March 2025 | Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

SANTA FE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPANSION PROJECT

Porterville Unified School District

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PLACEWORKS

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAQS	ambient air quality standards
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
ADT	average daily trips
amsl	above mean sea level
APN	Assessor Parcel Number
AQMP	air quality management plan
AST	aboveground storage tank
BAU	business as usual
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAFE	corporate average fuel economy
CalARP	California Accidental Release Prevention Program
CalEMA	California Emergency Management Agency
Cal/EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDE	California Department of Education
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
cfs	cubic feet per second
CGS	California Geologic Survey
CGP	Construction General Permit
CUP	Conditional Use Permit

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CMP	congestion management program
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
Corps	US Army Corps of Engineers
CSO	combined sewer overflows
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWMA	Consolidated Waste Management Authority
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DSA	Division of State Architects
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	environmental impact report
EMS	Emergency Medical unit Services
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gases
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
GWP	global warming potential
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HQTA	high quality transit area
HVAC	heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
K	Kindergarten
L_{dn}	day-night noise level

Abbreviations and Acronyms

L_{eq}	equivalent continuous noise level
LBP	lead-based paint
LCFS	low-carbon fuel standard
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
LRA	local responsibility area
LOS	level of service
LST	localized significance thresholds
M_W	moment magnitude
MCL	maximum contaminant level
MEP	maximum extent practicable
mgd	million gallons per day
MMT	million metric tons
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MPO	metropolitan planning organization
MT	metric ton
MWD	Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	National Community Conservation Plan
ND	Negative Declaration
NO_X	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
O_3	ozone
OES	California Office of Emergency Services
PFD	Porterville Fire Department
PPD	Porterville Police Department
PM	particulate matter
POTW	publicly owned treatment works
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRDs	Permit Registration Documents
PUSD	Porterville Unified School District
PWC	Pioneer Water Company
RCNM	Roadway Construction Noise Model

Abbreviations and Acronyms

RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental condition
RMP	risk management plan
RMS	root mean square
RPS	renewable portfolio standard
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SFES	Santa Fe Elementary School
SIP	state implementation plan
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SLM	sound level meter
SPAL	Small Project Analysis Level
SoCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SQMP	stormwater quality management plan
SR	State Route
SRA	source receptor area [or state responsibility area]
SUSMP	standard urban stormwater mitigation plan
SWP	State Water Project
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminants
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resources
TCRTA	Tulare County Regional Transit Agency
TK	Transitional Kindergarten
TNM	transportation noise model
tpd	tons per day
TRI	toxic release inventory
TTCP	traditional tribal cultural places

Abbreviations and Acronyms

USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
UWMP	urban water management plan
V/C	volume-to-capacity ratio
VdB	velocity decibels
VHFHSZ	very high fire hazard severity zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WQMP	water quality management plan
WSA	water supply assessment
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface
WWTF	Waste Water Treatment Facility

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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1. Introduction

Porterville Unified School District (PUSD or District) would construct two new buildings to accommodate up to 275 transitional kindergarten, preschool, and kindergarten students at the Santa Fe Elementary School (SFES) campus. This would increase the SFES's capacity to 1,091 students. To serve the increase in student capacity, nine new staff members will be hired and eight staff members would be relocated from other District campuses to SFES. In addition to the two new buildings, the proposed project includes a new parking lot, pick-up/drop-off area, new driveways, restructuring of parking lot 2, and sidewalk along Orange Avenue would be constructed. As part of the proposed project, the District would also acquire approximately 3.80 acres of the adjacent City property. See Section 1.3, *Project Description*, for a detailed description of the proposed project.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), PUSD is the applicant[1] and lead agency[2] for the proposed project. The PUSD, as lead agency, prepared the environmental documentation for the proposed project to determine if approval of the requested discretionary actions and subsequent development would have a significant impact on the environment. As defined by Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, an initial study is prepared primarily to provide the lead agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an environmental impact report, negative declaration (ND), or mitigated negative declaration (MND) would provide the necessary environmental documentation and clearance for the proposed project. This initial study has been prepared to support the adoption of an MND.

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

1.1.1 Project Site Location

The project site is located at SFES at 286 E Orange Avenue in the City of Porterville, Tulare County. The City of Porterville (City) is located in the southwest portion of Tulare County and is surrounded by the cities of Exeter and Tulare to the north, the City of Tipton to the west, the City of Delano to the south, which is in the northern part of Kern County, and Springville to the east. Tulare County is bordered by Kern County to the south, Kings County to the west, Fresno County to the north, and Inyo County to the east. See Figure 1, *Regional Location,* and Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*.

The project site is on the west side of the SFES campus. The SFES campus encompasses three full parcels owned by the District (with Assessor Parcel Numbers [APNs]: 261-150-058, 261-150-057, and 261-140-025) and a portion of one parcel (APN: 261-150-056) owned by the City of Porterville. The project site encompasses a total of approximately 4.5 acres and includes portions of three parcels: 261-150-056 (owned by the City of Porterville) and 261-150-057 and -058 (owned by the PUSD). See Figure 3, *Project Location with APNs*.

[1] CEQA Guidelines Section 15351 defines applicant as "a person who proposes to carry out a project which needs a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use or financial assistance from one or more public agencies when that person applies for the governmental approval or assistance."

[2] Public Resources Code Section 21067 defines lead agency as the "public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment."

1.1.2 Regional and Local Vehicle Access

Regional vehicle access to the project site comes from State Route 65 (SR-65), approximately 1.5 miles west of the project site, and State Route 190 (SR-190), approximately 0.7 miles south of the project site. Porterville Municipal Airport is also approximately 3.4 miles southwest of the project site. Direct access via train does not exist with the nearest Amtrak station being located in the City of Visalia, approximately 31 miles north of the project site.

Locally, the project site is served by local streets that surround the project site. Orange Avenue provides direct vehicle and pedestrian access to the project site. In the vicinity of the project site, Orange Avenue is a two-way roadway with two travel lanes in each direction. Sidewalks border both sides of the street. In addition, the City's bus services are administered by the Tulare County Regional Transit Agency (TCRTA). According to the TCRTA Route 4 (P4) Bus Schedule, there is a bus stop located at the corner of S Cornell Street and E Orange Avenue near SFES (TCRTA 2022). See Figure 4, *Aerial Photograph*.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

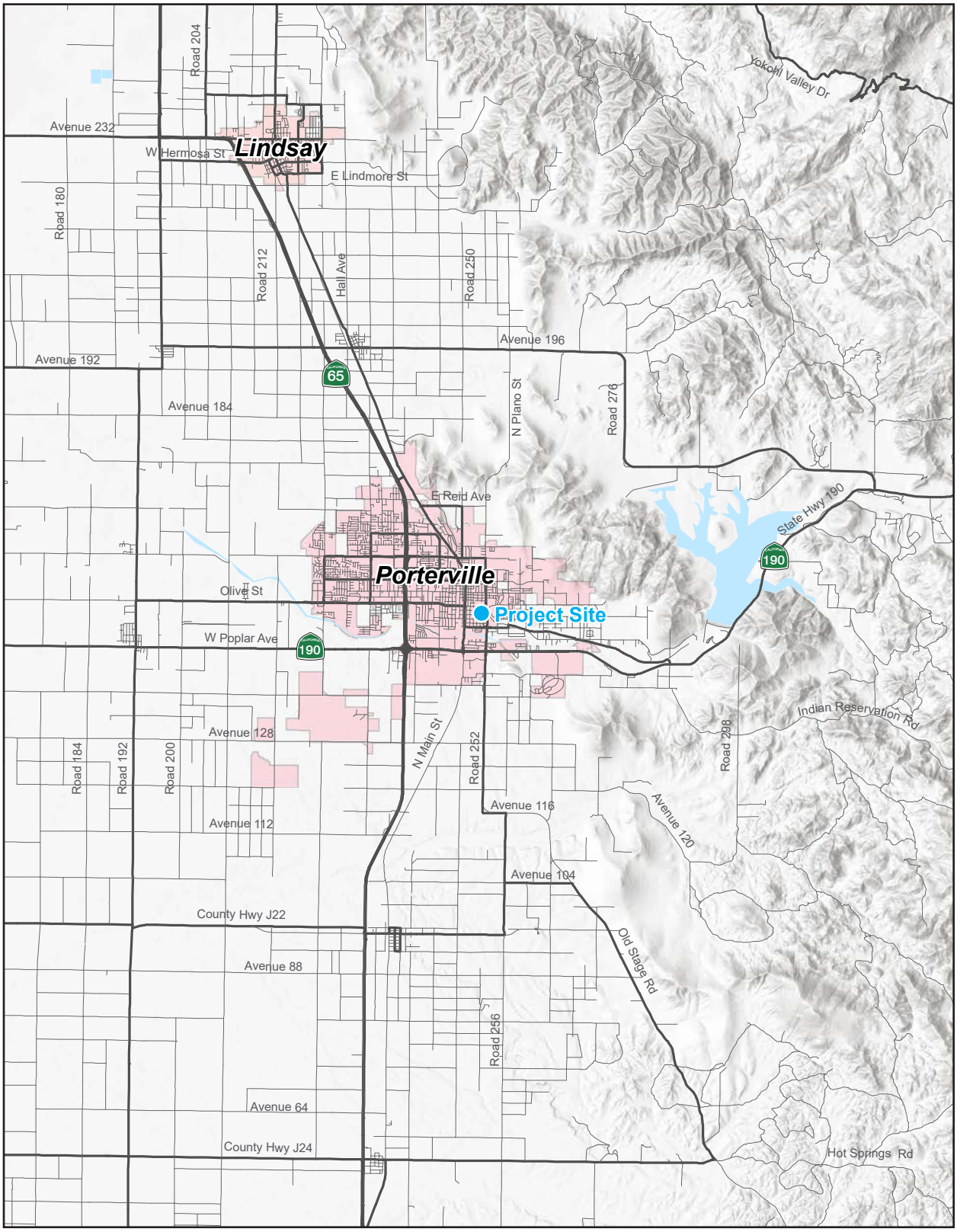
1.2.1 Existing Land Use

SFES, an approximately 11.3-acre elementary school campus, is comprised of District-owned property (APNs: 261-150-058, 261-150-057, and 261-140-025) and a portion of City-owned property on the western side of the campus (APN: 261-150-056); see Figure 3. The campus currently serves grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The campus has an enrollment capacity of 816 students and has an existing enrollment of 822 students.

