

COUNTY CLERK'S USE

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
200 NORTH SPRING STREET, ROOM 395
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Filing of this form is optional. If filed, the form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 E. Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15062. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS
CPC-2019-627-CU-ZAD-SPR

LEAD CITY AGENCY City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)		CASE NUMBER ENV-2019-628-CE
PROJECT TITLE Sierra Canyon School Athletic Field Improvement Project		COUNCIL DISTRICT 12 - Lee
PROJECT LOCATION (Street Address and Cross Streets and/or Attached Map) 11047 – 11055 North De Soto Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 91311		<input type="checkbox"/> Map attached.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: See attached.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional page(s) attached.
NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER: Sierra Canyon School		
CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above) Edgar Khalatian c/o Mayer Brown LLC	(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 229-9548	EXT.

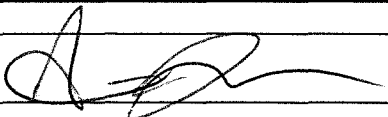

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

STATE CEQA STATUTE & GUIDELINES

- ☐ STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)
Public Resources Code Section(s) _____
- ☒ CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)
CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) 15314/Class 14
- ☐ OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b))

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION: ☒ Additional page(s) attached
See attached.

- ☒ None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project.
☐ The project is identified in one or more of the list of activities in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines as cited in the justification.
- IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.
If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

CITY STAFF USE ONLY:		
CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE Andrew Jorgensen, AICP 		STAFF TITLE City Planner
ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED 		
FEE: \$6,450.00	RECEIPT NO. 0101996813	REC'D. BY (DCP DSC STAFF NAME) LaTanya Roux

**DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING**

COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

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JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2019-628-CE

Project Description:

Sierra Canyon School is proposing to add bleacher seats to the existing Athletic Field located in the Sierra Canyon School Athletic Complex is located at 11047–11055 North De Soto Avenue within the community of Chatsworth in the City of Los Angeles (City), directly south of State Route (SR) 118. The Athletic Complex currently contains a baseball field, football/soccer field (referred herein as “Athletic Field”), and other associated improvements as permitted by Condition Use Permit (CUP) CPC-2008-3537-CU. The existing Athletic Field includes approximately 300 bleacher seats along the eastern side of the field and a restroom facility. The existing Athletic Field also includes other features typical of a school football/soccer athletic field, including goal posts, light standards, scoreboard, and chain-link fencing.

The Athletic Field currently contains approximately 300 seats on the home (eastern) side of the Athletic Field. The Project would replace these existing seats on the home side with 1,420 seats and would add 210 seats on the visitor’s side, along the western side of the Athletic Field adjacent to Brown’s Canyon Wash. In total, these additions to the Athletic Field would contain 1,630 seats. The Project also includes the construction of a press box, egress stairs, retaining walls, and a decomposed granite path leading to the new visitor-side bleachers.

The Project would not result in any changes to the use of the existing Athletic Field as authorized by CPC-2008-3537-CU, which allows for up to seven varsity football home games per season (late August through early December), occurring between 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM on Friday evenings. Home team players would walk to the Athletic Field from the Upper Campus on the east side of De Soto Avenue for these games. The visitor’s team would arrive on a bus from their school. Each team would consist of approximately 25 persons. The maximum attendance for Friday night games would include a total of 1,680 players and spectators.

Parking for the existing Athletic Field would be provided by existing Parking Lot D near the Athletic Field. The Project also includes incorporation of a shared parking agreement that would provide for the shared use of 236 existing parking spaces located on the Upper Campus east of De Soto Avenue. As shown in **Figure 3**, parking on the Upper Campus is currently split between three lots: a 50-space parking lot behind the gymnasium known as Parking Lot A, a 74-space parking lot known as Parking Lot B; and a 112-space parking lot west of the classroom building known as Parking Lot C. Thus, the shared parking agreement would provide for a total of 326 parking on the Sierra Canyon School campus available for the athletic events currently permitted on the Project Site.

