

DRAFT

**Initial Study and
Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the
California Conservation Corps,
Auberry Center**

Lead Agency:



**California Conservation Corps
1719 24th Street
Sacramento, California 95816**

Prepared For:



**Department of General Services
Real Estate Services Division
707 Third Street, 4th Floor
West Sacramento, California 95605**

August 2023



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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**Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the
Residential Center, Auberry: New Residential Center**

August 2023

Lead Agency:



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1719 24th Street
Sacramento, California 95816**

Prepared for:



**State of California Department of General Services
Real Estate Services Division
707 Third Street, 4th Floor
West Sacramento, California 95605**

Prepared by:



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

**2525 Warren Drive
Rocklin, California 95677**

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DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS, AUBERRY CENTER

Lead Agency:	California Conservation Corps (CCC)
Project Proponent:	State of California Department of General Services – Real Estate Services Division
Project Location:	The Proposed Project is located immediately west of the Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road intersection at the former Auberry Elementary School (33367 North Auberry Road) in Auberry, California. The Project site corresponds to a portion of Section 8, Township 10 south, and Range 23 east (Mount Diablo Base and Meridian) within the “Auberry, California” 7.5-minute quadrangle (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 1987). The approximate center of the Project site is located at latitude (NAD83) 37.080134° and longitude (NAD83) -119.487500° within the Upper San Joaquin Watershed (Hydrologic Unit Code #18040006, USGS 2016).

Project Description

Department of General Services on behalf of California Conservation Corps (CCC) initiated preparation of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) in spring of 2020 for the proposed renovation of an existing dilapidated elementary school in the unincorporated community of Auberry to allow the CCC to better fulfill their mission and objectives in the region with an upgraded, modern facility. Department of General Services (DGS) prepared the document on behalf of CCC. The Draft IS/MND was circulated in July of 2020 and receive seven comment letters. A Final IS/MND was not completed or approved for the project. Based on those comments, data collection at the existing onsite wells was conducted to further analyze the impact that the project may have on the groundwater supply in the area. Additionally, in August 2022 Nichols, Melburg, & Rossetto Architects (NM&R) completed a Pre-Assessment and Recommendations Report for the Proposed Project. This report found that due to the age and condition of the existing buildings onsite, it was recommended that the existing buildings should not be remodeled but demolished and new structures built on the project site. In response, DGS on behalf of CCC (state) has initiated preparation of a revised IS/MND to address the changes to the project and recirculation of the Draft IS/MND for public review. The revised project description in Section 2.0 is based on the revised site plan and improvements proposed for the site.

Public Review Period: August 2, 2023 – September 2, 2023

Mitigation Measures Incorporated into the Project to Avoid Significant Effects

The following Mitigation Measures (MM) identified in the Initial Study are required to ensure Project impacts are reduced to less than significant:

Air Quality

AQ-1: In accordance with SJVAPCD Rule 9510, a detailed AIA shall be prepared detailing the specific construction requirement (i.e., equipment required, hours of use) and operational characteristics associated with the proposed improvements. In accordance with this rule, emissions of NO_x from construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower used or associated with the development Project shall be reduced by 20 percent from baseline (unmitigated) emissions and PM₁₀ emissions by 45 percent. The Project shall demonstrate compliance with Rule 9510, including payment of all applicable fees, before the start of construction. Examples of MMs that will reduce emissions attributable to the Project in compliance with Rule 9510 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- During all construction activities, all diesel-fueled construction equipment including, but not limited to, rubber-tired dozers, graders, scrapers, excavators, asphalt paving equipment, cranes, and tractors shall be California Air Resources Board (CARB) Tier 4 Certified as set forth in Section 2423 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Part 89 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturers' specifications. Equipment maintenance records shall be kept on-site and made available upon request by the SJVAPCD.
- The Project applicant shall comply with all applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations. Copies of any applicable air quality permits and/or monitoring plans shall be provided to the County.

AQ-2: In accordance with SJVAPCD Rule 9510, a detailed AIA shall be prepared detailing the operational characteristics associated with the Project. In accordance with this rule, operational emissions of NO_x shall be reduced by a minimum of 33.3 percent. (Emissions reductions are in comparison to the Project's operational baseline emissions presented in Table 2 of the Initial Study.) The Project shall demonstrate compliance with Rule 9510, including payment of all applicable fees, before the start of construction.

Based on the findings of the AIA, the applicant shall pay the SJVAPCD a monetary sum necessary to offset the required operational emissions that are not reduced by the emission reduction measures contained in the air impact assessment. The quantity of operational emissions that need to be offset shall be calculated in accordance with the methodologies identified in Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review, and approved by the SJVAPCD. Operational emissions reduction methods shall be selected under the direction of the SJVAPCD according to the AIA process detailed in, and required by Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review.

Biological Resources

BIO-1: Conduct Pre-Construction Sensitive Amphibians Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

Conduct a preconstruction clearance survey for foothill yellow-legged frog within 48 hours prior to the start of construction. If foothill yellow-legged frogs are observed, work shall not proceed until consultation with CDFW has taken place, and avoidance measures (such as exclusionary fencing and biological monitoring) shall likely be required.

BIO-2: Conduct Pre-Construction Northwestern pond turtle surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

- Conduct a preconstruction clearance survey for Northwestern pond turtle within 48 hours prior to the start of construction. If Northwestern pond turtles are observed in the construction zone, a qualified biologist shall relocate the turtle to a location away from the construction zone.

BIO-3: Conduct Pre-Construction Bird Nesting Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

- Conduct a preconstruction nesting raptor and bird survey of all suitable habitat on the Project site within 14 days of the commencement of construction during the nesting season (February 1 - August 31). Where accessible, surveys shall be conducted within 300 feet of the Project site for nesting raptors and within 100 feet of the Project site for nesting birds.
- If active nests are found, a no-disturbance buffer around the nest shall be established. The buffer distance shall be established by a qualified biologist in consultation with CDFW. The buffer shall be maintained until the fledglings are capable of flight and become independent of the nest tree, to be determined by a qualified biologist. Once the young are independent of the nest, no further measures are necessary. Pre-construction nesting surveys are not required for construction activity outside the nesting season.

BIO-4: Special-Status Mammals Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to demolition and project construction:

- Conduct preconstruction roosting bat surveys for all suitable roosting habitat (i.e., trees and manufactured structures) no more than a year prior to the start of construction activities. If suitable roosting habitat is identified, a qualified biologist shall conduct an evening bat emergence survey (within a week or less from the start of construction) that may include acoustic monitoring to determine whether bats are present. If bats are found, consultation with CDFW prior to initiation of disturbance of suitable roosting habitat shall be required. If bats are not found during the preconstruction surveys, no further measures will be necessary.

Cultural Resources

CUL-1: Implement Measures to Protect Unanticipated Cultural, Archaeological, and/or Tribal Cultural Resources Discoveries.

The following mitigation measure is intended to address the evaluation and treatment of inadvertent/unanticipated discoveries of potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs), archaeological, or cultural resources during a project's ground disturbing activities.

- If any suspected TCRs are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment, as necessary.
- When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the California Native American Tribe(s) that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.
- The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil.
- Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Geology and Soils

GEO-1: Discovery of Unknown Paleontological Resources. If any paleontological resources (i.e., fossils) are found during Project construction, construction shall be halted immediately in the subject area and the area shall be isolated using orange or yellow fencing until RESD is notified and the area is cleared for future work. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the find and recommend appropriate treatment of the inadvertently discovered paleontological resources. In addition, in the event of an inadvertent find, sediment samples shall be collected and processed to determine the small fossil potential on the Proposed

Project Site. If RESD resumes work in a location where paleontological remains have been discovered and cleared, RESD shall have a paleontologist onsite to observe any continuing excavation to confirm that no additional paleontological resources are in the area. Any fossil materials uncovered during mitigation activities shall be deposited in an accredited and permanent scientific institution for the benefit of current and future generations.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

HAZ-1: Asbestos and Lead Based Paint Remediation Compliance

The proposed Project shall comply with all federal, state, and local regulations concerning asbestos. Prior to structure demolition, testing for both asbestos and lead based paint shall take place in all buildings to be demolished. If lead base paint or asbestos are found, a contractor registered by the contractor's state license board to remove asbestos and lead based paint shall conduct removal of all suspected materials. During demolition, water support shall be used to prevent the release of visible air emissions.

Traffic

TRA-1: Construction Traffic Management Plan

Prior to commencing construction of the Proposed Project, a construction traffic control plan (Traffic Plan) shall be prepared by the Contractor, in coordination with DGS, California Department of Transportation, and Fresno County. The traffic plan shall be detailed and comprehensive to adequately mitigate potential conflicts between traffic and construction-related activities. The Traffic Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following measures:

- A. Contractor's work within the State's right of way is subject to general permit conditions of Caltrans' issued encroachment permit including implementing traffic controls, restricting work on holidays and weekends, and notifying the traffic management center daily.
- B. Adequate off-street worker parking shall be provided.
- C. A scheduling plan showing hours of operation to minimize congestion during peak hours and special events.
- D. Roadway disturbances shall be minimized during non-working hours; open trenches shall be covered with steel plates or by the use of temporary backfill during non-working hours. Steel traffic plates shall only be allowed in areas of the State's right of way as permitted by Caltrans and shall meet the State's specifications and requirements.
- E. All paved surfaces disturbed during construction shall be repaved when work is complete.

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ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2020

Appendix B – Biological Resources Assessment
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2018

Appendix C – Cultural Resources Report (CONFIDENTIAL not included in public document)
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2019

Appendix D – Geotechnical Investigation
GEOCON Consultants, Inc. April 2020

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GEOCON Consultants. January 2019

Appendix F – SoundPLAN Noise Modeling
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2020

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KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. March 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	Asbestos-containing materials
ADL	Aerially deposited lead
AIA	Air Impact Assessment
BA	Biological Assessment
BAU	Business as Usual
BCC	Bird of Conservation Concern
BIOS	Biogeographic Information and Observation System
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BP	Before Present
BPS	Best Performance Standards
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCC	California Conservation Corps
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Center	California Conservation Corps Auberry Center
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH ₄	Methane
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CHRIS	California Historical Resource Information System
CI	<i>Coccidioides immitis</i>
CIWM	California Integrated Waste Management
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database

Term	Definition
CNEL	Community noise equivalent level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CO ₂ e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
COMET	Corpsmember Orientation, Motivation, Education, and Training
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DGS	Department of General Services
DHS	Department of Health Services
DOC	Department of Conservation
DPM	Diesel Particulate Matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	Department of Water Resources
ECDMS	Energy Commission Agreement Management System
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMKO	EMKO Environmental, Inc.
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FCEHD	Fresno County Environmental Health Division
FCOG	Fresno Council of Governments
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HDM	Highway Design Manual
IS	Initial Study
kWh	Kilowatt hours
LBP	Lead-Based Paint
L _{dn}	Average Daily Noise Levels
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
L _{eq}	Average hourly noise level
L _{max}	Maximum noise
LOS	Level of service
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MDF	Main Distribution Frame
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MM	Mitigation Measure
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
mph	Miles per Hour
MPOE	Minimum Point of Entry

Term	Definition
MSL	Mean Sea Level
MTBE	Methyl tert-butyl ether
N ₂ O	Nitrous Oxide
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Plan
NHMLA	National History Museum of Los Angeles County
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	Native Plant Protection Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historical Places
O ₃	Ozone
OHP	Office of Preservation
OPR	California Office of Planning and Research
PCBs	Polychlorinated biphenyls
pCi/L	Picocuries per liter of air
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric Company
PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}	Particulate Matter
PPV	Peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project, Proposed Project	California Conservation Corps, Auberry Center
PV	Photovoltaic
RACT	Reasonably Available Control Technology
REC	Recognized Environment Condition
RESO	Real Estate Services Division
ROG	Reactive Organic Gas
RPS	Renewables Portfolio Standard
RR	Rural residential
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
Scoping Plan	California 2008 Climate Change Scoping Plan
sf	Square feet
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SR	State Route
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SSJVIC	Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center
SSS	Side Street Stop

Term	Definition
SUSD	Sierra Unified School District
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resource
TPHd	Total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plans
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	U.S. Code
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VMT	Vehicle miles traveled
VOC	Volatile organic compound
WBWG	Western Bat Working Group
WSA	Water Supply Assessment
ZNE	Zero Net Energy

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Summary

Project Title:	Residential Center, Auberry: New Residential Center
Lead Agency Name and Address:	California Conservation Corps 1719 24th Street Sacramento, California 95816 Stephanie Coleman - Senior Environmental Planner California Department of General Services Project Management and Development Branch Environmental Section 916-376-1602
Contact Person and Phone Number:	Terry Ash, Sr. Environmental Planner Department of General Services, Environmental Section (916) 201-0085
Project Location:	33367 North Auberry Road, Auberry, California 93602.
General Plan Designation:	Mountain Urban
Zoning:	Rural Residential (RR)

1.2 Introduction

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is the Lead Agency for this Initial Study. The Department of General Services (DGS), on behalf of CCC, prepared the Initial Study to identify and assess potential environmental impacts of the proposed Auberry Center Project. This document has been prepared to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21000 et seq.) and State CEQA Guidelines (14 Code of California Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.). CEQA requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before acting on those projects. A CEQA Initial Study is generally used to determine which CEQA document is appropriate for a project (Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration [MND], or Environmental Impact Report [EIR]).

In accordance with CEQA, this Initial Study (IS)/MND will be circulated for a 30-day public review and comment period. Written comments on the Draft IS/MND should be submitted to:

Ms. Terry Ash, DGS Senior Environmental Planner
cc: Amberly Morgan
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Rocklin, CA 95677
amorgan@ecorpconsulting.com

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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DGS on behalf of California Conservation Corps (CCC) initiated preparation of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) in spring of 2020 for the proposed renovation of an existing dilapidated elementary school in the unincorporated community of Auberry to allow the CCC to better fulfill their mission and objectives in the region with an upgraded, modern facility. The Draft IS/MND was circulated in July of 2020 and receive two comment letters. A Final IS/MND was not completed or approved for the project. Based on those comments, data collection at the existing onsite wells was conducted to further analyze the impact that the project may have on the groundwater supply in the area. Additionally, in August 2022 Nichols, Melburg, & Rossetto Architects (NM&R) completed a Pre-Assessment and Recommendations Report for the Proposed Project. This report found that due to the age and condition of the existing buildings onsite, it was recommended that the existing buildings should not be remodeled but demolished and new structures built on the project site. In response, DGS on behalf of CCC has initiated preparation of a revised IS/MND to address the changes to the project and recirculation of the Draft IS/MND for public review. The following project description is based on the revised site plan and improvements proposed for the site.

2.1 Project Background

The California Conservation Corps is a department within the California Natural Resources Agency charged with protecting and enhancing California's natural resources and communities while empowering and developing young adults through hard work and education. Thus, at the heart of the CCC are its Corpsmembers selected for participation based solely on their motivation for hard work, public service, and personal development. During their participation in the program Corpsmembers work on environmental projects and respond to natural and humanmade disasters. Through this work, they gain skills and experience that lead to meaningful careers.

The CCC has more than two dozen residential and nonresidential locations throughout the state and is the only state program with year-round residential centers. District Centers help Corpsmembers tackle more than 900 projects annually, with more than 2,400,000 hours worked, generating more than \$26 million. These facilities support the mission of the CCC, and the revenue stream generated from its activities.

The CCC Auberry Center has been designed to meet the following specific requirements:

- Minimum Net Area of 16.5 Acres
- Two points of ingress/egress from a major roadway and outside of any 100-year flood plain, as established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Project is proposed at the former Auberry Elementary School located at 33367 North Auberry Road in the unincorporated community of Auberry in Fresno County (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). The Auberry Elementary School was originally constructed in 1939. The Sierra Unified School District (SUSD) was forced to close the school in 2012 due to a declining student population.



Figure 2-1. Project Vicinity
2018-26.003 CCC Auburn Center



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

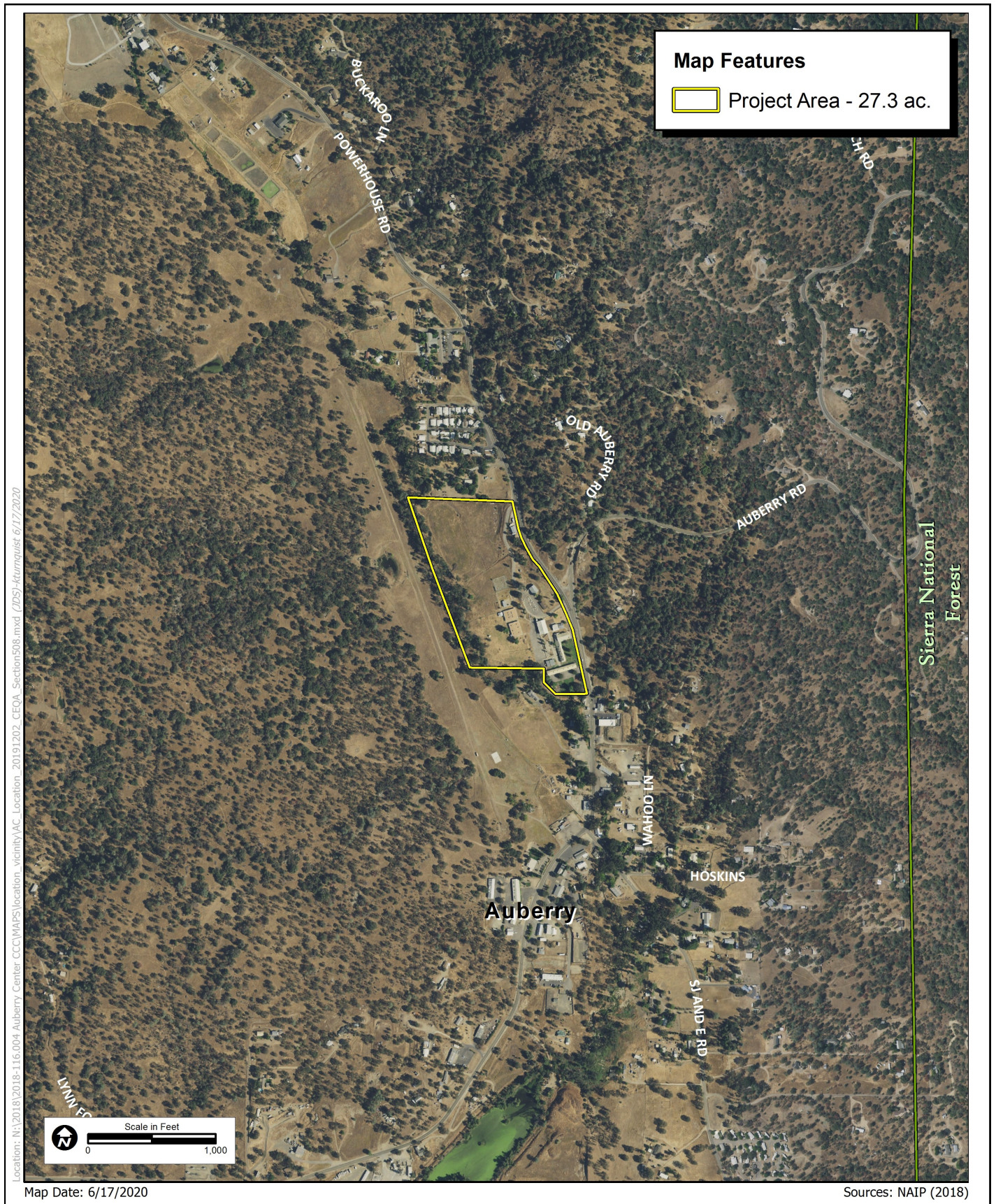


Figure 2-2. Project Location
2018-26.003 CCC Auberry Center

2.2 Project Purpose and Objectives

The Project's purpose and objective is to demolish the existing dilapidated elementary school and construct a new modern facility that will allow the CCC to better fulfill its mission and objectives in the region. To accomplish this, the CCC Auberry Center (Auberry Center, Center, or Proposed Project) is proposed. The Proposed Project will provide for a new residential, training, and operations facility for approximately 100 Corpsmembers and 26 staff in the town of Auberry.

2.3 Surrounding Land Use and Environmental Setting

The Proposed Project is located on a 29.64-acre parcel at 33367 Auberry Road, Auberry, California (Project site). The Project site is on hilly terrain with shuttered buildings, ballfields, and school grounds that are no longer maintained (Figure 2-3). The Project site is located west of the intersection of Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road in the unincorporated town of Auberry in Fresno County. Facilities utilized by the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department are located near the northeast corner of the site, along Auberry Road. The Auberry Volunteer Fire Department entered into a Right of Entry permit with the State and will eventually enter into a lease with the State. This use will remain following the implementation of the Proposed Project.

On the southern boundary of the site along Auberry Road, is a small park that includes playground equipment. The fence is closed and locked; however, the park appears to be actively used by the community. This area is not part of the Project. The southern and western boundaries of the property are defined by a seasonal creek known as Little Sandy Creek. The northern property boundary is a fence line. Auberry Road borders the site on the eastern side.

Surrounding land uses include Mount Ararat Mobile Home Park to the north, rural residential uses with undeveloped grey-oak woodland and rangeland to both the east and west, and a mix of commercial and residential uses along Auberry Road to the south of the Project site.

The approximate elevation of the Project site ranges between 1,950 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) and 2,025 feet above MSL. The Project Area is characterized by a Mediterranean climate that is moderated by the Pacific Ocean. Climate is generally mild with warm days and cool nights, with summer average July high and low temperatures of 94- and 67-degrees Fahrenheit and winter average December high and low temperatures of 54- and 36-degrees Fahrenheit. Average annual rainfall in the area is approximately 24.5 inches (EMKO 2023). The area supports natural habitats including oak-gray pine woodland, riparian and rangeland (ECORP 2019).



Center of site looking northwest toward existing cafeteria to be demolished.



View from driveway looking west toward existing classrooms to be demolished.



Looking north toward existing warehouse, adjacent to driveway.



Looking northeast toward existing cafeteria to be demolished from southern portion of the Project site.



2.4 Project Characteristics

2.4.1 Project Components and Facilities

The Proposed Project Site Plan is shown in Figure 2-4. *Site Plan*, and a description of each component follows.

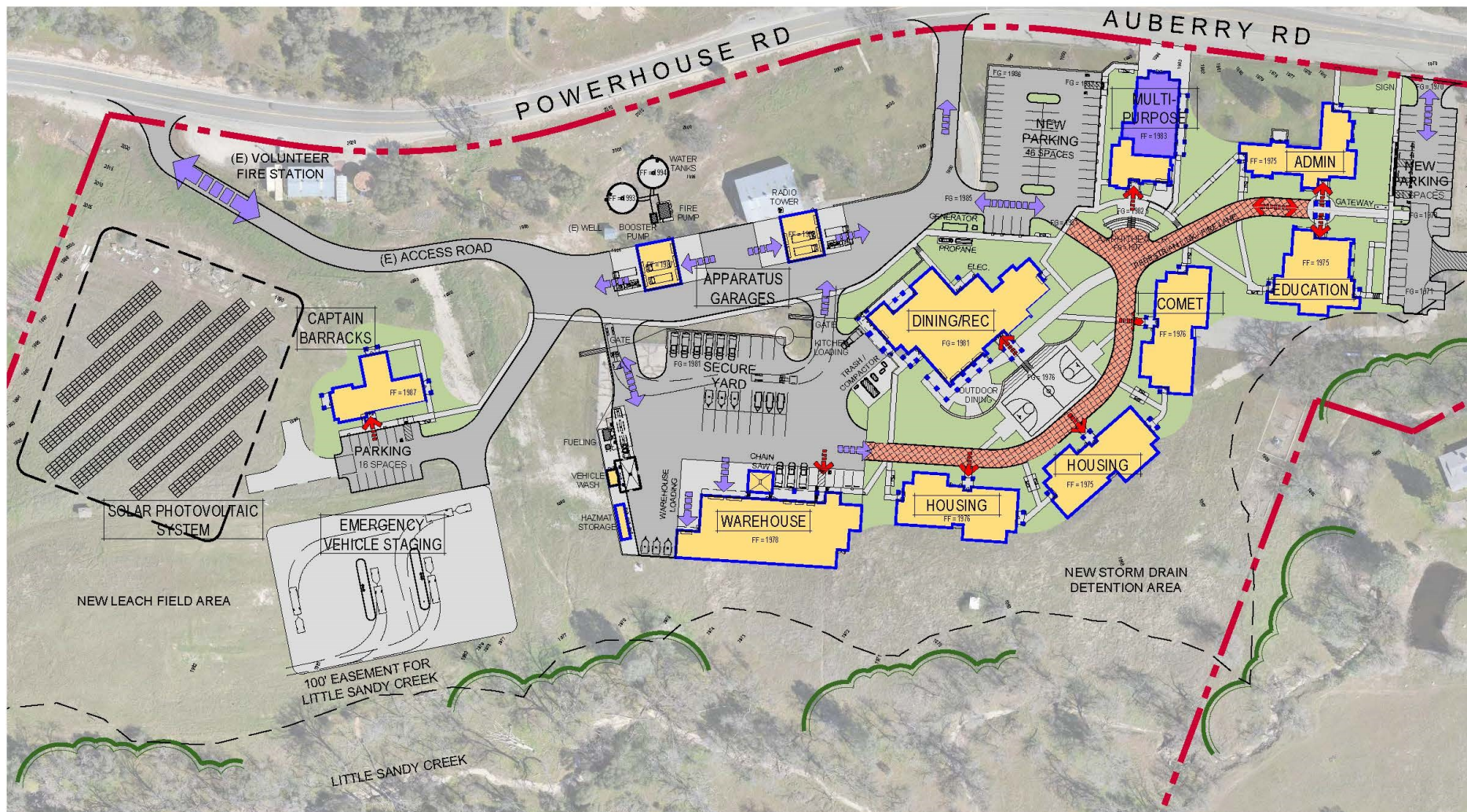
Access, Circulation, and Parking

Access to the CCC facility will be provided from the east side of the Project site, where it connects to Powerhouse/Auberry Road. Two primary entry points are proposed to ensure safe and straightforward circulation for Corpsmembers, staff, and visitors. One entrance/exit is located near the center of the site. This entrance accesses an internal driveway that turns to the north and connects to the other entrance/exit on Powerhouse Road (near the northeast corner of the site adjacent to and north of the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department facilities). Both ingress/egress points and the internal connecting driveway are current features of the Project site. Improvements to parking along the existing internal roadway are part of the Proposed Project.

A third access point is located at the southeast boundary of the site. This ingress/egress is for the parking lot closest to the Administration and Education buildings. This parking lot includes approximately 27 spaces. The Project proposes 3 additional parking lots for a total of 4. The second lot will be located adjacent to the Multi-Purpose building and will be the largest with approximately 49 spaces. The third lot will be in the middle of the site nearest the apparatus garages and will provide approximately 10 spaces. The last lot will be located in the northern portion of the project site and will provide approximately 17 spaces in front of the Staff Living Quarters. Electrical vehicle charging stations will also be provided at several parking stalls per Code requirements. (Figure 2-4).

Emergency Staging Area

Throughout the year, crews from various California emergency response organizations may require use of the CCC's center as a staging area. To accommodate this function onsite, an 40,600 sf emergency staging area will be located to the north of the Warehouse and to the west of the Staff Living Quarters. This staging area will be surfaced with Class II aggregate base over compacted subgrade and will accommodate up to four large vehicles with restroom trailers. It will be designed to accommodate the turning radii of large vehicles with trailers and there will be two raised curb areas with a trailer fill station and dumping station.



Source: Nichols, Melburg & Rossetto Architects + Engineers

Warehouse/Secure Yard

A warehouse and associated secure yard will be used as the staging area for crews heading out to their projects. The warehouse and yard will be accessible via the facility entrances and will be in the center of the CCC facility. The yard will primarily be paved with asphalt concrete, except for crew vehicle parking, where concrete will be used for durability and lower maintenance. Within the gated secure yard will be vehicle fueling, a vehicle wash station, warehouse loading area, service vehicle parking, kitchen loading area, and generator yard. The warehouse yard will include its own perimeter fencing within the campus itself and gated entry for operational security. Vehicular and pedestrian access gates will control entry into the yard. The approximate 73,000- sf warehouse yard will be located next to the Warehouse and Multi-Purpose and Recreation building in the middle of the site.

Corpsmembers also require a place to clean their tools. Covered tables will be located along the eastern outside edge of the warehouse to accommodate this need. Fuel from chainsaws, cleaning agents, and other byproducts of this cleaning process will be collected and contained in a dedicated storage system. Similarly, to prevent contaminants from crew vehicles from entering the storm drain system, a treatment equipment collection/storage system (oil/water separator) will be located at the outdoor vehicle wash bay. The warehouse yard will also include two aboveground storage tanks. One will have both unleaded gasoline and diesel and the other will have chain saw fuel.

Warehouse

The approximate 12,496 sf warehouse will be used for storage, vehicle maintenance, and will facilitate crew meetings for briefing and debriefing before and after work. Corpsmembers will use this building as the rollcall location in the mornings. This will be the location for preparing and cleaning tools, obtaining clothing and materials for work projects as needed. The warehouse building will receive vehicular and pedestrian traffic both at the beginning and end of each day. It will have maximum visibility throughout the building and surrounding yard to prevent any potential incidences and provide means for passive security controls.

Photovoltaic Solar Array

An approximate 60,000-sf ground-mounted Photovoltaic (PV) system solar array will be included on the Project site. The PV system will consist of panels mounted on low structures for ease of cleaning and maintenance. Interconnecting wiring, inverters, and combiner panels will be designed for 480 volts AC power interconnections to the existing medium voltage service.

Dining/Recreation Building

The Dining/Rec building will be approximately 12,971 sf and will be located near the center of the site adjacent to the dorms. This building will include space for food preparation, storage, serving, dining, and restrooms for Corpsmembers, plus staff and visitors. The recreation area will be a centralized meeting area with a TV room, gaming room, music/craft room, reading/quiet room, night staff room, laundry facilities and an open activity/lounge space. Nearby outdoor recreation facilities include a full-size basketball court

and an outdoor dining area where Corpsmembers can meet for social activities, games, physical training, instruction, and entertainment.

The food preparation area will include a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, at least two large refrigerators—one intended for dining hall meals and one for work project meals. A covered seating area will be provided outside of the dining area and will accommodate up to 40 percent of the 100 Corpsmembers. This canopy will be constructed as part of the building and be built from wood stud framing and metal roofing.

Space next to the Dining building will be utilized for a garbage storage area, a grease interceptor drain, a trash compactor unit, wet trash, recycling, and composting bins. A loading zone will include an area for receiving, unloading, and storing goods.

Corpsmember Housing

The Auberry Center is designed to provide housing for 100 Corpsmembers. The CCC provides year round 24-hour-per-day residential operation, including sleeping accommodations. Two Housing buildings totaling (approximately 6,904 sf each, will both accommodate 32 beds (roughly equivalent to two crews each building). Included in each building are laundry facilities and a central gathering space. Dormitories are located west of the outdoor recreation areas near the center of the facility. will At the end of the workday, Corpsmembers return to the facility to bathe, prepare for dining, attend evening classes, and participate in recreational activities. Each Corpsmember is provided with a mattress and linens on a bed with storage space, closet, desk, bathrooms, shower, and drinking fountain/hydration station.

COMET Building

Before applicants become official Corpsmembers, they go through initial orientation and training. This intensive session is called Corpsmember Orientation, Motivation, Education, and Training (COMET). COMET usually takes place monthly and requires trainees to have separate housing from the active Corpsmembers. The COMET building (approximately 7,132 sf) includes bunk beds for up to 32 people and accompanying restrooms, laundry and showers. The COMET Building is located south of the Dinning/Rec building, west of the Multi-Purpose building, and east of the other two dormitory buildings.

Administration Building

The approximately 5,688 sf administration building will be in the southeast portion of the development area near the Education building. The administration building includes a reception area, offices for the CCC staff, a conference room, workstations, offices for CAL FIRE staff, records room, lactation room, copy room, and restroom. The administration building is where Corpsmembers, civil service staff, project sponsors, vendors, parents, and general visitors are welcomed. This area will see much interaction with the pertinent field District office (supervises operations of several centers and/or satellite locations), and headquarters staff. The building will house senior staff members and clerical personnel. Typical staffing may include, but is not limited to, District Director, Conservation Supervisor, Project Coordinator, Business Service Officer, Analysts and Office Technicians and/or Office Assistants. The intent of this building is to allow staff to provide day-to-day program administration, project management, procurement, personnel

management, training, Corpsmember counseling, sponsor development and coordination, and fleet administration. Included in the administration building are six private offices and open office space for CAL FIRE staff who will oversee fire crews operating out of this facility.

Education Building

The approximately 6,389 sf education building will be located near the southern end of the site next to the administration building. The education building includes roughly four offices, three training rooms, a computer lab, library, restrooms, storage and support facilities. Training rooms, library, and computer lab will include mobile furniture. A lactation room will double as a small meeting room, as needed.

Section 14402 of the California PRC directs the CCC to “give priority to providing an educational component for Corpsmembers who have not completed high school. The component shall be equal in content to a high school curriculum and provide course credits leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent.” Corpsmembers participating in these courses will utilize non-project work times and evenings. When non-Section 14402 courses are in session, this facility will be utilized for Corpsmember training activities, as well as additional staff office functions. The intent is to provide flexible space to facilitate the educational component of the CCC program as well as support fire crew operations.

Multi-Purpose

The approximately 5,480 sf Multi-Purpose building will be located near the eastern most portion of the site north of the Administration building and directly off Auberry Road. The building will include the existing 2,959 sf gymnasium and stage along with an addition containing restrooms, shower rooms, a janitor closet, an electric room, data storage room, and weight room. This area will also have an outdoor fitness patio.

Apparatus Garage(s)

The two approximately 2,000 sf apparatus garages will be located within-in the main site access just west of the existing barn and east of the proposed Dinning/Rec Building. Each garage will have four 12 foot by 12.8 foot rolling doors and one 10 foot by 10 foot rolling door. They will house an air compressor, storage, and crew lockers.

Staff Living Quarters

An approximately 4,200 SF staff living quarters will be located east of the emergency staging area and west of the main access road. This building will provide housing for civil servant staff.

Project Statistics

Proposed buildings and facilities and related approximate square footages are listed in Error! Reference source not found.. Listed buildings will be new construction except for the gym which will include upgrades to the existing structure and additions. Buildings will be designed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating requirements in order to attain the highest possible energy efficiency and may include zero net energy (ZNE) pursuant to

the Governor's Executive Order (EO) B-18-12; however, registration and certification for these ratings will not be pursued.