The campus consists of seven buildings (numbered 100, 200, 200a, 300, 400, 500 and 600) that include classrooms and administrative uses and a gymnasium/multi-use building. The buildings can be found in the southern portion of the campus. Buildings 100, 200, 200a, and 500, are adjacent to the two parking lots onsite. Building 100 is the administration building; building 200 is the gymnasium/multi-use building; building 200a is a tiny tots preschool and library; and building 500 is a kindergarten classroom. Buildings 300, 400, and 600, located in the interior of the campus, consist of classroom uses. Building 200A, a fenced outdoor plaza, and a portion of the existing parking lot are on the City-owned parcel. See Figure 4, *Aerial Photograph*.

The northern portion of the campus consists of two playgrounds, grass fields, a blacktop play area, and other various play areas. The main playground on the campus is located just north of building 300. The playground is shaded and has sand. Bordering the playground to the north is an open grass field with two baseball backstops. Adjacent to buildings 300 and 400, to the north, is the blacktop play area. This blacktop play area includes five full length basketball and volleyball courts, two handball courts, six four square courts, and three tetherball courts. Within the project site there is a small grass field just south of the playground that is surrounded by a concrete walkway, is northwest of building 300 and is partially covered. An additional playground is located in the front of the campus, adjacent to E Orange Avenue and building 500. This playground is covered and consists of a play structure with various games and uses, including two slides. See Figure 4, *Aerial Photograph*.

Figure 1 - Regional Location



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Scale (Miles)

Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.
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1. Introduction

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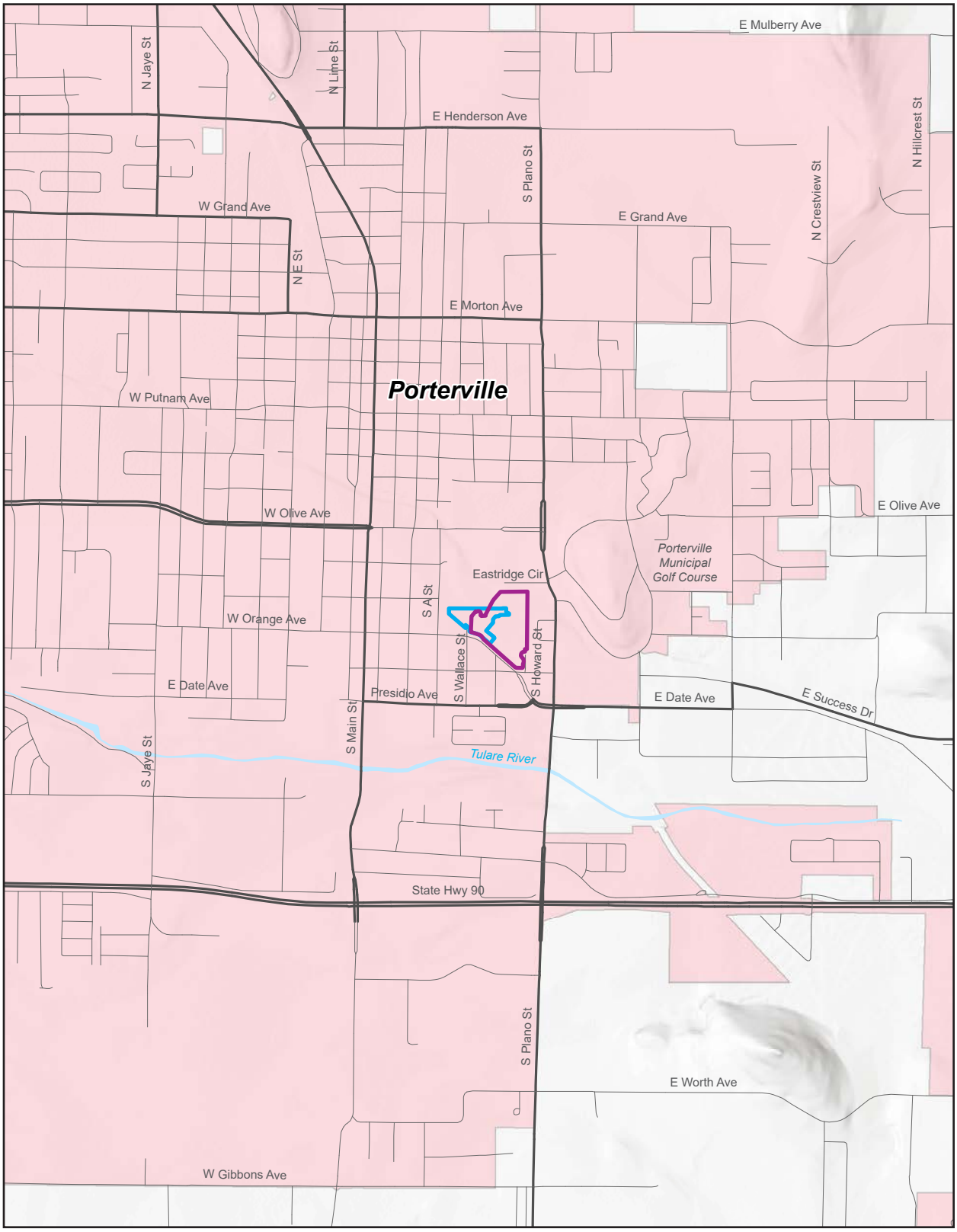
Figure 2 - Local Vicinity



School Boundary
Project Boundary

Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.
Source: Generated using ArcMap 2024.

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Scale (Feet)

1. Introduction

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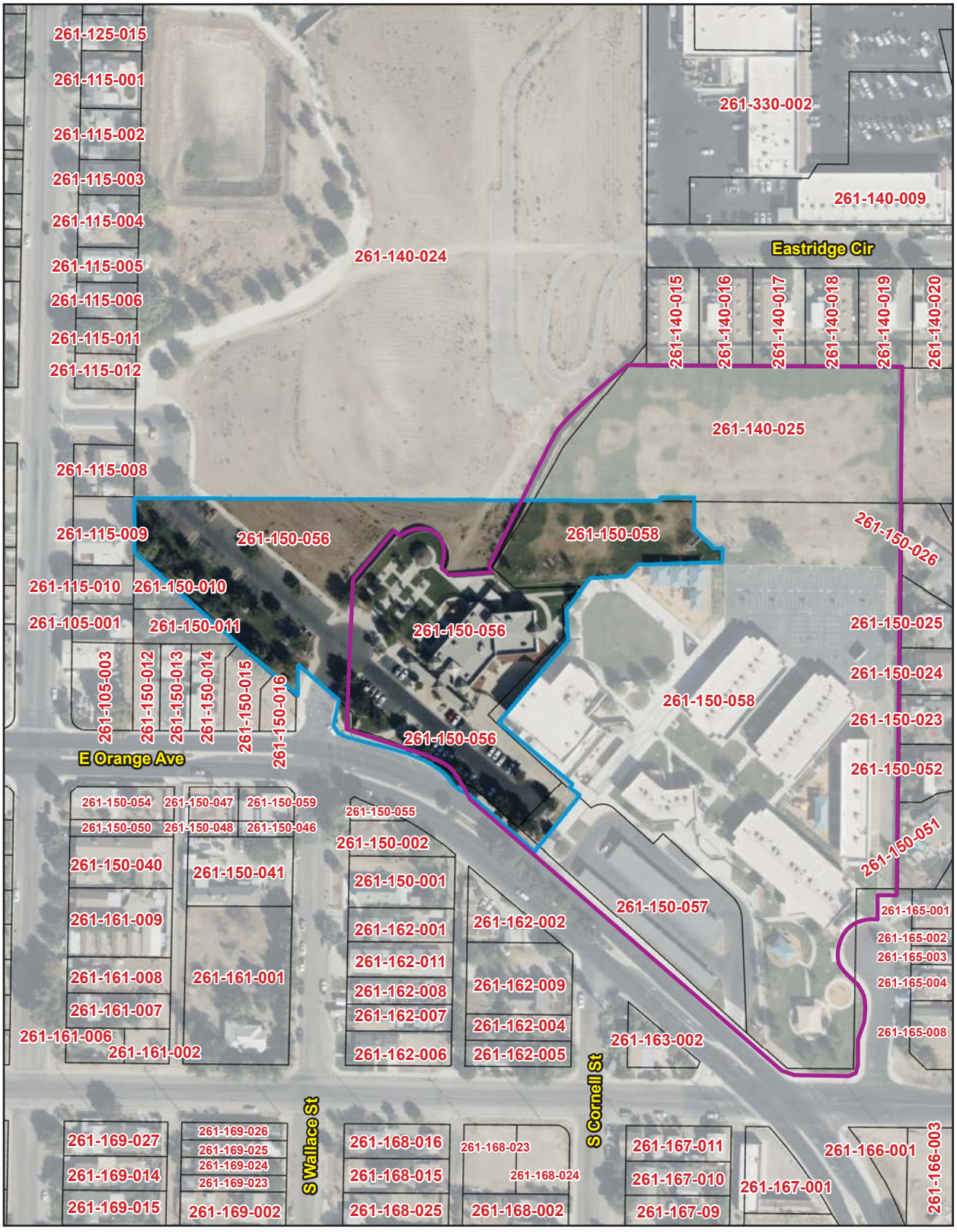
Figure 3 - Project Location with APNs



Source: Nearmap 2024; County of Tulare 2024.

