

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Orange

601 N. Ross Street

Santa Ana, CA 92701

From: (Public Agency): Anaheim Union High School District
501 N. Crescent Way
Anaheim, CA 92801

(Address)

Project Title: Loara High School Track & Field Project

Project Apploant: Anaheim Union High School District

Project Location - Specific:

Loara High School - 1765 West Cerritos Ave, Anaheim, CA 92804

Project Location - City: Anaheim

Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Anaheim Union High School District (District) proposes recreational and athletic improvements, including enhancing the existing track and field consisting of a new turf and striping and installing new field lighting and bleachers. The upgraded track and field area will offer enhanced exterior learning opportunities and increased safety for sports and student assemblies.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Anaheim Union High School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Anaheim Union High School District

Exempt Status: (check one):

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: \$15301, \$15302, \$15311[a], \$15314
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

None of the exceptions specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.
See Attachment A.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Patricia Neely

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 714 999 3505

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Nancy C. Nien, Ph. D.

Date: 6/12/2026

Title: Assist. Superintendent, Business

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21162, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

FILED

JUN 15 2026

Resolution No. 2025/26-F-11

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY: AK

DEPUTY

**Loara High School Track & Field Project
Notice of Exemption (NOE)**

The Anaheim Union High School District (District), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), proposes to implement recreational and athletic improvements at Loara High School (HS) by enhancing the existing track and field consisting of a new turf and striping, and installing new field lighting and bleachers (Proposed Project). The upgraded track and field area will offer enhanced exterior learning opportunities and increased safety for sports and student assemblies.

Project Location

Loara High School is located at 1765 West Cerritos Ave, Anaheim, CA 92804. The school is located on a 39.3-acre property comprising 26 permanent buildings, a swimming pool, hardcourts, playfields, tennis courts, and a parking lot.

Description of Project

The Proposed Project will consist of the following upgrades:

- Modular restrooms
- Provide utility infrastructure for future sound system
- Extend the existing campus PA system to the track and field
- Replace the existing natural turf football/soccer field with a new synthetic turf field
- Replace the existing decomposed granite (DG) track with a new all-weather synthetic track, with a new stormwater management system that will capture and infiltrate stormwater. The system is designed to infiltrate the runoff from new and replaced impervious area.
- Add field lighting and score board
- Install new path of travel improvements, with concrete paving and fencing
- New bleachers with approximately 900 seats

The existing turf football/soccer field is currently located along the northwest edge of the Project site, with the long side parallel to residential properties along the northern property line. Under the Proposed Project, the track and field will be relocated to the eastern portion of the site, rotated 90 degrees, and placed parallel to South Euclid St.

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt:

The proposed activity is a project subject to CEQA. However, it is exempt from further environmental analysis under Class 1, *Existing Facilities* (CEQA Guidelines §15301), Class 2, *Replacement or Reconstruction* (CEQA Guidelines §15302), Class 11 *Accessory Structures* (CEQA Guidelines §15311) and Class 14 *Minor Additions to Schools* (CEQA Guidelines §15314).

- Class 1 categorical exemption 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.
- Class 2 consists of the 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 of the structure replaced.

- Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.
- 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 Proposed Project will result in the improvement of the existing practice field area at the existing high school. The improvements will not involve an increase in student capacity, and will include repairs, maintenance, reconstruction, and minor additions to an existing school campus. The Proposed Project will not result in significant environmental impacts and is exempt from further review under the conditions in Article 19.

Therefore, the application of Class 1, Class 2, Class 11, and Class 14 categorical exemptions is appropriate for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2. Consequently, as documented below, the Proposed Project is exempt from further CEQA review.

- (a) **Location.** The improvements will occur entirely within the existing campus, which is located within an urbanized community. The existing conditions on and around the high school are disturbed, paved ground and are not considered environmentally sensitive. Ground disturbance would occur during construction but will be limited to the existing school property on previously disturbed surfaces. The Proposed Project will not impact environmentally sensitive areas or an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.
- (b) **Cumulative Impact.** Once the Proposed Project has been approved by the District's Board of Education, project construction activities would occur over a 12-month period, approximately between the 4th Quarter of 2026 and the 4th Quarter of 2027. The majority of impacts associated with the Proposed Project will be temporary (the construction timeframe) and are limited to the immediate vicinity of Loara HS. In addition, the area around the Project site is completely built-out, and no known projects have been identified in the area that would cause potential impacts. As such, no other cumulatively considerable projects have been identified that could incrementally contribute to the impacts associated with the Proposed Project. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.
- (c) **Significant Effect.** The activities associated with the upgrading of the existing track and field are not considered an unusual circumstance as campus updates are not unusual for school sites. All upgrades associated with the Proposed Project would be installed on or within existing facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not appear visually incompatible with existing equipment and accessories on the Project site. Normal operations will be similar and consistent with current uses within the Project boundary.