Table 2.4-1. Project Statistic	
Proposed Buildings and Facilities	Area Occupied
Project Site	29.64 acres
Administration Building	5,688 sf
COMET Building	7,132 sf
Staff Living Quarters	4,232 sf
Housing (x2)	6,904 sf each
Education Building	6,389 sf
Dining/Rec Building	12,971 sf
Warehouse Building	12,496 sf
Multi-Purpose (Existing with addition)	6,480 sf
Apparatus Garages (x2)	2,000 sf each
Vehicle Wash	196 sf

2.4.2 Avoidance Areas

There are no wetlands or waters onsite, however, Little Sandy Creek is adjacent to the western Project site boundary. The Proposed Project includes a 75-foot setback from Little Sandy Creek.

2.4.3 Utilities

Water

The Project site is not in proximity to a public water system and it is infeasible to extend service to the site. Four wells are currently located on the site. However, only one well is functional. This well is located near the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department facility. It is capable of pumping at an average rate of 25 gallons per minute and provides water to a 45,000-gallon water tank adjacent to the volunteer fire station. From there, the domestic water runs to a hydro-pneumatic storage tank and booster pump. Fire water is supplied on a separate line directly from the water tank. This water tank is shared with the adjacent volunteer fire department, which fills its fire engine tank prior to fire calls. The Proposed Project will include a new well and two approximately 170,000-gallon water tanks that will serve both domestic and fire water. A domestic water booster pump and a diesel fire pump will connect to the water tanks to provide required water pressure. The three non-functional wells on site will be destroyed and sealed in accordance with California and Fresno County Environmental Health regulations as part of the Project.

Stormwater

A new retention basin will be installed as part of the Project and will be located west of the new dormitories near Little Sandy Creek. The basin will be designed for a potential 100-year storm event to store stormwater runoff from the site. Any excess water will be directed to a designed overflow, where water will flow through cobble and sheet flow following existing drainage patterns. A previously abandoned septic system will be removed as needed for installation of the proposed retention basin.

Wastewater/Septic

The Project site is not served by a sewer district, and both the Project site and surrounding area are served by septic systems. The Project site has multiple septic systems, which are still maintained and are not used by the volunteer fire department. The septic system has been utilized a few times per year to maintain it since the school was closed. Wastewater will be disposed of via a leach field(s). A well-designed leach field has a lifespan of approximately 30 years. There are several existing leach fields on the property. Leach field #1 was installed around 1970 with the auxiliary restroom. Size and date of installation of leach field #2 is unknown. Leach field #3 is smaller and serves the eastern classroom building.

Location and size of the new septic system was determined using the 2022 California Building Code and Table H201.1(2) of the 2022 California Plumbing Code. The aging existing septic system is past its usable life-span. Therefore, the project will abandon and remove all existing leach fields and septic tanks. A new approximately 5,000-gallon septic tank will be installed. Potentially a new leach field will be developed north of the emergency staging area. According to maps provided by the *Web Soil Survey* (Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] 2019), the predominant soil in the area is Visalia Sandy Loam. This is a sandy clay composed of approximately 70% sand, 15% clay and well drained. Based on this information, an estimate of 40 square feet (sf) of leaching area per 100 gallons was used. Maximum absorption capacity was assumed to be 2.5 gallons per sf of leaching area per day. In order to treat the effluent stream, a leaching area of approximately 3,600 sf will be needed.

Electric

Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) will provide electric service to the Project site. A photovoltaic array will be constructed on ground-mounted supports. The array will connect to the facility electrical system to offset the campus load. The array will connect to a small battery system and will also interconnect with the PG&E grid..

Internet and Cable TV

High-speed data infrastructure will be provided throughout the site to support data and voice communication needs. New underground service to the site will be routed to a new main point of entry in the administration or multipurpose building. Telecom/data cabling to each building will be extended via underground conduit from the Minimum Point of Entry (MPOE)/Main Distribution Frame (MDF) room to a data closet in each building. In addition to fixed wiring systems, wireless access points will be provided within each building to support the business and educational needs of the facility. Cable TV service shall be provided to the site via underground conduits routed to the MPOE/MDF room. Cable TV service will be

distributed to the dormitories, education buildings, administration building, recreation building and multipurpose building via underground conduits.

Natural Gas

Project site will use propane for the kitchen and emergency generator usages.

2.4.4 Personnel

CCC Auberry Center staffing is expected to total approximately 26 persons and include those personnel listed in **Error! Reference source not found..** The number of staff onsite will vary throughout the year depending on seasonal needs as well as major fire and other emergency events.

Table 2.4-2. Operations and Personnel Staffing by Building
Administration Building
Open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday 7-10 public visitors per day Full Time Staff (8 hours or more): 6 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0 Corpsmembers (daily average):7
Education Building
Full Time Staff (8 hours or more): 10 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0 Corpsmembers (daily average): 60
Dining/Recreation Building
Full Time Staff (8 hours or more): 2 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0 Corpsmembers (daily average): 80
Warehouse Building
Full Time Staff (8 hours or more): 1 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 8 Corpsmembers (daily average): 60
Housing Building (2 Total)
Residents (8 hours or more): 80 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0
COMET Building
Residents (8 hours or more): 18 for up to 30 days 4-6 times per year. Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0
Apparatus Garage:
Full Time Staff (8 hours or more): 0 Part Time Staff (less than 8 hours): 0 Corpsmembers (daily average): 32

2.4.5 Operations

Typical Auberry Center operations are described below.

Administration

The Auberry Center administration building will serve as the hub of Center activities and will be open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The administration building will be staffed by six full-time employees and will see seven to 10 public visitors, on average, per day.

Warehouse and Crew Operations

Corpsmember field operations consists of up to 3 crews of approximately 16 Corpsmembers each. Crews typically load and unload service truck tools, equipment and supplies at the warehouse and in the staging area in front of the warehouse. In general, crews typically depart the Center around 6:30 a.m. for field operations in two vehicles per crew (a crew carrying vehicle accompanied by pickup truck with trailer) and return at 5:30 p.m. refueling, power washing, training, maintain vehicles, trailers, chain saws and other small gas-powered equipment also occurs in front of the warehouse and along the western boundary of the gated warehouse parking yard. This area also accommodates trash receptacles and a hazardous materials storage area.

Education

Classroom education for Corpsmembers typically occurs Monday-Friday when they return to the center after their workday. Corpsmembers reside onsite while some instructors drive to the Center from offsite locations. An example of type and duration of typical training activities is summarized below:

John Muir Charter School – Monday-Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Career Training – once per week 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Navigator Class – once per week 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Conservation Awareness Class – once per week 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Computer Lab Class – once per week; 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

COMET Training (boot camp) – monthly; Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for 75 hours

Flood Training – eight times per year; Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for 14 hours

Boating and Waterway Training – monthly; 7:00am to 7:00pm for 10 hours

Chain Saw Training – quarterly; Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for 40 hours

HAZWOPER Training – annually; Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for 40 hours

Blue Card Training (class B license) – six times per year for 12 hours

Tree Climbing Training – twice monthly; Monday-Wednesday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for 24 hours

Fire Training – twice monthly; Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for 40 hours

Dining/Rec Building

The dining building will prepare two meals and bag lunches daily, seven days a week.

Housing and COMET Buildings

Housing will typically house Corpsmembers 24 hours per day, year-round. The COMET building will be used for overflow Corpsmember housing during emergency events when additional personnel are on site. COMET building housing is expected to be used almost six times per year for one to two week per use.

Outdoor Onsite Training

Flood and firefighting emergency preparation and training activities typically occur in and around the warehouse and vehicle/trailer parking area. This can include operation of fire extinguishers and firefighting apparatuses as well as small gas-powered equipment such as chainsaws, air compressors, and generators.

Deliveries

Various deliveries (such as U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service, and Federal Express) are likely to occur daily. In addition, solid waste pickup occurs once per week and food deliveries occur approximately twice per week. Mail and overnight deliveries are typically received at the administration building, equipment supplies are received at the warehouse, and kitchen/food supplies will be received at the rear of the multi-purpose building.

Onsite Public Address System

A loudspeaker public address system may be included as part of the project to alert onsite personnel of possible fire alarms and other important information. The speaker system will only be placed at outdoor activity areas where personnel typically gather and will be designed so as not to be audible offsite.

2.5 Construction Schedule and Approach

2.5.1 Schedule

Project construction activities are anticipated to begin in 2025, with an anticipated facility operational date in early 2027. Construction activities will take place between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, or between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sundays as approved by the State.

Construction will consist of the following primary phases.

- Phase 1: Mobilization and Site Layout. The construction team will set up the construction site, including perimeter fencing, job trailers, and implement initial construction BMPs (such as fencing environmentally sensitive areas).
- Phase 2: Civil Site Preparation and Receipt of Construction Materials. The construction team will conduct site and building demolition, minor grading to smooth and contour the site, construct

access roads, install underground utilities, and prepare building sites. Materials needed for project construction will be received and stored onsite within construction staging areas.

- Phase 3: Building construction.
- Phase 4: Signage and Demobilization Activities. Finishing work such as signage will be installed. The construction team will conduct post-construction site restoration, including site cleanup activities, removal of any temporary facilities, and implementation of post-construction BMPs.

2.5.2 Grading

Grading will consist of cuts and fills to smooth new development areas, remove existing building pads and ensure positive drainage throughout the Project site. Some import of soil is anticipated to raise some building pads to provide for better drainage. It is expected that grading will be accomplished using conventional grading equipment listed in Table 2.5-1. Scrapers will cut and transport onsite soil within the Project site. Finish grading will be achieved by motor graders (blades) and skip loaders. Material excavation and compaction activities will primarily be required to install roads to meet fire and safety requirements. Throughout grading operations, water trucks will provide water to the site to achieve the proper moisture content for compaction and dust suppression.

Underground utilities will be installed using standard underground utility trenching methods. Trenches will be excavated by hand or by a backhoe or similar excavation equipment. Underground utility placement will begin once subgrade compaction is achieved following trench excavation, followed by back fill and compaction.

Table 2.5-1. Construction Equipment List

Grading, Underground and Road Construction Phase	Building Construction Phase
3 Dozers 4 Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes 1 Excavator 1 Grader 2 Pavers 2 Paving Equipment 1 Scraper 2 Rollers 1 4,000-gallon water truck	1 Crane 3 Forklifts 1 Generator Set 3 Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes 1 Welder 1 Air Compressor 1 4,000-gallon water truck

2.6 Regulatory Requirements, Permits, and Approvals

This Initial Study provides the environmental information and analysis and primary CEQA documentation necessary for the CCC to adequately consider the effects of the proposed construction project. CCC, as Lead agency, has the approval authority and responsibility for considering the environmental effects of the Proposed Project.

The following approvals and regulatory permits required for implementation of the Proposed Project can be found in Error! Reference source not found..

Table 2.6-1. Regulatory Permits and Approvals

Organization or Issue	Approval or Permit
California Conservation Corps	Adopt IS/MND and Project Approval
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, Construction Storm Water General Permit (including the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and BMPs. SWRCB, Division of Drinking Water – Potable Water System Permit
Division of the State Architect	California Building Code Accessibility compliance review. Approval for Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
Office of the State Fire Marshal	Fire/Life Safety code compliance review suppression and code compliance review.

*The Proposed Project will be located on State-owned property and will remain a State-owned and operated facility. As such, the property will not be within permitting jurisdiction of Fresno County and permits for planning and building activities are not required.

2.7 Consultation with California Native American Tribe(s)

On February 4, 2019, general request for information letters were sent to each representative listed for the tribes on the NAHC response letter. A summary of the consultation process is provided in Section 4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, of this Initial Study.

On March 10, 2019, CCC determined that it had a complete Project description, and were ready to begin review under CEQA. On April 2, 2019, one response was received from the Table Mountain Rancheria Tribal Government Office declining participation, but asked to be notified in the unlikely event that any resources were discovered. The lead agency (CCC) is responsible for carrying out AB 52 consultation. At this time, CCC had not received any formal written requests from any tribes for AB 52 consultation on CCC projects. Because no tribes had sent responses to General Information Request Letters, and no requests for notification had been received from tribes in accordance with PRC Section 21080.3.1(d), no tribes were consulted.

In the absence of tribes wishing to consult, information about potential impacts to TCRs was drawn from: 1) the results of a search of the Sacred Lands File of the NAHC; 2) existing ethnographic information about pre-contact lifeways and settlement patterns; and 3) information on archaeological site records obtained from the CHRIS.

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3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

3.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below will be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☒ Hazards/Hazardous Materials	☐ Recreation
☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Transportation
☒ Air Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☒ Biological Resources	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Utilities and Service Systems
☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Noise	☐ Wildfire
☐ Energy	☒ Paleontological Resources	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance
☒ Geology and Soils	☐ Population and Housing	
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Public Services	

Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	☐
I find that although the Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	☒
I find that the Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.	☐
I find that the Project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.	☐
I find that although the Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the Project, nothing further is required.	☐

AGENCY REP NAME TITLE	Date
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4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Aesthetics

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

Fresno County has a diverse visual landscape that gradually changes from east to west. Starting from the east are the Sierra Nevada, which are rich in coniferous forests and provide scenic views of the varied topography. There are several large reservoirs such as Millerton, Huntington, and Shaver lakes scattered throughout the Sierra, which provide recreational as well as scenic opportunities. The San Joaquin and Kings rivers, which originate high in the Sierra Nevada, are the county's two major rivers. Two scenic highways, State Route (SR) 168 and SR-180, extend down from the Sierras and terminate in the Eastside Valley area. In addition, there are several scenic drives that wind their way through the Sierra and Sierra Foothill areas. The county's built-out environment is located throughout the valley, and much of it is located along the Highway 99 corridor. Agricultural lands consisting of orchards, vineyards, ranches, and various row crops start on the fringe of these communities and extend to cover much of the valley floor. These large farms provide a sense of open space, emphasize the county's rural and farming heritage, and allow motorists opportunities for unrestricted panoramic views. The Coastal Foothills, containing gentle rolling hills with scattered oak trees, extend westward past Interstate 5 (Fresno County 2020).

Project Site Visual Setting

As discussed in the Project Description, the Proposed Project is located on a 29.64-acre parcel at 33367 North Auberry Road, Auberry, California. The Project site is characterized by hilly terrain with shuttered buildings, ballfields, and school grounds that are no longer maintained (Figure 2-3). The Project site is located west of the intersection of Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road in the unincorporated town of Auberry within Fresno County. Facilities utilized by the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department are located near the northeast corner of the site, along Powerhouse Road. There is a small park that includes playground equipment on the southern boundary of the site along Auberry Road, but the area is not part of the Project. The southern and western boundaries of the property are defined by a seasonal creek known as Little Sandy Creek. The northern property boundary is a fence line. Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road border the site on the eastern side. The surrounding land uses include Mount Ararat Mobile Home Park to the north, rural residential uses with undeveloped grey-oak woodland and rangeland to both the east and west, and a mix of commercial and residential uses along Auberry Road to the south of the Project site.

From a development standpoint, Auberry's visual setting is representative of a small-town character which is reflected in the spacing and design of its residences and commercial buildings. The most prominent offsite views of the Project site are from Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road to the east and the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department facilities to the north. A riparian corridor and trees line the north, west, and southwest boundaries of the site, thereby filtering views of the Project site from adjacent parcels.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

Fresno County General Plan 2020 Update

According to the Fresno County General Plan 2020 Update, the physical environment is a key component in planning for future county growth since it contributes directly to the perceived desirability of the county as a place to live, work, and visit. This, in turn, has consequences for the economic vitality of the county since it affects the types and quantity of businesses and residents that ultimately will settle in Fresno County. The General Plan identifies the following policies to minimize visual impacts of land development.

Scenic Resources

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Policy OS-K.1</i> | <i>The County shall encourage the preservation of outstanding scenic views, panoramas, and vistas wherever possible. Methods to achieve this could include encouraging private property owners to enter into open space easements for designated scenic areas.</i> |
| <i>Policy OS-K.2</i> | <i>The County shall identify and map significant scenic resources within the County and shall develop a program to manage these resources.</i> |
| <i>Policy OS-K.3</i> | <i>The County should preserve areas of natural scenic beauty and provide for public access to scenic vistas by purchasing sites for park use.</i> |
| <i>Policy OS-K.4</i> | <i>The County should require development adjacent to scenic areas, vistas, and roadways to incorporate natural features of the site and be developed to minimize impacts to the scenic qualities of the site.</i> |

Scenic Roadways

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Policy OS-L.1</i> | <i>The County designates a system of scenic roadways that includes landscaped drives, scenic drives, and scenic highways.</i> |
| <i>Policy OS-L.2</i> | <i>The County shall manage designated landscaped drives and adjacent land based on the following principles:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>a) Maintenance and improvement of landscaped drives should be directed toward preserving and enhancing the quality of the landscape within the right-of-way. Where deemed necessary or desirable, the Board of Supervisors should, by resolution, assume responsibility for maintenance and improvement of landscaped drives; and</i><i>b) Development of land adjoining landscaped drives should be planned and designed to preserve the quality and integrity of the roadside landscape.</i> |

Policy OS-L.3

The County shall manage the use of land adjacent to scenic drives and scenic highways based on the following principles:

- a) Timber harvesting within or adjacent to the right-of-way shall be limited to that which is necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of the forest;*
- b) Proposed high voltage overhead transmission lines and towers shall be routed to minimize detrimental effects on scenic amenities visible from the right-of-way;*
- c) Installation of signs visible from the right-of-way shall be limited to business identification signs, onsite real estate signs, and traffic control signs necessary to maintain safe traffic conditions. All billboards and other advertising structures shall be prohibited from location within view of the right-of-way;*
- d) Intensive land development proposals including, but not limited to, subdivisions of more than four lots, commercial developments, and mobile home parks shall be designed to blend into the natural landscape and minimize visual scarring of vegetation and terrain. The design of said development proposals shall also provide for maintenance of a natural open space area 200 feet in depth parallel to the right-of-way. Modification of the setback requirement may be appropriate when any one of the following conditions exist*
 - 1. Topographic or vegetative characteristics preclude such a setback;*
 - 2. Topographic or vegetative characteristics provide screening of buildings and parking areas from the right-of-way;*
 - 3. Property dimensions preclude such a setback; or*
 - 4. Development proposal involves expansion of an existing facility or an existing concentration of uses.*
- e) Subdivision proposals shall be designed to minimize the number of right-of-way access drives;*
- f) Developments involving concentration of commercial uses shall be designed to function as an integral unit with common parking areas and right-of-way access drives; and*
- g) Outside storage areas associated with commercial activities shall be completely screened from view of the right-of-way with landscape*

plantings or artificial screens which harmonize with the natural landscape.

- Policy OS-L.4 The County shall require proposed new development along designated scenic roadways within urban areas and unincorporated communities to underground utility lines on and adjacent to the site of proposed development or, when this is infeasible, to contribute their fair share of funding for future undergrounding.*
- Policy OS-L.5 The County road improvement projects involving designated scenic roadways shall be constructed to ensure that consideration is given to preservation of ornamental trees consistent with public safety standards and accepted road design.*
- Policy OS-L.6 The County shall request city, State, and Federal agencies to maintain County-designated landscaped drives, scenic drives, and scenic highways under their jurisdictions in a manner consistent with the goals and policies in this section.*
- Policy OS-L.7 The County shall encourage the State of California to landscape urban freeway and highway routes which pass through Fresno County. Policy OS-L.8 The County shall encourage cities within Fresno County to develop complementary policies and principles to enhance the visual qualities of streets and highways within their boundaries.*
- Policy OS-L.9 The County shall work with the Department of Transportation to pursue scenic highway designation from the State of California for the State highway segments eligible for such designation.*
- Policy LU-B.11 The County shall require that new development requiring a County discretionary permit be planned and designed to maintain the scenic open space character of rangelands including view corridors of highways. New development shall utilize natural landforms and vegetation in the least visually disruptive way possible, and use design, construction and maintenance techniques that minimize the visibility of structures on hillsides, ridgelines, steep slopes, and canyons.*

State Scenic Highways

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) administers the California Scenic Highway Program, which is the only official program in Fresno County designed to protect and enhance scenic/visual resources. The goal of the California Scenic Highway Program is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of California. The program develops and implements a scenic corridor protection program containing five accepted land use planning standards. A legislatively- appointed body, the Departmental

Transportation Advisory Committee, has the responsibility of recommending program criteria, reviewing applications and recommending eligible highways for official scenic highway designation, and advising the Director of Caltrans to revoke the official designation of any existing scenic highway which is no longer in compliance with the program. Other regulations that assist in minimizing impacts from urban land uses, to some extent, include County zoning and development standards and regulations (Fresno County 2020).

The California Scenic Highway Program protects and enhances the scenic beauty of California's highways and adjacent corridors. A highway can be designated as scenic based on how much natural beauty can be seen by users of the highway, the quality of the scenic landscape, and if development impacts the enjoyment of the view (Caltrans 2013). Two scenic highways, SR-168 and SR-180, extend down from the Sierras and terminate in the Eastside Valley area in Fresno County. In addition, there are several scenic drives that wind through the Sierra and Sierra Foothill areas (Fresno County 2000). SR-168 is the primary option from which to access Fresno and Clovis from the Project site. SR-180 does not come near the Project site.

Two portions of SR-168 are designated as National Forest Scenic Byways: the segment between Clovis and Huntington Lake is the Sierra Heritage Scenic Byway, while the segment from Camp Sabrina to Brockman Lane is the Ancient Bristlecone Scenic Byway. The Sierra Heritage Scenic Byway begins in Old Town Clovis, a suburb of Fresno. Clovis, the *Gateway to the Sierras*, offers shopping, antique stores, restaurants, and coffee shops. The byway leaves Clovis and travels up the western slope of the Sierras, through the Sierra National Forest. Shaver Lake offers lodging, horseback riding, skiing, camping, fishing, and mountain biking. Recreation enthusiasts can enjoy boating, fishing, camping, skiing, wildlife viewing, and alpine views in the Huntington Lake area. Sailboat races are held throughout the summer. The byway ends at 9,000 feet at Kaiser Pass Meadow and the Kaiser Wilderness Area. This area is known for hiking trails and rock climbing (National Geographic 2020).

4.1.3 Aesthetics (I) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Proposed Project will demolish an abandoned school and construct a new facility for CCC year-round operations and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) emergency staging use. The Project site is not within a designated scenic area or located within a scenic vista. Therefore, site development will not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and no impact will occur.

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:

- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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☐	☐	☐	☒
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No impact.

Although state scenic highway SR-168 (Sierra Heritage Scenic Byway) connects to Auberry Road 2.6 miles south of the Project site, the Proposed Project will not affect scenic resources along this state scenic highway. The majority, if not all, existing onsite trees will be preserved within open space corridors and developed areas will include complementary landscape plantings. The Project will not substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway viewshed. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:

- c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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☐	☐	☐	☒
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No Impact.

The Project site exists within the rural Census Designated Place of Auberry and is zoned Rural Residential. The site is currently developed and consists of abandoned school buildings and a field area. The Project site is partially screened from public view, as the western and southern boundaries are buffered by Little Sandy Creek and a riparian corridor. The public viewing location is from the north and east along Auberry and Powerhouse Roads. Mount Ararat Mobile Home Park, which is further north than the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department, may have tree-obstructed views of the Project site. Overall, the Proposed Project will improve the visual character of the Project site. The dilapidated buildings on site will be demolished and replaced with new buildings within the existing footprints. Trees will be preserved and an easement for Little Sandy Creek is part of the Proposed Project. As such, proposed development will not significantly degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Project Site or its surroundings nor will it conflict with other regulations governing scenic quality. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Project development will include building and landscape-level lighting typical of similar developments. Exterior lighting will achieve a minimum exterior illumination level of one foot-candle minimum at grade level. Building perimeters will be highlighted by wall-mounted light fixtures and downlights and will provide coverage for pedestrians in proximity of buildings. All corridors, exit pathways, and other areas required by code will be illuminated to current California Building Code (CBC) minimum standards and all exterior fixtures will be dark-sky compliant.

The above noted design features ensure the Project will not create a new source of substantial light or glare that could adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact will be less than significant, and no mitigation will be required.

4.1.4 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no Mitigation Measures (MM) are required.

4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

4.2.1 Environmental Setting

Agriculture

Per the 2018 Fresno County Crop and Livestock Report, the top crops in the County are almonds, pistachios, and grapes (Fresno County 2019). Fresno County's total gross production value for 2018 is \$7,887,583,790. This represents an increase of \$859,559,690 or 12.23 percent over the previous year's total of \$7,028,024,100. Fresno County's agricultural strength is based on the diversity of crops produced. Included in the 2018 report are more than 300 different commodities, 76 of which have a gross value in excess of \$1,000,000 (Fresno County 2019).

Forestry

The Sierra National Forest occupies the northeastern corner of Fresno County; the closest point to the Project site is approximately 1.5 miles east. The Sierra National Forest is comprised of 1,300,000 acres; terrain includes oak-covered foothills, heavily forested slopes, and the tundra landscape of the High Sierra. Vegetation types include mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands and savannah, chaparral, and annual and perennial grass glades, among others.

The Sequoia National Forest occupies the southeastern tip of the county and is southeast of the Project site. The Sequoia National Forest takes its name from the giant sequoia, the world's largest tree, which grows in more than 30 groves in the forest's lower elevation slopes. The Sequoia's landscape includes granite monoliths, glacier-carved canyons, whitewater rivers, and elevations ranging from 1,000 feet in the foothill region to peaks over 12,000 feet in the rugged high country, providing visitors with spectacular views.

The Project site is designated Mountain Urban by the Fresno County General Plan and zoned Rural Residential by the County Zoning Code. The site is currently dilapidated and abandoned and not used for any agricultural or forestry purposes.

4.2.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources (II) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (DOC 2017a), which identifies and maps significant farmland. Farmland is classified using a system of five categories including Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land. The classification of farmland as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance is based on the suitability of soils for agricultural production, as determined by a soil survey conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS, DOC 2017b]. DOC manages an interactive website called the California Important Farmland Finder. This website program identifies the Project site as being urban and built-up land, and, therefore, not considered to be agriculturally important land [DOC 2017a]. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The site is zoned Rural Residential in the Fresno County Zoning Code. This zoning district was not intended for agricultural uses. DOC also maintains mapping for Williamson Act contracts by county. As shown on the map for Fresno County, the site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract. [DOC 2010]. Therefore, the Proposed Project will result in no impact to Williamson Act contract lands or land zoned for agricultural uses. No mitigation will be required.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Project site contains no forest or timber resources and is not zoned for forestland protection or timber production. There will be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Proposed Project will not convert forest land to non-forest use. There will be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located within the County of Fresno on land designated for development. The lands immediately west are suitable for grazing, but the Proposed Project will not hinder the use of those lands in any way. The Sierra National Forest is approximately 2,700 feet east of the Project site. The intended purpose of the Proposed Project and the CCC will be to aid in responding to natural and humanmade disasters and conservation efforts. Therefore, Project development is not expected to result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Related impacts are considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

4.2.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified; no mitigation measures are required.

4.3 Air Quality

This assessment was prepared using methods and assumptions recommended in the rules and regulations of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). Regional and local existing conditions are presented, along with pertinent pollutant emissions standards and regulations. The purpose of this assessment is to estimate criteria air pollutants attributable to the Project and determine the level of impact the Project will have on the environment.

4.3.1 Environmental Setting

The Project Area is located in unincorporated Fresno County. The California Air Resource Board (CARB) has divided California into regional air basins according to topographic features. Fresno County lies in a region identified as the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). The SJVAB occupies the southern two-thirds of the Central Valley and includes eight counties. The SJVAB is mostly flat, less than 1,000 feet in elevation, and is surrounded on three sides by the Sierra Nevada, Tehachapi, and Coast Range mountains. This bowl-shaped feature forms a natural barrier to the dispersion (spreading over an area) of air pollutants. As a result, the SJVAB is highly susceptible to pollutant accumulation over time.

The climate in the SJVAB is strongly influenced by the presence of mountain ranges. The mountains create a partial rain shadow over the valley and block the free circulation of air, trapping stable air in the valley for extended periods. The climate is semi-arid and is characterized by long, hot, dry summers and cool, wet, and foggy winters. Based on historical data obtained from the meteorological station located in Bakersfield, ambient temperatures range from an average minimum of 39°F in January to an average maximum of 98°F in July. The average monthly precipitation is approximately 6.24 inches per year, with January and February averaging 1.35 inches. The average daily wind speed is 5.9 miles per hour (mph). The air flow patterns are characterized by one of four directions depending on the season. For example, during the summer, winds are predominantly northwestern (up valley), while winters typically feature a prevailing stagnant condition that leads to high incidence of valley fog.

Both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CARB have established ambient air quality standards for common pollutants. These ambient air quality standards establish safe levels of

contaminants that avoid specific adverse health effects associated with each pollutant. The ambient air quality standards cover what are called criteria pollutants because the health and other effects of each pollutant are described in criteria documents. The six criteria pollutants are Ozone (O₃), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Particulate Matter (PM), Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), and lead. Areas that meet ambient air quality standards are classified as attainment areas, while areas that do not meet these standards are classified as nonattainment areas.

The air quality regulating authority in Fresno County is the SJVAPCD. The agency's primary responsibility is ensuring that the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and California Ambient Air Quality Standards are attained and maintained in the SJVAB, which encompasses Fresno County and the Project Site. Fresno County is designated as a nonattainment area under the national standards for O₃ and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and designated as a nonattainment area under the state standards for O₃, coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀) and PM_{2.5} (CARB 2022). The SJVAPCD is responsible for adopting or creating a comprehensive plan to reduce the emissions of these criteria pollutants. They also enforce rules and regulations, inspect and issue permits for stationary sources of air pollutants, respond to citizen complaints, monitor ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, award grants to reduce motor vehicle emissions, and conduct public education campaigns. The SJVAPCD coordinates work from government agencies, businesses, and private citizens to achieve and maintain healthy air quality.

The following is a list of noteworthy SJVAPCD rules that are required of construction activities associated with the Project:

- **Regulation IV (Visible Emissions), Rule 4101, Nuisance.** The purpose of this rule is to protect the health and safety of the public from source operations that emit or may emit air contaminants or other materials. It prohibits emissions of air contaminants or other materials "which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public."
- **Regulation IV (Visible Emissions), Rule 4601, Architectural Coatings.** The rule limits volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from architectural coatings and specifies practices for proper storage, cleanup, and labeling requirements. Rule 4601 applies to "any person who supplies, sells, offers for sale, applies, or solicits the application of any architectural coating, or who manufactures, blends or repackages any architectural coating for use within the District." Materials covered by the rule include adhesives, architectural coatings, paints, varnishes, sealers, stains, concrete curing compounds, concrete/masonry sealers, and waterproofing sealers.
- **Regulation IV (Visible Emissions), Rule 4641, Cutback, Slow Curve and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations.** The purpose of this rule is to limit VOC emissions by restricting the application and manufacturing of certain types of asphalt and maintenance operations and applies to the use of these materials. Specifically, certain types of asphalt cannot be used for penetrating prime coat, dust palliative, or other paving: rapid cure and medium cure cutback asphalt, slow cure asphalt that contains more than 0.5 percent of organic compound which evaporates at 500°F or lower, and emulsified asphalt containing VOC in excess of 3 percent which evaporates at 500°F or lower.

- **Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM₁₀ Prohibitions), Rules 8021–8071, Fugitive PM₁₀ Prohibitions.** The purpose of these rules is to limit airborne particulate emissions associated with construction, demolition, excavation, extraction, and other earthmoving activities, as well as with open disturbed land and emissions associated with paved and unpaved roads. Accordingly, these rules include specific measures to be employed to prevent and reduce fugitive dust emissions from anthropogenic sources.
- **Regulation IX (Mobile and Indirect Sources), Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review.** This rule is the result of state requirements outlined in California Health and Safety Code Section 40604 and the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The air district's SIP commitments were originally contained in the SJVAPCD's 2003 PM₁₀ Plan and Extreme Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plans, which presented the SJVAPCD's strategy to reduce PM₁₀ and NO_x in order to reach the ambient air pollution standards on schedule, which had been 2010. The plans quantify the reduction from current SJVAPCD rules and proposed rules, as well as state and federal regulations, and then model future emissions to determine whether the SJVAPCD may reach attainment for applicable pollutants.

This rule will reduce emissions of NO_x and PM₁₀ from new development projects that attract or generate motor vehicle trips. In general, new development contributes to the air pollution problem in the SJVAB by increasing the number of vehicles and vehicle miles traveled. Although newer, cleaner technology is reducing per-vehicle pollution, the emissions increase from new development partially offsets emission reductions gained from technology advances. Indirect Source Review applies to larger development projects that have not yet gained discretionary approval. A discretionary permit is a permit from a public agency, which requires some amount of deliberation by that agency, including the potential to require modifications or conditions on the project. In accordance with this rule, developers of larger residential, commercial, and industrial projects are required to reduce smog-forming NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions from their projects' baselines as follows:

- 20 percent of construction NO_x exhaust
- 45 percent of construction PM₁₀ exhaust
- 33 percent of operational NO_x over 10 years
- 50 percent of operational PM₁₀ over 10 years

These reductions are intended to be achieved through incorporation of on-site reduction measures. If, after implementation of on-site emissions reduction measures project emissions still exceed the minimum baseline reduction, the Indirect Source Review requires a project applicant to pay an off-site fee to the SJVAPCD, which is then used to fund clean-air projects within the air basin.

4.3.2 Air Quality (III) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

As part of its enforcement responsibilities, the USEPA requires each state with nonattainment areas to prepare and submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that demonstrates the means to attain the federal standards. The SIP must integrate federal, state, and local plan components and regulations to identify specific measures to reduce pollution in nonattainment areas, using a combination of performance standards and market-based programs. The Project region is classified as nonattainment for the federal O₃ and PM_{2.5} standards and is also a nonattainment area for state O₃, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ standards (CARB 2022). The USEPA, under the provisions of the Clean Air Act (CAA), requires each state with regions that have not attained the federal air quality standards to prepare a SIP detailing how these standards are to be met in each local area. The SIP is a legal agreement between each state and the federal government to commit resources to improving air quality. It serves as the template for conducting regional and project-level air quality analysis. CARB is the lead agency for developing the SIP in California. Local air districts, such as the SJVAPCD, prepare air quality attainment plans or air quality management plans and submit them to CARB for review, approval, and incorporation into the applicable SIP. The air districts develop the strategies stated in the SIPs for achieving air quality standards on a regional basis.