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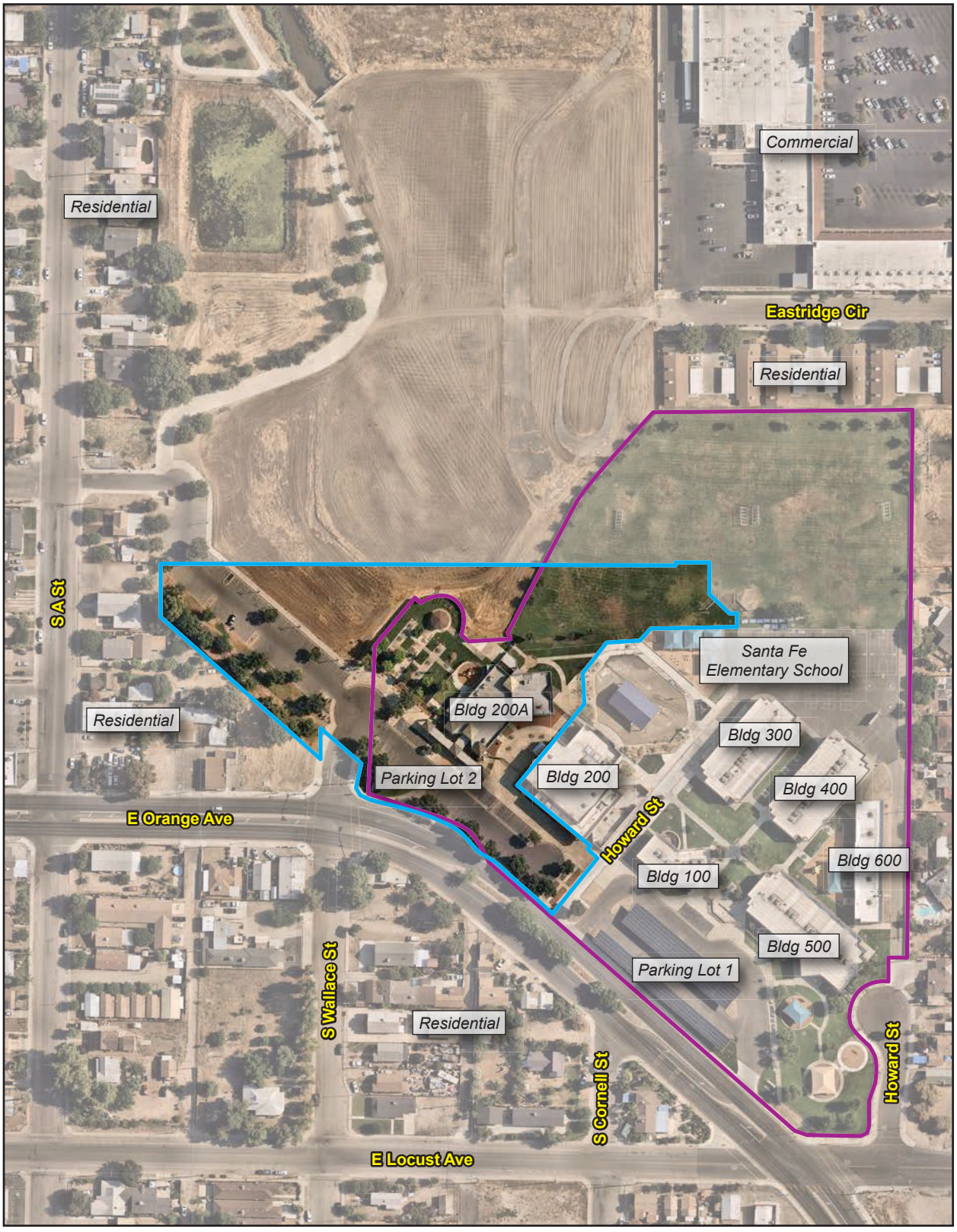
Figure 4 - Aerial Photograph



Source: Nearmap 2024.

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The campus consists of landscaping, trees, and concrete walkways. Some landscaping exists in front of the campus, in front of the two parking lots. Other areas of the campus are also landscaped with trees around the partially covered grass field within the project site, northwest of building 300. Trees can also be found throughout the entire campus.

The project site is on the west side of the campus and includes building 200A, an existing parking lot, concrete walkways, a portion of the grass playfield, a playground, picnic benches, a pavilion, fencing, a bike rack, lighting, landscaping, and trees. Additionally, City-owned land is located on the western side of the project site that is undeveloped but disturbed (see Figure 5, *Aerial View with Onsite Photos*).

1.2.2 Parking and Access

The campus parking area consists of two parking lots adjacent to E Orange Avenue and are located in front of buildings 100, 200, 200a, and 500. Parking lot 1 is covered with solar panels and has 71 existing parking spaces, including six ADA parking spaces. Parking lot 2 (on and off campus) includes a total of 126 parking spaces, including four ADA parking spaces and a driveway turnaround on the southeastern end. This includes six accessible parking stalls which also include two van accessible parking stalls. General vehicle access to the campus is provided by two ingress-egress driveways on the north side of Orange Avenue – one on the eastern side of the campus and one on the western side of the campus. There are two gated entries for authorized vehicles, one towards the middle of the campus and one on the eastern side of the campus. There is also one egress-only driveway for parking lot 1 towards the middle of the campus. An offsite ingress-egress driveway connects parking lot 2 to A Street and also provides access to the campus.

Vehicle access to the project site is provided from the western-most driveway on Orange Avenue and the offsite driveway from A Street. The project site can also be accessed from the SFES campus.

1.2.3 Surrounding Land Use

The project site is predominantly surrounded by residential uses; other types of uses also surround the campus such as recreational, commercial, and government. To the north of the campus, are residential, commercial, and government uses. Specifically, the residential uses are mostly single-family homes with some multi-family homes. The commercial uses to the north of the campus are in a shopping center and consists of retail and restaurants and the Porterville Department of Motor Vehicles office. To the east of the campus, the uses consist of single-family residential. To the south of the campus, the uses mainly consist of single-family residences. To the west, uses mostly consist of undeveloped, but disturbed land, and single-family residences with some commercial uses at the corner of E Orange Avenue and S A Street; see Figure 4, *Aerial Photograph, Figure 5, Aerial View with Onsite Photographs,* and Figure 6, *Photographs of Surrounding Uses*.

The project site is surrounded by SFES campus to the northeast and east. The undeveloped but disturbed land (owned by the City) to the north. Residential uses to the west and south across Orange Avenue.

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Figure 5 - Aerial View with Onsite Photographs

View 1. From the western side of the project site, looking north at the existing pavilion, picnic benches, and fencing.

View 2. From the northern side of the project site, looking east at Building 200 A, existing playground, and fencing.

View 3. From the northern side of the project site, looking north at the existing playfield, soccer goals, trees, and existing residential.

View 4. From the northern side of the project site on City-owned property, looking west at City-owned parking lot outside of the project site residential uses, walkways, and trees.

View 5. From the eastern side of the project site, looking east at the existing shaded playground, grass field, soccer goals, baseball backstops, and residential uses.

View 6. From the western side of the project site, looking northwest at the existing parking lot, walkways, lighting, and residential uses.

View 7. From north of the project site, on the City property, looking southeast at the existing fencing and Building 300.

View 8. From the western side of the project site, looking southeast at the existing parking lot, Building 200A, walkways, benches, and fencing.

View 9. From the southern side of the project site, looking east at Building 200A, the existing parking lot, fencing, trees, and walkways.

Project Site

Photograph Location and Direction (9)

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Scale (Feet)

Source: Nearmap 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024.