The Proposed Project is located within a disturbed, urbanized environment in Anaheim. The campus vegetation is limited to ornamental landscaping, and it is anticipated that no candidate, sensitive, or special status species are anticipated to exist on or around the school. The majority of work associated with the Proposed Project would occur on the existing track and field area and would result in minor ground disturbing activities. Implementation of the Project would include the removal of two existing non-native palm trees within the school campus; however, no native vegetation or designated scenic public trees would be removed, and no scenic vistas in the surrounding area would be affected.

Therefore, no reasonable possibility exists that the Proposed Project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception does not apply to this Project. Please refer to the Initial Study Checklist (IS Checklist) for further details on potential impacts.

- (d) **Scenic Highways.** There are no eligible or designated state scenic highways or City-designated scenic expressways within the Project viewshed. The nearest designated scenic highway segment is located 7 miles east of the Project site (City 2004). The Project site is not within the viewshed of any scenic highway or expressway due to intervening development, distance, and topography. No rock outcroppings, historic buildings, or trees within a scenic highway would be impacted by the Proposed Project. Therefore, no impact to scenic highways would occur, and this exception does not apply to the Project.
- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** The Proposed Project will not include any significant structural renovations that would result in the accidental release of hazardous materials to the environment. According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database, Loara HS was identified in 2003 as a potentially contaminated site due to historical agricultural uses dating back to at least 1947, use of cleaning chemicals in the former adjacent farmhouse, and use of lead-based paint during the high school's development in 1961 (DTSC 2003). Potential contaminants of concern included dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane (DDD), dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene (DDE), and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT).

In January 2004, a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was prepared to investigate the potential environmental contamination from previous uses of the site. The PEA concluded that, "It does not appear that current or historic activities at the Site or past practices of handling hazardous waste/substances have resulted in a release or the threat of a release at the Site" and "there does not appear to be a significant threat to public health or the environment." On January 30th, 2004, DTSC issued an approval of the PEA and concurred with the "No further action" determination of the case.

The Proposed Project would involve improvements to the existing Loara HS track and field, including new turf, track replacement and reorientation, lighting, bleachers, restrooms, and utility upgrades. Given DTSC's determination that there are no human health or environment threats, impacts would be less than significant. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.

- (f) **Historical Resources.** On January 21st, 2026 a Cultural Resources Record Search Results memo (Cultural Memo) was prepared by Chambers Group in support of the Proposed Project (see Appendix B of the IS Checklist).

Loara High School was established in 1962; however, modifications and additional buildings have since been added to the site. The one cultural resource documented within the Project site is the Loara HS gymnasium (P-30-176762), built in 1961 by the District. Based on the confidential SCCIC records, the gymnasium, while in good condition and retaining integrity, does not meet eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. The Proposed Project would not involve any demolition, renovation, or alteration of the gymnasium. Path of travel improvements adjacent to the gymnasium would only occur in existing paved areas.

These changes reflect typical ongoing maintenance and reinvestment in an active school campus and have resulted in a campus that has been substantially altered from its original

condition; therefore, the campus does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA and implementation of the Proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Additionally, Chambers Group requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) records search from the NAHC on November 26, 2025. The purpose of the request is to determine if any sacred lands or other resources important to local tribal groups have been recorded within the Project site or adjacent areas. The results of the SLF search, provided by the NAHC on December 8, 2025, were negative, and included a list of 26 tribal government contacts representing 12 tribes were provided to seek additional information.

Because no historical or archaeological resources would be adversely affected, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource, and no impact would occur. Work associated with the Proposed Project would be completed on the existing field and would not involve any improvements to the existing permanent buildings. The Proposed Project would, therefore, have less than significant impacts to any historical resources. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.

References:

California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)

2003 Envirostor. Available at:
https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=30820023

City of Anaheim (City)

2004 General Plan. Available at: <https://www.anaheim.net/712/General-Plan>