The SJVAPCD is required, pursuant to the federal CAA, to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants for which the SJVAB is in nonattainment. In order to reduce such emissions, the SJVAPCD prepared the following air quality plans:

- 2004 Extreme Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan
- 2007 Plan for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone Standard
- 2009 Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT)
- 2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard
- 2014 RACT SIP
- 2016 Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard
- 2020 RACT Demonstration for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard
- 2022 Plan for the 2018 *-Hour Ozone Standard
- 2007 PM₁₀ Maintenance Plan
- 2008 PM_{2.5} Plan

- 2012 PM_{2.5} Plan
- 2015 Plan for the 1997 PM_{2.5} Standard
- 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM_{2.5} Standard
- 2018 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM_{2.5} Standard

These plans collectively address the air basin's nonattainment status with the national and state O₃ standards as well as particulate matter by establishing a program of rules and regulations directed at reducing air pollutant emissions and achieving state (California) and national air quality standards. Pollutant control strategies are based on the latest scientific and technical information and planning assumptions.

According to the SJVAPCD (2015), the established thresholds of significance for criteria pollutant emissions are based on SJVAPCD New Source Review offset requirements for stationary sources. Stationary sources in the SJVAB are subject to some of the most stringent regulatory requirements in the nation. Emission reductions achieved through implementation of SJVAPCD offset requirements are a major component of SJVAPCD's air quality planning efforts. Thus, projects with emissions below the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants are determined to "Not conflict or obstruct implementation of the SJVAPCD's air quality plan" (SJVAPCD 2015). As shown in Tables 4.3-1 and 3, both Project construction and Project operations will not generate emissions that will exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds and therefore will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new air quality violations. Furthermore, implementation of MM AQ-1, described below, will reduce construction-generated emissions below what is required in Rule 9510 and MM AQ-2 will reduce operational-generated emissions or offset operational emissions with payment of a fine.

Table 4.3-1. Unmitigated Construction-Related Emissions (Regional Significance Analysis)						
Construction Year	Maximum Pollutants (tons per year)					
	ROG	NO_x	CO	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Construction Year 1 (2025)	0.45	3.45	3.58	0.01	0.57	0.32
Construction Year 2 (2026)	0.47	2.37	3.33	0.01	0.13	0.10
Construction Year 3 (2027)	0.09	0.46	0.67	0.00	0.03	0.02
<i>SJVAPCD Potentially Significant Impact Threshold</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>
Exceed SCAQMD Regional Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. Refer to Appendix A for Model Data Outputs.

Notes: Emission reduction/credits for construction emissions are applied based on the required implementation of SJVAPCD Regulation VIII. The specific regulation applied in CalEEMod was watering unpaved surfaces three times per day with a maximum vehicle speed of 15 mph.

The Project will not conflict with any applicable air quality plans. There is no impact.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. No single project is sufficient in size, by itself, to result in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. If a project's individual emissions exceed its identified significance thresholds, the project will be cumulatively considerable. Projects that do not exceed significance thresholds will not be considered cumulative considerable.

A portion of the Project's air quality impacts are attributable to construction activities. The majority of the long-term air quality impacts will be due to the operation of motor vehicles traveling to and from the site. For purposes of impact assessment, air quality impacts have been separated into construction impacts and operational impacts.

Regional Construction Emission Impacts

Construction-generated emissions are temporary and short-term but have the potential to represent a significant air quality impact. Three basic sources of short-term emissions will be generated through construction of the Project: operation of the construction vehicles (i.e., excavators, trenchers, dump trucks), the creation of fugitive dust during clearing and grading, and the use of asphalt or other oil-based substances during paving activities. Construction activities such as excavation and grading operations, construction vehicle traffic, and wind blowing over exposed soils will generate exhaust emissions and fugitive PM emissions that affect local air quality at various times during construction. Effects will be variable depending on the weather, soil conditions, the amount of activity taking place, and the nature of dust control efforts. The dry climate of the area during the summer months creates a high potential for dust generation. Construction activities will be subject to SJVAPCD Regulation VIII, which specifies the following measures to control fugitive dust:

- Apply water to unpaved surfaces and areas.
- Use nontoxic chemical or organic dust suppressants on unpaved roads and traffic areas.
- Limit or reduce vehicle speed on unpaved roads and traffic areas to a maximum 15 miles per hour.
- Maintain areas in a stabilized condition by restricting vehicle access.

- Install wind barriers.
- During high winds, cease outdoor activities that disturb the soil.
- Keep bulk materials sufficiently wet when handling.
- Store and handle materials in a three-sided structure.
- When storing bulk materials, apply water to the surface or cover the storage pile with a tarp.
- Do not overload haul trucks. Overloaded trucks are likely to spill bulk materials.
- Cover haul trucks with a tarp or other suitable cover. Or, wet the top of the load enough to limit visible dust emissions.
- Clean the interior of cargo compartments on emptied haul trucks prior to leaving a site.
- Prevent trackout by installing a trackout control device.
- Clean up trackout at least once a day. If along a busy road or highway, clean up trackout immediately.
- Monitor dust-generating activities and implement appropriate measures for maximum dust control.

Construction-generated emissions associated with the Project were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to quantify potential criteria pollutant emissions associated with both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. Project construction-generated air pollutant emissions were calculated using CalEEMod model defaults for Fresno County. Appendix A provides more information regarding the construction assumptions, including construction equipment and duration, used in this analysis.

Predicted maximum daily construction-generated emissions for the Project are summarized in Table 4.3-1. Construction-generated emissions are short-term and of temporary duration, lasting only as long as construction activities occur, but will be considered a significant air quality impact if the volume of pollutants generated exceeds the SJVAPCD's thresholds of significance.

As shown in Table 4.3-1, construction-generated emissions will not exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds or result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard for.

In addition to the SJVAPCD criteria air pollutant thresholds, SJVAPCD Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review, aims to fulfill the District's emission reduction commitments in the PM₁₀ and Ozone Attainment Plans. This rule applies to the following construction projects within the jurisdiction of the SJVAPCD:

- 50 residential units
- 2,000 sf of commercial space

- 25,000 sf of light industrial space
- 100,000 sf of heavy industrial space
- 20,000 sf of medical office space
- 39,000 sf of general office space
- 9,000 sf of educational space
- 10,000 sf of government space
- 20,000 sf of recreational space; or
- 9,000 sf of space not identified above.

This rule also applies to any transportation or transit project where construction exhaust emissions equal or exceed two tons of NO_x or two tons of PM₁₀. The project developers are required to reduce concentrations of NO_x by 20 percent and PM₁₀ by 45 percent during construction activities.

This Project is proposing the construction of more than 10,000 sf of government space. Therefore, the Project is required to comply with Rule 9510. In accordance with Rule 9510, the Project applicant is required to prepare a detailed Air Impact Assessment (AIA) for submittal to the SJVAPCD, which demonstrates reduction of NO_x emissions from the Project's baseline by 20 percent and PM₁₀ emissions from the Project's baseline by 45 percent. Therefore, MM AQ-1, described in detail below, is required.

As demonstrated in Table 4.3-2, implementation of MM AQ-1 will reduce total NO_x emissions by 127 percent and total PM₁₀ emissions by 70 percent, which is beyond the reduction needed to achieve the SJVAPCD Rule 9510 target.

Table 4.3-2. Construction Related NO_x & PM₁₀ Emissions- Baseline and Mitigated (tons per year)			
Construction	NO_x Baseline	NO_x Mitigated	Percent Reduction
Total Construction	6.28	1.38	127 percent
<i>SJVAPCD Rule 9510 NO_x Reduction Target</i>			<i>20 percent</i>
Construction Year	PM₁₀ Baseline	PM₁₀ Mitigated	Percent Reduction
Total Construction	0.73	0.35	70 percent
<i>SJVAPCD Rule 9510 PM₁₀ Reduction Target</i>			<i>45 percent</i>

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. See Appendix A for emission outputs.

As previously stated, construction-generated emissions will not exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds. However, construction activities include the construction of more than 10,000 sf of government space, instigating the implementation of Rule 9510 and the requirement to reduce NO_x emissions from the Project's unmitigated baseline by 20 percent and PM₁₀ emissions from the Project unmitigated baseline by 45 percent. MM AQ-1 will result in a greater than 20 percent reduction of NO_x emissions from the

unmitigated baseline and a greater than 45 percent reduction of PM₁₀ emissions from the unmitigated baseline for all construction activities.

Regional Operational Emission Impacts

Implementation of the Project will result in long-term operational emissions of criteria air pollutants such as PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, and SO₂ as well as ozone precursors such as Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) and NO_x. Project-generated increases in emissions will be predominantly associated with motor vehicle use. Operational air pollutant emissions were based on the Project Site plans and the estimated traffic trip generation rates from KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. (2020).

Long-term operational emissions attributable to the Project are identified in Table 4.3-3 and compared to the regional operational significance thresholds promulgated by the SJVAPCD.

Table 4.3-3. Operational-Related Emissions (Regional Significance Analysis)						
Construction Year	Maximum Pollutants (tons per year)					
	ROG	NO_x	CO	SO₂	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
Mobile Source	0.07	0.09	0.62	0.00	0.07	0.01
Area Source	0.37	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy Use	0.01	0.14	0.12	0.00	0.01	0.01
Total:	0.45	0.23	1.02	0.00	0.08	0.02
<i>SJVAPCD Significance Threshold</i>	10	10	15	15	100	27
Exceed SJVAPCD Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. Refer to Appendix A for Model Data Outputs.

Notes: Emission projections predominately based on CalEEMod model defaults for Fresno County. Average daily vehicle trips provided by KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. (2020).

As indicated in Table 4.3-3, operational-generated emissions will not exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds.

Although operational emissions are very low, due mainly to the limited daily vehicle trips, the Project is still subject to Rule 9510 and will be required to consult with the SJVAPCD regarding the specific applicability of Rule 9510 in relation to Project operations. In accordance with Rule 9510, the Project applicant will be required to prepare a detailed AIA for submittal to the SJVAPCD demonstrating the reduction from the Project's baseline of NO_x emissions by 33.3 percent. MM AQ-2, described below, is required. Operational emissions from the Project will not exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds and will abide by SJVAPCD Rule 9510 with implementation of MM AQ-2.

A less than significant impact will occur with implementation of MMs AQ-1 and AQ-2.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less Than Significant Impact.

Sensitive receptors are defined as facilities or land uses that include members of the population that are particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. Examples of these sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. CARB has identified the following groups of individuals as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65, children under 14, athletes, and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site are residences located adjacent to the northern and southern site boundary.

Construction-Generated Air Contaminants

Construction of the Project will result in temporary, short-term Project-generated emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM), ROG, NO_x, CO, and PM₁₀ from the exhaust of off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for Project construction; soil hauling truck traffic; paving; and other miscellaneous activities. The portion of the SJVAB which encompasses the Project Area is designated as nonattainment for the federal O₃ and PM_{2.5} standards and is also a nonattainment area for state O₃, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ standards (CARB 2022). Thus, existing O₃, PM_{2.5}, and PM₁₀ levels in the SJVAB are at unhealthy levels during certain periods. However, as shown in Table 4.3-1, the Project will not exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds for construction emissions and therefore no regional health effects from Project criteria pollutants will occur.

Per SJVAPCD guidance, this analysis employs the SJVAPCD Prioritization Calculator health risk screening tool to assess the potential health risk-related effects of Project construction. The SJVAPCD Prioritization Calculator identifies a Prioritization score based on the Project emission potency at the vicinity sensitive residential receptors. A prioritization score of 10 or greater, as determined by this screening protocol, is potentially significant and indicates that mitigation should be imposed, or a detailed Health Risk Assessment should be performed.

In addition to cancer risk, the significance thresholds for Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC) exposure requires an evaluation of non-cancer risk stated in terms of a hazard index. A chronic hazard index of 1.0 is considered individually significant. It should be noted that there is no acute health hazard for DPM, which is the only significant air toxic associated with construction for this Project. Thus, the maximum acute index for construction of the Project is zero.

As previously stated, the nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site are residences located adjacent to the northern and southern site boundary with the closest being less than 100 meters from proposed construction activities. The calculated carcinogenic risk and highest maximum chronic hazard indexes at the nearby sensitive residential receptors due to Project construction is depicted in Table 4.3-4.

Table 4.3-4. Health Risk Summary			
Exposure Scenario	Maximum Cancer Risk at Residence	Maximum Chronic Hazard Index at Residence	Maximum Acute Hazard Index at Residence
Project Construction	0.3	0.0009	0.0
<i>SJVAPCD Screening Threshold</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>
Exceed SJVAPCD Screening Threshold?	No	No	No

Source: SJVAPCD Prioritization Calculator. Refer to Appendix A for Model Data Outputs.

As shown in Table 4.3-4, impacts related to both cancer risk and non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard indexes) because of Project construction will not surpass the screening thresholds at the nearest permanent, offsite sensitive residential receptors. Therefore, Project construction will not result in a potentially significant contribution to regional concentrations of nonattainment pollutants and will not result in a significant contribution to the adverse health impacts associated with those pollutants.

Operational Air Contaminants

Operation of the Project will not result in the development of any substantial sources of air toxics. There are no stationary sources associated with the operations of the Project. Nor will the Project attract mobile sources that spend long periods queuing and idling at the site. Thus, by its very nature, will not be a source of TAC concentrations during Project operations. Impacts in this regard will be less than significant.

Valley Fever

Coccidioidomycosis, often referred to as San Joaquin Valley Fever or Valley Fever, is one of the most studied and oldest known fungal infections. Valley Fever most commonly affects people who live in hot dry areas with alkaline soil and varies with the season. This disease, which affects both humans and animals, is caused by inhalation of arthroconidia (spores) of the fungus *Coccidioides immitis* (CI). CI spores are found in the top few inches of soil and the existence of the fungus in most soil areas is temporary. The cocci fungus (an organism that grows and feeds on dead or decaying organic matter) lives as a saprophyte in dry, alkaline soil. When weather and moisture conditions are favorable, the fungus "blooms" and forms many tiny spores that lie dormant in the soil until they are stirred up by wind, vehicles, excavation, or other ground-moving activities and become airborne. Agricultural workers, construction workers, and other people who work outdoors and who are exposed to wind and dust are more likely to contract Valley Fever. Children and adults whose hobbies or sports activities expose them to wind and dust are also more likely to contract Valley Fever. After the fungal spores have settled in the lungs, they change into a multicellular structure called a spherule. Fungal growth in the lungs occurs as the spherule grows and bursts, releasing endospores, which then develop into more spherules.

Valley fever (Coccidioidomycosis) is found in California, including Fresno County. In about 50 to 75 percent of people, valley fever causes either no symptoms or mild symptoms and those infected never seek medical care; when symptoms are more pronounced, they usually present as lung problems (cough, shortness of breath, sputum production, fever, and chest pains). The disease can progress to chronic or progressive lung disease and may even become disseminated to the skin, lining tissue of the brain (meninges), skeleton, and other body areas.

When soil containing this fungus is disturbed by ground-disturbing activities such as digging or grading, by vehicles raising dust, or by the wind, the fungal spores get into the air. When people breathe the spores into their lungs, they may get valley fever. Fungal spores are small particles that can grow and reproduce in the body. The highest infection period for valley fever occurs during the driest months in California, between June and November. Infection from valley fever during ground-disturbing activities can be partially mitigated through the control of Project-generated dust. Project-generated dust will be controlled by adhering to SJVAPCD dust-reducing measures (Regulation VIII), which includes the preparation of a SJVAPCD-approved dust control plan describing all fugitive dust control measures that are to be implemented before, during, and after any dust-generating activity.

With conformance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII, dust from the construction of the Project will not add significantly to the existing exposure level of people to this fungus, including construction workers. In summary, Project construction will not result in a potentially significant contribution to regional concentrations of nonattainment pollutants and will not result in a significant contribution to the adverse health impacts associated with those pollutants.

Carbon Monoxide Hot Spots

It has long been recognized that CO exceedances are caused by vehicular emissions, primarily when idling at intersections. Concentrations of CO are a direct function of the number of vehicles, length of delay, and traffic flow conditions. Under certain meteorological conditions, CO concentrations close to congested intersections that experience high levels of traffic and elevated background concentrations may reach unhealthy levels, affecting nearby sensitive receptors. Given the high traffic volume potential, areas of high CO concentrations, or "hot spots," are typically associated with intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service during the peak commute hours. However, transport of this criteria pollutant is extremely limited, and CO disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. Furthermore, vehicle emissions standards have become increasingly stringent in the last 20 years. Currently, the CO standard in California is a maximum of 3.4 grams per mile for passenger cars (requirements for certain vehicles are more stringent). With the turnover of older vehicles, introduction of cleaner fuels, and implementation of control technology on industrial facilities, CO concentrations in the Project vicinity have steadily declined.

Accordingly, with the steadily decreasing CO emissions from vehicles, even very busy intersections do not result in exceedances of the CO standard. The analysis prepared for CO attainment in the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) *1992 Federal Attainment Plan for Carbon Monoxide* in Los Angeles County can be used to demonstrate the potential for CO exceedances. The SCAQMD CO hot spot analysis was conducted for four busy intersections in Los Angeles County during the peak morning and

afternoon time periods. The intersections evaluated included Long Beach Boulevard and Imperial Highway (Lynwood), Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue (Westwood), Sunset Boulevard and Highland Avenue (Hollywood), and La Cienega Boulevard and Century Boulevard (Inglewood). The busiest intersection evaluated was at Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue, which has a traffic volume of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority evaluated the level of service (LOS) in the vicinity of the Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection and found it to be LOS E at peak morning traffic and LOS F at peak afternoon traffic (LOS E and F are the two least efficient traffic LOS ratings). Even with the inefficient LOS and volume of traffic, the CO analysis concluded that there was no violation of CO standards (SCAQMD 1992).

According to the Traffic Impact Assessment prepared for the Project (KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. 2020), the Project is anticipated to generate approximately 90 daily trips on average. Because the Project will not generate traffic volumes at any intersection to more than 100,000 vehicles per day, there is no likelihood of the Project traffic exceeding CO values.

Furthermore, the SJVAPCD Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Impacts (2015) includes the following CO hot spot criteria:

If neither of the following criteria are met at all intersections affected by the developmental project, the project will result in no potential to create a violation of the CO standard:

A traffic study for the project indicates that the Level of Service (LOS) on one or more streets or at one or more intersections in the project vicinity will be reduced to LOS E or F; or

A traffic study indicates that the project will substantially worsen an already existing LOS F on one or more streets or at more or more intersections in the project vicinity.

The Proposed Project will not reduce the LOS at any intersection to LOS E or F. Thus, based on Project traffic generation and resultant LOS on affected roadways, it can be determined that the Project will not result in CO hotspots. The impact is less than significant. No mitigation is required.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

Typically, odors are regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard. However, manifestations of a person's reaction to foul odors can range from psychological (e.g., irritation, anger, or anxiety) to physiological (e.g., circulatory and respiratory effects, nausea, vomiting, and headache).

With respect to odors, the human nose is the sole sensing device. The ability to detect odors varies considerably among the population and overall is quite subjective. Some individuals have the ability to

smell minute quantities of specific substances; others may not have the same sensitivity but may have sensitivities to odors of other substances. In addition, people may have different reactions to the same odor; in fact, an odor that is offensive to one person (e.g., from a fast-food restaurant) may be perfectly acceptable to another. It is also important to note that an unfamiliar odor is more easily detected and is more likely to cause complaints than a familiar one. This is because of the phenomenon known as odor fatigue, in which a person can become desensitized to almost any odor and recognition only occurs with an alteration in the intensity.

Quality and intensity are two properties present in any odor. The quality of an odor indicates the nature of the smell experience. For instance, if a person describes an odor as flowery or sweet, then the person is describing the quality of the odor. Intensity refers to the strength of the odor. For example, a person may use the word "strong" to describe the intensity of an odor. Odor intensity depends on the odorant concentration in the air. When an odorous sample is progressively diluted, the odorant concentration decreases. As this occurs, the odor intensity weakens and eventually becomes so low that the detection or recognition of the odor is quite difficult. At some point during dilution, the concentration of the odorant reaches a detection threshold. An odorant concentration below the detection threshold means that the concentration in the air is not detectable by the average human.

Land uses commonly considered to be potential sources of obnoxious odorous emissions include agriculture (farming and livestock), wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting facilities, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding. The Project does not include any uses considered to be associated with odors.

The Project does not include any of the described sources of obnoxious odors, and as such will not be a source of obnoxious odors. No impact and no mitigation is required.

4.3.3 Mitigation Measures

- AQ-1:** In accordance with SJVAPCD Rule 9510, a detailed AIA shall be prepared detailing the specific construction requirement (i.e., equipment required, hours of use) and operational characteristics associated with the proposed improvements. In accordance with this rule, emissions of NO_x from construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower used or associated with the development Project shall be reduced by 20 percent from baseline (unmitigated) emissions and PM₁₀ emissions by 45 percent. The Project will demonstrate compliance with Rule 9510, including payment of all applicable fees, before the start of construction. Examples of MMs that will reduce emissions attributable to the Project in compliance with Rule 9510 include, but are not limited to, the following:
- During all construction activities, all diesel-fueled construction equipment including, but not limited to, rubber-tired dozers, graders, scrapers, excavators, asphalt paving equipment, cranes, and tractors shall be California Air Resources Board (CARB) Tier 4 Certified as set forth in Section 2423 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Part 89 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

- All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturers' specifications. Equipment maintenance records shall be kept on-site and made available upon request by the SJVAPCD.
- The Project applicant shall comply with all applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations. Copies of any applicable air quality permits and/or monitoring plans shall be provided to the County.

AQ-2: In accordance with SJVAPCD Rule 9510, a detailed AIA shall be prepared detailing the operational characteristics associated with the Project. In accordance with this rule, operational emissions of NO_x shall be reduced by a minimum of 33.3 percent. (Emissions reductions are in comparison to the Project's operational baseline emissions presented in Table 2 of the Initial Study.) The Project will demonstrate compliance with Rule 9510, including payment of all applicable fees, before the start of construction.

Based on the findings of the AIA, the applicant shall pay the SJVAPCD a monetary sum necessary to offset the required operational emissions that are not reduced by the emission reduction measures contained in the air impact assessment. The quantity of operational emissions that need to be offset will be calculated in accordance with the methodologies identified in Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review, and approved by the SJVAPCD. Operational emissions reduction methods will be selected under the direction of the SJVAPCD according to the AIA process detailed in, and required by Rule 9510, Indirect Source Review.

4.4 Biological Resources

This section is based on the analysis and findings presented in the Biological Resource Assessment that is included in Appendix B (ECORP 2019).

4.4.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is situated at an elevation range between approximately 1,950 and 2,025 feet above MSL in Auberry, California. The Project Site is located in the Sierra Nevada region, central Sierra Nevada Foothills subregion of the California Floristic Province (Baldwin et al. 2012). This region is characterized by blue oak/foothill-pine woodlands and is dotted with serpentine (Baldwin et al. 2012). The average annual precipitation for the region is 25.00 inches with an annual average of 3.6 inches of snowfall; average maximum temperatures range from 55.3°F in January to 95.4°F in July; average minimum temperatures range from 33.7 °F in January to 64.4 °F in July (Western Regional Climate Center 2019).

The Project site is on hilly terrain and is the site of a former school with shuttered buildings and ballfields and school grounds that are no longer maintained. The surrounding lands include rural residential and commercial properties, a mobile home park, and undeveloped oak-gray pine woodland and rangeland.

Vegetation Communities

Vegetation communities found within the Study Area include nonnative annual grassland, riparian woodland, and disturbed/developed areas. Little Sandy Creek, seasonal, is found along the western boundary of the Project site.

Nonnative Annual Grassland

The nonnative annual grassland community is found in the former ballfields and lawns associated with the school. These areas have been leveled. Dominant plants found in the nonnative annual grassland include a variety of weedy nonnative species including soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), filaree (*Erodium botrys*), wild oats (*Avena fatua*), yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and medusahead grass (*Elymus caput-medusae*).

Riparian Woodland

The riparian woodland is located along the western boundary of the Study Area along Little Sandy Creek, which is a seasonal creek. The riparian woodland has a relatively open canopy of Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*), gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), and Fremont's cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*). The open understory is made up of herbaceous grasses and herbs, such as Italian ryegrass (*Festuca perennis*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), hedge parsley (*Torilis* spp.), chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), and rough cockle-bur (*Xanthium strumarium*).

Wildlife

Wildlife species observed within and around the Study Area during the January 2019 reconnaissance site visits are listed in below in Table 4.4-1.

Table 4.4-1. Wildlife Species Observed Within and Around the Study Area	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Birds	
California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>
Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>
Nuttall's Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates nuttallii</i>
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>

Table 4.4-1. Wildlife Species Observed Within and Around the Study Area	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
California Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>
Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>
California Towhee	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>
Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Mammals	
California ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>

Soils

According to the *Web Soil Survey* (NRCS 2019), three soil units, or types, have been mapped within the Study Area (Figure 4-1):

(AuB) Auberry coarse sandy loam 3 to 9 percent slopes;

(AvB) Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes;

(VaA) Visalia sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes.

VaA Visalia sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes is considered a hydric soil with Hildreth inclusions in floodplains and swales; unnamed and somewhat poorly drained inclusions in depressions, drainageways, and valleys; and Foster inclusions in depressions and floodplains (NRCS 2019).

Potential Waters of the U.S.

There are no aquatic resources in the old school grounds and ball field portions of the Study Area. One seasonal creek has been mapped along the western and southern boundaries of the Study Area (Figure 4 from Appendix B – *Biological Resource Assessment*).

Little Sandy Creek, seasonal, has been mapped along the western boundary of the Study Area. The seasonal creek ranges from 15 to 25 feet wide and is characterized by sporadic flows during the wet season and dry during the dry season. The creek bed substrate is comprised of sand and sediment, with scattered rock outcrops and debris tangles. The weedy or unvegetated banks range from gently sloped to steep in highly eroded reaches. There is no emergent vegetation growing in the bed of the creek.

Special-Status Plants

Eight special-status plant species were determined to have the potential to occur within the Study Area based on the literature review and habitats/vegetation communities found during the field reconnaissance. Brief descriptions of these species are presented below.

Tree-anemone

Tree-anemone (*Carpenteria californica*) is not listed pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or listed as threatened pursuant to the California ESA, and is designated as a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.2 species. This species is perennial evergreen shrub that occurs on usually granitic substrates in chaparral and cismontane woodland (California Native Plant Society [CNPS] 2019). Tree-anemone blooms from May through July and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 1,115 to 4,396 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Tree-anemone is endemic to California; the current range of this species includes Fresno and Madera counties (CNPS 2019).

There is one California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) occurrence located approximately one mile from the Study Area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] 2019a). The riparian woodland represents potential habitat for this plant species.

Rawson's Flaming-trumpet

Rawson's flaming-trumpet (*Collomia rawsoniana*) is not listed pursuant to the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 1B.2 species. This species is a perennial rhizomatous herb that occurs in mesic areas in lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, and riparian forest (CNPS 2019). Rawson's flaming-trumpet blooms from July through August and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 2,559 to 7,218 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Rawson's flaming-trumpet is endemic to California; the current range of this species includes Madera County (CNPS 2019).

There are no CNDDDB occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, the riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

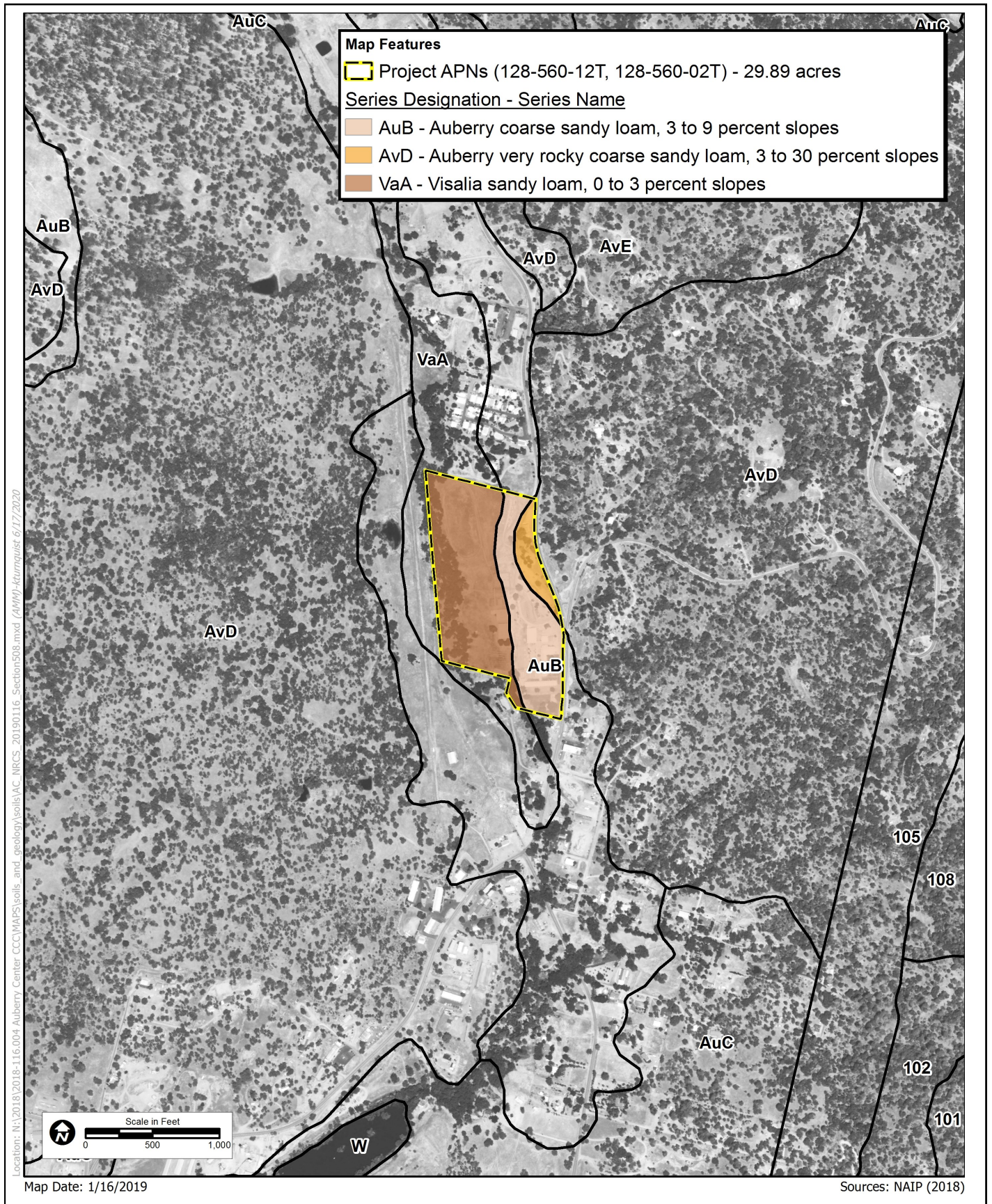


**Figure 4-1. Natural Resources Conservation
Service Soil Types**

2018-26.003 CCC Auberry Center



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Tracy's Eriastrum

Tracy's eriastrum (*Eriastrum tracyi*) is not listed pursuant to the federal ESA, is listed as rare pursuant to the California ESA, and is designated as a CRPR 3.2 species. This species is an herbaceous annual that occurs in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and valley and foothill grassland (CNPS 2019). Tracy's eriastrum blooms from May through July and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 1,033 to 5,840 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Tracy's eriastrum is endemic to California; the current range of this species includes Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Lake, Santa Clara, Shasta, Stanislaus, Tehama, Trinity, and Tulare counties (CNPS 2019).

The nearest CNDDDB occurrence of this species is approximately two miles from the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). The riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Kings River Monkeyflower

Kings River monkeyflower (*Erythranthe acutidens*) is not listed pursuant to the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 3 species. This species is an herbaceous annual that occurs in cismontane woodland and lower montane coniferous forest (CNPS 2019). Kings River monkeyflower blooms from April through July and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 1,001 to 4,003 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Kings River monkeyflower is endemic to California; the current range of this species includes Fresno, Madera, and Tulare counties (CNPS 2019).

There are no CNDDDB occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, the riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Slender-stalked Monkeyflower

Slender-stalked monkeyflower (*Erythranthe gracilipes*) is not listed pursuant to the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 1B.2 species. This species is an herbaceous annual that occurs on decomposed granite substrates in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest (CNPS 2019). Slender-stalked monkeyflower blooms from April through June and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 1,640 to 4,265 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Slender-stalked monkeyflower is endemic to California; the current range of this species includes Fresno, Madera, and Mariposa counties (CNPS 2019).

There are no CNDDDB occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, the riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Madera Leptosiphon

Madera leptosiphon (*Limosella serrulatus*) is not listed pursuant to either the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 1B.2 species. This species is an herbaceous annual that occurs in cismontane woodland and lower montane coniferous forest (CNPS 2019). Madera leptosiphon blooms between April and May and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 984 to 4,265 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Madera leptosiphon is endemic to California; its current range includes Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa and Tulare counties (CNPS 2019).

The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is approximately four miles from the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). The riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Orange Lupine

Orange lupine (*Lupinus citrinus* var. *citrinus*) is not listed pursuant to either the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 1B.2 species. This species is an herbaceous annual that occurs in granitic soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and low montane coniferous forest (CNPS 2019). Orange lupine blooms between April and July and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 1,246 to 5,577 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). Orange lupine is endemic to California; its current range includes Fresno and Madera counties (CNPS 2019).

There is one CNDDDB occurrence of less than one mile from the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). The riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Oval-leaved Viburnum

Oval-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum ellipticum*) is not listed pursuant to either the federal or California ESAs but is designated as a CRPR 2B.3 species. This species is a perennial deciduous shrub that occurs in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest communities. Oval-leaved viburnum blooms from May through June and is known to occur at elevations ranging from 705 to 4,593 feet above MSL (CNPS 2019). The current range of this species in California includes Alameda, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Mariposa, Napa, Placer, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, and Tehama counties (CNPS 2019).

The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is approximately three miles from the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). The riparian woodland provides marginal habitat for this plant species.

Special-Status Wildlife

Special-Status Amphibians

Marginally suitable upland habitat for one special-status amphibian species, foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), is present within the Project site.

There is one documented CNDDDB occurrence of this species located approximately five miles north of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). The sand and sediment substrate of Little Sandy Creek is not high quality habitat for this species. However, ECORP site reconnaissance and literature review cannot preclude the potential of occurrence for foothill yellow-legged frog within the Study Area, but is highly unlikely to be encountered.

Special-Status Reptiles

Marginally suitable upland habitat for one special-status reptile species, Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), is present within the Project site.

