways onto Ralston Avenue will provide access to the drop-off/pick-up lane, and two driveways internal to the site will provide access from the drop-off/pick-up lane to the parking lot. This will improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles using Ralston Avenue by eliminating the direct access to the informal parking area. An additional 3 parking spaces will be provided east of the MPR in an area that is currently used for parking.
 - Landscaping: Approximately 13 elm trees and will be planted along the parking lot frontage on Ralston Avenue to provide shading. A mixture of smaller trees, shrubs, and groundcover will be planted throughout the project area.
 - Stormwater Improvements: Stormwater improvements meeting the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program requirements will be installed, consistent with the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that will be developed for the project.

- 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

☐	Ministerial Project (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268)
☒	Categorically Exempt Class: Section 15302 and 15314
☐	Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐	Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
☐	Statutory Exemption (Code/Section _____)
☐	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 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2) and Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14).

The project meets the conditions for this exemption as explained below.

Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2).

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The project will replace the existing MPR with a new one of a similar size that will be used for the same purpose and functions as the existing MPR, which includes educational and community gatherings, play, assemblies, indoor dining, and storage. The project will also provide a new building to house administrative functions, which will be relocated from existing space on the campus. The project will not increase or decrease student enrollment or student capacity, and the new buildings will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the existing facilities.

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 administration building at an existing middle school. 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.

- 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 2 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 northeastern corner of the parcel is mapped within a liquefaction zone, which continues along the easterly side of Ralston Avenue. All of the project activities will occur in the southern and central portions of the parcel, outside of the liquefaction zone (DOC 2025).

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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.

HCSD does not anticipate any future projects of the same type at this project site. The properties adjacent to the project site 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). 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. 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 an unusual circumstance. By implementing the Regulatory Compliance Actions included in the project description, HCSD 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 new MPR structure and administration building relative to projects that meet the criteria for the Class 2 or Class 14 Categorical Exemptions that could result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. 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 1.15 miles from Interstate 280 (I-280) and State Route (SR) 35. The northbound portion of I-280 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. The middle school buildings at the project site are not visible from the highway. 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 Geotracker database and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control 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

- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2025. California State Scenic Highways System Map. Accessed April 10, 2025.
<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.
- DTSC (California Department of Toxic Substances Control). 2025. Envirostor. Accessed April 10, 2025.
<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov>.
- DOC (California Department of Conservation). 2025. Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation. Accessed April 10, 2025.
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/eqzapp/>.
- Dudek 2025a. Biological Resources Assessment Report for the Crocker Middle School MPR and Administration Building Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.
- Dudek 2025b. Built Environment Inventory and Evaluation Report for the Crocker Middle School MPR and Administration Building Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.
- Dudek 2025c. Archaeological Resources Letter Report for the Crocker Middle School MPR and Administration Building Project, Hillsborough, California. April 2025.
- SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2025. GeoTracker. Accessed April 10, 2025.
<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.
- Town of Hillsborough. 2025. Current Projects. Accessed April 10, 2025.
<https://www.hillsborough.net/258/Current-Projects>.

