

**State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance**

Lead Agency: Sweet Home Central School District

Date: June 20, 2023

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law.

Sweet Home Central School District (the “District”) has reviewed its proposed Federally Funded Service Center Pole Barn Project and has determined that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Name of Action:

Sweet Home Central School District Federally Funded Service Center Pole Barn Project

Location of Action:

Sweet Home Service Center
1741 Sweet Home Road
Amherst, NY 14228

Erie County

SEQR Status: Unlisted

Description of Action:

Sweet Home Central School District (the “District”) proposes to use federal funds to construct a pole barn near the Service Center at the Sweet Home High School / Service Center campus. The recently upgraded Service Center houses the District’s Transportation, Buildings & Grounds, and Food Services departments. The metal pole barn, with overhead doors, a man door, and concrete pad within the building and in areas outside the doors, will be used to store various equipment and materials in support of the Service Center.

Reasons Supporting this Determination:

Potential environmental impacts associated with the action were identified in the Environmental Assessment Form to assess potential adverse environmental impacts compared to the criteria for determining significance identified in 6 NYCRR § 617.7(c)(1) and in accordance with 6 NYCRR § 617.7(c)(2) and (3). As indicated below in the discussion of each criterion specified in 6 NYCRR § 617.7(c)(1), the action will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

(i) a substantial adverse change in existing air quality, ground or surface water quality or quantity, traffic or noise levels; a substantial increase in solid waste production; a substantial increase in potential for erosion, flooding, leaching or drainage problems;

Proposed site work involves the construction of a metal pole barn, with overhead doors, a man door, and concrete pad within the building and in areas outside the doors to support the Service Center. Construction will be located on a small gravel lot area near the Service Center and will add a small (approximately 0.1 acre) area of impervious surface. Since only a small area of land will be disturbed, compliance with the NYSDEC's SPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges from Construction Activity ("Storm Water General Permit") and development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan ("SWPPP") will not be required. However, erosion and sediment controls in accordance with appropriate storm water management design standards, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ("NYSDEC") Storm Water Management Design Manual, will be utilized during construction, if necessary. Drainage improvements may not be necessary given the small area of additional impervious surface, but if needed, they will tie into the existing storm water system. Traffic and noise impacts from the site work will be minimal and temporary. Student, faculty and staff populations, and associated traffic and waste production, will not increase as a result of the project. Staff who will use the pole barn already work at the Service Center. The project will not create a substantial adverse change in existing air quality, ground or surface water quality or quantity, or traffic or noise levels and will not result in a substantial increase in potential for erosion, flooding, leaching or drainage problems or in solid waste production. There will not be significant adverse impacts.

(ii) the removal or destruction of large quantities of vegetation or fauna; substantial interference with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species; impacts on a significant habitat area; substantial adverse impacts on a threatened or endangered species of animal or plant, or the habitat of such a species; or other significant adverse impacts to natural resources;

The proposed site work will be undertaken in a gravel area near the upgraded Service Center. As noted in the Negative Declaration for the Capital Improvements Project, 2019 which included more extensive site work on this campus, according to a NYSDEC database, the campus is located in a large general area of "rare plants listed as endangered, threatened, or rare" (specifically, Big Shellbark Hickory as "threatened" and the Spiny Softshell turtle as a species of "special concern"). However, as noted in that SEQR determination, while those species may exist in undeveloped locations within the general area of the campus, the proposed site work is planned within a portion of the campus which has already been developed, and there will be no significant impacts to those species. The proposed project will not result in the removal or destruction of large quantities of vegetation or fauna or interfere with the movement of resident or migratory fish or wildlife. The developed campus does not contain significant habitat area, and the project will not have substantial adverse impacts on a threatened or endangered species of animals or plants, or the habitat of such a species, or other significant adverse impacts to natural resources.

(iii) the impairment of the environmental characteristics of a Critical Environmental Area as designated pursuant to subdivision 617.14(g) of this Part;

The campus is not within or adjacent to a *Critical Environmental Area* as designated pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.14(g), and thus the project will not impair the environmental characteristics of a *Critical Environmental Area*.

(iv) the creation of a material conflict with a community's current plans or goals as officially approved or adopted;

The project involves an upgrade to an existing District site and will not create a conflict with the community's current plans or goals as officially approved or adopted.

(v) the impairment of the character or quality of important historical, archeological, architectural, or aesthetic resources or of existing community or neighborhood character;

The NYSDEC EAF Mapper database indicates that the site does not contain, and is not substantially contiguous to a building, archaeological site, or district listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places ("Register"). According to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's ("SHPO") Cultural Resource Information System ("CRIS"), both the Service Center and the High School on this campus have been determined by SHPO to be "not eligible" for listing on the Register. The NYSDEC EAF Mapper and CRIS indicate that the campus is within an area designated as archaeologically sensitive. However, much more extensive site work at this campus (including an addition to the Service Center) has been reviewed by SHPO for prior projects, and SHPO determined that it has no archaeological concerns. The proposed project will not impair the character or quality of important historical, archeological, architectural, or aesthetic resources or existing community or neighborhood character.

(vi) a major change in the use of either the quantity or type of energy;

The pole barn will be used for cold storage. Energy use during and after construction will not create a major change in the quantity of electricity or natural gas to be used and will not affect the community's sources of fuel or energy supply.

(vii) the creation of a hazard to human health;

The proposed pole barn will not create a hazard to human health.

(viii) a substantial change in the use, or intensity of use, of land including agricultural, open space or recreational resources, or in its capacity to support existing uses;

The proposed pole barn to support the existing Service Center will not cause a substantial change in use, or intensity of use, at the existing campus. Also, the project will not adversely impact agricultural, open space, or recreational resources.

(ix) the encouraging or attracting of a large number of people to a place or places for more than a few days, compared to the number of people who would come to such place absent the action;

The proposed upgrades will not impact the school's population. The new pole barn will be used by District Service Center staff who already work at the campus and will not attract a large number of people to the campus. There will not be a significant impact.

(x) the creation of a material demand for other actions that would result in one of the above consequences;

The proposed project will not create the material demand for any other actions that would result in one of the above consequences.

(xi) changes in two or more elements of the environment, no one of which has a significant impact on the environment, but when considered together result in a substantial adverse impact on the environment; or

The proposed project will not result in changes in two or more elements of the environment which, when considered together, would result in a substantial adverse impact on the environment.

(xii) two or more related actions undertaken, funded or approved by an agency, none of which has or would have a significant impact on the environment, but when considered cumulatively would meet one or more of the criteria in this subdivision.

It is noted that the District's Capital Improvements Project, 2019, which was the subject of a SEQR review resulting in a Negative Declaration, was a much larger project encompassing improvements at several District sites including substantial upgrades to the Service Center. The Federally Funded Service Center Pole Barn Project is a much smaller project and will not have a significant impact on the environment even if considered cumulatively with the Capital Improvements Project, 2019.

For Further Information:

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