There are three CNDDDB occurrences of Northwestern pond turtle within five miles of the Study Area, with the closest approximately one mile to the north (CDFW 2019a). While Little Sandy Creek is a seasonal creek, the potential for Northwestern pond turtle occurrence within the Study Area cannot be ruled out, but is highly unlikely to be encountered.

Special-Status Birds

Suitable nesting habitat for two special-status bird species is present within the Study Area. If nesting individuals are present during construction, the Project could result in harassment to nesting individuals and may temporarily disrupt foraging activities.

Nuttall's Woodpecker

The Nuttall's woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*) is not listed and protected under either federal or state ESAs, but is considered a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC). They are resident from Siskiyou County south to Baja California. Nuttall's woodpecker nests in tree cavities primarily within oak woodlands, but also can be found in riparian woodlands (Lowther 2000). Breeding occurs during April through July.

There are no CNDDDB occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, the riparian woodland onsite supports suitable nesting habitat for this species.

Oak Titmouse

Oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) is not listed and protected under either federal or state ESAs, but are considered a USFWS BCC. Oak titmouse breeding range includes southwestern Oregon south through California's Coast, Transverse and Peninsular ranges, western foothills of the Sierra Nevada, into Baja California; they are absent from the humid northwestern coastal region and the San Joaquin Valley (Cicero et al. 2017). They are found in dry oak or oak-pine woodlands, but may also use scrub oaks or other brush near woodlands (Cicero et al. 2017). Nesting occurs during March through July.

There are no CNDDDB occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, the riparian woodland onsite supports suitable nesting habitat for this species.

Special-Status Mammals

Suitable habitat for three special-status mammal species is present within the Project site.

Greater Mastiff Bat

The greater mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*) is not listed pursuant to either the California or federal ESAs; however, this species is considered a Species of Special Concern (SSC) by CDFW. The greater mastiff bat is the largest North American molossid (free-tailed bat) with a forearm length of 73-83 mm. This species has a disjunct distribution and ranges from central Mexico across the southwestern United States, and throughout California to within a few miles of the Oregon border. The greater mastiff bat can be found in a variety of habitats, including desert scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, the ponderosa pine belt, and at high elevation meadows and mixed conifer forests. This species is primarily a cliff-dwelling

species and roosting colonies are generally found under exfoliating rock slabs. Roosts have also been identified in similar crevices in large boulders and buildings. Foraging has been documented to be as high as 2,000 feet above the ground, although 100 to 200 feet is more typical. This species is most commonly encountered in broad open areas including dry desert washes, flood plains, chaparral, oak woodland, open ponderosa pine forest, grassland, and agricultural areas. The diet of the greater mastiff bat consists primarily of moths, but also includes beetles, crickets, and katydids (Western Bat Working Group [WBWG] 2019).

There are three documented CNDDDB occurrences of this species located within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). Some of the building within the Study Area represent potential roost sites. Pallid bat has potential to occur within the Study Area.

Pallid Bat

The pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) is not listed pursuant to either the federal or California ESAs; however, this species is considered an SSC by CDFW. The pallid bat is a large, light-colored bat with long, prominent ears and pink, brown, or grey wing and tail membranes. This species ranges throughout North America from the interior of British Columbia, south to Mexico, and east to Texas. The pallid bat inhabits low elevation (below 6,000 feet) rocky arid deserts and canyonlands, shrub-steppe grasslands, karst formations, and higher elevation coniferous forest (above 7,000 feet). This species roosts alone or in groups in the crevices of rocky outcrops and cliffs, caves, mines, trees, and in various human structures such as bridges, and barns. Pallid bats are feeding generalists that glean a variety of arthropod prey from surfaces as well as capturing insects on the wing. Foraging occurs over grasslands, oak savannahs, ponderosa pine forests, talus slopes, gravel roads, lava flows, fruit orchards, and vineyards. Although this species utilizes echolocation to locate prey, often they use only passive acoustic cues. This species is not thought to migrate long distances between summer and winter sites (WBWG 2019).

There are no documented CNDDDB occurrences of this species located within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, some of the structures within the Study Area represent potential roost sites. Pallid bat has potential to occur within the Study Area, but it is very unlikely.

Townsend's Big-Eared Bat

The Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) is not listed pursuant to either the federal or California ESAs; however, this species is considered an SSC by CDFW. Townsend's big-eared bat is a fairly large bat with prominent bilateral nose lumps and large "rabbit-like" ears. This species occurs throughout the west and ranges from the southern portion of British Columbia south along the Pacific coast to central Mexico and east into the Great Plains. This species has been reported from a wide variety of habitat types and elevations from sea level to 10,827 feet AMSL. Habitats used include coniferous forests, mixed mesophytic forests, deserts, native prairies, riparian communities, active agricultural areas, and coastal habitat types. Its distribution is strongly associated with the availability of caves and cave-like roosting habitat including abandoned mines, buildings, bridges, rock crevices, and hollow trees. This species is readily detectable when roosting due to their habit of roosting pendant-like on open surfaces. Townsend's big-eared bat is a moth specialist with more than 90 percent of its diet composed of Lepidopterans. Foraging habitat is generally edge habitats along streams adjacent to and within a variety of wooded habitats. This

species often travels long distances when foraging and large home ranges have been documented in California (WBWG 2019).

There are no documented CNDDDB occurrences of this species located within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2019a). However, some of the structures within the Study Area represent potential hibernacula. Townsend's big-eared bat has potential to occur within the Study Area, but it is very unlikely.

Wildlife Movement Corridors

The Project site, located in rural Auberry, Fresno County, does not support significant wildlife use due to the disturbed nature of the habitats. However, Little Sandy Creek and associated riparian corridor supports a moderate to high likelihood of wildlife use, particularly now that the school has been shut down.

4.4.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal Regulations

Federal Endangered Species Act

The federal ESA protects plants and animals that are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as endangered or threatened. Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the taking of listed wildlife, where take is defined as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct" (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 17.3). For plants, this statute governs removing, possessing, maliciously damaging, or destroying any listed plant on federal land and removing, cutting, digging up, damaging, or destroying any listed plant on non-federal land in knowing violation of state law (16 U.S. Code [USC] 1538). The ESA requires that at the same time the decision is made to list a species, the Secretary of the Interior must develop a recovery plan for the species and, with certain exceptions, designate the critical habitat of the species. Critical habitat consists of "the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, at the time it is listed ... on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) which may require special management considerations or protection."

Section 7

Under Section 7 of the ESA, federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS and/or NMFS if their actions, including permit approvals or funding, could adversely affect a listed (or proposed) species (including plants) or its critical habitat. Through consultation and the issuance of a biological opinion, the USFWS and/or NMFS reviews and approves a Biological Assessment (BA) and may issue an incidental take statement allowing take of the species that is incidental to an otherwise authorized activity provided the activity will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species.

Section 10

When no discretionary action is being taken by a federal agency, but a project may result in the take of listed species, an incidental take permit under Section 10 of the ESA is necessary. The purpose of the incidental take permit is to authorize the take of federally listed species that may result from an otherwise lawful activity; not to authorize the activities themselves. In order to obtain an incidental take permit under Section 10, an application must be submitted that includes a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). In some instances, applicants, USFWS, and/or NMFS may determine that an HCP is necessary or prudent, even if a discretionary federal action will not occur. The purpose of the HCP planning process associated with the permit application is to ensure that adequate minimization and mitigation for impacts to listed species and/or their critical habitat will occur.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), federal agencies are required to consult with the NMFS for activities that may affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). EFH are the waters and substrate necessary for fish spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity, and include several important components: adequate substrate; water quality; water quantity, depth, and velocity; channel gradient and stability; food; cover, and habitat complexity; space; access and passage; and habitat connectivity. The EFH consultation process is separate from ESA consultation, though the two often happen simultaneously through the Section 7 ESA BA. The EFH consultation with NMFS may result in project conservation recommendations to avoid, reduce, or compensate impacts to EFH.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements international treaties between the U.S. and other nations devised to protect migratory birds, any of their parts, eggs, and nests from activities such as hunting, pursuing, capturing, killing, selling, and shipping, unless expressly authorized in the regulations or by permit. As authorized by the MBTA, the USFWS issues permits to qualified applicants for the following types of activities: falconry, raptor propagation, scientific collecting, special purposes (rehabilitation, education, migratory game bird propagation, and salvage), take of depredating birds, taxidermy, and waterfowl sale and disposal. The regulations governing migratory bird permits can be found in 50 CFR Part 13 General Permit Procedures and 50 CFR Part 21 Migratory Bird Permits. The State of California has incorporated the protection of birds of prey in Sections 3800, 3513, and 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (as amended) provides for the protection of bald eagle and golden eagle by prohibiting the take, possession, sale, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg, unless allowed by permit [16 USC 668(a); 50 CFR 22]. USFWS may authorize take of bald eagles and golden eagles for activities where the take is associated with, but not the purpose of, the activity and cannot practicably be avoided (50 CFR 22.26).

Federal Clean Water Act

The purpose of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) is to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters.” Section 404 of the CWA prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into “Waters of the U.S.” without a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The definition of Waters of the U.S. includes rivers, streams, estuaries, the territorial seas, ponds, lakes, and wetlands. Wetlands are defined as those areas “that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR 328.3 7b). The USEPA also has authority over wetlands and may override a USACE permit.

Substantial impacts to wetlands may require an individual permit. Projects that only minimally affect wetlands may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required for Section 404 permit actions; this certification or waiver is issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

The alteration of a USACE federally authorized civil works project requires a permit pursuant to Section 408 (33 USC 408, Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899). Projects with minimal impacts require approval by the USACE Sacramento District Construction Operations Group; however, projects with more substantial impacts may require USACE Headquarters review. Coordination with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, who serve as the Non-Federal Sponsor, is required as a part of the process of obtaining a Section 408 permit.

State and Local Regulations

California Fish and Game Code

The California ESA (California Fish and Game Code Sections 2050-2116) generally parallels the main provisions of the ESA, but unlike its federal counterpart, the California ESA also applies the take prohibitions to species proposed for listing (called candidates by the State). Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the taking, possession, purchase, sale, and import or export of endangered, threatened, or candidate species, unless otherwise authorized by permit or in the regulations. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.” The California ESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects. State lead agencies are required to consult with CDFW to ensure that any action they undertake is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered, threatened, or candidate species or result in destruction or adverse modification of essential habitat.

Fully Protected Species

The State of California first began to designate species as “fully protected” prior to the creation of the federal and California ESAs. Lists of fully protected species were initially developed to provide protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction and included fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most fully protected species have since been listed as threatened or endangered under the federal and/or California ESAs. The regulations that implement the Fully Protected Species

Statute (California Fish and Game Code Sections 4700 for mammals, 3511 for birds, 5050 for reptiles and amphibians, and 5515 for fish) provide that fully protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time. Furthermore, the CDFW prohibits any state agency from issuing incidental take permits for fully protected species. The CDFW will issue licenses or permits for take of these species for necessary scientific research or live capture and relocation pursuant to the permit.

Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) of 1977 was created with the intent to “preserve, protect and enhance rare and endangered plants in this State.” The NPPA is administered by CDFW and provided in California Fish and Game Code Sections 1900-1913. The Fish and Wildlife Commission has the authority to designate native plants as “endangered” or “rare” and to protect endangered and rare plants from take. The California ESA of 1984 (California Fish and Game Code Section 2050-2116) provided further protection for rare and endangered plant species, but the NPPA remains part of the California Fish and Game Code.

California Native Birds

Several Sections (3800, 3513, and 3503) of the California Fish and Game Code specifically protect birds. Section 3800 protects birds of prey and states that it is unlawful to take nongame birds, such as those occurring naturally in California that are not resident game birds, migratory game birds, or fully protected birds, except when in accordance with regulations of the commission or a mitigation plan approved by CDFW for mining operations. Section 3513 specifically prohibits the take or possession of any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA.

Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the take, possession, or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird. Additionally, Subsection 3503.5 prohibits the take, possession, or destruction of any birds and their nests in the orders Strigiformes (owls) or Falconiformes (hawks and eagles). These provisions, along with the federal MBTA, serve to protect nesting native birds.

Species of Special Concern

Species of Special Concern (SSC) are defined by CDFW as a species, subspecies, or distinct population of an animal native to California that are not legally protected under the federal or California ESAs, or the California Fish and Game Code, but currently satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- The species has been completely extirpated from the state or, as in the case of birds, it has been extirpated from its primary seasonal or breeding role;
- The species is listed as federally (but not state) threatened or endangered, or meets the state definition of threatened or endangered but has not formally been listed;
- The species has or is experiencing serious (nonscyclical) population declines or range retractions (not reversed) that, if continued or resumed, could qualify it for state threatened or endangered status;

- The species has naturally small populations that exhibit high susceptibility to risk from any factor that if realized, could lead to declines that will qualify it for state threatened or endangered status.

SSC are typically associated with habitats that are threatened. Project-related impacts to SSC, state-threatened, or endangered species are considered “significant” under CEQA.

California Rare Plant Ranks

The CNPS maintains the *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California* (CNPS 2019), which provides a list of plant species native to California that are threatened with extinction, have limited distributions, and/or low populations. Plant species meeting one of these criteria are assigned to one of six California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPRs). The rank system was developed in collaboration with government, academia, non-governmental organizations, and private sector botanists, and is jointly managed by CDFW and the CNPS. The CRPRs are currently recognized in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The following are definitions of the CNPS CRPRs:

- Rare Plant Rank 1A – presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere
- Rare Plant Rank 1B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
- Rare Plant Rank 2A – presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere
- Rare Plant Rank 2B – rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere
- Rare Plant Rank 3 – a review list of plants about which more information is needed
- Rare Plant Rank 4 – a watch list of plants of limited distribution

Additionally, the CNPS has defined Threat Ranks that are added to the CRPR as an extension. Threat Ranks designate the level of threat on a scale of 1 through 3, with 1 being the most threatened and 3 being the least threatened. Threat Ranks are generally present for all plants ranked 1B, 2B, or 4, and for most plants ranked 3. Plant species ranked 1A and 2A (presumed extirpated in California), and some species ranked 3, which lack threat information, do not typically have a Threat Rank extension. The following are definitions of the CNPS Threat Ranks:

- Threat Rank 0.1 – Seriously threatened in California (more than 80 percent of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)
- Threat Rank 0.2 – Moderately threatened in California (20 to 80 percent occurrences threatened/moderate degree and immediacy of threat)
- Threat Rank 0.3 – Not very threatened in California (less than 20 percent of occurrences threatened/low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)

Factors, such as habitat vulnerability and specificity, distribution, and condition of occurrences, are considered in setting the Threat Rank, and differences in Threat Ranks do not constitute additional or different protection (CNPS 2019). Depending on the policy of the lead agency, substantial impacts to

plants ranked 1A, 1B, or 2 are typically considered significant under CEQA Guidelines Section 15380. Significance under CEQA is typically evaluated on a case-by-case basis for plants ranked 3 or 4.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act

The RWQCB implements water quality regulations under the federal CWA and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act. These regulations require compliance with the NPDES, including compliance with the California Storm Water NPDES General Construction Permit for discharges of stormwater runoff associated with construction activities. General Construction Permits for projects that disturb one or more acres of land require development and implementation of a SWPPP. Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, the RWQCB regulates actions that will involve “discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, with any region that could affect the water of the state” (Water Code 13260(a)). Waters of the State are defined as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state” (Water Code 13050 (e)). The RWQCB regulates all such activities, as well as dredging, filling, or discharging materials into Waters of the State, which are not regulated by USACE due to a lack of connectivity with a navigable water body. The RWQCB may require issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements for these activities.

California Environmental Quality Act

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15380, a species not protected on a federal or state list may be considered rare or endangered if the species meets certain specified criteria. These criteria follow the definitions in the federal and California ESAs and Sections 1900-1913 of the California Fish and Game Code, which deal with rare or endangered plants or animals. Section 15380 was included in the CEQA Guidelines primarily to deal with situations where a project under review may have a significant effect on a species that has not yet been listed by either USFWS or CDFW.

CEQA Significance Criteria

Sections 15063-15065 of the CEQA Guidelines address how an impact is identified as significant and are particularly relevant to SSC. Generally, impacts to listed (rare, threatened, or endangered) species are considered significant and when considered unavoidable/unmitigable require lead agencies to prepare an EIR to thoroughly analyze and evaluate the impacts. Assessment of “impact significance” to populations of non-listed species (e.g., SSC) usually considers the proportion of the species’ range that will be affected by a project, impacts to habitat, and the regional and population level effects.

Specifically, Section 15064.7 of CEQA Guidelines encourages local agencies to develop and publish the thresholds that the agency uses in determining the significance of environmental effects caused by projects under its review. However, agencies may also rely upon the guidance provided by the expanded Initial Study checklist contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, which provides examples of impacts that will normally be considered significant. Based on these examples, impacts to biological resources will normally be considered significant if the project would:

- have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS;
- have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by CDFW or USFWS;
- have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected Waters of the U.S. including wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, and coastal) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;
- conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- conflict with the provisions of an adopted HCP, Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved local, regional, or state HCP.

An evaluation of whether an impact on biological resources will be substantial must consider both the resource itself and how that resource fits into a regional or local context. Substantial impacts will be those that will diminish, or result in the loss of, an important biological resource, or those that will obviously conflict with local, state, or federal resource conservation plans, goals, or regulations. Impacts are sometimes locally important but not significant according to CEQA. The reason for this is that although the impacts will result in an adverse alteration of existing conditions, they will not substantially diminish or result in the permanent loss of an important resource on a population-wide or region-wide basis.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Sensitive natural communities are communities that are of limited distribution statewide or within a county or region and are often vulnerable to environmental effects of projects. The CDFW maintains the *California Natural Communities List* (CDFW 2019a), which provides a list of vegetation alliances, associations, and special stands as defined in the *Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer et al. 2009), along with their respective state and global rarity ranks. Natural communities with a state rarity rank of 1, 2, or 3 are considered *sensitive* natural communities. Depending on the policy of the lead agency, impacts to sensitive natural communities may be considered significant under CEQA.

Wildlife Movement/Corridors and Nursery Sites

CDFW's Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) database, the CDFW Mule Deer Range, identifies winter range, migration corridors, critical range, or critical fawning areas for mule deer (CDFW 2019b). For urban settings such as the Project, riparian vegetated stream corridors can also serve as wildlife movement corridors.

For the purpose of this analysis, both mule deer migration corridors and riparian stream corridors were assessed for their potential to support wildlife movement on the Project site.

For the purpose of this analysis, nursery sites include, but are not limited to, concentrations of nest or den sites such as heron rookeries, bat maternity roosts, and mule deer critical fawning areas. This data is available through CDFW's BIOS database or as occurrence records in the CNDDDB and is supplemented with the results of the field reconnaissance.

Local Plans and Ordinances

Fresno County General Plan (2000)

The Open Space and Conservation Element of the 2000 Fresno County General Plan is concerned with protected and preserving natural resources, preserving open space areas, managing the production of commodity resources, protecting and enhancing cultural resources, and providing recreational opportunities. The following Goals and Policies are pertinent to biological resources found within the Study Area.

Goal OS-D: To conserve the function and values of wetlands communities and related riparian areas throughout Fresno County while allowing compatible uses where appropriate. Protection of these resource functions will positively affect aesthetics, water quality, floodplain management, ecological functions, and recreation/tourism.

Goal OS-E.1: To help protect, restore, and enhance habitats in Fresno County that support fish and wildlife species so that populations are maintained at viable levels.

Goal OS-F: To preserve and protect the valuable vegetation resources of Fresno County.

Policy OS-D.4: The County shall require riparian protection zones around natural watercourses and shall recognize that these areas provide highly valuable wildlife habitat.

Policy OS-D.6: The County shall require new private or public developments to preserve and enhance existing native riparian habitat unless public safety concerns require removal of habitat for flood control or other purposes.

Policy OS-E.1: The County shall support efforts to avoid the "net" loss of important wildlife habitat where practicable.

Policy OS-E.2: The County shall require adequate buffer zones between construction activities and significant wildlife resources, including both onsite habitats that are purposely avoided and significant habitats that are adjacent to the project site, in order to avoid the degradation and disruption of critical life cycle activities such as breeding and feeding.

- Policy OS-E.5:** *The County shall support preservation of habitats of rare, threatened, endangered, and/or other special-status species including fisheries.*
- Policy OS-E.6:** *The County shall ensure the conservation of large, continuous expanses of native vegetation to provide habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife populations, as long as this preservation does not threaten the economic well-being of the county.*
- Policy OS-E.13:** *The County should protect to the maximum extent practicable wetlands, riparian habitat, and meadows since they are recognized as essential habitats for birds and wildlife.*
- Policy OS-E.18:** *The County should preserve, to the maximum possible extent, areas defined as habitats for rare or endangered animals and plant species in a natural state consistent with State and Federal endangered species laws.*
- Policy OS-F.3:** *The County shall support the preservation of significant areas of natural vegetation including, but not limited to, oak woodlands, riparian areas, and vernal pools.*
- Policy OS-F.10:** *The County shall promote the preservation of oak woodlands by encouraging landowners to follow the Fresno County Oak Management Guidelines and to prepare an Oak Management Plan for their property.*

4.4.3 Biological Resources (IV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

Invertebrates and Fish

The Project Site does not provide suitable habitat for any special-status invertebrate or fish. Therefore, there will be no impact and these species are not discussed further.

Special-Status Plants

There is suitable habitat within the Project site for eight special-status plant species. The riparian corridor associated with Little Sandy Creek is the only vegetation community/habitat onsite that supports potential habitat for these species. Since there are no proposed impacts to the riparian woodland, no special-status plant surveys are recommended.

Special-Status Amphibians

Marginally suitable upland habitat for one special-status amphibian species, foothill yellow-legged frog, is present within the Project site. With implementation of MM BIO-1, potential impacts to the foothill yellow-legged frog will be less than significant.

Special-Status Reptiles

Marginally suitable upland habitat for one special-status reptile species, Northwestern pond turtle, is present within the Project site. With implementation of MM BIO-2, potential impacts to Northwestern pond turtle will be less than significant.

Special-Status Birds

Suitable nesting habitat for two special-status bird species, Nuttall's woodpecker and Oak titmouse, is present within the Study Area. If nesting individuals are present during construction, the Project could result in harassment to nesting individuals and may temporarily disrupt foraging activities.

In addition to the above-listed special-status birds, all native birds, including raptors, are protected under the California Fish and Game Code and the federal MBTA. Implementation of MM BIO-3 will ensure that there are no impacts to active nests.

Special-Status Mammals

Suitable habitat for three special-status mammal species, Greater Mastiff Bat, Pallid Bat, and Townsend's Big-eared bat, is present within the Project site. Implementation of MM BIO-4 will ensure that these species are not impacted by Project activities.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The riparian woodland is located along the western and southern boundary of the Study Area along Little Sandy Creek, which is a seasonal creek. The riparian woodland has a relatively open canopy of Valley oak, interior live oak, gray pine, and Fremont's cottonwood. The open understory is made up of herbaceous grasses and herbs, such as Italian ryegrass, Bermuda grass, miner's lettuce, hedge parsley, chicory, and rough cockle-bur. Little Sandy Creek, seasonal, has been mapped along the western boundary of the Study Area. The seasonal creek ranges from 15 to 25 feet wide and is characterized by sporadic flows during the wet season and dry during the dry season. There is no emergent vegetation growing in the bed of the creek. Proposed Project improvements have been designed to avoid impacts to riparian habitat.

There are numerous oak trees in the riparian corridor of Little Sandy Creek; however, the Proposed Project will not require the removal of Oaks. Therefore, the project will have no impact on Oak Trees.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

There are no aquatic resources in the old school grounds and ball field portions of the Study Area. One seasonal creek (Little Sandy Creek) has been mapped along the western and southern boundaries of the project site. However, the Project is implementing a 75-foot setback from Little Sandy Creek. Therefore, no impacts to riparian vegetation or the seasonal creek are anticipated. A CDFW 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement is not anticipated.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Wildlife have potential to use the Project Site for movement, especially the riparian corridors. However, the site plan avoids and preserves the majority of riparian habitat within open space avoidance areas, which include buffers to protect sensitive resources. Therefore, Project implementation will not constitute

a significant loss of the available migration habitat in the area. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Open Space and Conservation Element of the 2000 Fresno County General Plan is concerned with protected and preserving natural resources, preserving open space areas, managing the production of commodity resources, protecting and enhancing cultural resources, and providing recreational opportunities. The Proposed Project does not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting wildlife. The Fresno County General Plan includes the County Oak Woodlands Management Guidelines (Fresno County General Plan Policy OS-F.10). The Proposed Project does not include removal of Oak trees. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Project site is not located within or adjacent to an HCP or NCCP. There will be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

4.4.4 Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Conduct Pre-Construction Sensitive Amphibians Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

Conduct a preconstruction clearance survey for foothill yellow-legged frogs within 48 hours prior to the start of construction. If foothill yellow-legged frogs are observed, work will not proceed until consultation with CDFW has taken place, and avoidance measures (such as exclusionary fencing and biological monitoring) will likely be required.

BIO-2: Conduct Pre-Construction Northwestern pond turtle surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

- Conduct a preconstruction clearance survey for Northwestern pond turtle within 48 hours prior to the start of construction. If Northwestern pond turtles are observed in the construction zone, a qualified biologist shall relocate the turtle to a location away from the construction zone.

BIO-3: Conduct Pre-Construction Bird Nesting Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of Project construction:

- Conduct a preconstruction nesting raptor and bird survey of all suitable habitat on the Project site within 14 days of the commencement of construction during the nesting season (February 1 - August 31). Where accessible, surveys should be conducted within 300 feet of the Project site for nesting raptors and within 100 feet of the Project site for nesting birds.
- If active nests are found, a no-disturbance buffer around the nest shall be established. The buffer distance shall be established by a qualified biologist in consultation with CDFW. The buffer shall be maintained until the fledglings are capable of flight and become independent of the nest tree, to be determined by a qualified biologist. Once the young are independent of the nest, no further measures are necessary. Pre-construction nesting surveys are not required for construction activity outside the nesting season.

BIO-4: Special-Status Mammals Surveys. The following shall be conducted prior to initiation of demolition and Project construction:

- Conduct preconstruction roosting bat surveys for all suitable roosting habitat (i.e., trees and manufactured structures) no more than a year prior to the start of construction activities. If suitable roosting habitat is identified, a qualified biologist will conduct an evening bat emergence survey (within a week or less from the start of construction) that may include acoustic monitoring to determine whether or not bats are present. If bats are found, consultation with CDFW prior to initiation of disturbance of suitable roosting habitat will be required. If bats are not found during the preconstruction surveys, no further measures will be necessary.

4.5 Cultural Resources

4.5.1 Environmental Setting

The Project Area consists of approximately 18 acres of property located in the northern half of Section 8 of Township 10 South, Range 23 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian, as depicted on the 1987 Auberry, California USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map. It is also known as Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 128-560-12T and 128-560-02T.

ECORP Consulting, Inc. conducted a cultural resources inventory and evaluation for the Proposed Project. The inventory included a records search, a search of the Sacred Lands File by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), a literature review, and a field survey. The records search results indicated

that two previous cultural resources studies have been conducted within a small portion of the Project Area. No resources have previously been recorded within the Project Area as a result of those studies.

As a result of the field survey, one cultural resource was recorded inside the Project Area: AB-001, the historic-period Auberry Elementary School campus. The Auberry Elementary School campus was evaluated using California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and National Register of Historical Places (NRHP) eligibility criteria and was found not eligible for inclusion in the CRHR and NRHP. Further, it does not meet the threshold for status as a California Historical Landmark. Therefore, it is not considered an Historical Resource under CEQA or an Historic Property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Recommendations for the management of unanticipated discoveries are also provided.

Local Prehistory

The San Joaquin Valley and adjacent Sierra foothills have a long and complex cultural history with distinct regional patterns that extend back more than 11,000 years. The first generally agreed-upon evidence for the presence of pre-contact peoples in the region is represented by the distinctive basally thinned and fluted projectile points, found on the margins of extinct lakes in the San Joaquin Valley. These projectiles, often compared to Clovis points, have been found at three localities in the San Joaquin Valley including along the Pleistocene shorelines of former Tulare Lake (approximately 90 miles southeast of the Tesoro Viejo Master Planned Community Area). Based on evidence from these sites and other well-dated contexts elsewhere, the Paleo-Indian hunters who used these spear points existed during a narrow time range of 11,550 to 8,550 Before Present (BP, ECORP 2019).

About 8,000 years ago, many California cultures shifted the main focus of their subsistence strategies from hunting to nut and seed gathering, as evidenced by the increase in food-grinding implements found in archeological sites dating to this period. This cultural pattern is best known for southern California, where it has been termed the Millingstone Horizon, but recent studies suggest that the horizon may be more widespread than originally described and is found throughout the region during the Middle Archaic Period. Radiocarbon dates associated with this period vary between 8,000 and 2,000 BP, although most cluster in the 6,000 to 4,000 BP range (ECORP 2019).

Early Middle Archaic sites are relatively rare on the valley floor. However, early Middle Archaic sites are relatively common in the Sierra foothills, and the mainly utilitarian assemblages recovered show relatively little change from the preceding period with a continued emphasis on acorns and pine nuts. Few bone or shell artifacts, beads, or ornaments have been recovered from these localities. Projectile points from this period reflect a high degree of regional morphological variability, with an emphasis on local tool stone material supplemented with a small amount of obsidian from eastern sources.

The period between approximately 1,000 BP and European-American contact is referred to as the Emergent Period. The Emergent Period is marked by the introduction of bow-and-arrow technology, which replaced the dart and atlatl at about 1,100 to 800 BP. In the San Joaquin region, villages and small residential sites developed along the many stream courses in the lower foothills and along the river channels and sloughs of the valley floor. A local form of pottery was developed in the southern Sierra

foothills along the Kaweah River. While many sites with rich archaeological assemblages have been documented in the northern Central Valley, relatively few sites have been documented from this period in the southern Sierra foothills and adjacent valley floor, despite the fact that the ethnographic record suggests dense populations for this region. (ECORP 2019)

Project Area History

Fresno County extends eastward from the San Joaquin Valley through the Sierra Nevada foothills to the crest of the Sierras at over 12,000 feet in elevation. The San Joaquin River forms the northern boundary of the county. The Kings River flows from the Sierras through the central part of the county. The topographical and climate conditions promoted a rich history of agriculture and ranching in Fresno County. Prior to 1848 in California, cattle were used for their hides and tallow; an average size steer will cost as much as \$4 per head and was often sold at ranchos. The onset of the Gold Rush in 1848, however, resulted in a huge influx of miners and settlers into California, which raised the demand for beef in the growing cities of San Francisco, Sacramento, and the surrounding areas. The demand for cattle became so great that prices soared to as much as \$500 per head when purchased in San Francisco. During the 1850s, cattle were primarily raised using free-range methods on the established large open ranchos. Within the decade of the Gold Rush, when competition for land was fierce, cattle ranching moved from the free-range style of the ranchos to the European style of feedlots and fenced areas. A "no-fence" law was passed in 1872, which made ranchers responsible for the damages caused by their livestock if they were unfenced (ECORP 2019).

The agricultural industry surrounding the Project Area to the west continues to be one of the primary economic activities in Fresno County. Driving that economic force are the expansive networks of irrigation and waterways supplying water to the arid regions throughout the county. The massive increase in lumbering operations in the Sierra Nevada Range required the construction of flumes to carry lumber from the forested mountains to the sawmills in the valley. One of the first and largest flumes was the Kings River Flume, which extended more than 62 miles from the Sierra Nevada to the rail head in Sanger and was constructed in 1890 by the Kings River Lumber Company. Another company, the Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company, was formed in 1892 by Charles Shaver and Lewis Swift. The company successfully repaired an old sawmill flume and hired civil engineer John Eastwood to design updates and additions to the flume to carry water approximately 40 miles from Stevenson Creek to Clovis. The flume was reported as requiring nine million feet of lumber and a cost of \$200,000. These flumes supplied lumber to the developing cities in the San Joaquin Valley, but also supplied water for agriculture.

The Project Area is located within the community of Auberry. Auberry was named for Al Yarborough who was one of four hunters who explored the Kings River watershed and named Dinkey Creek in 1863. The name Auberry was an incorrect spelling of the phonetic mispronunciation of his last name. A post office was established in the 1880s and the name was spelled as it was commonly pronounced. F. F. William built the first store on a dirt road in 1880. The town began as a supply point for the lumber industry with a general store, café, blacksmith shop, and bar. The Sequoia Forest Industries Sawmill located in Auberry closed in 1994, laying off 125 workers. Since the sawmill closed, Auberry has been developing into a bedroom community for the Fresno-Clovis area (ECORP 2019).

The Southern Joaquin & Eastern Railroad traveled through the community of Auberry for 21 years from 1912 to 1933. The 56-mile-long railroad was built in 1912 by the Southern California Edison Company for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Project in the upper San Joaquin River watershed. A railroad was needed to haul equipment to the system due to the steep grade. Once the project was complete, the rail line was no longer needed for freight. However, passenger service continued until 1929. The railroad was abandoned and dismantled in 1933. The railroad grade was located west of Little Sandy Creek near the Project Area (ECORP 2019).

The existing buildings within the Project Area are associated with the Auberry Elementary School which was established in 1939 and was closed in 2012. In 1940, the main L-shaped building of the campus was constructed for the Big Sandy School but in 1947 the surrounding school districts merged to create the Auberry Union Elementary School District. The school's name then changed to the Auberry Union Elementary School. In 1990, the Golden Hills School District was formed from the Auberry Union and Sierra Union school districts. In 1992 the Golden Hills School District became part of the SUSD and Auberry Elementary School was one of the SUSD elementary schools.

4.5.2 Cultural Resources (V) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

Records, Map and Aerial Photo Search Results

ECORP conducted a records search for historical resources using various sources.

A records search for the property was completed at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) of the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) at California State University, Bakersfield on January 28, 2019 (SSJVIC search #19-016). The purpose of the records search was to determine the extent of previous surveys within a 0.5-mile (800-meter) radius of the Proposed Project location, and whether previously documented pre-contact or historic-age archaeological sites, architectural resources, or traditional cultural properties exist within this area.

In addition to the official records and maps for archaeological sites and surveys in Fresno County, the following historic references were also reviewed: Historic Property Data File for Fresno County; The National Register Information System website; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Landmarks website; California Historical Landmarks; California Points of Historical Interest; Directory of Properties in the Historical Resources Inventory; Caltrans Local Bridge Survey; Caltrans State Bridge Survey; and Historic Spots in California (ECORP 2019).