To enhance pedestrian and vehicle safety during athletic events, the Sierra Canyon High School would provide traffic control officers at the Athletic Field driveway (located on the west side of De Soto Avenue at Rinaldi Street) and Upper Campus driveways along Rinaldi Street during peak arrival and departure times on game days, likely from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM and from 9:00 PM to 10:30 PM.

CEQA DETERMINATION – CLASS 14, CATEGORY 15300.2. CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION APPLIES

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 percent or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

As a project involving approval of a Conditional Use Permit for the modification of conditions of approval under CPC-2005-6118-VCU-SPR and CPC-2008-3537-CU to allow the 1,630 bleacher seats; a determination to permit shared parking using the 236 parking spaces at the Upper Campus for the Athletic Field's sports events by event attendees during the late afternoon and evening and a Site Plan Review due to the addition to an existing use, other than a Drive-Through Fast-food Establishment, which results in a net increase of 1,000 or more average daily trips as determined by the trip generation factors defined by the Department of Transportation to allow for a non-significant change of use in an existing facility, the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption set forth at CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15314 and under City CEQA Guidelines, Article 3, Section 1, Class 14.

CEQA SECTION 15300.2 EXCEPTIONS TO THE USE OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS

The City has further considered whether the proposed project is subject to any of the six exceptions set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, that would prohibit the use of any categorical exemption. None of the exceptions are triggered for the following reasons:

- 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 effect on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes may not be utilized 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 applies to Classes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 and not to Class 14, the Class applicable to this proposed Project. For this reason, this exception is not applicable

- B. **Cumulative Impact.** *The exception applies when, although a particular project may not have a significant impact, the impact of successive projects, of the same type, in the same place, over time is significant.*

The Project consists of modifications to the existing Sierra Canyon School Athletic Field with no increase or modification to the permitted uses. The shared parking agreement would not include the construction, expansion, or reduction in required parking on the existing campus.

The Project complies with the existing General Plan land uses and zoning designations for the site and permits issued for the facility. In addition, the Project promotes the City's policies for promoting a mix of land uses and access; increasing network access; balancing parking and land use management; creating parking solutions; facilitating the shared utilization of privately owned off-street parking facilities; and promoting safe routes to school programs within the community. The Project would not adversely change the existing relationships among land uses or properties in the community; nor is the Project part of a series of successive projects of the same type in the immediate area that would result in significant impacts.

A ZIMAS case history search of properties within 1,000 feet of the Sierra Canyon Athletic Complex did not identify any requests for approval of modifications to an approved Conditional Use Permit,

or approval of a shared parking study, or a Site Plan Review for projects that would have the potential to result in cumulative impacts when considered with the proposed Project. The Traffic Impact Analysis for the Sierra Canyon Athletic Fields (Overland Traffic Consultants, May 3, 2019) includes analysis of potential cumulative traffic impacts from three related projects that have the potential to contribute traffic to the 3 intersections potentially affected by traffic generated by the proposed Project. The related projects considered in the traffic analysis include a 125 room hotel with 20,000 square feet of restaurant space at 9733 Mason Avenue, approximately 1.75 miles southeast of the Project Site, and 2 single family residential projects located north of SR 118 that include 193 and 314 units. These projects do not represent projects of the same type as the proposed Project. No significant cumulative traffic impacts were identified. Therefore, the impact of successive projects of the same type, in the same place, over time is less than significant.

- C. **Significant Effect Due To Unusual Circumstances.** *This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.*

The Project consists of minor improvements to the existing Athletic Field located in the Sierra Canyon School Athletic Complex. The Project Site is not unusual in terms of size or other physical characteristics. There are no known unusual circumstances associated with the proposed Project or the Project Site. As described below no significant effects have been identified for the full range of environmental topics from the Initial Study Checklist.