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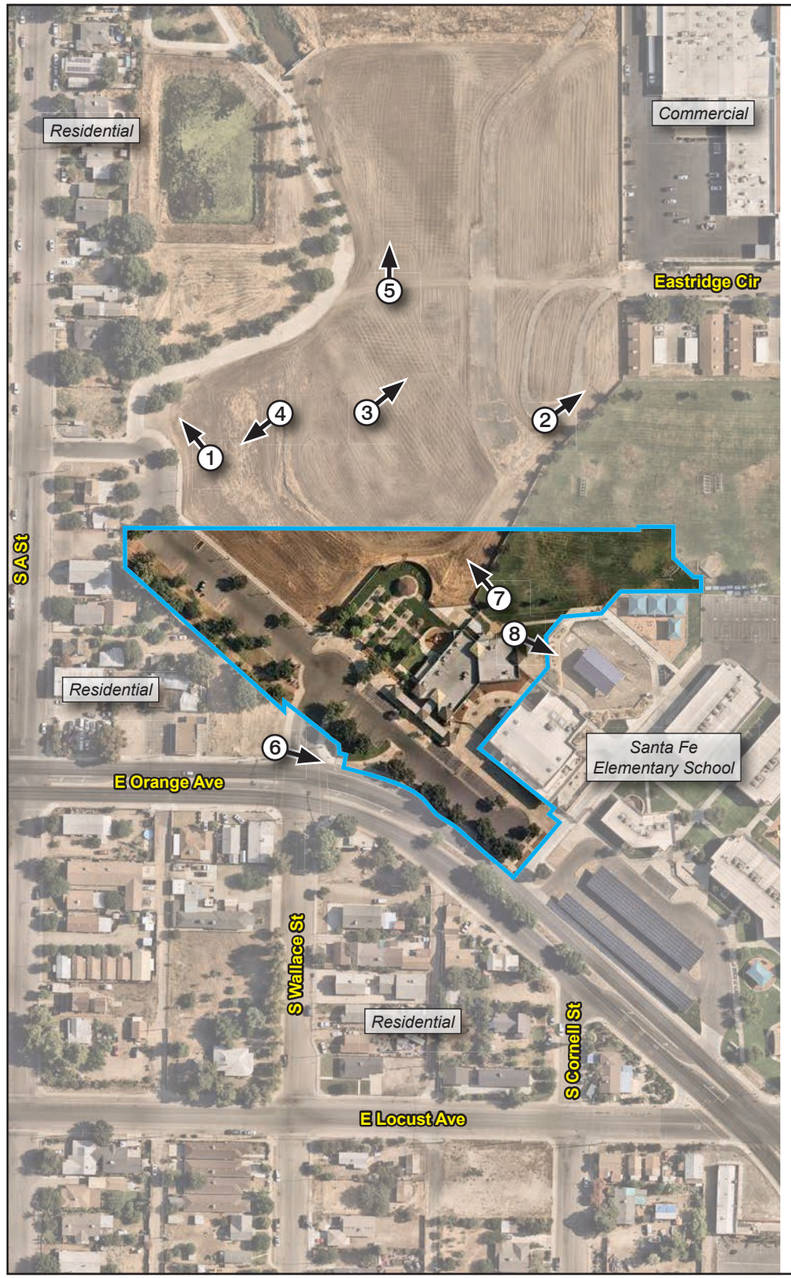
Figure 6 - Aerial View with Surrounding Site Photographs



View 1. From northwest of the project site on the City-owned property, looking north at existing residential and City-owned property.

View 2. From north of the project site on the City-owned property, looking northeast at the school's grass playfield and fencing and existing residential uses and City-owned property.

View 3. From north of the project site on the City-owned property, looking northeast at existing residential and commercial uses and City-owned property.

View 4. From north of the project site on the City-owned property, looking southwest at existing residential uses and City-owned property.

View 5. From north of the project site on the City-owned property, looking north at existing public institutional use and City-owned property.

View 6. From the southern side of the project site, looking south at E Orange Avenue, residential uses, existing walkways, Santa Fe Elementary school sign, and trees.

View 7. From the northern side of the project site, looking northwest on school campus at existing school fencing and City-owned property.

View 8. From the eastern side of the project site, looking east at the shaded playground off the project site and on the campus.

Project Site

1 Photograph Location and Direction (9)

0 220
Scale (Feet)

Source: Nearmap 2024; PlaceWorks, 2024.

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1.2.4 Existing General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

The City's general plan land use designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as Education and Parks and Recreation, respectively. The City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS (Public and Semi-Public) and PK (Parks and Public Recreation Facilities), respectively. The surrounding General Plan land use designations and zoning designations are under the Porterville 2030 General Plan and Series 200 of the Porterville City Code, respectively.

To the north of the campus, the General Plan land use designations consist of Retail Centers, Neighborhood Commercial, Parks and Recreation, and Public Institutional. East of the campus, the General Plan designations consist of Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Parks and Recreation. South of the campus the General Plan Designations consist of General and Service Commercial, Retail Centers, and Medium Residential. To the west of the campus, the General Plan Designations are made up of General and Service Commercial, Parks and Recreation, High Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential (Porterville 2008a).

To the north of the campus, the zoning designations consist of PK (Parks and Public Recreation Facilities), D-PK (Downtown Parks and Public Recreational Facilities), PD (Planned Development), D-PO (Downtown Professional Office), and DRM-3 (Downtown High Density Residential). To the east of the campus, the zoning designation is RS-2 (Low Density Residential). To the south of the campus, the zoning designation is CG (General and Service Commercial), CR (Retail Centers) DR-S (Downtown Retail-South of Olive Avenue), and DRM-2 (Downtown Medium Density Residential). To the west of the campus, the zoning designation is DR-S (Downtown Retail-South of Olive Avenue), DRM-3 (Downtown High Density Residential), and PK (City of Porterville 2024a).

1.2.5 Enrollment and Schedule

The current enrollment of SFES is 822 students and the number of staff is 45. For all students, kindergarten (K) through 5th grade, school starts at 8:30 am. Primary grade students (transitional kindergarten [TK] through 3rd grade) are dismissed at 2:45 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Intermediate grade students (4th and 5th grade) are dismissed at 3:30 pm Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. All grades are dismissed at 1:45 pm on Wednesdays.

1.2.6 Existing Programs and Activities

The SFES campus provides an Expanded Learning Program before and after the school day, which provides academic support to existing students. The before-school Expanded Learning Program begins at 7:20 AM and concludes at 8:10 AM and operates Monday through Friday, serving approximately 450 students. The after-school Expanded Learning Opportunity Program operates from 2:45 PM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, serving approximately 600 students.

Additionally, consistent with the Civic Center Act, school facilities including classrooms, a library, and the multipurpose room are available to the public for community events through Facilitron, a district-wide reservation platform, allowing for joint use of the school facilities.

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.3.1 Proposed Land Use

The proposed project would expand the campus of Santa Fe Elementary School with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel and the construction of two new buildings to serve TK, preschool and K students, a new parking lot, and a new pickup/drop-off area. The project would also renovate the existing parking lot 2, located in front of buildings 200A and 200. The two new buildings would be numbered 700 and 800. Building 700 would include four preschool classrooms; building 800 would include four TK classrooms and three K classrooms. See Figure 7, *Site Plan*.

The proposed project would accommodate up to 275 TK, K, and preschool students at the Santa Fe Elementary School (SFES) campus. This would increase the SFES's capacity to 1,091 students. Based on existing enrollment, the proposed project represents an increase of 269 students. As part of the proposed project, eight existing staff members would be relocated to SFES to serve TK and K classrooms and nine new staff members would be hired for the preschool program. The proposed project would result in an increase in nine new jobs.

1.3.1.1 BUILDING 700

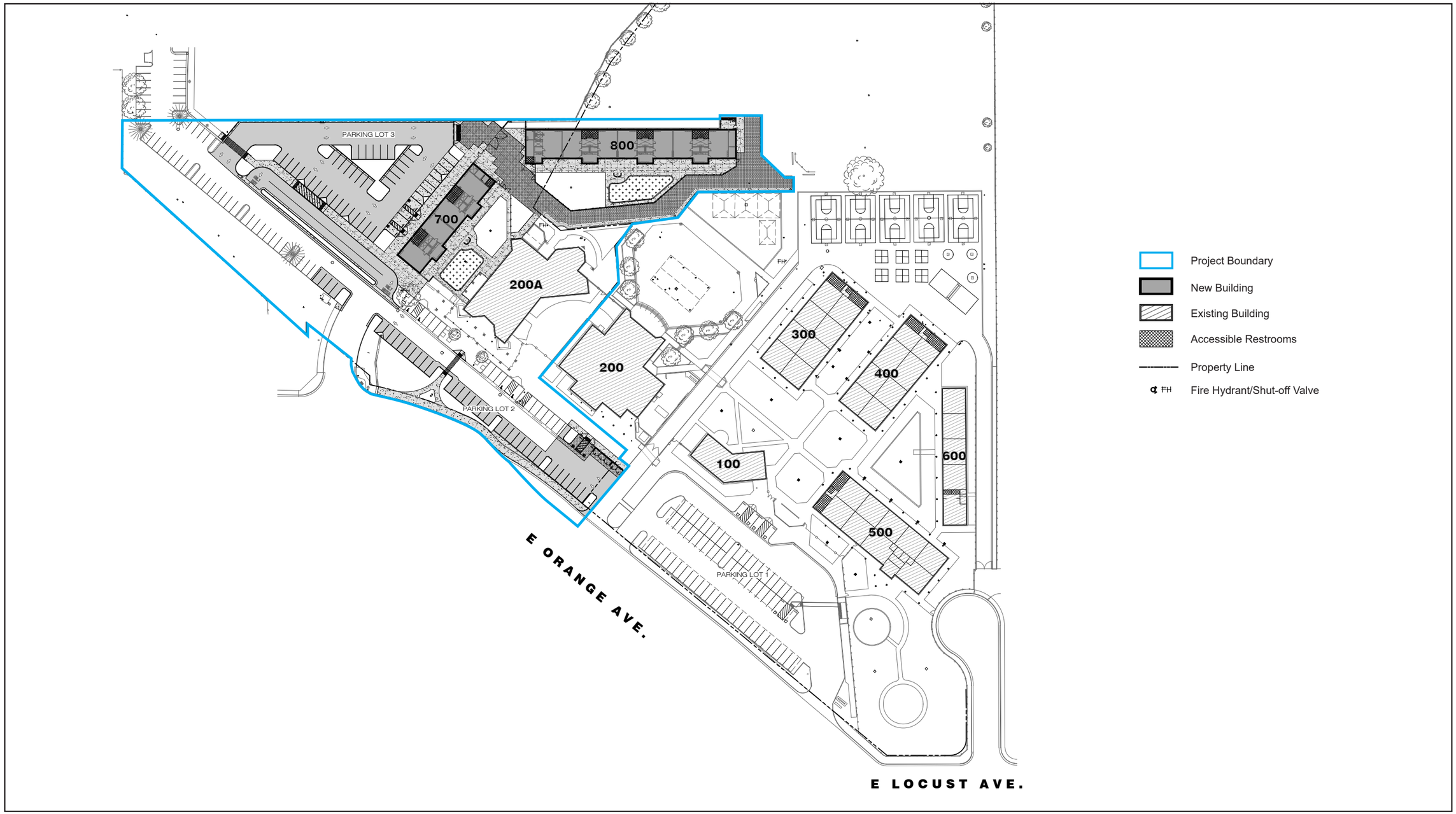
Building 700 would be one story (approximately 18 feet and 8 inches in height) and would be located in the northwestern corner of the project site. Building 700 would consist of 5,823 square feet. The roof overhang would further shade 1,860 square feet of outdoor area. Construction of building 700 would remove the existing walkway, benches, covered area, picnic tables, and playground adjacent to building 200A. The building would consist of four preschool classrooms, five storage areas, 10 restrooms for the students, one staff restroom, four clean up areas, two teacher work rooms, a janitor area, and one area to house the buildings electrical components. With each set of two classrooms, the restrooms, storage areas, and clean up areas are located in the middle with each classroom directly having access to two restrooms, one clean up area, and one storage area. Additionally, each two classrooms would share one teacher work room. Access to the building would come from the southwestern side of the building which would face building 200A. See Figure 8, *Building 700 Elevations*.