Other references examined include a RealQuest Property Search and historic General Land Office land patent records (ECORP 2019).

Historic Maps

Historic aerial photos taken in 1940, and from 1993 to present were also reviewed for any indications of property usage and built environment.

The nearest local history register (for the City of Fresno) was reviewed (ECORP 2019).

Field Survey Results

On January 28 and 29, 2019, ECORP subjected the Area of Potential Effects to an intensive pedestrian survey under the guidance of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Identification of Historic Properties* using transects spaced 15 meters apart (Figure 4 in Appendix B – *Biological Resource Assessment*). ECORP expended one person-day in the field. At that time, the ground surface was examined for indications of surface or subsurface cultural resources. The general morphological characteristics of the ground surface were inspected for indications of subsurface deposits that may be manifested on the surface, such as circular depressions or ditches. Whenever possible, the locations of subsurface exposures caused by such factors as rodent activity, water or soil erosion, or vegetation disturbances were examined for artifacts or for indications of buried deposits. No subsurface investigations or artifact collections were undertaken during the pedestrian survey (ECORP 2019).

Evaluation/Conclusions

Auberry Elementary School campus has been evaluated using CRHR or NRHP eligibility criteria and was found to be not eligible. It does not rise to the status of a California Historical Landmark. Therefore, the Auberry Elementary School campus is not an Historical Resource as defined by CEQA or an Historic Property as defined by Section 106 of the NHPA. Therefore, the Project will not have an impact on historic properties.

Would the Project:	Less than			
	Potentially Significant Impact	Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

As discussed above, no cultural resources were identified on the property as a result of the records search and field survey. However, due to the presence of alluvium along Little Sandy Creek, and given the likelihood of pre-contact archaeological sites being located along perennial waterways, there exists the potential for buried pre-contact archaeological sites in the Project Area. Additionally, there always remains the potential for ground-disturbing activities to expose previously unrecorded cultural resources. Both

CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA require the Lead Agency to address any unanticipated cultural resource discoveries during project construction. This is considered a potentially significant impact. Implementation of MM CUL-1 will reduce this potential impact to less than significant.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

No formal cemeteries are located within or near the Project Site and no human remains have been reported in the Project vicinity. Therefore, the Proposed Project has low potential to disturb human remains. The potential exists however for previously unknown remains to be unearthed during construction. The impact on such resources will be less than significant with the implementation of MM CUL-1.

4.5.3 Mitigation Measures

CUL-1: Implement Measures to Protect Unanticipated Cultural, Archaeological, and/or Tribal Cultural Resources Discoveries. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the evaluation and treatment of inadvertent/unanticipated discoveries of potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs), archaeological, or cultural resources during a project's ground disturbing activities.

- If any suspected TCRs are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment, as necessary.
- When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the California Native American Tribe(s) that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.
- The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the

resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil.

- Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

4.6 Energy

4.6.1 Environmental Setting

California relies on a regional power system comprised of a diverse mix of natural gas, renewable, hydroelectric, and nuclear generation resources. Natural gas provides California with a majority of its electricity followed by renewables, large hydroelectric and nuclear (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2022a). Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) provides electricity and natural gas to Fresno County. It generates or buys electricity from hydroelectric, nuclear, renewable, natural gas, and coal facilities. PG&E provides natural gas and electricity to most of the northern two-thirds of California, from Bakersfield and Barstow to near the Oregon, Nevada and Arizona State Line. It provides 5.2 million people with electricity and natural gas across 70,000 square miles. In 2019, PG&E announced that 100 percent of the company's delivered electricity comes from GHG emission-free sources, including renewables, nuclear, and hydropower (PG&E 2019).

Electricity/Natural Gas Services

PG&E provides electricity and natural gas to the Project Area. PG&E generates or buys electricity from hydroelectric, nuclear, renewable, natural gas, and coal facilities. PG&E provides natural gas and electricity to most of the northern two-thirds of California, from Bakersfield and Barstow to near the Oregon, Nevada and Arizona state lines. It provides 5.2 million people with electricity and natural gas across 70,000 square miles.

Energy Consumption

Electricity use is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh), and natural gas use is measured in therms. Vehicle fuel use is typically measured in gallons (e.g. of gasoline or diesel fuel), although energy use for electric vehicles is measured in kWh.

The electricity consumption associated with all uses in Fresno County from 2017 to 2021 is shown in Table 4.6-1. As indicated, the demand has increased since 2017.

Table 4.6-1. Electricity Consumption in Fresno County 2017-2021

Year	Electricity Consumption (kilowatt hours)
2021	8,378,047,292
2020	8,017,830,742
2019	7,444,929,569
2018	7,645,729,423
2017	7,429,224,999

Source: CEC 2022b

The natural gas consumption associated with all uses in Fresno County from 2017 to 2021 is shown in Table 4.6-2. As indicated, the demand has decreased since 2017.

Table 4.6-2. Natural Gas Consumption in Fresno County 2017-2021

Year	Natural Gas Consumption (therms)
2021	318,890,506
2020	325,913,153
2019	352,191,049
2018	346,621,512
2017	341,193,501

Source: CEC 2022b

Automotive fuel consumption in Fresno County from 2018 to 2022 is shown in Table 4.6-3. Fuel consumption has slightly decreased since 2018.

Table 4.6-3. Automotive Fuel Consumption in Fresno County 2018-2022

Year	Total Fuel Consumption
2022	537,970,309
2021	537,288,839
2020	487,624,247
2019	549,114,020
2018	545,482,636

Source: CARB 2021

4.6.2 Regulatory Setting

State

California Renewable Energy Standards

In 2002, California established its Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) Program, with the goal of increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the State's electricity mix to 20 percent of retail sales by 2010. In 2006, California's 20 percent by 2010 RPS goal was codified under Senate Bill (SB) 107. Under the provisions of SB 107 (signed into law in 2006), investor-owned utilities were required to generate 20 percent of their retail electricity using qualified renewable energy technologies by the end of 2010. In 2008, EO S-14-08 was signed into law and requires that retail sellers of electricity serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. As described previously, PG&E's electricity mix in 2015 was 30 percent renewable. In October 2015, Governor Edmund Gerald (Jerry) Brown, Jr., signed SB 350 to codify California's climate and clean energy goals. A key provision of SB 350 requires retail sellers and publicly owned utilities to procure 60 percent of the state's electricity from renewable sources by 2030, while calling for a "bold path" toward 100 percent zero-carbon electricity by 2045.

California Building Codes

At the State level, the Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings, as specified in Title 24, Part 6, of the CCR (Title 24), was established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. Title 24 is updated approximately every three years. These standards are a unique California asset that have placed the state on the forefront of energy efficiency, sustainability, energy independence and climate change issues. The 2020 Building Energy Efficiency Standards improved upon the 2016 Energy Standards for new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings. The 2019 update to the Building Energy Efficiency Standards focuses on several key areas to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed buildings and additions and alterations to existing buildings. The 2019 standards are a major step toward meeting ZNE. The most significant efficiency improvement to the residential standards include the introduction of photovoltaic into the perspective package, improvements for attics, walls, water heating and lighting. Buildings permitted on or after January 1, 2023, must comply with the 2022 Standards. These new standards, applicable to the Project, require all residential development, three stories and under, to have 100 percent electricity production offset by solar.

4.6.3 Energy (VI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less Than Significant Impact

The impact analysis focuses on the four sources of energy that are relevant to the Proposed Project: electricity, natural gas, the equipment-fuel necessary for Project construction, and the automotive fuel necessary for Project operations. Addressing energy impacts requires an agency to make a determination as to what constitutes a significant impact. There are no established thresholds of significance, statewide or locally, for what constitutes a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy for a proposed land use project. For the purpose of this analysis, the amount of electricity and natural gas estimated to be consumed by the Project is quantified and compared to that consumed by all land uses in Fresno County. Similarly, the amount of fuel necessary for Project construction and operations is calculated and compared to that consumed in Fresno County.

The analysis of electricity and natural gas usage is based on California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) modeling conducted by ECORP Consulting (see Appendix A), which quantifies energy and natural gas use for Project operations. The amount of operational automotive fuel use was estimated using the CARB's EMFAC2021 computer program, which provides projections for typical daily fuel usage in Fresno County. The amount of total construction-related fuel use was estimated using ratios provided in the Climate Registry's General Reporting Protocol for the Voluntary Reporting Program, Version 2.1. Energy consumption associated with the Project is summarized in Table 4.6-4.

Table 4.6-4. Proposed Project Energy and Fuel Consumption		
Energy Type	Annual Energy Consumption	Percentage Increase Countywide
Project Energy Consumption		
Electricity Consumption	905,310 kilowatt-hours	0.0106 percent
Natural Gas Consumption	28,546 therms	0.0089
Automotive Fuel Consumption		
Project Construction Year One	69,754 gallons	0.0129
Project Construction Year Two	52,414 gallons	0.0097
Project Construction Year Three	10,640 gallons	0.0019
Project Operations	18,938 gallons	0.0035

Source: Refer to Appendix A for building energy consumption calculations and Fuel Consumption calculations.

Notes: The Project increases in electricity and natural gas consumption are compared with all of the usage in Fresno County in 2021, the latest year of data available. The Project increases in construction and operations automotive fuel consumption are compared with the countywide fuel consumption in 2022, the most recent full year of data.

As shown in Table 4.6-4, the annual electricity consumption due to operations will be 905,310 kilowatt-hours, resulting in a negligible increase (0.0106 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all uses in Fresno County. This is potentially a conservative estimate since in September 2018 Governor Jerry Brown Signed Executive Order (EO) B-55-18, which established a new statewide goal "to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net

negative emissions thereafter.” Carbon neutrality refers to achieving a net-zero carbon dioxide emissions. This can be achieved by reducing or eliminating carbon emissions, balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal, or a combination of the two. This goal is in addition to existing statewide targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction. Governor’s Executive Order B-55-18 requires CARB to “work with relevant state agencies to ensure future Scoping Plans identify and recommend measures to achieve the carbon neutrality goal.” Additionally, this number does not take into account the 60,000 square foot solar array that is proposed on the Project Site. This, in turn, will result in less energy consumption on the Project Site and a smaller contribution to annual electricity consumption in Fresno County. Natural gas consumption due to operations will be 28,546 therms resulting in a negligible increase (0.0089 percent) in the typical annual natural gas consumption attributable to all uses in Fresno County. For these reasons, the Project will not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of building energy.

Fuel necessary for Project construction will be required for the operation and maintenance of construction equipment and the transportation of materials to the Project Site. The fuel expenditure necessary to construct the physical building and infrastructure will be temporary, lasting only as long as Project construction. As further indicated in Table 4.6-4, the Project’s gasoline fuel consumption during the one-time construction period is estimated to be 69,754 gallons over the course of the first year of construction, 52,414 gallons over the course of the second year of construction, and 10,640 gallons over the course of the third year of construction. This will increase the annual fuel use in the County by 0.0129 percent, 0.0097 percent, and 0.0019 percent, respectively. As such, Project construction will have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies. No unusual Project characteristics will necessitate the use of construction equipment that will be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or the state. Construction contractors will purchase their own gasoline and diesel fuel from local suppliers and will judiciously use fuel supplies to minimize costs due to waste and subsequently maximize profits. Additionally, construction equipment fleet turnover and increasingly stringent state and federal regulations on engine efficiency combined with state regulations limiting engine idling times and requiring recycling of construction debris, will further reduce the amount of transportation fuel demand during Project construction. For these reasons, it is expected that construction fuel consumption associated with the Project will not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than other similar development projects of this nature.

The Project is estimated to generate approximately 90 daily trips (KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. 2020). As indicated in Table 4, this will result in the consumption of approximately 18,938 gallons of automotive fuel per year, which will increase the annual countywide automotive fuel consumption by 0.0035 percent. Fuel consumption associated with the vehicle trips generated by the Project during operations will not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to other similar developments in the region.

For these reasons, this impact will be less than significant.

Would the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact

The Project will be designed in a manner that is consistent with relevant energy conservation plans designed to encourage development that results in the efficient use of energy resources. The Project will be built to Title 24 standards and designed to meet the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver rating requirements. Additionally, the Project is proposing a 60,000-sf ground-mounted solar array. The array will be connected to the facility electrical system to offset the campus load. Furthermore, the Project will also be consistent with Fresno County General Plan Policy H-J.6 which encourages the use of architectural design standards that reduce energy use. The Project will not conflict or obstruct any local or state plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

For these reasons, no impact will occur.

4.6.4 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.7 Geology and Soils

GEOCON Consultants, Inc. conducted a Geotechnical Investigation for the Proposed Project (GEOCON 2020). The investigation included reviewing all available geologic and subsurface information, a field investigation of the site, drilling geotechnical machine borings, performing laboratory tests on selected soil samples, and providing geotechnical recommendations to aid Project planning, design and construction. The following geology and soils analysis is based on the GEOCON Geotechnical Report, and the report is included with this Draft IS/MND as Appendix D.

4.7.1 Environmental Setting

Geomorphic Setting

The Project site is located in the foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada geomorphic province of California. The Sierra Nevada province of California is a tilted fault block, which is overlain by the sediments of the Great Valley province to the west. In general, the Sierra Nevada province is composed of metamorphic bedrock along its western boundary and intrusive bedrock in its central and eastern portions. Published geologic mapping depicts the site vicinity as underlain by Quaternary-age alluvium, which generally consists of stream deposits, chiefly underlying meadows over the Late Cretaceous Tonalite of Blue Canyon facies characterized by medium-grained biotite-hornblende tonalite with large euhedral hornblende prisms and includes small areas of biotite-hornblende granodiorite (USGS et al. 1976).

Soils

According to the *Web Soil Survey* (NRCS 2019), three soil units, or types, have been mapped within the Study Area (Figure 4-1):

- (AuB) Auberry coarse sandy loam 3 to 9 percent slopes: deep, well-drained soils formed in material weathered from intrusive igneous rocks; and
- (AvD) Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes: residuum weathered from basic igneous rock and or metamorphic rock; and
- (VaA) Visalia sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes: moderately well-drained, very deep sandy loams derived from granitic alluvium on alluvial fans and flood plains at 400 to 2,000 feet elevation.

Hydrologic Soil Groups

Hydrologic soil groups are based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of four groups according to the rate of water infiltration when the soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation.

- Group A: Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet.
- Group B: Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet.
- Group C: Soils having a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet.
- Group D: Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet.

VaA Visalia sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes is considered a hydric soil (Group A) with Hildreth inclusions in floodplains and swales; unnamed and somewhat poorly drained inclusions in depressions, drainageways, and valleys; and Foster inclusions in depressions and floodplains (NRCS 2019).

Groundwater

Frunk's Mountain Drilling Company prepared a Department of Water Resources (DWR) *Well Completion Report* for a public water supply well installed onsite and dated October 21, 2003. The report included a stratigraphic log from drilling of the well boring approximately 805 feet deep. Soil and rock encountered in this boring is described as approximately 0 to five feet of topsoil, five to 12 feet of granite, overlying decomposed and oxidized granite. Groundwater was encountered at 277 feet.

According to GEOCON (2020), "Based on site geology, perched groundwater/seepage may develop at relatively shallow depths at or near the contact between residual soil and formational material, especially during winter and spring. Seepage can also occur within formational material based on the degree of weathering, fracturing, and jointing. It should be noted that fluctuations in the level of groundwater may occur due to variations in rainfall, temperature, and other factors. Depth to groundwater can also vary significantly due to localized pumping, irrigation practices, and seasonal fluctuations. Therefore, it is possible that groundwater may be encountered during construction."

Regional Seismicity and Fault Zones

The California State Mining and Geology Board defines an “active fault” as one that has had subsurface displacement within the past 11,000 years (Holocene). “Potentially active faults” are defined as those that have ruptured between 11,000 and 1.6 million years before the present (Quaternary). Faults are generally considered inactive if there is no evidence of displacement during the Quaternary period.

The Proposed Project Area is in the Sierra Nevada province of California and is a tilted fault block, overlain by the sediments of the Great Valley province to the west. In general, the Sierra Nevada province is composed of metamorphic bedrock along its western boundary and intrusive bedrock in its central and eastern portions.

Published geologic mapping depicts the site vicinity as underlain by Quaternary-age alluvium, which generally consists of stream deposits, chiefly underlying meadows over the Late Cretaceous Tonalite of Blue Canyon facies (map symbol Kbl) characterized by medium-grained biotite hornblende tonalite with large euhedral hornblende prisms and includes small areas of biotite-hornblende granodiorite (USGS 1976).

The Round Valley Fault, approximately 50 miles southwest of the Proposed Project, is a high-angle, down-to-east normal fault along the prominent eastern front of central Sierra Nevada; it is in one of the most seismically active regions along the eastern front of the Sierra Nevada. Based on the official State of California Special Studies Zones fault maps, no known active fault crosses the Project site. Therefore, the risk of surface fault rupture at the Project Site is considered low.

Liquefaction

Liquefaction refers to the temporary loss of soil shear strength that may occur suddenly during strong ground shaking. This phenomenon can occur where there are saturated, loose, granular (sandy) deposits subjected to long-duration seismic shaking. Liquefaction-related phenomena can include localized ground settlement, ground cracking and expulsion of water and sand (sand boils), the partial or complete loss of bearing and confining forces used to support loads, amplification of seismic shaking, and lateral spreading. The Project site is not located in a currently established State of California Seismic Hazard Zone for liquefaction.

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and radioactive gas that is produced as a natural decay product of uranium. Because of its radioactivity, studies have shown that at elevated concentrations there is a link between radon and lung cancer. Persons living in a building with elevated radon concentrations may have an increased risk of contracting lung cancer over a period of years. The Project site is located in an area believed to have low radon potential with levels of radon typically below the USEPA radon threshold limit of 4.0 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). Potentially high radon levels are typically associated with geologic uplift, the uranium/lignite belt, or granite or shale outcrops. Fresno County is an USEPA Radon Zone 2, a county with predicted average indoor radon screening levels less than 3 pCi/L.

Paleontological Resources

A paleontological database search of the paleontology locality and specimen collection records for the Project Area and surrounding area (0.5-mile radius) was requested from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLA) in September 2019. Additional information from a query of the University of California Museum of Paleontology online catalog records, a review of regional geologic maps from the California Geological Survey, and a review of existing literature on paleontological resources of Fresno County were used to provide information about paleontological resources.

The results of the records search indicated that there are no known vertebrate fossil localities that lie directly within the Proposed Project Area boundaries, or any known vertebrate fossil localities nearby from the same rock formations that occur in the Proposed Project Area. Bedrock in the surrounding elevated terrain, and at unknown depth within the Proposed Project Area, consists of granitic intrusive igneous rock that will not contain recognizable fossils. Surface deposits in the entire Proposed Project Area though consist of younger Quaternary Alluvium, derived as alluvial fan deposits from the surrounding more elevated terrain via Little Sandy Creek that currently flows along the western border of the Proposed Project Area.

4.7.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to geology and soils and relevant to the Project are presented below.

Building Codes

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (PRC, Sections 2621-2630).

This Act requires that “sufficiently active” and “well-defined” earthquake fault zones be delineated by the State Geologist and prohibits locating structures for human occupancy on active and potentially active surface faults. Note that since only those potentially active faults that have a relatively high potential for ground rupture are identified as fault zones, not all potentially active faults are zoned under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, as designated by the State of California.

California Building Code (CCR Title 24)

The CBC provides a minimum standard for building design, which is based on the Uniform Building Code, but is modified for conditions unique to California. The CBC is selectively adopted by local jurisdictions, based on local conditions. The CBC contains requirements pertaining to multiple activities, including excavation, site demolition, foundations and retaining walls, grading activities including drainage and erosion control, and construction of pipelines alongside existing structures.

4.7.3 Geology and Soils (VII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

i) The closest active fault, the Hartley Springs Fault, is located approximately 47 miles northeast of the Proposed Project site. Therefore, the Proposed Project site is not located within the Earthquake Fault Hazards Zone associated with an active fault. Additionally, no known active fault crosses the Project Site based on the official State of California Special Studies Zones fault maps. Therefore, the risk of surface fault rupture at the Project Site is considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.

ii) The Project Site is not located within the Earthquake Fault Hazards Zone associated with the closest active fault (Round Valley Fault) nor any other fault. No known active fault crosses the Proposed Project Site based on the official State of California Special Studies Zones fault maps. Adverse effects via strong seismic ground shaking is considered less than significant. No mitigation will be required.

iii) The Project site is not located in a currently established State of California Seismic Hazard Zone for liquefaction, nor is GEOCON aware of any reported historical instances of liquefaction in the area. Based on the subsurface conditions and anticipated seismic conditions at the site, liquefaction is not considered a hazard for the Project site. Impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

iv) The majority of the Project site is located on mostly flat land, though regional topography is mountainous and rolling. Existing natural slopes are not anticipated to be altered during Project

construction or function. Therefore, landslides and slope instability should not be a hazard for the Project. This impact is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Proposed Project will implement a SWPPP that identifies BMPs to control erosion and topsoil loss during construction (Section 0, Hydrology and Water Quality). Because the Project will implement a SWPPP, soil erosion impacts will be reduced to a less than significant impact. No additional mitigation is required.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that will become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project site is not located in a currently established State of California Seismic Hazard Zone for liquefaction, nor is GEOCON aware of any reported historical instances of liquefaction in the area. Based on the subsurface conditions and anticipated seismic conditions at the site, liquefaction, subsidence, and similar effect, are not considered a hazard for the Project site. Impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The potential for damaging settlements to propagate to the ground surface is considered low based upon the laboratory testing conducted as part of the Geotechnical Investigation. No special design

considerations with respect to expansive soil are necessary. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e)	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project includes a new onsite septic system. As discussed in the Project Description, the abandoned school used several leaching fields and septic tanks that will be removed as part of the Project. A new 5,000-gallon septic tank and potential leach field construction will be consistent with recommendations given in GEOCON's Geotechnical Investigation as well as California Building Code requirements. A less than significant impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
f)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

The NHMLA shows the closest vertebrate fossil locality from similar deposits, LACM 7254, just north of west of the Proposed Project Area on the south side of Ash Slough northeast of Chowchilla, which produced a fossil specimen of elephantoid, Proboscidea. Shallow excavations in the soil and Quaternary alluvial deposits exposed throughout the Proposed Project Area are not likely to uncover significant fossil vertebrate remains. Because unknown paleontological resources could be discovered during excavation, this impact is considered potentially significant. Implementation of MM GEO-1 will reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

4.7.4 Mitigation Measures

GEO-1: Discovery of Unknown Paleontological Resources. If any paleontological resources (i.e., fossils) are found during Project construction, construction shall be halted immediately in the subject area and the area shall be isolated using orange or yellow fencing until RESD is notified and the area is cleared for future work. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the find and recommend appropriate treatment of the inadvertently discovered paleontological resources. In addition, in the event of an inadvertent find, sediment samples should be collected and processed to determine the small fossil potential on the Proposed

Project Site. If RESD resumes work in a location where paleontological remains have been discovered and cleared, RESD shall have a paleontologist onsite to observe any continuing excavation to confirm that no additional paleontological resources are in the area. Any fossil materials uncovered during mitigation activities shall be deposited in an accredited and permanent scientific institution for the benefit of current and future generations.

4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

4.8.1 Environmental Setting

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are released as byproducts of fossil fuel combustion, waste disposal, energy use, land use changes, and other human activities. This release of gases, such as Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), and chlorofluorocarbons, creates a blanket around the earth that allows light to pass through but traps heat at the surface, preventing its escape into space. While this is a naturally occurring process known as the greenhouse effect, human activities have accelerated the generation of GHGs beyond natural levels. The overabundance of GHGs in the atmosphere has led to an unexpected warming of the earth and has the potential to severely impact the earth's climate system.

Each GHG differs in its ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere based on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere. CH₄ traps over 25 times more heat per molecule than CO₂, and N₂O absorbs 298 times more heat per molecule than CO₂. Often, estimates of GHG emissions are presented in Carbon Dioxide Equivalents (CO₂e). Expressing GHG emissions in carbon dioxide equivalents takes the contribution of all GHG emissions to the greenhouse effect and converts them to a single unit equivalent to the effect that will occur if only CO₂ were being emitted.

The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G thresholds for GHG's do not prescribe specific methodologies for performing an assessment, do not establish specific thresholds of significance, and do not mandate specific mitigation measures. Rather, the CEQA Guidelines emphasize the lead agency's discretion to determine the appropriate methodologies and thresholds of significance consistent with the manner in which other impact areas are handled in CEQA. With respect to GHG emissions, the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a) states that lead agencies "shall make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate or estimate" GHG emissions resulting from a project. The CEQA Guidelines note that an agency has the discretion to either quantify a project's GHG emissions or rely on a "qualitative analysis or other performance-based standards." (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15064.4(b)). A lead agency may use a "model or methodology" to estimate GHG emissions and has the discretion to select the model or methodology it considers "most appropriate to enable decision makers to intelligently take into account the project's incremental contribution to climate change." (14 CCR 15064.4(c)). Section 15064.4(b) provides that the lead agency should consider the following when determining the significance of impacts from GHG emissions on the environment:

1. The extent a project may increase or reduce GHG emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting.
2. Whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project.

3. The extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions (14 CCR 15064.4(b)).

In addition, Section 15064.7(c) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that “[w]hen adopting or using thresholds of significance, a lead agency may consider thresholds of significance previously adopted or recommended by other public agencies, or recommended by experts, provided the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence” (14 CCR 15064.7(c)). The CEQA Guidelines also clarify that the effects of GHG emissions are cumulative and should be analyzed in the context of CEQA’s requirements for cumulative impact analysis (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(f)). As a note, the CEQA Guidelines were amended in response to SB 97. In particular, the CEQA Guidelines were amended to specify that compliance with a GHG emissions reduction plan renders a cumulative impact insignificant.

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), a project’s incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not cumulatively considerable if the project will comply with an approved plan or mitigation program that provides specific requirements that will avoid or substantially lessen the cumulative problem within the geographic area of the project. To qualify, such plans or programs must be specified in law or adopted by the public agency with jurisdiction over the affected resources through a public review process to implement, interpret, or make specific the law enforced or administered by the public agency. Examples of such programs include a “water quality control plan, air quality attainment or maintenance plan, integrated waste management plan, habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plans [and] plans or regulations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.” Put another way, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3) allows a lead agency to make a finding of less than significant for GHG emissions if a project complies with adopted programs, plans, policies and/or other regulatory strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

To provide guidance to local lead agencies on determining significance for GHG emissions in CEQA documents, the SJVAPCD provides a tiered approach in assessing significance of project specific GHG emission increases as shown below.

- Projects complying with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG mitigation program which avoids or substantially reduces GHG emissions within the geographic area in which the project is located will be determined to have a less-than-significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions. Such plans or programs must be specified in law or approved by the lead agency with jurisdiction over the affected resource and supported by a CEQA-compliant environmental review document adopted by the lead agency. Projects complying with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG mitigation program will not be required to implement Best Performance Standards (BPS).
- Projects implementing BPS will not require quantification of project-specific GHG emissions. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines, such projects will be determined to have a less-than-significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions.

- Projects not implementing BPS will require quantification of project-specific GHG emissions and demonstration that project-specific GHG emissions will be reduced or mitigated by at least 29 percent, and compared to Business-as-Usual (BAU), including GHG emission reductions achieved since the 2002-2004 baseline period, consistent with GHG emission reduction targets established in the previous Scoping Plans. Projects achieving at least a 29 percent GHG emission reduction compared to BAU will be determined to have a less-than-significant individual and cumulative impact for GHGs.

The BPS and the BAU portion of the SJVAPCD tiered approach are problematic based on the 2015 California Supreme Court *Center for Biological Diversity v. Department of Fish and Wildlife* (2015) 62 Cal. 4th 214, 213, 221, 227 (Newhall Ranch) decision, which stated that a GHG-related impact determination based on the BAU approach is "not supported by a reasoned explanation based on substantial evidence." Additionally, the SJVAPCD thresholds were adopted to achieve statewide GHG-reduction goals for the year 2020, and the Project will not be built until after the year 2020. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, Project GHG emissions are quantified and compared to the thresholds issued by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), which is an association of the air pollution control officers from all 35 local air quality agencies throughout California, including the SJVAPCD. CAPCOA recommends a significance threshold of 900 metric tons annually. This threshold is based on a capture rate of 90 percent of land use development projects, which in turn translates into a 90 percent capture rate of all GHG emissions. The 900 metric ton threshold is considered by CAPCOA (2020) to be low enough to capture a substantial fraction of future projects that will be constructed to accommodate future statewide population and economic growth, while setting the emission threshold high enough to exclude small projects that will in aggregate contribute a relatively small fraction of the cumulative statewide GHG emissions.

In the Newhall Ranch decision, following its review of various potential GHG thresholds proposed in an academic study [Crockett, *Addressing the Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions: California's Search for Regulatory Certainty in an Uncertain World* (July 2011), 4 Golden Gate U. Env'tl. L. J. 203], the California Supreme Court identified the use of numeric bright-line thresholds as a potential pathway for compliance with CEQA GHG requirements. The study found numeric bright line thresholds designed to determine when small projects were so small as to not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on global climate change was consistent with CEQA. Specifically, PRC section 21003(f) provides it is a policy of the state that "[a]ll persons and public agencies involved in the environmental review process be responsible for carrying out the process in the most efficient, expeditious manner in order to conserve the available financial, governmental, physical and social resources with the objective that those resources may be better applied toward the mitigation of actual significant effects on the environment." The Supreme Court-reviewed study noted, "[s]ubjecting the smallest projects to the full panoply of CEQA requirements, even though the public benefit will be minimal, will not be consistent with implementing the statute in the most efficient, expeditious manner. Nor will it be consistent with applying lead agencies' scarce resources toward mitigating actual significant climate change impacts." (Crockett, *Addressing the Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions: California's Search for Regulatory Certainty in an Uncertain World* (July 2011), 4 Golden Gate U. Env'tl. L. J. 203, 221, 227.)

4.8.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (VIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction-Generated Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A potent source of GHG emissions associated with the Project will be combustion of fossil fuels during construction activities. Construction-related activities that will generate GHG emissions include worker commute trips, haul trucks carrying supplies and materials to and from the Project Site, and off-road construction equipment (e.g., dozers, loaders, excavators). Table 4.8-1 illustrates the specific construction generated GHG emissions that will result from construction of the Project. Once construction is complete, the generation of these GHG emissions will cease.

Table 4.8-1. Construction-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Emission Source	CO ₂ e (Metric Tons/Year)
Construction Year 1 (2025)	708
Construction Year 2 (2026)	532
Construction Year 3 (2027)	108
<i>Potentially Significant Impact Threshold</i>	<i>900</i>
Exceed Significance Threshold?	No

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. Refer to Attachment A for Model Data Outputs.

As shown in Table 4.8-1, Project construction will not result in the exceedance of 900 metric tons of CO₂e during any year of construction. Once construction is complete, the generation of these GHG emissions will cease.

Operational-Generated Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operation of the Project will result in GHG emissions predominantly associated with the use of energy. Long-term operational GHG emissions attributable to the Project are identified in Table 4.8-2.

Table 4.8-2. Operational-Related GHG Emissions	
Emissions Source	CO₂e (Metric Tons/Year)
Area Source Emissions	1
Energy Source Emissions	236
Mobile Source Emissions	172
Solid Waste Emissions	62
Water Emissions	17
Refrigeration Emissions	7
Total Emissions:	495
<i>Potentially Significant Impact Threshold</i>	<i>900</i>
Exceed Significance Threshold?	No

Source: CalEEMod version 2016.3.2. Refer to Attachment A for Model Data Outputs.

Notes: Emission projections predominately based on CalEEMod model defaults for Fresno County. Average daily vehicle trips provided by KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. (2020).

As shown in Table 5, Project operations will result in the generation of approximately 495 metric tons of CO₂e annually and will not exceed CAPCOA's significance threshold of 900 metric tons annually. Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant impact on the environment due to GHG emissions since it will not exceed this threshold of significance.

Will the Project:

- b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project will not conflict with any adopted plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. The Project is subject to compliance with statewide GHG-reducing goals promulgated by the California 2008 Climate Change Scoping Plan and subsequent updates. As discussed previously, the Project-generated GHG emissions will not surpass the CAPCOA's significance threshold. Additionally, a solar array is proposed to be located on the northern end of the Project Site and will generate supplemental electrical power for the Project. The solar array will be comprised of 60,000 sf of ground mounted photovoltaic cells along with the necessary inverter, combiners and metering to provide clean, renewable energy to be used on site. Therefore, the Project will contribute to the continued reduction of GHG emissions in the interconnected California and western U.S. electricity systems, as the energy produced by the Project will displace GHG emissions that will otherwise be produced by existing

'business-as-usual' power generation resources (including natural gas, coal, arid renewable combustion resources). It is noted that the energy generated from the solar array was not account for in this analysis as specific information was not available the time this report was being prepared.

For these reasons, the Project will not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation related to the reduction in GHG emissions. There is no impact.

4.8.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section is based on the analysis and findings of the *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report* (GEOCON Consultants, Inc. 2019, Appendix E).

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. A hazardous material is defined by the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25501 as follows:

"Hazardous material" means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. "Hazardous materials" include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it will be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

A hazardous material is defined in 22 CCR Section 662601.10 as follows:

A substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed.

Most hazardous materials regulation and enforcement in Fresno County is managed by the Fresno County Department of Public Health, which refers large cases of hazardous materials contamination or violations to the Central Valley RWQCB and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). It is not at all uncommon for other agencies, such as federal and state Occupational Safety and Health Administrations, to become involved when issues of hazardous materials arise.

Transporters of hazardous waste in California are subject to many federal and State regulations. They must register with the California Department of Health Services (DHS) and ensure that vehicle and waste container operators have been trained in the proper handling of hazardous waste. Vehicles used for the transportation of hazardous waste must pass an annual inspection by the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Transporters must allow the CHP and/or the DHS to inspect its vehicles and must make certain required

inspection records available to both agencies. The transport of hazardous materials that are not wastes is regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation through national safety standards.

Other risks resulting from hazardous materials include the use of these materials in local industry, businesses and agricultural production. The owner or operator of any business or entity that handles a hazardous material above threshold quantities is required, by State and federal laws, to submit a business plan to the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). Fresno County Department of Public Health, HazMat Compliance Division is the CUPA within the county boundaries.

Under Government Code Section 65962.5, both the DTSC and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) are required to maintain lists of sites known to have hazardous substances present in the environment. Both agencies maintain up-to-date lists on their websites. The Project site is not listed by the DTSC or SWRCB as a hazardous substances site on the list of hazardous waste sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List). A search of the DTSC (2017) and SWRCB (2017) lists identified two open cases of Leaking Underground Storage Tanks hazardous waste violations within one mile of the Project site.