Aesthetics

The proposed Project site consists of minor Athletic Field improvements on an existing school campus, including the addition of bleacher seats, a press box, egress stairs, retaining walls, and a decomposed granite path. Implementation of the Project would not adversely affect the existing visual character of the community or area; introduce inappropriate contrast between proposed Project elements and adjacent and nearby development; or remove existing features that substantially contribute to the character of or image of the community. In addition, the design of the Project would complement the existing design of the school and associated athletic facilities, as well as the surrounding neighborhood. The Project would not introduce any new sources of light or glare. Therefore, the Project would not result in any significant aesthetic impacts.

Air Quality

Construction Emissions - Air emissions that would be generated by construction activities were estimated based on the type and number of pieces of heavy construction equipment that would be used to: (1) replace the existing bleachers with two new bleachers to seat 1,420 spectators and 210 spectators, respectively; (2) press box and egress stairs installation; (3) retaining wall installation; (4) excavation and grading; and (5) decomposing granite path. Emissions calculations assumed that construction activities would be conducted in compliance with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) rules pertaining to Fugitive Dust (Rule 403)¹ and Architectural Coatings (Rule 1113),² and that heavy-duty diesel equipment would meet minimum CARB off-road fleet requirements.

The analysis of daily construction emissions was prepared utilizing the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) recommended by the SCAQMD. Table 1: Maximum Daily Construction Emissions presents the maximum estimated daily emissions anticipated to occur during Project construction. Emissions of volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, and particulate matter are compared against the applicable SCAQMD mass daily thresholds of significance. As shown in Table 1, maximum daily emissions during construction would be below the applicable SCAQMD maximum daily emission thresholds. Accordingly, air quality emissions associated with construction of the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

¹ South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), *Rule 403: Fugitive Dust*, accessed February 2019, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-403.pdf>.

² SCAQMD, *Rule 1113: Architectural Coatings*, accessed February 2019, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1113.pdf>.

Table 1
Maximum Daily Construction Emissions

	VOC	NOx	CO	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Source	pounds/day					
Unmitigated Maximum	2	16	15	<1	1	1
SCAQMD Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
Exceeds Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: Refer to Appendix A: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Background and Modeling Data.

CO = carbon monoxide; NOx = nitrogen oxides; PM10 = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; ROG = reactive organic gases; SOx = sulfur oxides.

Agricultural and Forestry Resources

The surrounding area is an urbanized neighborhood along a major regional freeway. While a portion of the Project Site is zoned A2-1 (Agricultural Zone), the Project would not result in any changes to the existing uses currently permitted for the site under the CUP. The proposed Project does not contain any farmland or agricultural land that could potentially be impacted.

Biological Resources

The Project Site is a fully improved site and does not contain any natural habitat of value for endangered, rare, or threatened species. In addition, the Project would not result in the removal, replacement, relocation, or impact to any trees on the Project Site. While the Project Site is adjacent to the Brown's Canyon Wash, this portion of the wash is fully improved for flood control purposes and does not contain any natural riparian habitat. For these reasons, impacts would be less than significant.

Cultural Resources

The Project Site does not contain any known cultural resources. The depth and extent of ground disturbing activities would be negligible. If subsurface cultural resources are inadvertently unearthed, the City has regulations on how artifacts found during construction must be handled. As such, no significant impacts to cultural resources would occur.

Geology and Soils

The Project Site is not located within a State of California-identified Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area. The Project Site is not located in a designated Earthquake Fault Zone.³ While the Project Site is located within a liquefaction zone as defined by the California Geological Survey,⁴ the proposed Project would be designed in accordance with the applicable California Building Code and applicable local codes. As such, the potential for hazardous events related to flooding, subsidence, slope instability, and seismic activity is considered low. Thus, the proposed Project would not result in any significant geology and soils impacts.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Summaries of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that would be generated construction of the Project are provided in Table 2: Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Total construction emissions would be approximately 31 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e). Construction emissions amortized over 30 years would be approximately 1 MTCO₂e/year.

³ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, ZIMAS, accessed February 2019, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>.

⁴ California Geological Survey, *Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Oat Mountain Quadrangle*, available at <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/>.