In between buildings 700 and 200A, new walkways, new landscaping, and a new soft fall surface play area would be installed; the existing bike rack and existing metal fencing would remain.

1.3.1.2 BUILDING 800

Building 800 would be one story (approximately 18 feet and 8 inches in height) and would be located in the northern side of the project site, north of building 200A. Building 800 would consist of 10,358 square feet; the roof overhang would further shade with 3,686 square feet of outdoor area. Six existing trees in the area would be removed along with the small concrete walkway and some of the existing fencing. The utility box and chain link baseball back stop, and benches would be relocated to other parts of the campus. Building 800 would consist of four TK and three K classrooms, eight student restrooms, one staff restroom, four clean up areas, nine storage areas, one janitor area, one area to house the buildings electrical components, and four teach work rooms. Each two classrooms would share a boys and girls restroom, clean up area, and a teacher work room. Each classroom would have a separate storage area. Only the classroom located in the western side of the building would have its own two restrooms, clean up area, storage area, and teacher work room. Access to the building would be located on the southern side of building 800. See Figure 9, *Building 800 Elevations*.

Figure 7 - Site Plan



Source: Mangini 2024.

1. Introduction

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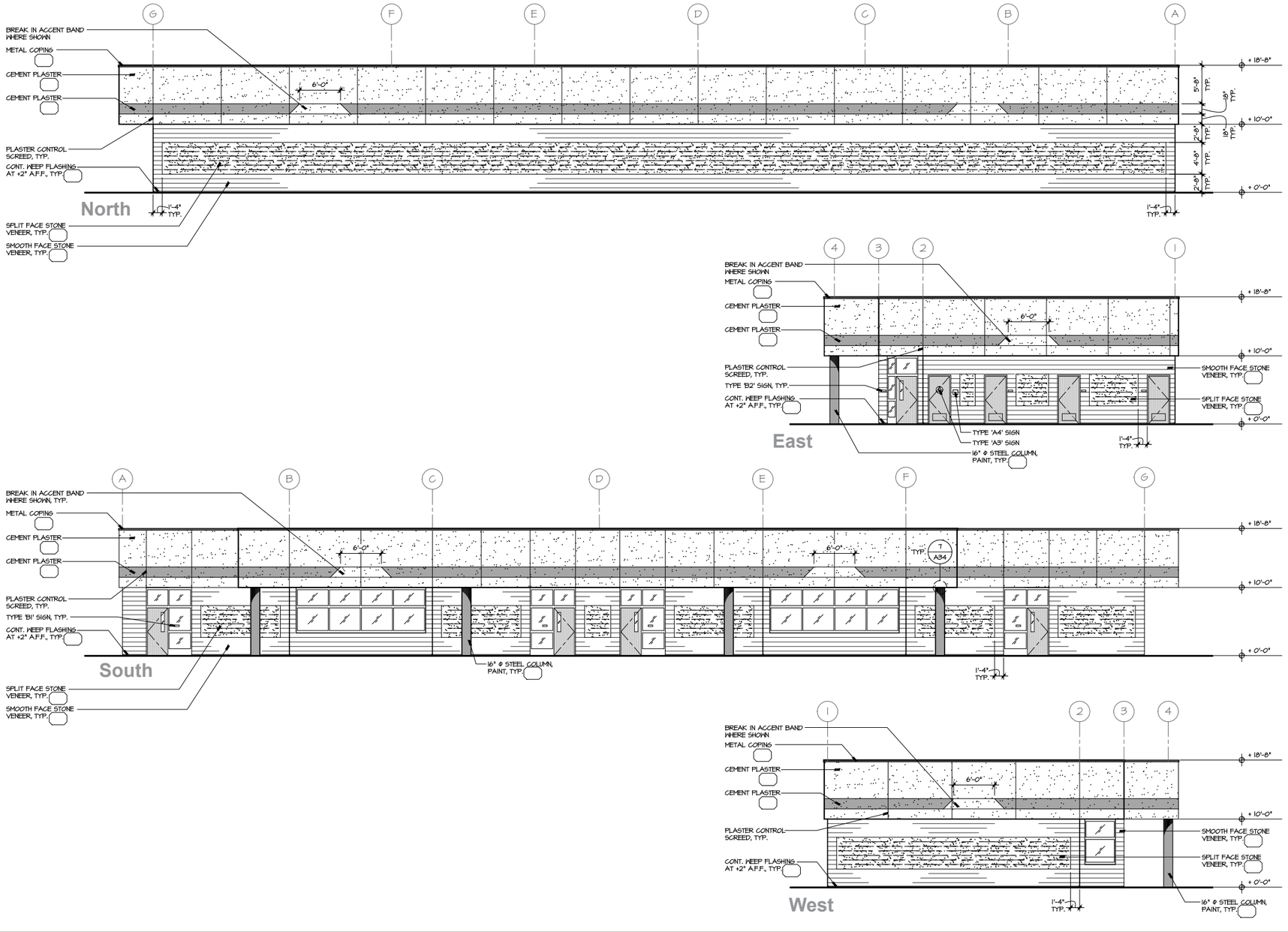
Figure 8 - Building 700 Elevations



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Source: Mangini 2024.

1. Introduction

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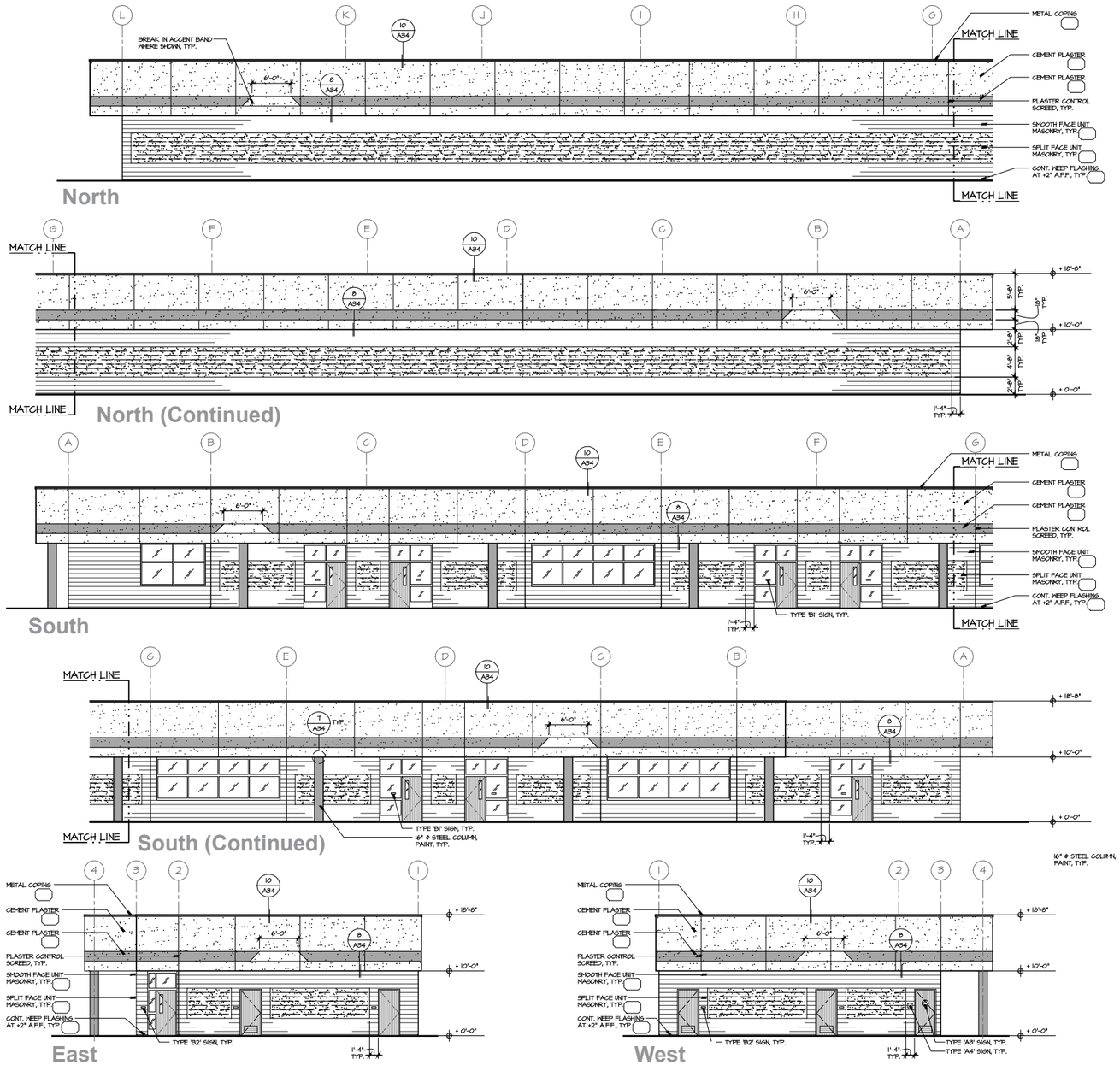
Figure 9 - Building 800 Elevations