4.9.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is located at 33367 North Auberry Road, in the unincorporated community of Auberry in Fresno County. The Project site is located on a 29.64-acre parcel. The topography of the site is hilly with gentle slopes to the east at an elevation of approximately 1,983 feet above MSL. The vacant elementary school comprises seven buildings, four portable classrooms, and a maintenance garage. The Proposed Project is accessed via an asphalt-paved driveway near the intersection of Auberry Road and Powerhouse Road on the eastern side of the Proposed Project Site and from Powerhouse Road near the northeastern corner of the Proposed Project Site. A concrete courtyard and asphalt-paved play areas are located in the central and southern portions of the Site. The Auberry Volunteer Fire Department station is located in the northeastern portion of the site. The nearest schools are Foothill Elementary School, 3.4 miles to the southwest, and Sierra High School, 3.5 miles to the southeast.

Environmental Database Review

GEOCON obtained environmental agency listings database information for the Project site and for properties located up to a one-mile radius of the Project site from GeoTracker and EnviroStor. The purpose of the environmental agency listings database review is to identify whether the Proposed Project Site or adjacent sites have been listed on local, state, or federal government database listings or retain historical documentation regarding current and/or past usage that could potentially pertain to Recognized Environment Conditions (REC). Sites within the search radius were also reviewed to identify outlying sites that might potentially impact the subsurface soil and/or groundwater conditions beneath the Proposed Project Site. No information for the Proposed Project Site or properties/facilities within ¼ mile of the Proposed Project Site is available on EnviroStor. Information regarding the Proposed Project Site and offsite properties or facilities within a ¼ mile of the Proposed Project Site on GeoTracker is summarized below.

The most recent Central Valley RWQCB report on GeoTracker – *Case Closure Letter and Summary*, prepared by the Central Valley RWQCB and dated May 25, 2004, shows that two 1,000-gallon gasoline underground storage tanks (USTs), one 1,000-gallon diesel UST, and associated dispensers were removed south of the maintenance garage and a 2,500-gallon diesel UST was removed near the southeastern corner of the administration building on August 16, 1991. Only total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel (TPHd) was detected in a base soil sample at a concentration of 180 mg/kg from the diesel UST south of the maintenance garage. On June 11, 1997, a 1,000-gallon diesel UST was removed near the southeastern corner of the administration building and an unknown-capacity diesel UST was removed from a parking area in the central portion of the campus. TPHd was detected in a base soil sample at a concentration of 76 mg/kg for the first UST and 1,000 micrograms per liter in a water sample collected beneath the second UST.

In a routine sampling event of three water supply wells at the Proposed Project Site on March 12, 2001, methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) was detected in two wells. The well with concentrations that exceeded the MTBE drinking water screening level, located in the northern portion of the campus, was removed from the school water supply system. After pumping approximately 30,000 gallons of water out of the northernmost well, MTBE concentrations have been at or less than drinking water screening levels since October 2003. The RWQCB concluded that a small gasoline discharge to the septic system or a surface source near the water supply well was likely responsible for the MTBE. The minor releases of diesel fuel from two of the former USTs produced negligible groundwater impact and the residual petroleum hydrocarbons are expected to degrade naturally. Regardless of the source, the historical presence of petroleum hydrocarbons and associated chemical components in groundwater beneath the site is a REC for the Site.

The following offsite properties/facilities are also listed on GeoTracker:

- Auberry General Store (33251 Auberry Road)
- Former Exxon (33260 Powerhouse Road)
- Auberry Garage (33246 Auberry Road)
- Fresno County Yard #5 (33148 Auberry Road)
- Former Chevron (33105 Auberry Road)

The information obtained from various regulatory databases for the facilities is also available on GeoTracker. Based on the available information for these facilities, their respective releases are not anticipated to have caused a REC at the Project site.

Historical Aerial Photograph Review

Available aerial photographs of the Project site and the surrounding area obtained from Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) were reviewed. Aerial photographs showing the area of the Project site for the years 1946, 1950, 1957, 1963, 1975, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2005, 2009, 2012, and 2016 were reviewed by

GEOCON. Copies of the aerial photographs are provided in Appendix D of Appendix E – *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report*. The following is a summary of the aerial photographs reviewed:

- 1946. The Project site is open space land with Little Sandy Creek west of the site. A single school building was present near the eastern boundary of the site.
- 1950. The resolution of the photograph is poor; however, it appears that conditions are similar to those observed in the 1946 image.
- 1957. Conditions are similar to those observed in the 1950 photograph except that three school buildings are present onsite.
- 1963. Conditions are similar to those observed in the 1957 photograph.
- 1975. The resolution of the photograph is poor; however, the school has added two buildings and an oval track.
- 1978. The resolution of the photograph is poor; however, it appears that conditions are similar to those observed in the 1975 image.
- 1985. The Auberry volunteer fire department building is present in the eastern portion of the site.
- 1998. The school has added three portable classrooms.
- 2005. An unimproved road is present in the northern portion of the site.
- 2009. Conditions are similar to those observed in the 2005 image.
- 2012. Conditions are similar to those observed in the 2009 image.
- 2016. One portable classroom, the unimproved road, and the oval track are no longer present.

Review of the historical aerial photographs did not indicate evidence that will pose a REC to the Project site or adjacent properties.

United States Geological Survey Topographic Maps

GEOCON obtained historical topographic maps from EDR for the Proposed Project Site. Historical topographic maps dated 1904, 1953, 1981, 1983, 2004, and 2012 were available for review. In general, the large scale of the topographic maps (1 inch = 0.5 mile) renders most specific land uses at ground level to be indistinguishable. Review of the historical topographic maps did not indicate evidence or conditions that will pose a REC to the Project site.

Historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

GEOCON did not review Sanborn fire insurance maps as EDR indicated that Sanborn map coverage do not exist for the Proposed Project Site and vicinity.

Hazardous Materials Inspection Reports

The Fresno County Environmental Health Division (FCEHD) indicated that they have 604 documents pertaining to the Proposed Project Site accessible via the FCEHD's online document portal. These documents include food facility inspection reports, water quality results, UST permits, well completion reports, Auberry Elementary School maps and plans, and letters from the Central Valley RWQCB. Water quality results for the drinking water supply wells onsite indicate that the water has tested positive for coliform bacteria in the past. There is no DWR well destruction report on file with the FCEHD for the four groundwater monitoring wells installed in March 2002.

Site Reconnaissance

On December 13, 2018, Mr. Cord Denning, Senior Staff Scientist, and Mr. Christian Virrueta, Staff Geologist, performed the site reconnaissance. Weather conditions during the reconnaissance was sunny with temperatures approximately 65°F. Photos of various site features are appended to Appendix E – *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report* as Appendix D.

The Project site is a vacant elementary school with classrooms, a gymnasium, cafeteria, library, asphalt-paved driveways and parking lot, maintenance garage, and open space vegetated with grasses, trees, and brush. The Auberry Volunteer Fire Department station is in the northeastern portion of the site. Presented below are GEOCON's observations:

School Campus

The main school campus consists of seven permanent buildings and four portable classrooms. Five permanent buildings house the office, gymnasium, cafeteria, kitchen, classrooms, restrooms, and two boiler rooms. A boiler, sump, and floor drain are present in each of the boiler rooms in the lower level of the cafeteria building and the southern end of the gymnasium, administration, and classroom building. Two permanent buildings, two portable classrooms, a maintenance garage, and an asphalt-paved parking lot are to the north and northwest of the cafeteria building. The permanent buildings house the library and more classrooms.

The Auberry Volunteer Fire Department Station, in the northeastern portion of the Proposed Project Site, includes a garage, a mobile office, storage containers, an emergency vehicle, and a water holding tank. The SUSD currently rents out the maintenance garage to Mountainflame Propane, a local propane distributor. Twenty-five refurbished 100- to 1,000-gallon propane containers were temporarily stored on the parking lot. An empty 500-gallon split gasoline and diesel above ground storage tank, a storage shed with old cans and five-gallon buckets of paint and primer, empty 55-gallon drums, and metal debris are adjacent to the maintenance garage. Inside the maintenance garage, *de minimus* oil spills, an in-ground lift, non-functioning pick-up truck, small catamaran, and other miscellaneous items were observed. The in-ground lift is a REC for the site because it constitutes a "material threat" of a release, which could impact surrounding soil with hydraulic fluid.

Exterior Areas

The Proposed Project Site also contains open space vegetated with grasses, trees, and brush. Little Sandy Creek is located along the western portion of the site. GEOCON observed various waste and debris in the northeastern portion of the site including metal, wood, plastic, tires, and discarded appliances. A pad-mounted transformer and switchboard enclosure are east of the library and classroom building. The transformer appeared to be in fair condition, but GEOCON observed no labels regarding polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) content. GEOCON observed no evidence of leakage from this transformer.

Four water supply wells (including two inactive wells) are distributed throughout the site. The well in the northern portion of the campus was disconnected from the school water supply system in April 2001 due to elevated methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) concentrations in water samples collected from this well. The two most recent water supply wells were installed in June 2002 and October 2003 (Section 4.9.1.1.1, Environmental Database Review, provides more information on the inactive wells).

Offsite Survey

Adjoining and adjacent properties consist of the following:

- North – single-family residence and mobile home park.
- East – Auberry Road, single-family residences, and undeveloped parcel(s)
- South – single-family residences, a Mexican restaurant, and auto repair facility
- West – dry Little Sandy Creek and undeveloped parcel(s)

GEOCON observed no evidence of RECs on properties adjacent to the site.

Asbestos-Containing Materials

The use of asbestos in common building materials has been mostly discontinued since the late 1970s. Suspect asbestos-containing materials (ACM) were not observed within the building materials at the Project site. However, given the age of most of the structures onsite, ACM may be present in onsite buildings scheduled for demolition. An asbestos survey was not included in the subject scope of services of GEOCON's assessment.

Lead-Based Paint

The use of Lead-Based Paints (LBP) was common practice in building construction prior to 1978. Given the age of most of the structures onsite, lead-based painted surfaces may be present in onsite structures scheduled for demolition. An LBP survey was not included in the subject scope of GEOCON's assessment.

Aerially Deposited Lead

Due to the historical use of leaded gasoline, Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) is potentially present in shallow soils along highways that conveyed traffic between the 1920s through the 1980s. Based on current and historic use, the Project site is not at risk of ADL.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

The federal Toxic Substances Control Act generally prohibited the domestic manufacturing of PCBs after 1979. However, hydraulic fluids or dielectric insulating fluids typically found in electrical transformers, hydraulic equipment, capacitors, and similar equipment may contain PCBs if such materials have been present prior to the late 1970s. A hydraulic lift, which will be removed, is in the existing warehouse in the middle of the Proposed Project Site. Moore Twining Associates, Inc. conducted a subsurface soil investigation in April 2019. The analytical results of the soil and groundwater samples collected from the areas adjacent to the hydraulic lift system showed no detectable petroleum hydrocarbons, VOCs, and PCBs analyzed. No additional investigation or remedial action appears to be warranted for the Project site. Based on these observations, the potential for the presence of PCBs is not considered a REC to the Project site.

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and radioactive gas that is produced as a natural decay product of uranium. Because of its radioactivity, studies have shown that at elevated concentrations there is a link between radon and lung cancer. Persons living in a building with elevated radon concentrations may have an increased risk of contracting lung cancer over a period of years. The Project site, located in Fresno County, is a USEPA Radon Zone 2, an area of moderate radon potential with levels of radon typically below the USEPA radon threshold limit of 4.0 pCi/L. Potentially high radon levels are typically associated with geologic uplift, the uranium/lignite belt, or granite or shale outcrops. Radon was not tested in the *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report* but is not anticipated to be a REC to the Project Site.

4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to hazards and hazardous materials and relevant to the Project are identified in Appendix E. At the local level, the following objectives, policies, and programs were taken from the Health and Safety Element of the Fresno County General Plan (2000).

Goal HS-D To minimize the loss of life, injury, and property damage due to seismic and geologic hazards.

Goal HS-F To minimize the risk of loss of life, injury, serious illness, and damage to property resulting from the use, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes.

Goal HS-G To protect residential and other noise-sensitive uses from exposure to harmful or annoying noise levels; to identify maximum acceptable noise levels compatible with various land use designations; and to develop a policy framework necessary to achieve and maintain a healthful noise environment.

4.9.3 Hazards and Hazardous Materials (IX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Some hazardous materials, such as diesel fuel, gasoline and other lubricants, will be used onsite during construction and will be stored onsite and used on and offsite during Center operation. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Due to the relatively small quantities involved, and because all on- and offsite storage and use of lubricants, fuels, and solvents will be conducted consistent with applicable regulations, use of these materials will not create a significant hazard to the public and impacts will be less than significant. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

The use of asbestos and lead based paint was commonly used in buildings in the 1970s. Suspect asbestos-containing materials (ACM) were not observed within the building materials at the Project site. However, given the age of most of the structures onsite, ACM may be present in onsite buildings scheduled for demolition. Similarly, given the age of most of the structures onsite, lead-based painted surfaces may be present in onsite structures scheduled for demolition. Therefore, the project will implement HAZ-1 requiring testing for both lead based paints and asbestos prior to demolition of existing buildings.

During construction, there will be a low risk for accidental discharge of hazardous materials associated with heavy duty machinery. Related risks will be addressed through the implementation of BMPs and contractor compliance with related regulatory requirements for transport and temporary storage of construction related fuels and lubricants. Therefore, the potential for the accidental release of hazardous materials during construction is considered unlikely. A less than significant impact will occur.

During operation, the CCC Center will be equipped with an onsite emergency power system consisting of a pad-mounted 400kW diesel engine generator fueled by a separate aboveground propane tank located

near the generator will have a capacity sufficient for 72 hours of generator operation at 100 percent load and will be designed and constructed consistent with applicable standards, including secondary containment. The Center will also include a 200-sf hazardous materials storage building in the western portion of the warehouse parking area. This building will be designed for hazardous materials storage consistent with applicable regulations and will be specially designed for ventilation and secondary containment. Onsite storage and use of hazardous materials will comply with all applicable regulations. With implementation of HAZ-1, impacts will be less than significant.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

There are no schools located within ¼ mile of the Project site. The nearest school to the Project site is Sierra High School, located approximately 3.4 miles to the southeast. Please see the response to b) above. Impacts will be less than significant. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, will it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

GEOCON conducted a search of the DTSC's Hazardous Waste and Substance List (Cortese List) and EnviroStor online database and the SWRCB's GeoTracker online database for the Project Area and did not identify any potential or confirmed state or federal Superfund sites located within or immediately adjacent to the Project site. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites. No impact will occur.

Will the Project:

- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, will the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Potentially Significant Impact Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated Less than Significant Impact No Impact

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact.

The closest airport to the Project site is Johnston Field-5CL9, approximately 4.5 miles north of the Project site. Due to the distance of the Proposed Project Site to a public use airport, no hazards to people residing or working in the Proposed Project Area will result. No impact will occur.

Will the Project:

- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Potentially Significant Impact Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated Less than Significant Impact No Impact

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact.

The *Fresno County Operational Area Master Emergency Services Plan* (2017) sets forth policies to address and respond to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and national security emergencies affecting Fresno County. Construction of the Proposed Project will not interfere with the above-listed emergency response and recovery plan and will enhance ability to respond to emergency situations locally. No impact will occur.

Will the Project:

- g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Potentially Significant Impact Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated Less than Significant Impact No Impact

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Less than Significant Impact.

According to the *Draft Fire Hazard Severity Zones in* (both) *State and Local Responsibility Area* maps published by CAL FIRE, the Project Site is located in an other-moderate fire hazard severity zone in Fresno County. Much of the surrounding area is high other severity hazard. However, as described in the Project Description, the Proposed Project will have several fire prevention measures including buildings designed for durability and wildfire resistance with exterior material such as noncombustible fiber cement siding

with adhered masonry stone veneer wainscots. The facility will also house 100 Corpsmembers who will be training and equipped to respond to both natural and manmade disasters (including fire) in an area that currently does not have this type of facility. Therefore, the Proposed Project will have a less than significant impact on increasing the wildfire risk within the area or further exposing people or structures to additional significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

4.9.4 Mitigation Measures

HAZ-1: Asbestos and Lead Based Paint Remediation Compliance

The proposed Project shall comply with all federal, state, and local regulations concerning asbestos. Prior to structure demolition, testing for both asbestos and lead based paint shall take place in all buildings to be demolished. If lead base paint or asbestos are found, a contractor registered by the contractor's state license board to remove asbestos and lead based paint shall conduct removal of all suspected materials. During demolition, water support shall be used to prevent the release of visible air emissions.

4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

EMKO Environmental, Inc. prepared a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) for the Proposed Project in March 2023. The following hydrology analysis is based, in part, on the WSA, which is included with this Draft IS/MND as Appendix I.

4.10.1 Environmental Setting

Regional Hydrology

The Project Site is located within the Upper San Joaquin River Basin. The San Joaquin River is the second largest river system in California. The upper San Joaquin River Basin encompasses approximately 1,720 square miles from Friant Dam up to the headwaters of its north, middle and south forks. The geographical area of the basin includes the high elevation crest of the Sierra Nevada mountain range from Yosemite National Park at its northernmost extent, easterly down the Mono Creek drainage and Mono Pass, and finally as the south fork of the San Joaquin flowing from Goddard Canyon, Kings Canyon National Park (USGS Hydrological Unit Code 18040006).

There is a total of 20 water courses in the upper basin, 498 lakes, of which nine are man-made for power production. There is a total of 1,100,800 acres of watershed in the upper basin and 1,900 river/stream miles of which 1,435 are perennial river/stream miles. Approximately 2/3's of the upper watershed is within the Sierra National Forest in both Fresno and Madera counties and is about 1,500 square miles in area that is predominately conifer forest or above timberline within the headwaters region along the western crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. A portion of the watershed also extends into the Inyo National Forest. There is approximately 1,861,000 acre-feet of annual average surface water run-off that is accumulated in the upper basin all of which ultimately flows into Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam which is operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Millerton Lake's maximum storage capability at any given time is 520,000 acre-feet. Under current operations, approximately 90 percent of the collected runoff is

diverted via the Friant Kern and Madera canals at Friant Dam primarily for agricultural use, as well as some for urban use.

Water resources in Fresno County include a number of rivers and streams, artificial waterways, and groundwater. Surface water in Fresno County is used for a variety of agricultural, urban, and industrial activities. Agricultural uses include drinking water for livestock, wash water on dairies, irrigation of crops and pasturelands, and frost protection of sensitive crops in the spring. Urban uses include water used for drinking water and other indoor and outdoor household activities, including flushing of toilets and irrigation of gardens. Industrial users of water include mining, hydroelectric power, and sewage treatment activities. Surface water and well as groundwater are the primary water sources for Fresno County.

Groundwater resources in the San Joaquin River region are supplied by alluvial aquifers and by fractured-rock aquifers. Alluvial aquifers are comprised of sand and gravel or finer-grained sediments, with groundwater stored within the voids, or pore space, among the alluvial sediments. Fractured-rock aquifers consist of granitic, metamorphic, volcanic, or hard sedimentary rocks, with groundwater being stored in fractures or other void spaces. The distribution and extent of alluvial and fractured-rock aquifers and water wells vary in the San Joaquin River region. DWR Bulletin 118-2003 identifies 11 alluvial groundwater basins and sub-basins in the San Joaquin River region. The 11 basins and sub-basins underlie approximately 5,830 square miles or 38 percent of the hydrologic region. Most of the groundwater in the San Joaquin River region is stored in alluvial aquifers (California's Groundwater Bulletin 118).

The Project is in the Sierra Nevada foothills and is underlain by granitic bedrock. Therefore, there is not an alluvial groundwater basin present underlying the Project site and vicinity. The nearest groundwater basin to the site identified by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), referred to as the Kings Subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Basin No. 5-022.08), begins at the east edge of the San Joaquin Valley, approximately 15 miles to 18 miles southwest of Auberry (EMKO 2023).

Groundwater in the Auberry area does not occur within a groundwater basin but is pumped from deep within a fractured granitic aquifer system (EMKO 2023).

Onsite Drainage

The Project Site is currently developed and is located on hilly terrain. Current site topography generally slopes down from the north to the south-southwest and east to west at elevations ranging from approximately 2,020 feet down to 1,965 feet above mean sea level. Natural slope inclinations are relatively gentle in the southern portion of the site, transitioning to steeper slopes in the northern portion of the site. Site drainage is primarily by sheet flow to the low-lying floodplains areas and existing Little Sandy Creek.

4.10.2 Regulatory Setting

A discussion of the key laws, regulations, and programs pertaining to hydrology and water quality is provided in the following sections.

Federal

Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, commonly known as the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. This gave U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting water quality standards and criteria for contaminants in surface waters. The CWA does not deal directly with groundwater or with water quantity issues. Section 208 requires the use of best management practices (BMPs) to control releases of pollutants in stormwater at construction sites. Section 303(d) requires the states identify waters for which effluent limits are not stringent enough to implement the applicable water quality standards, and to prepare plans for improving the quality of these water bodies. Section 401 requires the federal government to obtain certification from the state that a project is consistent with state water quality standards. Section 402(p)(3)(B)(iii) authorizes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program to control water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches. Section 404 authorizes the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to regulate projects that will discharge dredge or fill materials into waters of the U.S.

Construction projects and many industrial facilities must obtain NPDES permits to control the release of industrial chemicals and sediment in stormwater runoff. Stormwater discharges may contain pollutants in quantities that could adversely affect water quality due to runoff from land and impervious areas such as paved streets, parking lots, and building rooftops during rainfall events. The primary method to control stormwater discharges is through the use of BMPs identified in stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) prepared under applicable State General Permits (see discussion under the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act).

Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974

First enacted in 1974 and substantively amended in 1986 and 1996, the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act authorizes the U.S. EPA to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and manmade contaminants that may be found in drinking water. Within California, the Safe Drinking Water Act is implemented through the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water (see additional discussion below).

State

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

The regulations set by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pertain to water quality aspects of discharges of solid waste to land for treatment, storage, or disposal. The provisions of California Code of Regulations, Title 27, Division 2, Article 1, Subchapter 1, Chapter 7, Subdivision 1 (§22470), regulate the discharge of mining waste. The standards set by the RWQCB do not override or relieve an owner of compliance with other orders, laws, regulations, or other requirements of other approval, regulatory, or enforcement agencies, such as the California Department of Toxic Substances

Control (DTSC), local health entities, water and air quality control boards, local land use authorities, fire authorities, and other agencies.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division 7 of the California Water Code) [§13000 et seq.] was enacted to establish a regulatory program to protect water quality and beneficial uses of all waters of the State of California. It created the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and RWQCB to plan, implement, manage and enforce water quality protection and management. The RWQCB is empowered by the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to require compliance with State and local water quality standards. The Project site is located within the Central Valley Region and is regulated by the Central Valley RWQCB. To implement parts of the Federal Clean Water Act, RWQCB has issued General Stormwater Permits for construction and for various commercial and industrial facilities. The Stormwater NPDES Permitting program is administered by the SWRCB. To obtain a NPDES permit, applicants must prepare and submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the SWRCB, along with a SWPPP and monitoring program that incorporates applicable BMPs.

SWRCB Division of Drinking Water

The Division of Drinking Water regulates public drinking water systems. The water system for the Project will be a public water system because it will serve more than 25 people daily for more than 60 days per year. Since corpsmembers will reside at the facility for much of the year, a Community Water System Permit will most likely be required. To apply for the permit, a technical report must be submitted to the Division of Drinking Water at least six months prior to construction and operation of the water system.

Senate Bill 610: Water Supply Assessment

Water Code §§10910 through 10915 were amended by Senate Bill 610 (SB 610) in 2002. SB 610 requires an assessment of available water supplies to determine if they are sufficient to serve the demand generated by the Project, as well as the reasonably foreseeable demand in the region over the next 20 years under average normal year, single dry year, and multiple dry year conditions. An SB 610 water supply assessment has been prepared for the Project and is included in Appendix I of this IS/MND

Executive Order N-7-22

On March 28, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-7-22 in response to extreme drought conditions throughout the state. Based on Executive Order N-7-22, applications for a construction permit for a new well or alteration of an existing well must be supported by a Licensed Professional Report prepared by a California-licensed professional such as a Professional Geologist with a Certified Hydrogeologist specialty certification. The Report must conclude both that extraction of groundwater from the well:

1. Is not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells; and
2. Is not likely to cause subsidence that will adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.

However, construction of a new well and alteration of an existing well are exempt from the Executive Order if the well either provides less than two acre-feet of water per year to a single domestic user, or the well supplies a public water system as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 116275.

Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm Water Permit for General Construction Activity

The SWRCB has issued a general NPDES permit for stormwater discharges associated with construction activity of greater than 1 acre in size - Order 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by Orders 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-0006-DWQ (General Construction Permit). The General Construction Permit requires the preparation of a SWPPP that identifies and describes the BMPs to be implemented at construction sites to control pollution from stormwater runoff. Coverage is obtained by submitting an NOI, risk assessment, post-construction calculations, a site map, the SWPPP, and a signed certification statement by the legally responsible person to the SWRCB prior to construction.

Local

Fresno County Environmental Health Division

The County Environmental Health Division, within the Department of Public Health, regulates the drilling and installation of groundwater wells in accordance with California Water Well Standards (Department of Water Resources Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90), Fresno County Ordinance Title 14 Chapters 14.04 and 14.08, and Fresno County General Plan Policies PF-C.19 and PF-C.20. The well permit application must be submitted by a state-licensed well drilling contractor and include documentation required under Executive Order N-7-22 before a permit can be issued.

Existing wells on the Project site that will no longer be used must be properly abandoned and destroyed in accordance with State and County Environmental Health requirements. A permit for well destruction must be obtained from the Environmental Health Division if a well has not been used for a period of one year and the owner has not demonstrated an intent to use the well again and has not followed the requirements for maintaining an inactive well.

Fresno County General Plan

The following goals and policies of the Fresno County General Plan (Fresno County 2000) are applicable to the Project:

Goal Public Health and Safety (PHS) 1: Minimize the potential for loss of life, personal injury, and property damage associated with floods.

PF-C.1: The County shall actively engage in efforts and support the efforts of others to retain existing water supplies within Fresno County.

PF-C.3: To reduce demand on the county's groundwater resources, the County shall encourage the use of surface water to the maximum extent feasible.

- PF-C.14: The County shall require that water supplies serving new development meet US Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Health Services and other water quality and quantity standards.*
- PF-C.19: The County shall discourage the proliferation of small community water systems.*
- PF-C.20 The County shall not permit new private water wells within areas served by a public water system.*
- PF-C.25 The County shall require that all new development within the County use water conservation technologies, methods, and practices as established by the County.*
- PF-C.26 The County shall encourage the use of reclaimed water where economically, environmentally, and technically feasible.*

4.10.3 Hydrology and Water Quality (X) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The majority of the precipitation for the area occurs during the winter months; however, adverse storm events can also occur outside of the winter. During construction of the Proposed Project, impacts to water resources could occur without proper controls to protect water quality and reduce impacts to soil erosion. Soil can be loosened during demolition, fill and grading, paving, and tree removal processes. Loosened soils and spills of fluids or fuels from construction vehicles and equipment or miscellaneous construction materials and debris could degrade surface and ground water quality. A heavy rainfall event could cause pollutants to flow offsite and reach nearby surface water drainages. The Project Site and area impacted will be more than one acre, making the Proposed Project subject to the requirements of the statewide NPDES storm water permit for construction (Order 98-08-DWQ). A SWPPP, a required element of the NPDES, includes a listing of BMPs to prevent construction pollutants and products from violating water quality standards or waste discharge requirements [SWRCB 2010]. The SWPPP will be required for the Proposed Project.

All operational activities will be performed consistent with water quality regulations and all hazardous material special use areas will be designed to protect against surface and groundwater contamination. Additionally, the Project will comply with all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the storage of

hazardous waste and all onsite hazardous waste storage will occur within the specially designed hazardous waste storage building which will be equipped with secondary containment.

The Project site and surrounding area are served by well water and septic systems. Wastewater will be disposed of via a leach field. There are several existing leach fields on the property. However, due to changing demands of the site, the project will abandon and remove all existing leach fields and septic tanks. A new approximately 5,000-gallon septic tank will be installed, and existing septic tanks will be removed. A new leach field will be developed to the south of the dormitories. According to the Geotechnical Investigation, the predominant soil in the area is Visalia Sandy Loam. This is a sandy clay composed of approximately 70% sand, 15% clay and well drained. Based on this information, an estimate of 40 sf of leaching area per 100 gallons was used. The maximum absorption capacity was assumed to be 2.5 gallons per sf of leaching area per day. In order to treat the effluent stream, a leaching area of 3,600 sf will be necessary.

Storm drain improvements will be designed in accordance with Fresno County Low Impact Development Standards Manual. Onsite improvements will be designed for the 85th percentile storm event and site grading will ensure all impervious areas and surface drainage are directed toward bioretention areas prior to release to existing wetlands and drainage channels. Final treatment measures will be consistent with a Storm Water Control Plan. A less than significant impact will occur. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Groundwater Supply

The Proposed Project site is not in proximity to a public water system and it is infeasible to extend service to the Project site. Four wells are currently located on the site. However, only one well is functional. Domestic water for the Proposed Project will be provided by the existing functional onsite well and a new well. The three non-functional wells will be destroyed and sealed in accordance with California and Fresno County Environmental Health regulations as part of the Project.

As discussed in Section 4.10.1, groundwater in the Auberry area does not occur within a groundwater basin but is pumped from deep within a fractured granitic aquifer system. Groundwater from the fractured granitic rocks is the sole source of water throughout the Auberry community and for the Project. GEOCON conducted testing of the existing supply well and additional monitoring in 2020 and 2021, both of which were dry years that were part of a multiple-year dry period. Analysis of the testing and monitoring data presented in the WSA (EMKO, 2023) indicates that the existing supply well produces approximately 25 gallons per minute (gpm).

The water demand for the proposed Project will consist of water needed during demolition and construction, for the daily potable demand once the Project facilities are operating, and to initially fill the two 170,000-gallon water tanks. The amount of water needed to meet each of these demands is estimated in the WSA. The demolition and construction are estimated to require 14 acre-feet of water over a one-year period, which equates to a pumping rate of 8.8 gpm. The daily potable demands for the Project facilities are estimated to range from a median daily flow of approximately 3 gpm up to a maximum daily average of almost 8 gpm. As shown in the WSA, the construction-related and daily potable water requirements are less than the capacity of the existing 25-gallon-per-minute onsite well. Initial tank filling will take approximately 9 days 11 hours using the existing well. A second well will be installed as part of the Project to provide a backup supply and to meet the requirements of the water system permit to be issued by the Division of Drinking Water.

Site-specific hydrogeologic parameters were used in an analytical model as part of the WSA (EMKO, 2023) evaluation to assess the effects of pumping groundwater to meet the Project's needs. The findings of the analytical model were further verified by a series of volumetric calculations (EMKO, 2023). The nearest neighboring well to the site is located approximately 750 feet north of the existing supply well. This neighboring well provides water for a private residence and for the Mt. Ararat Mobile Home Park. The total predicted drawdown at the nearest neighboring well after pumping at 25 gpm for 9 days 11 hours to initially fill the two 170,000-gallon storage tanks is 6.1 feet. To meet the daily water demand once the facility is operational will require pumping at 25 gpm for a maximum of 7.5 hours each day. The predicted drawdown at the nearest neighboring well from the daily operational pumping is 3.3 inches. The water level in the nearest neighboring well will fully recover from the tank filling within approximately one to two weeks and will fully recover from the daily pumping before the end of the day, such that there will not be any cumulative drawdown from day to day due to the pumping.

The nearest neighboring well is reported to have initially been 800 feet deep but is currently 490 feet deep due to a collapse of the lower part of the well approximately 15 to 20 years ago. The pump is at a depth of 470 feet below the top of the well. The depth to groundwater, when pumping is not occurring, is approximately 100 feet below the top of the well. Thus, the neighboring well has an available water column of about 370 feet. Temporary drawdowns of 6.1 feet and 3.3 inches due to pumping for the Project represent approximately 1.6 percent and 0.07 percent, respectively, of the available water column. These small and temporary decreases in the available water column in the neighboring well should not have any effect on groundwater production and water availability for the Mt. Ararat Mobile Home Park and adjacent residence.

Since the average pumping rate during the demolition and construction period is only about one-third of the pumping rate to meet the daily demand once the facility is in operation, there will be no perceptible effects on the nearest neighboring well during demolition and construction.

Based on the analysis presented in the WSA, Project water use will not affect other nearby groundwater users such that there will be sufficient water available for existing water uses in the region, along with the Project water demand, during normal, single dry year, and multiple dry year periods for the anticipated life of the Project, which is anticipated to be greater than 20 years. Therefore, impacts to groundwater supply will be less than significant.

However, the shallower depth of the nearest neighboring well due to the collapse has reportedly reduced the sustainable pumping rate and appreciably extended the time it takes the water level in the well to recover after pumping. While the predicted effects of filling the two 170,000-gallon tanks will not result in significant impacts to the physical environment, the initial tank filling should occur using the following protocols to minimize potential temporary reductions in the water supply to the Mt. Ararat Mobile Home Park due to any potential that the initial tank filling could further extend the time it takes the nearest neighboring well to recover:

1. The two tanks should only be filled during rainy periods in the winter and early spring;
2. The two tanks should not be filled during the summer or fall, or during periods of extended drought;
3. The pumping rate during tank filling should be reduced by 50 percent, to approximately 12.5 gpm.

Following these recommendations should minimize or prevent any interference between the tank filling and the water needs supplied by the nearest neighboring well.

Groundwater Recharge

The Proposed Project involves demolition of most of the existing facilities and construction of a new CCC campus. However, the overall footprint of impervious services will be substantially the same as existing conditions. Therefore, impacts to groundwater recharge will be less than significant.

