

Addendum
to the
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the
**Mountain View High School
Expansion Project**
(SCH# 2011092006)

Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District

December 07, 2021

SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE & CONCLUSION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) recognizes that between the date an environmental document is completed and the date the project is fully implemented, one or more of the following changes may occur: 1) the project may change; 2) the environmental setting in which the project is located may change; 3) laws, regulations, or policies may change in ways that impact the environment; and/or 4) previously unknown information can arise. Before proceeding with a project, CEQA requires the Lead Agency to evaluate these changes to determine whether or not they affect the conclusion in the environmental document.

On January 7, 2019, the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mountain View High School Facilities Expansion Project (SCH# 2011092006) and approved the project.

The purpose of this Addendum is to evaluate the environmental impacts of the following change to the approved project:

Compared to the approved project, which would not result in the removal of any existing onsite trees on the Mountain View High School campus, the revised project would remove four trees. The four trees not previously identified to be removed are all ornamental cherry trees (*Prunus spp.*) ranging from 10 to 12 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) (See Appendix A-Arborist Report). The trees are located between the existing 100A and 100B classrooms building and the new student union/admin building currently under construction. Photos of the existing trees proposed for removal and their locations can be seen in Appendix A. The project proposes to plant four new replacement trees in the same locations.

The CEQA Guidelines §15162 state that when an EIR has been certified or Negative Declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the Lead Agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in light of the whole record, one or more of the following:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
 - a. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or Negative Declaration;
 - b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
 - c. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or

- d. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

CEQA Guideline §15164 states that the Lead Agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an Addendum to a previously adopted Negative Declaration if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary, but none of the conditions described in §15162 (see above) calling for preparation of a subsequent Negative Declaration have occurred.

Analysis

Aesthetics

The cherry trees proposed for removal are not considered a scenic resource for the surrounding area because they are not highly visible outside of the Mountain View High School campus. The trees are relatively small and according to the Arborist Report, four out of the five trees evaluated are in significant decline, two of which are nearly dead. The trees will no longer hold any aesthetic value after they are dead and unable to produce leaves and fruit. The project would plant four replacement trees in the same location. Additionally, the original project description of the Mountain View High School Expansion Project included the planting of 37 new trees on-site. Therefore, the project would result in a net increase of trees on-site, which is a visual improvement from existing conditions.

Biological Resources

As previously described, the existing cherry trees on-site are relatively small and several of them are in states of decline. The trees themselves are not a special status plant species and they do not provide suitable habitat for special status wildlife species. The trees are too small to support nesting raptors. As previously stated, the project would result in a net increase of trees on-site even with the proposed removal of the four cherry trees, therefore, the project would result in a net increase of potential bird nesting habitat on-site. The trees would be removed outside of the nesting season (February 1st – August 31st, inclusive) and therefore, removal of the trees would not result in the take of any nesting birds, active nests, eggs, or nestlings.

The City of Mountain View tree regulations protect all trees designated as Heritage trees (Chapter 32, Article 2). A Heritage tree is defined as any one of the following:

- A tree which has a trunk with a circumference of 48 inches or more measured at 54 inches above natural grade;
- A multi-branched tree which has major branches below 54 inches above the natural grade with a circumference of 48 inches measured just below the first major trunk fork.
- Any *Quercus* (oak), *Sequoia* (redwood), or *Cedrus* (cedar) tree with a circumference of 12 inches or more when measured at 54 inches above natural grade;
- A tree or grove of trees designated by resolution of the City Council to be of special historical value or of significant community benefit.

The existing cherry trees on-site do not fit any of the criteria listed above to be considered a Heritage tree. Therefore, a tree removal permit is not required for their removal and the project would not be in conflict with the City of Mountain View's Tree Preservation Ordinance.

Conclusion

Based on information contained in the Arborist Report prepared for the cherry trees, the findings of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the project, and knowledge of the project area, the District has concluded that the proposed change to the project (i.e., removal of four cherry trees) would not result in new significant environmental effects or substantially increase the severity of previously identified significant effects. The conclusions in the Initial Study and adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration would not change. For these reasons, a supplemental or subsequent Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration is not required and this Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted for the Mountain View High School Expansion Project (SCH# 2011092006) has been prepared.

This Addendum will not be circulated for public review, but will be attached to the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted for the Mountain View High School Expansion Project, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15164(c).