Source: Mangini 2024.

1. Introduction

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Additionally, new concrete walkways would be constructed on the western, southern, and eastern sides of the building along with new turf and landscaping and a soft fall surface play area adjacent to building 800. New chain link and decorative metal gates and fencing would also be installed on the western, southern, and eastern sides of the building.

1.3.1.3 PARKING AND CIRCULATION

The existing Parking lot 2 would be reconfigured and would include a pick-up/drop off area and new driveways, which would result in a reduction of seven parking stalls compared to existing conditions. The existing driveway turnaround in the southeastern side of Parking lot 2 would be reconfigured to connect to Howard Street. Additionally, five trash enclosures would be installed north of the reconfigured connection to Howard Street. Towards the center of campus (towards the middle of parking lot 2), a new ingress-egress driveway would be installed leading to a parent pick-up/drop-off area to the west of building 700. The parent pick-up/drop-off area would include two lanes that provide one-way direction. The pick-up/drop-off area would be bordered by a walkway to the north that would lead to building 700 and the central part of the campus. Additionally, the proposed project includes new landscaping along Orange Avenue, restriping of the Parking lot 2, a new entrance sign, and existing sidewalk along Orange Avenue would be widened.

The proposed project would construct a new parking lot ("Parking lot 3") on the northwestern side of the project site, adjacent to building 700. One ingress-egress driveway from parking lot 2 would provide access to parking lot 3. Parking lot 3 would consist of 49 parking stalls, which would include two accessible parking stalls, one van accessible parking stall, one van accessible EV charging, one standard EV charging station, and five EV charging capable stalls.

Compared to existing conditions, the proposed project would result in an increase of 42 parking stalls. See Figure 7, *Site Plan.*

1.3.2 Project Construction

The construction of the proposed project would occur in one phase. Construction is anticipated to last approximately 12 months, with construction starting in 2025. Construction activities would include demolition, site preparation, grading, construction, paving and architectural coating and landscaping/finishes. As part of the construction activities, the proposed project would remove total of 37 ornamental trees.

1.3.3 Site Acquisition

As part of the proposed project, 3.80 acres of parcel with APN 261-150-056 would be acquired by the District from the City. With this addition, the Santa Fe ES campus would be approximately 15.1 acres. The general plan designation is Parks and Recreation and the zoning designation is PK. See Figure 10, *Site Acquisition*.

1.3.4 Proposed Programming and Activities

The proposed project at SFES would expand educational facilities on-campus, by adding new pre-school classes and expand the existing TK and K facilities. The proposed project would maintain the existing hours of standard instruction.

The proposed classrooms would also be utilized for the before-school and after-school Expanded Learning programs. The before-school Expanded Learning program would occur from 7:20 AM to 8:30 AM. The proposed project would expand the duration of the before-school Expanded Learning program by 20 minutes. The after-school Expanded Learning program will run from 2:45 PM to 6:00 PM, consistent with the existing after-school program hours of operation.

1.3.5 Discretionary Approvals

The District is the Lead Agency under CEQA and has the approval authority over the proposed project. Discretionary actions for the proposed project would include: (1) Exempt portion of parcel APN 261-150-056 being acquired by PUSD from the City of Porterville from local zoning; (2) adoption of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration; (3) approval of the proposed project; and (4) adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

1.3.6 Other Agency Actions Requested

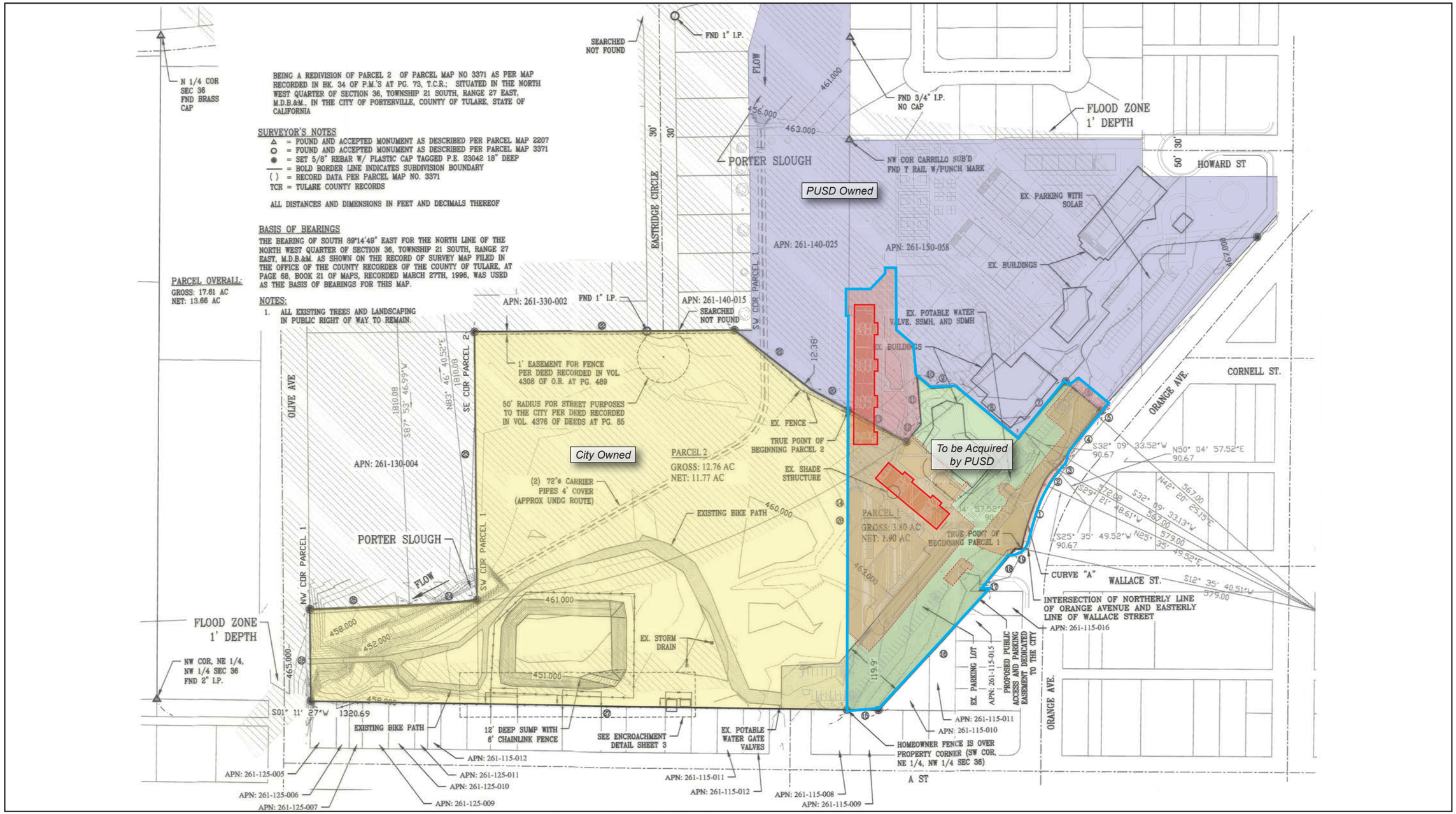
1.3.6.1 STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES

- Division of State Architects: Plan approval.
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control: Site Approval and No Further Action from the Preliminary Environmental Assessment.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District: Approval of Dust Control Plan, Indirect Source Review (SJVAPCD Rule 9510), and Demolition Permit and Asbestos Notification (SJVAPCD Rule 3050)
- California Department of Education: School Site Approval

1.3.6.2 LOCAL AGENCIES

- City of Porterville: Permits for tree removals in the public right-of-way, utility connections, new driveway connection, and grading permit and building permit of the sideway along Orange Avenue within the public right-of-way.
- City of Porterville: Subdivision of parcel with APN 261-150-056 and the land transfer of the 3.8 acres of this parcel from City of Porterville to the District.
- City of Porterville Planning Commission: Review pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21151.2 and Government Code section 65402;
- City of Porterville Fire Department: Review site plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers.
- Secure approvals, permits, and agreements, as necessary, from agencies and utilities that are responsible for public facilities and improvements needed for the project.