As such, the Proposed Project will have a less than significant impact on groundwater supply and recharge. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which will result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
iii) create or contribute runoff water which will exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Proposed Project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the Project site; however, improvements to the drainage system will be made to better convey stormwater runoff. Site drainage will be designed for the 85th percentile storm event and therefore will not exceed the capacity downstream of the existing or planned drainage systems. Additionally, the Proposed Project will be replacing the existing structures with structures similar in size and the increase in impervious surfaces will be minimal when compared to the existing footprint and impervious surfaces. Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant impact to flood flows. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project Site is not located in an area protected by levees. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, the Project Site is located in Zone X (area of minimal flood hazard). Additionally, the Project Site is neither located near any large bodies of water nor located inland, and not within a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow hazard area. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. A less than significant impact will occur. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

As stated above, the Proposed Project will be required to comply with SWPPP and NPDES regulations and will not obstruct or conflict with water quality control plan. Since the site is not located within a groundwater basin identified by DWR, there are no sustainable groundwater management plans that apply to the Proposed Project. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

4.10.4 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.11 Land Use and Planning

4.11.1 Environmental Setting

The Project is proposed at the former Auberry Elementary School located at 33367 North Auberry Road in the unincorporated community of Auberry in Fresno County (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). The Auberry Elementary School was originally constructed in 1939. Due to a declining student population, the SUSD was forced to close the school in 2012. The Proposed Project Site has a general plan designation of Mountain Urban and has a zoning designation of Rural Residential (RR). The nearest residential use is located approximately 100 feet north of the Proposed Project Site. The Proposed Project Site is currently an abandoned elementary school. The State of California and state-owned land such as the Auberry school site are not subject to local city or county land use and zoning regulations. However, the State is subject to the requirement under CEQA to assess project-related impacts that may occur as a result of conflicts between existing and proposed land uses.

4.11.2 Land Use and Planning (XI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Less than			
	Potentially Significant Impact	Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

Projects such as a railroad line, major highway, or water canal may result in physically dividing an established community by removing existing roadway connections, walkways and bike paths and other types of links between community areas. This may result in the division of an existing community by removing those connections. The Proposed Project will not introduce elements that will result in the removal of roadways or other connections in the surrounding community. The Proposed Project will have no impact in this area. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The State of California and State-owned land, such as a CCC facility, are not subject to local city or county land use and zoning regulations. Although the State is not subject to local land use and zoning regulations, local land use regulations were considered in this IS/MND, and the Project as proposed does not appear to conflict with any local regulations. Therefore, the Proposed Project will have no impact in this area. No mitigation will be required.

4.11.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.12 Mineral Resources

4.12.1 Environmental Setting

The most commonly listed minerals mined in Fresno County are chromium, tungsten, and gold and aggregate resources, primarily sand and gravel. Three sources of aggregate materials are present in Fresno County: quarries, instream gravel, and terrace gravel deposits. For most aggregate uses, rock from each of these sources requires varying amounts of processing.

The demand for minerals and aggregate is typically related to the size of the population, and construction activities, with demand fluctuating from year to year in response to major construction projects, large development activity, and overall economic conditions.

4.12.2 Mineral Resources (XII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

According to Mineral Land Classification maps located on the DOC website, the Project Site is not located in a mineral resources zone. The Proposed Project will not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that will be of value to the region and the residents of the state. There are no mining

activities being conducted or planned for the site. Therefore, no impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

The Proposed Project will not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

4.12.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.13 Noise

4.13.1 Environmental Setting

Noise Fundamentals

Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, or unexpected. The selection of a proper noise descriptor for a specific source is dependent on the spatial and temporal distribution, duration, and fluctuation of the noise. The noise descriptors most often encountered when dealing with traffic, community, and environmental noise include the average hourly noise level (in L_{eq}) and the average daily noise levels/community noise equivalent level (in $L_{dn}/CNEL$). The L_{eq} is a measure of ambient noise, while the L_{dn} and CNEL are measures of community noise. Each is applicable to this analysis and defined as follows:

- **Equivalent Noise Level (L_{eq})** is the average acoustic energy content of noise for a stated period of time. Thus, the L_{eq} of a time-varying noise and that of a steady noise are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy to the ear during exposure. For evaluating community impacts, this rating scale does not vary, regardless of whether the noise occurs during the day or the night.
- **Day-Night Average (L_{dn})** is a 24-hour average L_{eq} with a 10-dBA "weighting" added to noise during the hours of 10:00 pm to 7:00 am to account for noise sensitivity in the nighttime. The logarithmic effect of these additions is that a 60 dBA 24-hour L_{eq} will result in a measurement of 66.4 dBA L_{dn} .

- **Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)** is a 24-hour average L_{eq} with a 5-dBA weighting during the hours of 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm and a 10-dBA weighting added to noise during the hours of 10:00 pm to 7:00 am to account for noise sensitivity in the evening and nighttime, respectively.

Noise can be generated by a number of sources, including mobile sources, such as automobiles, trucks and airplanes, and stationary sources, such as construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations.

Sound spreads (propagates) uniformly outward in a spherical pattern, and the sound level decreases (attenuates) at a rate of approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance from a stationary or point source. Sound from a line source, such as a highway, propagates outward in a cylindrical pattern, often referred to as cylindrical spreading. Sound levels attenuate at a rate of approximately 3 dB for each doubling of distance from a line source, such as a roadway, depending on ground surface characteristics (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2011). Soft surfaces, such as soft dirt or grass, can absorb sound, so an excess ground-attenuation value of 1.5 dB per doubling of distance is normally assumed (FHWA 2011).

The manner in which older structures in California were constructed generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of about 20 to 25 dBA with closed windows (Caltrans 2002). The exterior-to-interior reduction of newer structures is generally 30 dBA or more (Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. 2006).

Human Response to Noise

The human response to environmental noise is subjective and varies considerably from individual to individual. Noise in the community has often been cited as a health problem, not in terms of actual physiological damage, such as hearing impairment, but in terms of inhibiting general well-being and contributing to undue stress and annoyance. The health effects of noise in the community arise from interference with human activities, including sleep, speech, recreation, and tasks that demand concentration or coordination. Hearing loss can occur at the highest noise intensity levels.

Noise environments and consequences of human activities are usually well represented by median noise levels during the day or night or over a 24-hour period. Environmental noise levels are generally considered low when the CNEL is below 60 dBA, moderate in the 60- to 70-dBA range, and high, above 70 dBA. Examples of low daytime levels are isolated, natural settings with noise levels as low as 20 dBA and quiet, suburban, residential streets with noise levels around 40 dBA. Noise levels above 45 dBA at night can disrupt sleep. Examples of moderate-level noise environments are urban residential or semi-commercial areas (typically 55 to 60 dBA) and commercial locations (typically 60 dBA). People may consider louder environments adverse, but most will accept the higher levels associated with noisier urban residential or residential-commercial areas (60 to 75 dBA) or dense urban or industrial areas (65 to 80 dBA). Regarding increases in dBA, the following relationships should be noted in understanding this analysis:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1.0 dBA cannot be perceived by humans.

- Outside of the laboratory, a 3.0-dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference.
- A change in level of at least 5.0 dBA is required before any noticeable change in community response will be expected. An increase of 5.0 dBA is typically considered substantial.
- A 10.0-dBA change is subjectively heard as an approximate doubling in loudness and will almost certainly cause an adverse change in community response.

Sensitive Noise Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Additional land uses such as hospitals, historic sites, cemeteries, and certain recreation areas are considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. Schools, churches, hotels, libraries, and other places where low interior noise levels are essential are also considered noise-sensitive land uses.

The Project is proposing to demolish the existing dilapidated elementary school and construct an upgraded, modern facility that will allow the CCC to better fulfill its mission and objective in the region. The nearest noise-sensitive land uses that will be impacted by onsite construction and Project operations consist of single-family residences located on the southern and northern boundary of the Project Site with the closest being approximately 100 feet distant.

Existing Noise Environment

The community of Auberry is impacted by various noise sources. It is subject to typical rural noise such as noise generated by traffic, heavy machinery, and day-to-day outdoor activities. Mobile sources of noise, especially cars and trucks, are the most common source of noise in the community. The Johnston Field Airport (5CL9) is located approximately 4.5 miles north of the Project Site. The Project Site is located outside the 60 dBA CNEL noise impact zone for all airports in the area per the *Background Report* of the 2000 Fresno County General Plan.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard 12.9-2013/Part 3 "Quantities and Procedures for Description and Measurement of Environmental Sound – Part 3: Short-Term Measurements with an Observer Present" provides a table of approximate background sound levels in L_{dn} , daytime L_{eq} , and nighttime L_{eq} , based on land use and population density. The ANSI standard estimation divides land uses into six distinct categories. Descriptions of these land use categories, along with the typical daytime and nighttime levels, are provided in Table 3.13-1. At times, one could reasonably expect the occurrence of periods that are both louder and quieter than the levels listed in the table. ANSI notes, "95% prediction interval [confidence interval] is on the order of ± 10 dB." The majority of the Project Area will be considered ambient noise Category 5.

Table 3.13-1. ANSI Standard 12.9-2013/Part 3 A-weighted Sound Levels Corresponding to Land Use and Population Density

Category	Land Use	Description	People per Square Mile	Typical L_{dn}	Daytime L_{eq}	Nighttime L_{eq}
				dBA		
1	Noisy Commercial & Industrial Areas and Very Noisy Residential Areas	Very heavy traffic conditions, such as in busy, downtown commercial areas; at intersections for mass transportation or other vehicles, including elevated trains, heavy motor trucks, and other heavy traffic; and at street corners where many motor buses and heavy trucks accelerate.	63,840	67	66	58
2	Moderate Commercial & Industrial Areas and Noisy Residential Areas	Heavy traffic areas with conditions similar to Category 1, but with somewhat less traffic; routes of relatively heavy or fast automobile traffic, but where heavy truck traffic is not extremely dense.	20,000	62	61	54
3	Quiet Commercial, Industrial Areas and Normal Urban & Noisy Suburban Residential Areas	Light traffic conditions where no mass-transportation vehicles and relatively few automobiles and trucks pass, and where these vehicles generally travel at moderate speeds; residential areas and commercial streets, and intersections, with little traffic, compose this category.	6,384	57	55	49
4	Quiet Urban & Normal Suburban Residential Areas	These areas are similar to Category 3, but for this group, the background is either distant traffic or is unidentifiable; typically, the population density is one-third the density of Category 3.	2,000	52	50	44
5	Quiet Residential Areas	These areas are isolated, far from significant sources of sound, and may be situated in shielded areas, such as a small-wooded valley.	638	47	45	39
6	Very Quiet Sparse Suburban or rural Residential Areas	These areas are similar to Category 4 but are usually in sparse suburban or rural areas; and, for this group, there are few if any nearby sources of sound.	200	42	40	34

Source: The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) 2013

Vibration Fundamentals

Ground vibration can be measured several ways to quantify the amplitude of vibration produced. This can be through peak particle velocity or root mean square velocity. These velocity measurements measure maximum particle at one point or the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, respectively. Vibration impacts on people can be described as the level of annoyance and can vary depending on an individual's sensitivity. Generally, low-level vibrations may cause window rattling but do not pose any threats to the integrity of buildings or structures.

4.13.2 Noise (XIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Project will be a source of noise during both construction and operations. For the purposes of this analysis, Fresno County's noise regulations were considered to assess potential impacts.

Construction Noise Impacts

Construction noise associated with the Proposed Project will be temporary and will vary depending on the nature of the activities being performed. Noise generated will primarily be associated with the operation of off-road equipment for on-site construction activities as well as construction vehicle traffic on area roadways. Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending on the nature or phase of construction (e.g., building construction, paving). Noise generated by construction equipment, including earth movers, material handlers, and portable generators, can reach high levels. Typical operating cycles for these types of construction equipment may involve 1 or 2 minutes of full power operation followed by 3 to 4 minutes at lower power settings. Other primary sources of acoustical disturbance will be random incidents, which will last less than one minute (such as dropping large pieces of equipment or the hydraulic movement of machinery lifts). During construction, exterior noise levels could negatively affect sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the construction site.

The County does not promulgate a numeric threshold pertaining to the noise associated with construction. This is because construction noise is temporary, short term, intermittent in nature, and will cease on completion of the Project. Fresno County Municipal Code Section 8.40.060 states that noise associated with construction is exempt from noise standards Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and, Saturday and Sunday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Project will be required to comply with this

Municipal Code requirement. The County does not promulgate a numeric threshold pertaining to the noise associated with construction. This is because construction noise is temporary, short term, intermittent in nature, and will cease on completion of the Project.

To estimate the worst-case onsite construction noise levels that may occur at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors and in order to evaluate the potential health-related effects (physical damage to the ear) from construction noise, the construction equipment noise levels were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration's Roadway Noise Construction Model (RCNM) and compared against the construction-related noise level threshold established in the Criteria for a Recommended Standard: Occupational Noise Exposure prepared in 1998 by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). A division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NIOSH identifies a noise level threshold based on the duration of exposure to the source. The NIOSH construction-related noise level threshold starts at 85 dBA for more than 8 hours per day; for every 3-dBA increase, the exposure time is cut in half. This reduction results in noise level thresholds of 88 dBA for more than 4 hours per day, 92 dBA for more than 1 hour per day, 96 dBA for more than 30 minutes per day, and up to 100 dBA for more than 15 minutes per day. For the purposes of this analysis, the lowest, more conservative threshold of 85 dBA L_{eq} is used as an acceptable threshold for construction noise at the nearby sensitive receptors.

It is acknowledged that the majority of construction equipment is not situated at any one location during construction activities, but rather spread throughout the Project Site and at various distances from sensitive receptors. Therefore, this analysis employs FTA guidance for calculating construction noise, which recommends measuring construction noise produced by all construction equipment simultaneously from the center of the Project Site (FTA 2018), which in this case is approximately 500 feet from the closest residence. The anticipated short-term construction noise levels generated for the necessary equipment for each phase of construction are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.2**.

Table 4.13-2. Construction Average (dBA) Noise Levels at Nearest Residential Receptors			
Equipment	Estimated Exterior Construction Noise Level at Nearest Residences (dBA)	Construction Noise Standards (dBA Leq)	Exceeds Standards?
Demolition	66.4	85	No
Site Preparation	67.6	85	No
Grading	70.0	85	No
Building Construction, Paving & Architectural Coating	69.1	85	No

Source: Construction noise levels were calculated by ECORP Consulting using the FHWA Roadway Noise Construction Model (FHWA 2006). Refer to Appendix E for Model Data Outputs.

Table 4.13-2. Construction Average (dBA) Noise Levels at Nearest Residential Receptors

Note: Construction equipment used during construction derived from the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. CalEEMod is designed to calculate air pollutant emissions from construction activity and contains default construction equipment and usage parameters for typical construction projects based on several construction surveys conducted in order to identify such parameters. Consistent with FTA recommendations for calculating construction noise, construction noise was measured from the center of the Project Site (FTA 2018), which is 500 feet from the nearest sensitive receptor. Building construction, paving & architectural coating are assumed to occur spontaneously.

Leq = The equivalent energy noise level, is the average acoustic energy content of noise for a stated period of time. Thus, the Leq of a time-varying noise and that of a steady noise are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy to the ear during exposure. For evaluating community impacts, this rating scale does not vary, regardless of whether the noise occurs during the day or the night.

As shown in Table 4.13-2, Project onsite construction activities will not exceed the NIOSH threshold of 85 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors.

Operational Offsite Traffic Noise Impacts

Project operation will also result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways, thereby increasing vehicular noise in the Project Area. According to Caltrans Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol (2013), doubling of traffic on a roadway is necessary in order to result in an increase of 3 dB (a barely perceptible increase). The main roadway traversing the Project Site is Power House Road/ Auberry Road. Per the Transportation Impact Assessment prepared by KD Anderson and Associates, Inc. (2020), the Project will generate approximately 90 vehicle trips daily resulting in a daily traffic volume increase of 62 percent on Auberry Road. This amount of additional traffic will not result in a doubling of traffic on any of the vicinity roadways and will represent a small incremental addition to the current traffic volumes. Thus, the Project's contribution to existing traffic noise will not be perceptible.

Operational Onsite Noise Impacts

The Project is proposing new residential, training, operations facility and associated features for the Auberry CCC Center. On-site noise associated with the Proposed Project has been calculated using the SoundPLAN 3D noise model. The modeling scenario accounts for internal vehicle circulation, parking lot activity (i.e., car doors opening and closing, people talking, car stereo), activities in the warehouse/service yard, activity at the sports court, and noise produced for the PV system solar array. Internal vehicle circulation was accounted for using a line source which traverses the proposed path of travel as shown in the Project's Site Plan. Additionally, area sources were placed at the proposed parking lot locations, warehouse/service yard, sports court and solar array to account for noise as a result of activity at those locations.

Table 4.12-3 shows the predicted Project noise levels at the nearest noise-sensitive location (rural residences) in the area of the Project Site as predicted by SoundPLAN. Additionally, a noise contour graphic for each scenario (Figure 4-2) has been prepared to provide a visual depiction of the predicted noise levels in the Project vicinity from Project operations.

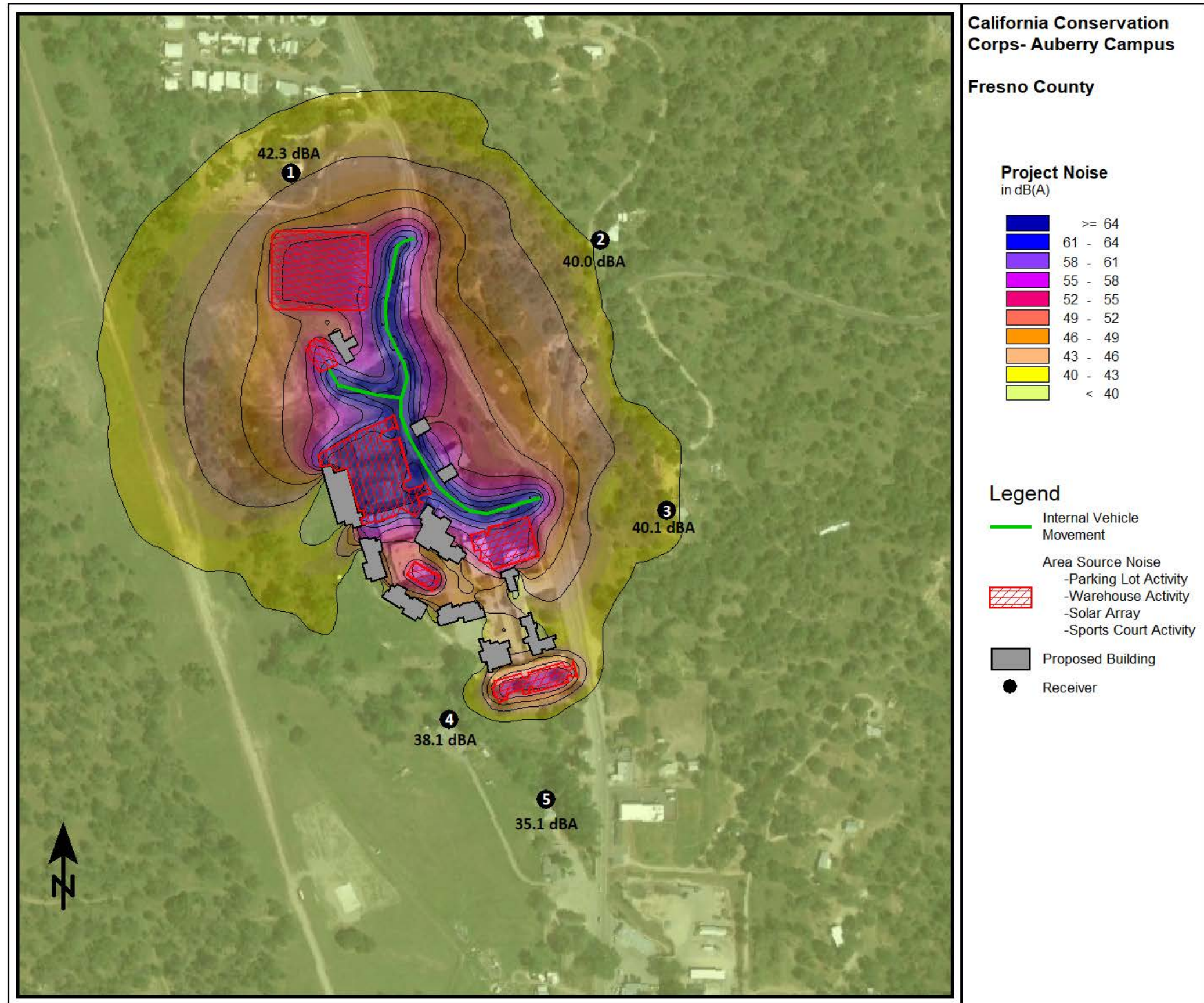


Figure 4-2. Modeled Operational Noise Levels

2018-116.045/CCC Auberry Center

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Table 4.13-3. Modeled Operational Noise Levels

Location	Modeled Operational Noise Attributable to Project (L _{eq} dBA)	Daytime/ Nighttime Exterior County Standards (dBA) ¹	Exceed Standard?
#1 Residence North of Project Site	42.3	50/45	No
#2 Residence East of Project Site	40.0	50/45	No
#3 Residence East of Project Site	40.1	50/45	No
#4 Residence South of Project Site	38.1	50/45	No
#5 Residence South of Project Site	35.1	50/45	No

Source: Stationary source noise levels were modeled by ECORP using SoundPLAN 3D noise model. Refer to Appendix C for noise modeling assumptions and results.

Notes: ¹Modeled operation noise levels are compared to the County of Fresno Exterior Noise Standards presented in the County of Fresno Municipal Code Chapter 8.40 *Noise Control*.

As shown in Table 4.13-3, Project operational noise will not exceed the County's daytime or nighttime exterior noise standards at the residences located in the vicinity of the Project Site. It is noted that Project noise modeling represents a worst-case scenario in which all potential Project noise sources are being generated at full intensity at the same moment. It is very unlikely that noise levels on the Project Site will reach that of those predicted in Table 4.13-3.

Additionally, as previously stated, the manner in which older homes in California were constructed generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of about 20 to 25 dBA with closed windows. As such, noise generated by the Proposed Project will fall below the County's interior noise standards for residential land uses as presented Chapter 8.40 of the Fresno County Municipal Code.

For the reasons described, this impact is less than significant.

Would the Project:

- b) Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction-Generated Vibration

Excessive groundborne vibration impacts result from continuously occurring vibration levels. Increases in groundborne vibration levels attributable to the Proposed Project will be primarily associated with short-term construction-related activities. Construction on the Project Site will have the potential to result in varying degrees of temporary groundborne vibration, depending on the specific construction equipment

used and the operations involved. Ground vibration generated by construction equipment spreads through the ground and diminishes in magnitude with increases in distance.

Construction-related ground vibration is normally associated with impact equipment such as pile drivers, jackhammers, and the operation of some heavy-duty construction equipment, such as dozers and trucks. Vibration decreases rapidly with distance and it is acknowledged that construction activities will occur throughout the Project site and will not be concentrated at the point closest to sensitive receptors. Groundborne vibration levels associated with construction equipment are summarized in Table 4.3-4.

Table 4.3-4. Representative Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment	
Equipment Type	Peak Particle Velocity at 25 Feet (inches per second)
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Pile Driver	0.170
Caisson Drilling	0.089
Loaded Trucks	0.076
Rock Breaker	0.089
Jackhammer	0.035
Small Bulldozer/Tractor	0.003
Vibratory Roller	0.210

Source: Caltrans 2020; FTA 2018

The County of Fresno does not regulate vibrations associated with construction. However, a discussion of construction vibration is included for full disclosure purposes. For comparison purposes, the Caltrans' (2020) recommended standard of 0.3 inch per second peak particle velocity (PPV) with respect to the prevention of structural damage for older residential buildings is used as a threshold. This is also the level at which vibrations may begin to annoy people in buildings.

Consistent with FTA recommendations for calculating construction vibration, construction vibration was calculated to account for all Project construction equipment operating simultaneously from the center of the Project Site (FTA 2018). The nearest structure of concern to the construction site, with regard to groundborne vibrations, is a residence located adjacent to the Project Site boundary approximately 500 feet from the Project Site center.

Based on the representative vibration levels presented for various construction equipment types in Table 4.3-5 and the construction vibration assessment methodology published by the FTA (2018), it is possible to estimate the potential project construction vibration levels. The FTA provides the following equation:

$$[PPV_{\text{equip}} = PPV_{\text{ref}} \times (25/D)^{1.5}]$$

Table 4.3-5 presents the expected Project related vibration levels at a distance of 500 feet.

Table 4.3-5. Construction Vibration Levels at 500 Feet							
Receiver PPV Levels (in/sec) ¹					Peak Vibration	Threshold	Exceed Threshold ?
Large Bulldozer, Caisson Drilling, & Hoe Ram	Loaded Trucks	Jackhammer	Pile Driver	Vibratory Roller			
0.0009	0.0008	0.0003	0.0018	0.0023	0.0023	0.3	No

Notes: ¹Based on the Vibration Source Levels of Construction Equipment included on Table 4 (FTA 2018). Distance to the nearest structure of concern is approximately 500 feet measured from Project Site center.

As shown in Table 4.3-5, groundborne vibrations attenuate rapidly from the source due to geometric spreading and material damping. Geometric spreading occurs because the energy is radiated from the source and spreads over an increasingly large distance while material damping is a property of the friction loss which occurs during the passage of a vibration wave. Vibration as a result of construction activities will not exceed 0.3 PPV. Thus, Project construction will not exceed the recommended threshold. This impact is less than significant.

Operational Groundborne Vibration

Project operations will not include the use of any stationary equipment that will result in excessive groundborne vibration levels. For this reason, no impact will occur.

Will the Project:

- c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, will the Project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Potentially Significant Impact Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated Less than Significant Impact No Impact

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

No Impact.

The Project site is located approximately 4.5 miles north of the Johnston Field Airport (5CL9). The Project site is located outside the 60 dBA CNEL noise impact zone for all airports in the area per the Background Report of the 2000 Fresno County General Plan. Implementation of the Proposed Project will not affect airport operations nor result in increased exposure of noise-sensitive receptors to aircraft noise. For this reason, no impact will occur.

4.13.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.14 Population and Housing

4.14.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is currently unoccupied. U.S. Census data shows that the Census Designated Place of Auberry had a population of 2,369 in 2010. As of the 2010 Census, there were 957 total housing units in the community with a 10.5 percent vacancy rate (100 units). Comparatively, Fresno County had a 2010 Census population of 930,450 and a 2018 population estimate of 994,400. The County had 326,213 housing units in 2010, an 8.3 percent housing vacancy rate (26,140 units), and an average household size of 3.16 (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

4.14.2 Population and Housing (XIV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Proposed Project will not increase the number of homes or provide additional offsite infrastructure in the area. The Project would, however, provide residence for up to 100 personnel (staff and Corpsmembers) at the state-owned Auberry Center at a given time, with turnover occurring annually. The Center will operate throughout Fresno and Madera counties on a variety of natural resource projects including trail and boardwalk construction, stream-bank enhancement, and natural and humanmade disaster response. The impact of population growth is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact.

The Project will not remove any existing housing. No mitigation is required.

4.14.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.15 Public Services

4.15.1 Environmental Setting

Fire Services

Facilities utilized by the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department are located near the northeast corner of the Project site, along Powerhouse Road. The Auberry Volunteer Fire Department entered a Right of Entry permit with the State and will eventually enter into a lease with the State. This use will remain following the implementation of the Proposed Project.

CAL FIRE/Fresno County Station No. 73 (Hurley Station) is located at 25627 Auberry Road in Clovis, 29 miles southwest of the Project site. Hurley Station serves as a public safety answering point for fire and emergency medical services in Fresno County. Upon completion of the Proposed Project, the Project Site can serve as a staging area for CAL FIRE emergency events, when necessary.

Police Services

The Fresno County Sherriff's Department provides police protection and law enforcement services for the town of Auberry, including the Project site. The County has a Sheriff Office located at 33155 Auberry Road, Auberry, CA 93602. The Fresno County Sherriff's Department Headquarters (located in Fresno, CA) provides dispatch, watch commander (shift oversight), administration, and records services for the town of Auberry.

Schools

The SUSD serves K–12 students in Auberry and surrounding areas. The SUSD includes Foothill Elementary School, 3.4 miles southwest of the Project site and Sierra Junior/Senior High School 3.4 miles southeast of the Project site.

Parks

On the southern boundary of the site along Auberry Road, is a small park that includes playground equipment. The fence is closed and locked; however, the park appears to be actively used by the community. This area is not part of the Project.

4.15.2 Public Services (XV) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	☐	☐	☐	☒
Fire Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other Public Facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

Fire Protection

The Proposed Project will not require additional fire protection within Auberry or the surrounding area and consists of construction of a new CCC facility that will have fire crews living onsite and will also serve as a staging area for CAL FIRE in the event of an emergency. Corpsmembers are trained to assist in fire suppression and vegetation management, which will enhance firefighting capabilities in the community of Auberry and surrounding areas. Construction of the Proposed Project will not impact fire service for the City of Auberry, and Aubrey Volunteer Fire Department operations will continue to operate at current capacity. No impact will occur.

Police Services

The Proposed Project will not increase the need for police services within Fresno County's sheriff service area. Corpsmembers will operate on a daily schedule with little time to be unsupervised. No impact will occur.

Schools

The Proposed Project includes the construction of a new CCC facility and does not require an expansion of residential housing. The Proposed Project will not induce population growth and require an additional

need for school facilities. Corpsmembers will attend classes onsite and will not impact local school facilities. No impact will occur, and no mitigation will be required.

Parks

The Proposed Project does not require an expansion of residential housing and will not induce population growth. The Proposed Project will not displace an existing park and will not require the construction of additional park facilities. Recreational facilities will be provided on-site for Corpsmembers. No impact will occur, and no mitigation will be required.

Other Public Facilities

The Proposed Project does not require an expansion of residential housing and will not induce population growth. The Proposed Project will not increase use of existing public facilities in the area because it will not promote population increase beyond those Corpsmembers who temporarily live onsite. Some permanent CCC facility employees may choose to relocate to Auberry and the surrounding area, but the total number of permanent facility personnel is expected to be 26 persons. No impact will occur, and no mitigation will be required.

4.15.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified. No mitigation measures are required.

4.16 Recreation

4.16.1 Environmental Setting

The unincorporated community of Auberry abuts the Sierra National Forest, which sprawls in nearly all directions around Auberry, occupying 1.3 million acres. The Sierra National Forest offers many activities such as hiking, campgrounds, skiing, and swimming. The Redinger Campground is located in the Sierra National Forest, five miles northeast of the Proposed Project Site.

The San Joaquin River Gorge Special Recreation Management Area features the Ya-Gub-Weh-Tuh Trailhead and is located 3.6 miles west of the Project site.

A small park with playground equipment is located on the southern boundary of the Proposed Project Site along Auberry Road. The fence is closed and locked; however, the park appears to be actively used by the community. This area is not part of the Proposed Project.

4.16.2 Recreation (XVI) Materials Checklist

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility will occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The Proposed Project will not generate a substantial increase in the area population; therefore, it will not significantly increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks and recreational facilities. An approximately 5,480-sf multipurpose building will include a full-size basketball court and an outdoor shade structure with tables and benches where Corpsmembers can meet for social activities, games, physical training, and entertainment. The multipurpose building will also feature fitness weights and game rooms. Additionally, the site has an existing dirt track that can be renovated and maintained by the Corpsmembers, depending on interest. Impacts will be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

As stated above, the multipurpose room will have several recreational amenities and will not require the expansion of offsite facilities or other facilities that are not included in the Proposed Project. Therefore, the overall impact of the Proposed Project on recreational facilities is less than significant and will not require additional changes to the environment outside of the Project site. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

4.16.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.17 Transportation

The Initial Study Transportation Analysis is based on the *Transportation Impact Assessment* prepared by KD Anderson & Associates (Appendix G to this Draft IS/MND). The following summarizes results of the KD Anderson and Associates (2020) traffic memorandum.

4.17.1 Project/Traffic Characteristics

For the purpose of the traffic study, the characteristics of the project have been identified in terms of activities associated with construction and with regular operation, as well as the new improvements that will be constructed for circulation/access.

The Auberry Center will have 26 staff and up to 100 Corpsmembers who will reside onsite. Most staff members will travel to and from the site each day, but some remain onsite full-time in supervisory roles. Staff members are transported from the site to work sites during the week but are permitted to travel on weekends.

The Project will be constructed over a two-year period and will require 10 to 20 construction employees at various times. Typical construction equipment associated with the building trades will be transported to the site as needed, depending on the nature of construction occurring at the time. Construction could generate 20 to 40 daily vehicle trips, with most of that activity concentrated into the beginning and ending of the workday (as workers come and go from the Project site).

Additionally, traffic to and from the site will also occur on a regular basis when the project has been constructed and is in operation. The facility will have 26 staff, most of whom will travel primarily during peak commute hours. Corpsmembers residing onsite will not regularly travel during peak commute hours but will be transported offsite by van for assignments at sponsor work locations. The administration center building will be open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and is expected to see seven to 10 public visitors each day. On a typical weekday, the Proposed Project could generate approximately 90 daily trips (i.e., half inbound and half outbound), with perhaps 20 to 30 peak hour trips.

Throughout the year, crews from various California emergency response organizations use the CCC's service centers as a staging area. These activities will generate automobile and truck traffic at different times throughout the day as personnel and equipment are staged and dispatched. Site access has been designed to accommodate the turning requirements of trucks.

4.17.2 Environmental Setting

The new Auberry Center will enable the CCC to reduce travel time and driving distance to reach sponsor work locations in the foothills. The objective of the Project is to replace an existing, abandoned school with a modern residential, training and operations facility.

The Auberry Center will be located on a 29.64-acre parcel at 33367 North Auberry Road in the Fresno County community of Auberry. The Proposed Project Site takes existing access near the intersection of North Auberry and Powerhouse Road at driveways previously used when the site was occupied by a school. These driveway locations will be reused and will be gated (Figure 2-4).

Existing Roadway Network

The Project will be constructed on a site located on the west side of North Auberry Road roughly three miles north of its intersection with SR-168. SR-168 links the facility with the Fresno Metropolitan area to the west and continues easterly over the Sierras to an intersection on SR-395 in Mono County.

State Route 168

SR-168 is an important east-west route through Fresno, Mono and Inyo counties and links the Auberry Center with the statewide circulation system in Fresno. The SR-168 Transportation Concept Report indicates that SR-168 in the area of the Proposed Project is a two-lane conventional highway, which is also the ultimate concept. The speed limit on SR-168 is 55 miles per hour (mph) in the area of the Project east of North Auberry Road and 45 mph west of the North Auberry Road intersection.

Caltrans provides Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for SR-168, and the most recent daily traffic volumes on SR-168 are 4,850 AADT west of the Morgan Canyon Road roundabout and 8,500 AADT east of that location toward the North Auberry Road intersection. Caltrans data indicates that trucks comprise 10 percent of the daily traffic on SR-168 in the study area.

