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## Memorandum

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**To:** Mr. John Chow  
**From:** Graham L. Trelstad, AICP  
**Date:** March 29, 2017  
**Re:** State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Documentation  
**cc:** Katherine Ghilain

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### A. INTRODUCTION

In March 2016 AKRF prepared a State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Environmental Assessment Form on behalf of the Chappaqua Central School District (CCSD) for a set of proposed school building, campus, and athletic field capital and maintenance projects as well as expansion of the Chappaqua Public Library through a capital improvement bond issue. Improvements were assessed at six (6) schools, the CCSD District Office (located on the campus of the Horace Greeley High School), and the Public Library.

At that time we advised that each of the individual projects and each set of projects at each location meets the criteria for classification as Type II (exempt) projects under SEQRA (6 NYCRR Part 617.5). Taken together, the full set of capital and maintenance projects is also considered to be Type II (exempt), meaning that SEQRA does not apply and a formal environmental assessment was not required. However, out of an abundance of caution, CCSD elected to prepare an Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) to identify potential environmental conditions that might affect the design or permitting of the proposed improvements.

We have been advised that CCSD has made certain modifications to the proposed improvements such that the athletic field at Bell Middle School would be refurbished with additional drainage and a natural sod surface instead of having an artificial turf field with lighting installed. Further, a field at Horace Greeley High School, which had been proposed to be refurbished with a natural surface, will instead be converted to an artificial turf field with lighting.

This Technical Memorandum reviews this modification and concludes that the modified improvements and the full set of proposed improvements (as modified) remain Type II actions and therefore are exempt from SEQRA. The proposed modification to the capital program at these two locations would not result in any significant adverse impacts, and no additional environmental analysis is warranted. While the nature of construction of artificial turf fields and natural turf fields does vary in some respects, the overall level of disturbance or impact is comparable, because each field requires excavation for the installation of drainage systems. Placement of additional field lighting at the Horace Greeley Campus would not result

in any significant adverse impacts due to the poles or the use of the lighting, as those features already exist on the 42-acre campus, and the lighting design will include the development of a photometric plan to target no more than a maximum light intensity of 0.1 foot-candles (fc) onto adjacent properties.

## **B. ANALYSIS**

### **HORACE GREELEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Horace Greeley High School is located on a 42-acre parcel at 70 Roaring Brook Road in a predominantly residential neighborhood. Existing school buildings and parking areas occupy the western portion of the property and athletic fields occupy the eastern portion of the property closer to North Bedford Road. Horace Greeley High School was constructed circa 1957 and does not appear to be eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) according to the OPRHP CRIS database.

Proposed improvements for the High School include resurfacing of existing paved areas; internal building and mechanical system upgrades; partial roof replacement; installation of two (2) new artificial turf fields; installation of field lighting; installation of a new running track; installation of toilets, dugouts, and bleachers; and the construction of an approximately 5,954 square foot Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) building. The proposed STEAM building is to be located in an existing courtyard located between two buildings joined by a covered walkway at the northern end of the campus. One tree is located in this courtyard. The courtyard is separated from adjacent woodlands and residential properties to the east by an existing driveway. A Class C stream is located approximately 75 feet east of the school driveway at the base of a sloped wooded area, and flows northward into a NYSDEC-mapped wetland located approximately 1,000 feet to the northwest of the campus. Because the proposed STEAM building would be constructed within an area already occupied by buildings and the driveway already separates this area from the adjacent woods, stream, and wetland, no impacts to the NYSDEC-mapped stream or 100-foot wetland adjacent area would likely occur. Examination of USFWS (IPaC) maps indicates the potential for Indiana Bats (endangered) and Northern Long-eared bats (threatened), although no critical habitats for these species were identified on or near the campus during field visits. Removal of the single tree, as planned in the courtyard, is unlikely to significantly affect either bat species.

Two natural grass athletic fields would be replaced with artificial turf surfaces, new drainage, and lighting. The first is the existing “competition” athletic field within the running track. The second is “Field C” which is located north and upslope of the existing track, adjacent to a parking area to the north, a row of deciduous trees to the east, and two other fields to the west. A new restroom would also be installed adjacent to the competition field. Preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) plan would likely be required to accommodate changes in stormwater flow from the artificial turf surfaces; while artificial turf fields incorporate design elements to facilitate drainage of the playing surface, the concentrated flow collected by the field under-drains may represent a new “discharge.” The proposed lighting would include either metal halide or LED athletic field lighting; the design will include the development of a photometric plan to target no more than a maximum light intensity of 0.1 foot-candles (fc) onto adjacent properties.