Figure 10 - Site Acquisition



Project Boundary

0 200
Scale (Feet)

Source: Mangini 2023.

1. Introduction

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2. Environmental Checklist

2.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Project Title:** Santa Fe Elementary School Expansion Project

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**
   Porterville Unified School District
   600 West Grand Avenue
   Porterville, California 93257

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**
   Brad Rohrbach, Assistant Superintendent Business Services
   559.793.2450

4. **Project Location:**
   286 E Orange Avenue
   Porterville, CA 93257

5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**
   Porterville Unified School District
   600 West Grand Avenue
   Porterville, California 93257

6. **General Plan Designation:**
   SFES Campus: Education
   City-owned Parcel: Parks and Recreation

7. **Zoning:**
   SFES Campus: PS (Public and Semi-Public)
   City-owned Parcel: PK (Parks and Public Recreation Facilities)

8. **Description of Project:**
   The proposed project would expand the campus of Santa Fe Elementary School with the District acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel (APN 261-150-056) and the construction of two new buildings (Building 700 and 800) to serve TK, preschool and kindergarten students, a new parking lot ("Parking lot 3"), and reconfigure Parking lot 2 which includes a new pickup/drop-off area. The proposed project would increase student capacity on campus by 275 transitional kindergarten, preschool, and kindergarten students at the Santa Fe Elementary School (SFES) campus, and this would increase SFES's capacity from 816 to 1,091 students. To accommodate the increase in student capacity nine new staff members would be hired, and eight staff members would be relocated from other District campuses to SFES.

2. Environmental Checklist

Building 700 would be one story (approximately 18 feet and 8 inches in height) and would be located in the northwestern corner of the project site. Building 700 would consist of 5,823 square feet, the roof overhang would further shade 1,860 square feet of outdoor area. The building would consist of four preschool classrooms, five storage areas, 10 restrooms for the students, one staff restroom, four clean up areas, two teacher work rooms, a janitor area, and one area to house the buildings electrical components. Construction of building 700 would remove the existing walkway, benches, covered area, picnic tables, and playground adjacent to building 200A. In between buildings 700 and 200A, new walkways, new landscaping, and a new soft fall surface play area would be installed; the existing bike rack and existing metal fencing would remain.

Building 800 would be one story (approximately 18 feet and 8 inches in height) and would be located in the northern side of the project site, north of building 200A. Building 800 would consist of 10,358 square feet; the roof overhang would further shade with 3,686 square feet of outdoor area. Six existing trees in the area would be removed along with the small concrete walkway and some of the existing fencing. The utility box and chain link baseball back stop, and benches would be relocated to other parts of the campus. Building 800 would consist of four TK and three kindergarten classrooms, eight student restrooms, one staff restroom, four clean up areas, nine storage areas, one janitor area, one area to house the buildings electrical components, and four teach work rooms. Additionally, new concrete walkways would be constructed on the western, southern, and eastern sides of the building along with new turf and landscaping and a soft fall surface play area adjacent to building 800. New chain link and decorative metal gates and fencing would also be installed on the western, southern, and eastern sides of the building.

The existing Parking lot 2 driveway turnaround to the southeast would be reconfigured to connect to Howard Street. Towards the center of campus (the middle of parking lot 2), a new ingress-egress driveway would be installed leading to a parent pick-up/drop-off area to the west of building 700 with two one-way lanes, and would be bordered by a walkway to the north. Improvements to Parking lot 2 would result in a reduction of seven parking stalls compared to existing conditions. Five trash enclosures would be installed north of the reconfigured connection to Howard Street. Additionally, the proposed project includes new landscaping along Orange Avenue, restriping of the Parking lot 2, a new entrance sign, and existing sidewalk along Orange Avenue would be widened.

The proposed project would construct a new parking lot ("Parking lot 3") on the northwestern side of the project site, adjacent to building 700, with one ingress-egress driveway from parking lot 2 providing access to parking lot 3. Parking lot 3 would consist of 49 parking stalls, which would include two accessible parking stalls, one van accessible parking stall, one van accessible EV charging, one standard EV charging station, and five EV charging capable stalls. Compared to existing conditions, the proposed project would result in an increase of 42 parking stalls.

The proposed project would maintain the existing hours of standard instruction. The proposed classrooms would also be utilized for the before-school and after-school Expanded Learning programs. The before-school Expanded Learning program would occur from 7:20 AM to 8:30 AM, expanded by 20 minutes from the existing end time at 8:10 AM. The after-school Expanded Learning program will run from 2:45 PM to 6:00 PM, consistent with the existing after-school program hours of operation.

The construction of the proposed project would occur in one phase. Construction is anticipated to last approximately 12 months, with construction starting in 2025. Construction activities would include demolition, site preparation, grading, construction, paving and architectural coating and landscaping/finishes. As part of the construction activities, the proposed project would remove total of 37 ornamental trees.

The District is the Lead Agency under CEQA and has the approval authority over the proposed project. Discretionary actions for the proposed project would include: (1) Exempt portion of parcel APN 261-150-056 being acquired by PUSD from the City of Porterville from local zoning; (2) adoption of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration; (3) approval of the proposed project; and (4) adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The City's general plan land use designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as Education and Parks and Recreation, respectively. The City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS (Public and Semi-Public) and PK (Parks and Public Recreation Facilities), respectively. The surrounding General Plan land use designations and zoning designations are under the Porterville 2030 General Plan and Series 200 of the Porterville City Code, respectively.

To the north of the campus, the General Plan land use designations consist of Retail Centers, Neighborhood Commercial, Parks and Recreation, and Public Institutional. East of the campus, the General Plan designations consist of Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Parks and Recreation. South of the campus the General Plan Designations consist of General and Service Commercial, Retail Centers, and Medium Residential. To the west of the campus, the General Plan Designations are made up of General and Service Commercial, Parks and Recreation, High Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential.

To the north of the campus, the zoning designations consist of PK (Parks and Public Recreation Facilities), D-PK (Downtown Parks and Public Recreational Facilities), PD (Planned Development), D-PO (Downtown Professional Office), and DRM-3 (Downtown High Density Residential). To the east of the campus, the zoning designation is RS-2 (Low Density Residential). To the south of the campus, the zoning designation is CG (General and Service Commercial), CR (Retail Centers) DR-S (Downtown Retail-South of Olive Avenue), and DRM-2 (Downtown Medium Density Residential). To the west of the campus, the zoning designation is DR-S (Downtown Retail-South of Olive Avenue), DRM-3 (Downtown High Density Residential), and PK.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participating agreement):

- State and Regional Agencies
  - Division of the State Architect (DSA)
  - California Department of Toxic Substances Control: Site Approval and No Further Action from the Preliminary Environmental Assessment.

- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District: Approval of Dust Control Plan, Indirect Source Review (SJVAPCD Rule 9510), and Demolition Permit and Asbestos Notification (SJVAPCD Rule 3050)
- California Department of Education: School Site Approval

- Local Agencies
  - City of Porterville: Permits for tree removals in the public right-of-way, utility connections, new driveway connection, and grading permit and building permit of the sideway along Orange Avenue within the public right-of-way.
  - City of Porterville: Subdivision of parcel with APN 261-150-056 and the land transfer of the 3.8 acres of this parcel from City of Porterville to the District.
  - City of Porterville Planning Commission: Review pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21151.2 and Government Code section 65402;
  - City of Porterville Fire Department: Review site plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers.
  - Secure approvals, permits, and agreements, as necessary, from agencies and utilities that are responsible for public facilities and improvements needed for the project.

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.94 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

The Porterville Unified School District invited California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to consult on the proposed project pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52). A total of five tribes were invited to consult based on Native American Heritage Commission's Native American Contact List and the District's AB 52 list, which include Kern Valley Indian Community, Tubatulabals of Kern Valley, Tule River Indian Tribe, Wuksachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band, and Tule River Tribe of California. The invitation letters were sent to tribes on May 24, 2024 via email and/or mail to the available addresses. No responses were received.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

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

2.3 DETERMINATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD AGENCY)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed 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 proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed 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 proposed 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 proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature, Title — *Date*

3/7/25

Brad Rohrbach, Ed.D. Asst. Supt. Business

2.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

   a) **Earlier Analyses Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.

   b) I**mpacts Adequately Addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

   c) **Mitigation Measures.** For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS. Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) In nonurbanized 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?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	
II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES. In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
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))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	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?				X
III. AIR QUALITY. Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
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?			X	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
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?		X		
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?				X
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?			X	
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?		X		
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
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?				X
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			X	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?		X		

Issues	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?			X	
VI. ENERGY. Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential 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.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
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?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				X
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		X		
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?		X		
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?		X		
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	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?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			X	
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?			X	
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, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			X	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			X	
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 which would:				
i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			X	
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;			X	
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			X	
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			X	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			X	

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
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?			X	
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
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?				X
XIII. NOISE. Would the project result in:				
a) 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?			X	
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the project:				
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)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
XV. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the project:				
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?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. RECREATION.				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			X	
XVII. TRANSPORTATION. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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		X		
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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.		X		
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:				
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?			X	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?			X	
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?			X	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	
XX. WILDFIRE. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.				
a) Does the project 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?		X		
b) Does the project 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.)			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

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3. Environmental Analysis

Section 2.4 provided a checklist of environmental impacts. This section provides an evaluation of the impact categories and questions contained in the checklist and identifies mitigation measures, if applicable.