The SR-168 Transportation Concept Report identifies the current operating LOS on the state highway based on roadway width, alignment and traffic volume. SR-168 operates at LOS C in the study area. The long-term concept for the roadway remains a two-lane highway, with a concept LOS of D.

North Auberry Road

Auberry Road is a Fresno County roadway that extends from an intersection on Copper Avenue near Clovis northeasterly through the Sierra Nevada Foothills to the community of Auberry and on to its eventual termination on SR-168 east of the study area. A portion of Auberry Road follows SR-168 from Morgan Creek Road to the North Auburn Road intersection south of the Proposed Project Site. From that location, Auberry Road continues to the Powerhouse Road intersection by the Proposed Project Site before turning again to the east and its termination at another location on SR-168. In the area of the Proposed Project, North Auberry Road is a two-lane facility with paved shoulders of varying widths. A 35-mph speed limit exists in Auberry.

Powerhouse Road

Powerhouse Road is a rural Fresno County Road that extends north from Auberry to an intersection on County Road 200 in Madera County. In the area of the Project, Powerhouse Road is a two-lane facility with paved shoulders of varying width.

Three existing intersections were included in this analysis.

North Auberry Road / Powerhouse Road intersection

The Proposed Project abuts this acute angle intersection. Powerhouse Road approaches Auberry Road at a 30° angle; this leg is controlled by a stop sign. A stop-controlled bypass lane allows left turns from Powerhouse Road and southbound right turns from Auberry Road outside of the intersection, and there is a northbound left turn lane. Sight distance in each direction satisfies Highway Design Manual (HDM) minimum requirements for 35 mph design.

SR-168 / North Auberry Road intersection

The Proposed Project's connection to SR-168 will occur at a "tee" intersection. Each approach is a single through lane, and a westbound left turn lane is on the state highway. The intersection is controlled by a stop sign on the North Auberry Road approach, and the corners of the intersection have been widened to accommodate the turning requirements of large trucks. There is a horizontal curve on SR-168 west of the intersection. The view looking east is unrestricted, and the available sight distance looking to the west is 400 feet within the state right-of-way and 600 feet looking across the inside of the curve. The minimum requirement for 45 mph (i.e., 360 feet) is satisfied in that direction.

SR-168 / (Morgan Canyon Road) / Auberry Road intersection

This intersection in the business district of the rural community of Prather is controlled by a modern two-lane roundabout recently installed by Caltrans to current design standards.

Traffic Impact Analysis Methodology

Quantitative LOS analysis was performed for the study area intersections based on published information originally derived from the methodologies contained in the Highway Capacity Manual, 6th Edition (Transportation Research Board 2020). LOS analysis is used to identify the relative delay experienced by motorists. A grading scale of LOS A to LOS F is used to describe the quality of traffic flow, with LOS A representing uncongested operations and LOS F representing stop-and-go operation with appreciable congestion and delay. Synchro software was employed to assess stop sign-controlled intersections, and the roundabout was assessed using Sidra.

Existing Traffic Operations

Information regarding current traffic operations has been based on new weekday a.m./p.m. peak hour traffic counts collected on February 19, 2020. As noted in Table 4.17-1, all three intersections operate with LOS' that satisfy Fresno County's LOS D standard for rural areas. Neither unsignalized intersection carries volumes that reach the level satisfying Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices peak hour warrants for signalization.

Table 4.17-1. Existing Traffic Operating Conditions						
Intersection	Control	Existing Level of Service				Traffic Signal Warranted?
		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		
		Average Delay (sec/ vehicle)	LOS	Average Delay (sec/ vehicle)	LOS	
North Auberry Road/Powerhouse Road	SSS ¹	9	A	9	A	No
North Auberry Road/SR-168	SSS	10	A	12	B	No
SR-168 (Morgan Canyon Road)/ Auberry Road	Roundabout	5	A	5	A	Not applicable

¹SSS = Side Street Stop control, and reported delay is for the *worst case* movement

Future Traffic Volumes

Future daily traffic volumes on Study Area roads were identified from available sources, as noted in Table 4.17-2. The volume on SR-168 is projected to increase by 31 percent based on the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG) model and 15 percent based on the information in the *SR-168 Transportation Concept Report*. The daily traffic volume on North Auberry Road may increase by 62 percent.

Table 4.17-2. Future Daily Traffic Volumes				
Road	Location	Current Count	Future Volume (vehicles/day)	
			SR-168 TCR (2035)	FCOG Regional Traffic Model
SR-168	Prather to North Auberry Road	8,500 ¹	9,800	11,175
North Auberry Rd	SR-168 to Powerhouse Road	2,925 ²	-	4,725

¹Caltrans 2017

²Estimated from peak hour volumes

Regulatory Setting and Significance Criteria

Senate Bill 743

After June 2020, CEQA analysis of transportation impacts will need to address Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in lieu of capacity-based LOS. At that time, LOS may still be evaluated in terms of consistency with adopted General Plan policies, but transportation impacts are to be described in terms of a project's effect on regional VMT. Various methods for estimating VMT are available and described in technical advisories to current CEQA guidelines. Many communities and counties are working to establish new tools for measuring VMT and to establish new significance criteria for CEQA evaluation. FCOG has taken the lead role in developing SB 743 regional guidelines, which can be adapted by local governments for their needs and purposes. Objectives of the FCOG program include:

- Develop screening criteria
- Recommend VMT threshold
- Recommend a metric and threshold for transportation projects
- Develop a VMT calculation tool that will be hosted on the FCOG website
- Identify VMT mitigation measures
- Recommend VMT threshold for plans

California Department of Transportation

Caltrans has jurisdiction over SR-168 and the balance of the State highway system. According to the Caltrans' Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies (2002), Caltrans aims to maintain a target Level of Service (LOS) at the transition between C and D on State highway facilities. However, Caltrans acknowledges that this may not always be feasible and recommends that the Lead Agency consult with Caltrans to determine the appropriate target LOS. If an existing State highway facility is operating below the appropriate target LOS, the existing LOS should be maintained.

Caltrans' Transportation Concept Reports identify long-range improvements and establish the concept (desired) LOS for specific corridor segments. The reports identify long-range improvements needed to bring an existing facility up to expected standards needed to adequately serve 20-year traffic forecasts. Additionally, they identify the ultimate design concept for conditions beyond the immediate 20-year design period.

The Caltrans HDM provides guidance in the design of facilities on state highways. In this case, Chapter 4 identifies design requirements for intersections and turn lanes based on deceleration requirements and acceptable transitions from mainline highway alignment.

Fresno County

The Circulation Element of the Fresno County 2000 General Plan (Fresno County 2000) provides policy direction for the transportation systems that serve the unincorporated lands of Fresno County and describes how the County intends to serve transportation needs for the next 20 years. The General Plan does prescribe a minimum standard of LOS D in rural areas.

Fresno County Regional Transportation Plan

The *Fresno County 2018 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) provides a coordinated, 20-year vision of the regionally significant transportation improvements and policies needed to efficiently move goods and people in the region. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, the FCOG is required by California law to adopt and submit an approved RTP to the California Transportation Commission every five years. Caltrans assists with plan preparation and reviews draft documents for compliance and consistency. The 2018 RTP noted a minimum of LOS D for SR-168.

4.17.3 Transportation (XVII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less Than Significant Impact.

Vehicular traffic accompanying the construction or operation of the Proposed Project will represent a small incremental addition to the current traffic volumes on SR-168 and North Auberry Road. The amount of project traffic will be too small to appreciably alter current operations, and LOS study intersections will not exceed adopted minimum standards and will not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing circulation systems.

Short-term traffic controls may be needed on North Auberry Road as the Proposed Project's improvements are constructed. Traffic controls may include traffic detours or lane closures, which may delay motorists for short periods of time. Construction traffic controls will be included in a traffic handling plan as part of the documents included in the encroachment permit granted by Fresno County for work in the public right-of-way. Because construction traffic controls will be temporary and managed under a plan approved by Caltrans, these short-term delays are not judged to be a significant impact with implementation of TRA-1.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b)	Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Proposed Project will create new regular weekday VMT within the project area as staff members travel to and from the site, deliveries are made to Auberry CCC and Corpsmembers are transported to and from work sites. The VMT will depend on factors such as the location of staff residences, the source of deliveries and the location of work sites within the service area. It is anticipated that a share of the staff members will be new employees who could be expected to reside in the Auberry/Prather area, but others will be transferred from the existing Fresno satellite center and may commute to the site for some time.

California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has established recommended screening criteria for determining whether the VMT impacts of a project are likely to be significant and whether additional quantification/analysis is warranted. The OPR suggests that projects generating fewer than 110 daily trips can be assumed to have a less than significant impact on regional VMT. As the Proposed Project's estimated daily trip generation will fall below that threshold, its impact will not be significant. Therefore, mitigation is not required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c)	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

The onsite circulation pattern is adequate for the proposed use and the site plan provides separate pathways for pedestrian circulation. Short-term traffic controls may be needed on North Auberry Road as the Proposed Project's improvements are constructed. Implementation of TRA-1 will ensure that a Traffic Management Plan is implemented. Because construction traffic controls will be temporary and managed under a plan approved by the County, these short-term delays are not judged to be a significant impact. With implementation of TRA-1, the Project will not introduce transportation hazards and related impacts are less than significant.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Access to the CCC facility will be provided from the east side of the Project site, where it connects to Auberry Road. One primary entry point and a separate exit point are proposed to ensure safe and straightforward circulation for Corpsmembers, staff, and visitors. The entrance is located near the center of the site. Secondary access will be provided by a new fire access (only) lane that will access the site from Auberry Road at the southern end of the property and loop around the western boundary of on-site structures before connecting with the new warehouse and the internal driveway. Additionally, the Proposed Project will include an emergency staging area for when the camp is used for local emergency fire events. Therefore, impacts are less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

4.17.4 Mitigation Measures

TRA-1: Construction Traffic Management Plan

Prior to commencing construction of the Proposed Project, a construction traffic control plan (Traffic Plan) shall be prepared by the Contractor, in coordination with DGS, California Department of Transportation, and Fresno County. The traffic plan shall be detailed and comprehensive to adequately mitigate potential conflicts between traffic and construction-related activities. The Traffic Plan will include, at a minimum, the following measures:

- A. Contractor's work within the State's right of way is subject to general permit conditions of Caltrans' issued encroachment permit including implementing traffic controls, restricting work on holidays and weekends, and notifying the traffic management center daily.
- B. Adequate off-street worker parking shall be provided.
- C. A scheduling plan showing hours of operation to minimize congestion during peak hours and special events.
- D. Roadway disturbances shall be minimized during non-working hours; open trenches shall be covered with steel plates or by the use of temporary backfill during non-

working hours. Steel traffic plates will only be allowed in areas of the State's right of way as permitted by Caltrans and shall meet the State's specifications and requirements.

- E. All paved surfaces disturbed during construction shall be repaved when work is complete.

4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

The following analysis of the potential environmental impacts related to Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) is derived primarily from the following sources and agencies:

- California NAHC Sacred Lands File Search, January 16, 2019;
- *Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report for the Auberry Center California Conservation Corps Project* (ECORP 2019), which included a records search with the California Historical Resource Information System; and
- Ethnographic overviews of the Foothill Yokuts (ECORP 2019).

4.18.1 Environmental Setting

Ethnographic, Religious, and Cultural Context

Ethnographically, the Project Area is in the southern portion of the territory occupied by the Penutian-speaking Foothill Yokuts. The territory of the Foothill Yokuts extended along the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada from the Kern River on the south and the Fresno River on the north. Unfortunately, the ethnography of the northern, or lower, San Joaquin Valley is poorly known, as the native inhabitants were for the most part gone by the time studies were undertaken. Disease, flight from missionization, and conflicts with the miners and settlers who suddenly entered the area in large numbers, reduced the native population to small, isolated remnants. Thus, the available information has been gleaned from historic accounts of early explorers, soldiers, hunters and trappers, and missionaries. Archaeology has added some information, but the record is by no means complete (Wallace 1978).

The Native American occupants of the San Joaquin Valley and adjoining Sierran foothills were hunters and gatherers who depended upon the seasonal procurement of locally abundant vegetal and faunal resources. As with their neighboring tribes, the Kechayi lived in permanently established villages during most of the year, usually between the months of October and May (Gayton 1930:365). During the rest of the year, the Kechayi will move across their territory, tracking seasonally available plant resources as well as game and fish. Their principal villages were situated along permanent stream courses, while temporary camp sites were scattered throughout their territory. Bedrock milling sites, the most visible vestige of Native American occupation, were located on rock boulders and outcrops above stream courses. The abundance of resources in the valley and adjoining foothills provided for a nearly sedentary life, with high population densities normally associated with agricultural peoples (Baumhoff and Olmsted 1963).

Numerous accounts of Valley Yokuts lifeways offer details of pre-European land use in the San Joaquin Valley. Additional information on pre-contact Yokuts subsistence and culture was reviewed from Gayton (1930, 1948), Kroeber (1925), Latta (1999), Spier (1978) and Wallace (1978).

The Spanish arrived on the coast in 1769, and by 1776, the Central Valley had been explored by José Canizares. From 1806 to 1808, the area was crossed by Gabriel Moraga, and in 1813, a major battle was fought between the Miwok to the north and the Spaniards near the mouth of the Cosumnes River. Though the Yokuts appear to have escaped being removed to missions by the Spanish, they were not spared the ravages of European-spread disease. In 1833, an epidemic—probably malaria—raged through the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, killing an estimated 75 percent of the native population. Not far to the north, when John Sutter erected his fort at the future site of Sacramento, he had no problem getting the few neighboring Nisenan survivors to settle nearby. The discovery of gold in 1848, near the Nisenan village of Colluma (also Coloma), drew thousands of miners into the area, and led to widespread killing and the near total destruction of traditional Nisenan and Yokuts cultures (Wilson and Towne 1978). By the latter part of the 1800s, the Yokuts had virtually ceased to exist (Kroeber 1976; Wallace 1978).

4.18.2 Regulatory Setting

Assembly Bill 52

Effective July 1, 2015, AB 52 amended CEQA to require that: 1) a lead agency provide notice to those California Native American tribes that requested notice of projects proposed by the lead agency; and 2) for any tribe that responded to the notice within 30 days of receipt with a request for consultation, the lead agency must consult with the tribe. Topics that may be addressed during consultation include TCRs, the potential significance of project impacts, type of environmental document that should be prepared, and possible mitigation measures and project alternatives.

Pursuant to AB 52, Section 21073 of the PRC defines California Native American tribes as “a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004.” This includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

Section 21074(a) of the PRC defines TCRs for the purpose of CEQA as:

- 1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
 - a. included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; and/or
 - b. included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1; and/or
 - c. a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the

purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Because criteria a and b also meet the definition of an Historical Resource under CEQA, a TCR may also require additional consideration as an Historical Resource. TCRs may or may not exhibit archaeological, cultural, or physical indicators.

Recognizing that California tribes are experts in their tribal cultural resources and heritage, AB 52 requires that CEQA lead agencies provide tribes that requested notification an opportunity to consult at the commencement of the CEQA process to identify TCRs. Furthermore, because a significant effect on a TCR is considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA, consultation is used to develop appropriate avoidance, impact minimization, and mitigation measures.

Summary of Tribal Consultation

AB 52 consultation requirements went into effect on July 1, 2015, for all projects that have not already published a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration or published a Notice of Preparation of an EIR (Section 11 [c]). The lead agency (CCC) is responsible for carrying out AB 52 consultation. At this time, CCC has not received any formal written requests from any tribes for AB 52 consultation on CCC projects.

On March 10, 2019, CCC determined that it had a complete Project description and they were ready to begin review under CEQA. Because no tribes sent letters requesting notification of projects per AB52, no notifications were mailed in accordance with PRC Section 21080.3.1(d) and no tribes were consulted.

Tribal Cultural Resources

On February 4, 2019, general information request letters were sent to each representative listed for the tribes on the NAHC response letter. On April 2, 2019, one response was received from the Table Mountain Rancheria Tribal Government Office declining participation in any consultation but asking to be notified in the unlikely event that any resources were discovered.

In the absence of tribes wishing to consult, information about potential impacts to TCRs was drawn from:

- 1) the results of a search of the Sacred Lands File of the NAHC;
- 2) existing ethnographic information about pre-contact lifeways and settlement patterns; and
- 3) information on archaeological site records obtained from the CHRIS.

Sacred Lands File Search

A search of the NAHC Sacred Lands File was requested on January 16, 2019. The NAHC responded on January 25, 2019, that the Sacred Lands File search was positive. The NAHC included a list of suggested tribal representatives to contact who may have more information. The list included Big Sandy Rancheria of Western Modoc Indians, Cold Springs Rancheria, Dumna Wo-Wah Tribal Government, Dunlap Band of Mono Indians, Kings River Choinumni Farm Tribe, North Fork Mono Tribe, Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe, and Table Mountain Rancheria.

Ethnographic Information

The ethnographic information reviewed for the Project, including ethnographic maps, does not identify any villages, occupational areas, or resource procurement locations in or around the current Project Area (Gayton 1930, 1948, Kroeber 1925, Latta 1999, Spier 1978 and Wallace 1978). Little Sandy Creek meanders along the western periphery of the Project Area. The Handbook of North American Indians (Spier 1978) lists the nearest Native American tribal territory as Kechayi of the Foothill Yokuts but does not list or depict any village or settlement locations. The Foothill Yokuts occupied the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada from the Fresno River southward to the Kern River. The Kechayi territory is located south of the town of Auberry.

CHRIS Records Search

A search of the CHRIS records for a 0.5-mile radius surrounding the Project Area revealed two previous cultural resources investigations included the area, and only very small portions along the western and northern peripheries of the Project Area have been previously surveyed for cultural resources. The previous studies identified eight pre-contact sites such as lithic scatters, bedrock mortars, and habitation sites within the 0.5-mile record search radius.

Significance Criteria

AB 52 established that a substantial adverse change to a TCR has a significant effect on the environment. In assessing substantial adverse change, the CCC must determine whether or not the Project will adversely affect the qualities of the resource that convey its significance. The qualities are expressed through integrity. Integrity of a resource is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association [CCR Title 14, Section 4852(c)]. Impacts are significant if the resource is demolished or destroyed or if the characteristics that made the resource eligible are materially impaired [CCR Title 14, Section 15064.5(a)]. Accordingly, impacts to a TCR will likely be significant if the Project negatively affects the qualities of integrity that made it significant in the first place. In making this determination, the CCC need only address the aspects of integrity that are important to the TCR's significance.

4.18.3 Tribal Cultural Resources (XVIII) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The project site was found to not be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, the searches of the Sacred Lands File by the NAHC identified sacred lands within or immediately adjacent to the Project Area. The ethnographic record for the area indicates that known village sites and camps were located primarily along the major rivers and their tributaries to exploit water resources. Although no major rivers are within the Project Area, Little Sandy Creek is in close proximity. The CHRIS records search indicated eight pre-contact native American sites exist in the vicinity of the Project Area. Therefore, evidence suggests that there is a moderate potential for TCRs inside the Project Area.

No TCRs were identified within the Proposed Project Area and the Proposed Project will not cause a substantial adverse action to a known TCR. However, impacts to unknown TCRs that may be discovered during Project construction is considered a potentially significant impact. Implementation of MM CUL-1 will reduce this impact to less than significant.

4.18.4 Mitigation Measures

CUL-1: Implement Measures to Protect Unanticipated Cultural, Archaeological, and/or Tribal Cultural Resources Discoveries. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the evaluation and treatment of inadvertent/unanticipated discoveries of potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs), archaeological, or cultural resources during a project's ground disturbing activities.

- If any suspected TCRs are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.
- When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the California Native American Tribe(s) that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.
- The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil.

Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

4.19 Utilities and Service Systems

4.19.1 Environmental Setting

Water Service

Water supply and delivery is one of the most critical issues for Fresno County and is essential to the environment, economy, and quality of life within the County. Readily available groundwater and the development of facilities for the storage and conveyance of surface water have allowed Fresno County to grow and prosper as one of the state's premier agricultural regions. Fresno County's agriculture and its

many dependent businesses are sustained by an affordable and reliable water supply made possible through conjunctive use of groundwater and stored surface water. In addition, the ready availability of high-quality groundwater allows most residents, municipalities, and industries within Fresno County to meet their water supply needs without expensive delivery and treatment infrastructure (Fresno County General Plan Update 2000).

The Project site is not in proximity to a public water system and it is infeasible to extend service to the site. Four wells are currently located on the site. However, only one well is functional. This well is located near the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department facility. It is capable of pumping at an average rate of 25 gallons per minute and provides water to a 45,000-gallon water tank adjacent to the fire station. From there, the domestic water runs to a hydro-pneumatic storage tank and booster pump. Fire water is supplied on a separate line directly from the water tank. This water tank is shared with the adjacent fire department, which fills its fire engine tank prior to fire calls. The Proposed Project will include a new well and two approximately 170,000-gallon water tanks that will serve both domestic and fire water. A domestic water booster pump and a diesel fire pump will connect to the water tanks to provide the required water pressure. The three non-functional wells will be destroyed and sealed in accordance with California and Fresno County Environmental Health regulations as part of the Project.

Wastewater and Septic

The Proposed Project site is not served by a sewer district, and both the Project site and surrounding area are served by septic systems. The Project site has multiple septic systems which are still maintained and are not used by the local fire department. The septic system has been utilized a few times per year to maintain it since the school was closed.

There are several existing leach fields on the property. Leach field #1 was installed around 1970 with the auxiliary restroom. The size and date of installation of leach field #2 is unknown. Leach field #3 is smaller and serves the eastern classroom building. Location and size of the new septic system was determined using the 2022 California Building Code and Table H201.1(2) of the 2016 Plumbing Code. The changing demands of the Project site created by the Proposed Project warrant changes to the septic system. Therefore, it is recommended to abandon and remove all existing leach fields and septic tanks. A new approximately 5,000-gallon septic tank will be installed. Potentially a new leach field will be developed north of the emergency staging area.

Solid Waste

The County of Fresno operates two disposal facilities for area residents. The American Avenue Disposal Site is the county's regional landfill located near the city of San Joaquin. This facility is able to accept all types of solid waste and recycling. In addition, the County of Fresno's Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility is located here to drop off various chemicals and substances for safe disposal. The Shaver Lake Transfer Station is operated in partnership with the County of Fresno, Granite Solid Waste, and the US Forest Service.

Ponderosa Solid Waste provides garbage collection for the Auberry (and surrounding) area.

Electricity

Electric service will be provided by PG&E.

Internet and Cable TV

A high-speed data infrastructure will be provided throughout the site to support data and voice communications needs. The new underground service to the site will be routed to a new main point of entry in the administration or multipurpose building. Telecom/data cabling to each building will be extended via underground conduit from the MPOE/MDF room to a data closet in each building. In addition to fixed wiring systems, wireless access points will be provided within each building to support the business and educational needs of the facility. Cable TV service will be provided to the site via underground conduits routed to the MPOE/MDF room. Cable TV service will be distributed to the dormitories, education buildings, administration building, recreation building and multipurpose building via underground conduits.

4.19.2 Regulatory Setting

Water

The following Goals, Policies, and Programs are from Fresno County's *General Plan 2000 Update*:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Policy PF-C.3</i> | <i>To reduce demand on the county's groundwater resources, the County shall encourage the use of surface water to the maximum extent feasible.</i> |
| <i>Policy PF-C.4</i> | <i>The County shall support efforts to expand groundwater and/or surface water storage that benefits Fresno County.</i> |
| <i>Policy PF-C.12</i> | <i>The County shall approve new development only if an adequate sustainable water supply to serve such development is demonstrated.</i> |
| <i>Policy PF-C.25</i> | <i>The County shall require that all new development within the County use water conservation technologies, methods, and practices as established by the County.</i> |
| <i>Policy PF-C.26</i> | <i>The County shall encourage the use of reclaimed water where economically, environmentally, and technically feasible.</i> |
| <i>Policy PF-C.27</i> | <i>The County shall adopt, and recommend to all cities that they also adopt, the most cost-effective urban best water conservation management practices circulated and updated by the California Urban Water Agencies, California Department of Water Resources, or other appropriate agencies.</i> |

Program PF-C.B The County shall adopt a well construction and destruction ordinance that will include among other requirements the mapping of location information on abandoned wells in the County GIS database and which includes a procedure for ensuring that abandoned wells are properly destroyed.

4.19.3 Utilities and Service Systems (XIX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Water

The volume and sustainability of dry-year water supply for a Project in California is typically addressed by comparing annual rainfall with changes in groundwater levels. This comparison is made for a normal or average water year, for single dry year, and for multiple dry water years. For the Proposed Project, local rainfall data were obtained from the Auberry 2 NW (ABR) meteorological station from the Western Region Climate Center (EMKO 2023) and DWR's California Data Exchange Center. The ABR station was initially located approximately one mile northeast of the Project site but was moved to a location approximately one mile west of the Project site in 1970. Rainfall data are available from the ABR station from August 1915 through February 2023. However, consistent data are not reported until the 1925 water year (EMKO 2023).

The WSA presents an analysis of groundwater data from the Project site obtained during the 2021 water year. The 2021 water year was relatively dry and part of a multiple dry year period. With only 13.67 inches of rain, the 2021 water year was the seventh driest year recorded in Auberry since 1919. The analysis in the WSA concludes that, despite the dry conditions in 2021, the existing onsite supply well is capable of providing the water necessary to both fill the two 170,000-gallon water tanks and provide the daily potable water needs for the Project without affecting other water users. This conclusion is also consistent with the prior use of the facility as a school, which relied solely on groundwater since 1939. A second well will be installed as part of the Project to provide a backup supply and to meet the requirements of the water system permit to be issued by the Division of Drinking Water. Installation of a new well will be a less than significant impact.

Wastewater

The existing leach fields will be destroyed, and a new one will be constructed. Existing septic tanks will be removed and replaced with a new septic tank to serve the facility.

New Septic System

The changing demands of the Project site created by the Proposed Project warrant changes to the septic system. Therefore, the project proposes to abandon and remove all existing leach fields and septic tanks and construct new ones. A new approximately 5,000-gallon septic tank will be installed. Existing septic tanks will be removed and disposed of. The following points will be considered when implementing the sanitary sewer design:

- *Offsite Sanitary Sewer System Requirements:* Comply with local agency requirements.
- *Storm Drainage System:* Do not connect sanitary sewer systems to storm drain systems.
- *Sewer Pipe Location:* Sanitary sewer pipes shall be horizontally located to provide minimum separation requirements with domestic water facilities in accordance with the current edition of the State Health Code and local agency requirements. The alignment of the sanitary sewer system shall facilitate maintenance of the system. Do not locate piping and appurtenances where excavation of the pipe will damage adjacent structures. Locate sewer mains a minimum of 10 feet outside of new buildings and outside of fill zones of structures.
- *Manholes:* Provide manholes at junctions, changes in direction, change in slope, and change in invert elevations of sewers eight inches and above. Clean-outs are allowed on sewer lines less than eight inches. Manhole spacing shall not exceed 300 feet.
- *Pipe Flow:* Pipe capacity shall be designed in accordance with local agency requirements.
- *Sanitary Sewer Sizes:* Sanitary sewer mains shall be sized to meet the projected flows and local agency requirements. For preliminary cost opinions, laterals were assumed to be four inches in diameter and main lines were assumed to be eight inches in diameter.
- *Cleanouts:* Cleanouts must be installed on all sewer building connections.
- *Slopes:* Sanitary sewer slopes shall provide a minimum velocity of 2.0 feet/second at full flow. The maximum pipe velocity shall be 9 feet/second.
- *Hydraulic Calculations:* Engineer shall provide hydraulic calculations of sanitary sewer system.
- *Septic Tank Location:* The septic tank shall be located 50 feet from water supply well and 50 feet from streams.
- *Leaching Field:* The disposal field shall be located 100 feet from water supply wells and 100 feet from streams.

According to maps provided by the California Soil Resource Lab, the predominant soil in the area is Visalia Sandy Loam. This is a sandy clay composed of approximately 70 percent sand, 15 percent clay and well

drained. Based on this information, an estimate of 40 sf of leaching area per 100 gallons was used. The maximum absorption capacity was assumed to be 2.5 gallons per sf of leaching area per day. In order to treat the effluent stream, a leaching area of 3,600 sf will be necessary. The leach field will be located on the southern portion of the Project site.

Stormwater

Storm drainage infrastructure will be sized to accommodate the new facility, which will have similar drainage impacts as the existing school.

Electric Power, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

Electric and telecommunications facilities are already present at the Project site and will not require substantial construction or relocation. Natural gas will be provided by propane tanks, similar to how the school was served.

The Proposed Project will not result in the construction or relocation of new utilities infrastructure having significant environmental effects. Additionally, no new offsite infrastructure will be required for any of the utility service systems. A less than significant impact will occur. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

See item a) and Section 4.10.3, Hydrology and Water Quality item b). The Proposed Project will have sufficient groundwater supply to serve the Project site during normal, dry and multiple dry years. A less than significant impact will occur, and no mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Wastewater will be disposed of via a newly constructed septic tank and leach field onsite. The facilities will be designed to accommodate the wastewater generation associated with the project. A less than significant impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d)	Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction activities associated with the Project are not expected to generate substantial amounts of solid waste. The minimal amount of solid waste generated will not exceed the capacity of local infrastructure/landfills and will not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Project operations, which consist of environmental projects and natural disaster response, will not generate significant onsite waste. Related impacts are less than significant. No mitigation will be required.

Will the Project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less Than Significant Impact.

The California Integrated Waste Management (CIWM) Act requires every county to adopt an integrated waste management plan that describes county objectives, policies, and programs relative to waste disposal, management, sources reduction, and recycling. Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning requires a Construction and Demolition Waste Management plan that is consistent with the CIWM Act. The disposal of solid waste due to construction activities and subsequent Project operations will comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Impacts to solid waste statutes and regulations will be less than significant. No mitigation will be required.

4.19.4 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.20 Wildfire

4.20.1 Environmental Setting

Generally, California fire season extends from spring to late fall. Fire conditions arise from a combination of hot weather, an accumulation of vegetation, and low moisture content in the air. These conditions, when combined with high winds and years of drought, increase the potential for wildfire to occur. CAL FIRE provides wildland fire protection services on private, non-federal lands for the purpose of life, property and resource protection. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provide wildland fire protection services on federal lands in Federal Responsibility Areas for watershed and resource protection. Some areas are also identified as Local Responsibility Areas.

Upon completion, the Project has the potential to serve as a staging area for CAL FIRE emergency response units and may be utilized during a major local or state fire or other emergency event in addition to the daily CCC uses described in the Project Description.

4.20.2 Wildfire (XX) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, will the Project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project is located in an other-moderate/moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone in both Local and State Responsibility Area and is 2,700 feet west of the nearest Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone according to the Draft Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the State Responsibility Area map published by CAL FIRE in 2016. The Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone nearby is part of the Sierra National Forest, which is managed by several state and federal entities, including the USFS, BLM, and CAL FIRE.

Construction of the Proposed Project will not impair or conflict with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan for areas in High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. There will be a less than significant impact. While there will be no impact, it is worth noting the facility will house 100 Corpsmembers trained and equipped to respond to both natural and manmade disasters (including fire) which should aid emergency evacuation plans.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, will the Project:

- b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

See above discussion. The Proposed Project will demolish the existing dilapidated elementary school and construct a new modern facility for CCC use. Additionally, the project will bring CCC members to the area that are trained to respond to wildfire threats. The new facility has also been designed to provide a staging area during major fire events. Therefore, the Project will not exacerbate wildfire risks within the immediate vicinity or surrounding areas. No impact will occur, and no mitigation is required.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, will the Project:

- c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☒	☐

No Impact.

See above discussion. Landscaping is not part of the Proposed Project, but drought-tolerant, fire resistant landscaping will be undertaken by CCC as an internal project once the Proposed Project is complete. Therefore, the Project will have a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, will the Project:

- d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact.

See above discussion. Project construction will consist of demolition of the existing dilapidated elementary school and construction of a new modern facility for CCC use and CAL FIRE emergency

staging.. Additionally, the Project will not increase landslides or flooding risk. No impact will occur. No mitigation will be required.

4.20.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are required.

4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

4.21.1 Mandatory Findings of Significance (XXI) Environmental Checklist and Discussion

Does the Project:	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated			
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

As described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources of this document, biological resources on the site that could be affected by the Proposed Project include special-status plants and wildlife resources. MMs BIO-1 through BIO-5 shall be implemented to ensure all potential impacts to sensitive species and their habitats are mitigated to less than significant levels.

As indicated in Section 4.5, Cultural Resources and 4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, the Project is expected to avoid direct impacts to known cultural and tribal resources. Furthermore, implementation of MMs CUL-1 and TCR-1 shall ensure potential impacts to unknown cultural and tribal resources are reduced to less than significant levels. Should any cultural or tribal cultural resources or human remains be encountered during construction, all construction activities shall be halted, and a professional archeologist consulted. Similarly, implementation of MM GEO-1 shall ensure potential impact to unknown paleontological resources are mitigated to less than significant.

Does the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

With implementation of the mitigation measures listed above, all impacts were found to be less than significant (including air quality, greenhouse gas, and traffic). The Project site was previously used as an elementary school and will have a similar use with the CCC taking on educational classes, environmental projects, and natural disaster response. Additionally, there will be minimal offsite impacts due to the nature of Project operations as defined in the Project Description. Therefore, cumulative impacts will be reduced to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Does the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less Than Significant.

Potential impacts to human beings include increases in ambient noise and increases in air emissions including PM (dust) during construction and Project operations. These impacts were found to be temporary and less than significant with implementation of AQ-1 and AQ-2. Implementation of the Project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will ensure compliance with related measures and will minimize impacts to the greatest extent feasible

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Dr. Andrew A. Kopania, California Professional Geologist No. 4711, California Certified Hydrogeologist No. HG31. March 2023. *Water Supply Assessment California Conservation Corps Auberry Center Fresno County, California.*

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7.0 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Model Data Output
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2020.

Appendix B – Biological Resources Assessment
ECORP Consulting, Inc. 2018.

Appendix C – Cultural Resources Report (CONFIDENTIAL)
ECORP Consulting, Inc. 2019.

Appendix D – Geotechnical Investigation
GEOCON Consultants, Inc. April 2020.

Appendix E – Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report
GEOCON Consultants. January 2019.

Appendix F – SoundPLAN Noise Modeling
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2020.

Appendix G – Transportation Impact Assessment
KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. March 2020.

Appendix H – Construction-Related and Operational Gasoline Usage
ECORP Consulting, Inc. April 2020.



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