The primary measure of whether a project would have an impact on GHG emissions is whether it would conflict with applicable regulatory plans and policies intended to reduce GHG emissions, in this case specifically the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS). Key policies of SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS include improving access and mobility by encouraging efficient transportation infrastructure and pedestrian improvements. The Project is a field improvement project that would facilitate a more efficient use of existing school facilities to ensure travel safety and reliability for people in the region. As such, the Project would not have a significant impact on GHG emissions.

Table 2
Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GHG Emissions Source	Emissions (MTCO₂e/year)
Construction (amortized)	1
Operational (mobile)*	0
Area	0
Energy	0
Waste	0
Water	0
Net total	1

*Notes: Refer to **Appendix B: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Background and Modeling Data.***

MTCO₂e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

**N₂O emissions are negligible.*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Project would not involve the routine use, handling or transport of hazardous materials that would create a substantial risk to the public. The Project would not exacerbate hazardous conditions related to airports or wildland fires. Roadways used for emergency evacuation would not be obstructed. As such, impacts from hazards would not be significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The portions of the Project Site that would be primarily affected by the Project is currently mostly impervious surfaces. The Project would be required to implement drainage measures that comply with the City's regulatory requirements. The Project would also not place housing or residents within a flood zone. As such, impacts on hydrology would not be significant.

Land Use and Planning

No alteration of street pattern is proposed, and no separation of existing uses or disruption of access would occur from the addition of seating to the existing Athletic Field. The Project Site is not located within a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. The Project would not result in any changes to existing uses on the Project Site as currently permitted by the CUP. Therefore, no significant land use or planning impacts would result from the Project.

Mineral Resources

The Project area does not contain any known mineral resources, and the Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site. The Project Site is not located within an Oil Drilling/Surface Mining Supplemental Use District or an Oil Field/Drilling Area.⁵ Therefore, no impacts on mineral resources would occur.

5 City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *General Plan*, "Conservation Element" (2001), Exhibit A: Mineral Resources, accessed February 2019, <https://planning.lacity.org/cwd/gnlpln/consvelt.pdf>.

Noise

The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) section 41.40 regulates noise from demolition and construction activities. Exterior demolition and construction activities that generate noise are prohibited between the hours of 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM Monday through Friday, and between 6:00 PM and 8:00 AM on Saturday. Construction is prohibited on Sundays and all federal holidays.

Pursuant to the City Noise Ordinance (LAMC Section 112.05), construction noise levels are exempt from the 75-dBA noise threshold if all technically feasible noise attenuation measures are implemented. Pursuant to Section 112.05, the operation of any powered equipment or powered hand tool that produces a maximum noise level exceeding 75 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the source of the noise is prohibited between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM when the source is located within 500 feet of a residential zone. Compliance with Section 112.05 of the LAMC includes the use of mufflers, shields, sound barriers, and/or other noise reduction devices or techniques. All construction equipment, fixed or mobile, must be equipped with properly operating and maintained mufflers and other State-required noise attenuation devices. Additionally, equipment would be required to be shut down after 5 minutes of idling. Moreover, City Noise Ordinances 144,331 and 161,574 prohibit the emission or creation of noise beyond certain levels at adjacent uses unless technically infeasible. As such, no impacts from noise would occur.

Population and Housing

The Project consists of minor Athletic Field improvements on an existing school campus. There be no change to the existing number of students and faculty on the campus. For this reason, the Project would not result in any substantial change in the number of employment opportunities or indirect population growth. Therefore, impacts on population and housing would be less than significant.

Public Services and Recreation

Fire protection and emergency medical services to the Project Site would continue to be served by Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Station 107, located at 20225 Devonshire Street, approximately 1.25 miles southeast of the Project Site. No changes to the permitted uses and no changes to access to the Athletic Field are proposed that would affect the ability of the LAFD to provide service to the site.