Re-paving operations within existing paved areas will have no significant adverse impacts to trees but CCSD should consider pre-construction pruning of existing trees for clearance under the guidance of a certified arborist.

Precautions would be made to keep the limit of disturbance out of the dripline (i.e., critical root zone) of the trees. No trees are proposed for removal in this area.

Due to the distance to larger forested areas, the lack of habitat suitability in immediately surrounding areas, and the presence of existing sources of light on the High School campus, additional lighting would likely not have any significant adverse impacts on either of the bat species.

As indicated above, consultation with OPRHP and compliance with the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA) may be required for the exterior modifications contemplated for the High School. Once a final

design has been developed, the School District would consult with OPRHP to identify if any of the proposed work has the potential to affect archaeological resources, and would undertake appropriate steps to avoid and minimize any impacts in consultation with OPRHP should potential archaeological resources be identified.

### **BELL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Bell Middle School is located on an approximately eight (8)-acre parcel at 50 Senter Street in downtown Chappaqua. The school was built circa 1925 as a High School and consists of a two- and three-story stone-clad building with gabled roofs and large window openings. A smaller stone-clad building occupies the northern end of the campus. The campus also contains two (2) athletic fields to the north and west of the main building, a small playground and parking area to the north of the main building, and a small parking lot to the west of the main building accessed off of South Greeley Avenue. South Greeley Avenue is a commercial area that also includes the Town of New Castle Town Hall and the Metro-North Railroad Chappaqua train station and parking lot. A wooded area and residential parcels abut the Middle School campus to the east. The Bell Middle School has been determined to be S/NR-eligible according to CRIS. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin & Greeley Grove at 191 South Greeley Avenue are S/NR-listed resources and abut the Middle School campus to the south.

An unmapped natural spring exists at the edge of upland woodlands adjacent to the northern athletic field, and runs into an existing storm sewer. Examination of USFWS (IPaC) maps indicates no threatened or endangered species are located within the project area and no critical habitats were identified. The closest NWI mapped wetland is located approximately 2,400 feet away. The proposed field is about 450 feet from the closest NYSDEC mapped stream (Class C).

Proposed improvements include various interior upgrades and renovations, but also include modifications to the building's façade and roof such as partial window replacement, masonry repointing and repairs, and slate roof and cupola repairs. The existing natural grass athletic field to the north of the school building would be refurbished with drainage and new sod. No lighting is proposed for the athletic field.

Final design of the exterior modifications to the school building and the partial window replacement project would be evaluated against the LOR between the New York State Education Department and OPRHP to ensure consistency with the terms of the agreement and to avoid any adverse effects to the S/NR-eligible building. While potentially visible from the Church grounds, proposed improvements to the Bell Middle School building façade and cupola are unlikely to have adverse effects on the S/NR-listed Church of St. Mary the Virgin & Greeley Grove, due to the existing visual relationship of the Middle School and Church within the overall context of the urban setting.

It is not expected that the refurbishment of the existing athletic field north of the main building and adjacent to the smaller building at the north end of the campus would have any adverse physical or visual impacts on the school buildings, which would maintain their existing setting along Senter Street bordered by commercial areas to the north and west. As the refurbishment of the athletic field would occur to the north of the main building, this work would also have no adverse impacts on the south-adjacent S/NR-listed Church of St. Mary the Virgin & Greeley Grove.

As such, none of the project elements are likely to have any significant adverse environmental impacts.

Refurbishment of the existing turf athletic field may require the preparation of a SWPPP to control new stormwater flow.

As indicated above, consultation with OPRHP and compliance with the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA) may be required for any of the several exterior modifications proposed (*e.g.*, window replacement, façade and roof repairs, and installation of athletic field lighting). Once a final design has been developed, the School District would consult with OPRHP to identify if any of the proposed work has the potential to affect historic structures or archaeological resources, and would undertake appropriate steps to avoid and minimize any impacts in consultation with OPRHP. \*