The Project Site is located within the area served by the Devonshire Community Station of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The Devonshire Division provides police protection services to the areas within the Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Granada Hills, Northridge, North Hills, Porter Ranch, West Hills, and Winnetka. The Devonshire Community Police Station is located at 10250 Etiwanda Avenue, approximately 3.5 miles southeast from the Project Site. No changes to the permitted uses and no changes to access to the Athletic Field are proposed that would affect the ability of the LAPD to provide service to the site.

The Project would not result in a substantial increase in demand for fire, police or other public services that would result in the need to construct new or physically altered facilities that could result in significant impacts.

Transportation

The Traffic Report prepared for this Project (The Traffic Impact Analysis for the Sierra Canyon Athletic Fields (Overland Traffic Consultants, May 3, 2019) identified that the traffic conditions with implementation of the proposed Project would not impact the traffic flow at any of the study intersections in the Project vicinity. In addition, the traffic control officers that would be provided at the Athletic Field driveway and Upper Campus driveways during peak travel time would minimize on-street delays. The Project would also make no changes to or have direct effects on nearby transit services, roadways, or bicycle facilities. Roadway design and access would be equivalent to the existing network and would comply with City standards. As such, no significant impacts to transportation would occur.

Tribal Cultural Resources

The Project Site does not contain any known cultural resources. The depth and extent of grading and excavation would be limited. If subsurface cultural resources are unearthed, the Project would comply with City regulations on how artifacts found during construction must be handled. As such, no significant impacts to tribal cultural resources occur.

Utilities and Service Systems

The Project consists of minor Athletic Field improvements on an existing school campus. The proposed improvements would connect to the existing utility infrastructure that serves the Project Site. The Project would not result in an increase in demand for water, wastewater, solid waste, and energy demand from what is currently permitted on the Project Site under the CUP.

Wildfires

While the Project Site is located in a State responsibility area classified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone,⁶ the minor improvements to the Athletic Field proposed would not result in any changes to the Athletic Field that would change or increase fire risks. In addition, no changes to the access to the Athletic Field are proposed that would affect the ability of the LAFD to access the site or affect the ability of students and visitors to exit the Athletic Field in the event of a fire event.

- D. **Scenic Highways.** *This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there may be 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.*

Based on a review of the California Scenic Highway Mapping System (http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/), the Project Site is adjacent to a segment of SR 118 designated as State scenic highway and appearing in Appendix B to the City's General Plan Mobility Element, views of the Project Site are currently limited due to the substantial elevation change from the freeway. For this reason, the placement of the additional bleacher seats at the Athletic Field would not obstruct or adversely affect any existing views across the San Fernando Valley from SR 118. Accordingly, this exception does not apply.

- E. **Hazardous Waste Sites.** *Projects located on a site or facility listed pursuant to California Government Code 65962.5.*

Based on a review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control "Envirostor Database" (<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>), no known hazardous waste sites are located on or proximate to the project site. In addition, the Project Site has been developed with school and associated Athletic Field uses since 1982. Based on this, the project will not result in a significant effect due hazardous waste and this exception does not apply.

- F. **Historical Resources.** *Projects that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.*

The Project Site does not contain any features that are listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register of historical resources. The former structures that were on the site have previously been removed.

Based on a review of HistoricPlacesLA, the nearest designated historic resource are the Stoney Point Outcroppings along Topanga Canyon Blvd, between Chatsworth Street and SR 118, which is designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument and is located approximately 0.6 miles west of the Project Site. Due to the nature of the Project, implementation of the Project would not result in any physical alteration to the nearby historic building and would not alter the context of the historic building. Therefore, the Project would not adversely affect the design, character, or feeling associated with any nearby historic resource. As such, this exception does not apply.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, since the project meets all of the requirements of the categorical exemptions set forth at CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15314 and under City CEQA Guidelines, Article 3, Section 1, Class 14, and none of the applicable exceptions to the use of these exemptions apply to the project, it is appropriate to determine this project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA.

6 CalFire, *Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas* (adopted November 7, 2007), accessed February 2019, available at <http://frap.fire.ca.gov/>.