3.1 AESTHETICS

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

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Porterville General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element does not specify scenic vistas within the City; however, the general plan describes views extending along the Tule River, a potential scenic vista. Tule River is approximately 0.40 miles south of the project site with existing development between the river and campus that views of the campus from the Tule River. Based on the distance and existing development, the proposed project would not impact or constrain views along the Tule River, a potential scenic vista.

Visual resources within the City are characterized by ridgelines, hillsides, agricultural areas, the Tule River and the Rocky Hill area (Porterville 2008b). The surrounding area is developed and does not include agricultural uses, and due to the distance views of and from the Tule River would not be impacted. The Rocky Hill area and surrounding ridgelines are visible from the public rights-of-way near the project site which includes East Walnut Avenue, South A Street and East Orange Avenue. Views of the ridge lines and hillsides from East Walnut Avenue, and South A Street are situated away from the project site or are constrained by existing residential and commercial development.

Views of the Rocky Hill area and surrounding ridge lines are visible from a segment of Orange Avenue and may be constrained by the proposed project. However, the proposed project would not create a substantial adverse effect on this view. The proposed project would expand the SFES campus with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre portion of the adjacent City-owned parcel and construct classroom buildings 700 and 800 and parking lot 3. The proposed classroom buildings would have a maximum height of approximately 18 feet and 8 inches and would be adjacent to existing classroom buildings of similar heights, residential and commercial development of one to two-stories, and trees. Building 800 would not be viable from the public right of way and parking lot 3 does not include building and would not impact views from the public right of way. Views from Orange Avenue and the public right of way towards the ridge lines and hillsides, and the proposed location of Building 700, are largely constrained by existing on-campus trees, existing campus structures and distant commercial and residential development. Thus, the proposed Building 700 would not substantially impact or constrain views from Orange Avenue. Additionally, views from the adjacent undeveloped City-owned parcel would remain untouched and maintained views of the Rocky Hill area and surrounding ridgelines.

3. Environmental Analysis

Since the proposed classroom buildings would be adjacent to classroom buildings of similar heights, the proposed project is limited to the project site, and the majority of the adjacent City property would remain in its current condition (providing views of the mountains), the proposed project would not substantially block views of ridgelines and hillsides.

The proposed project would not have a substantial effect on scenic vistas. Impacts would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. Visual resources within the City are characterized by ridgelines, hillsides, agricultural areas, the Tule River and the Rocky Hill area (Porterville 2008b). The proposed project would expand the SFES campus and develop two new classroom buildings and supportive improvements on a project site. The proposed project does not contain agricultural uses, and as discussed in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, the project site does not contain historic buildings. The project site is generally flat and does not include ridgelines, hillsides, and rock outcroppings. The project site is also 0.40 miles and 3.0 miles from Tule River and Rocky Hill, respectively, and the proposed project would not affect these scenic resources. The proposed project would remove existing ornamental trees onsite to construct the proposed project; however, the proposed project would include new landscaping including trees.

The nearest officially designated state scenic highway to the project site is a section of State Route 180 (SR-180) near the unincorporated area of Yokuts Valley of Fresno County, approximately 48.5 miles northwest of the project site (Caltrans 2024). The nearest eligible state scenic highway to the project site is SR-190 approximately 0.7 miles south of the project site. Due to the distance, topography and intervening development, SFES campus is not visible from SR-180, or SR-190. Therefore, the proposed project would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, and no impact would occur.

c) In nonurbanized 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As defined by Public Resources Code Section 21071, for an incorporated City, "urbanized area" means the City that either by itself or in combination with two contiguous incorporated cities has a population of at least 100,000 persons. The City of Porterville incorporated in 1902 and has an estimated population of 62,623 persons (Porterville 2024g, US Census 2020). The City of Porterville is not contiguous to any other incorporated City. Therefore, the project site is in a nonurbanized area, and the first question applies.

The City of Porterville General Pan describes itself as containing a "neighborhood" or "small town community character" (Porterville 2008f). Public views, which includes views from the public right of way surrounding the campus would include ridgelines, hillsides; no other views are accessible from the public right of way as discussed in Section 3.1(a) (Porterville 2008b). The proposed project would occur on the western side of the

campus and expand the SFES with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel and the construction and operation of the proposed project. The proposed uses are consistent with the existing SFES campus. As concluded in Section 3.1(a), the proposed classroom buildings would be adjacent to classroom buildings of similar heights. The proposed project's buildings and landscaping are designed to visually consistent with the existing SFES campus. The height of the proposed buildings is also similar to existing surrounding buildings. Therefore, the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. A less than significant impact would occur.

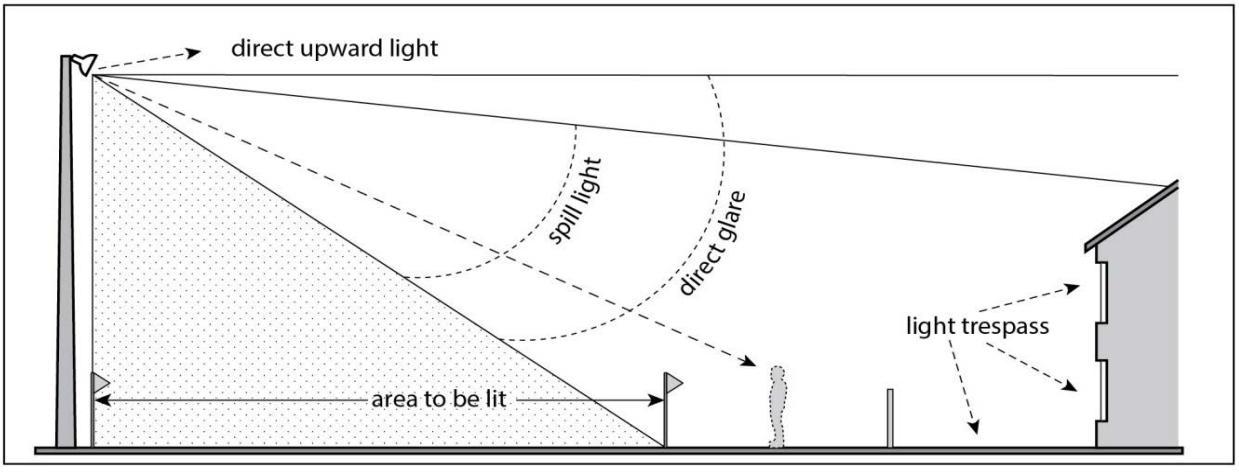
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. Existing sources of lighting on the project site and surrounding area include security lighting, light from outdoor residential lights, indoor lights emanating from windows, lights in parking lots, and vehicle headlights traveling on public rights of way and in parking lots. Glare can occur when a light source reflects off a reflective/light-colored surface. Existing sources of glare include light reflecting off of vehicles traveling on the public rights-of-way, parked in parking lots and along public rights-of-way, and light-colored building materials.

Glare means lighting entering the eye directly from a light fixture or indirectly from reflective surfaces that causes visual discomfort or reduced visibility. Glare can be generated by building-exterior materials, surface-paving materials, vehicles traveling or parked on roads and driveways, and sports lights. Any highly reflective façade material is a concern because buildings can reflect bright sunrays. The concepts of spill light, direct glare, and light trespass are illustrated in Exhibit B, *Spill Light, Direct Glare, and Light Trespass*, adapted from the Institution of Lighting Engineers (ILE 2003).

Direct glare is caused by looking at an unshielded lamp or a light at maximum candlepower. Direct glare is dependent on the brightness of the light source, the contrast in brightness between the light source and the surrounding environment, the size of the light source, and its position.

Exhibit B: Spill Light, Direct Glare, and Light Trespass



3. Environmental Analysis

Illuminance is the amount of light on a surface or plane, typically expressed in a horizontal plane (e.g., on the ground) or in a vertical plane (e.g., on the side of a building).

Lumen means the unit of measure used to quantify the amount of visible light produced by a light source or emitted from a luminaire (as distinct from "watt," a measure of power consumption).

Luminaire means outdoor electrically powered illuminating devices that include a light source, outdoor reflective or refractive surfaces, lenses, electrical connectors and components, and all parts used to mount the assembly, distribute the light, and/or protect the light source, whether permanently installed or portable. An important component of luminaires is their shielding:

- **Fully shielded**. A luminaire emitting no light above the horizontal plane.
- **Shielded**. A luminaire emitting less than 2 percent of its light above the horizontal plane.
- **Partly shielded**. A luminaire emitting less than 10 percent of its light above the horizontal plane.
- **Unshielded**. A luminaire that may emit light in any direction.

Light trespass. Spill light that, because of quantitative, directional, or type of light, causes annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility. Light trespass is light cast where it is not wanted or needed, such as light from a streetlight or a floodlight that illuminates someone's bedroom at night, making it difficult to sleep. As a general rule, taller poles allow fixtures to be aimed more directly on the playing surface, which reduces the amount of light spilling into surrounding areas. Proper fixture angles ensure even light distribution across the playing area and reduce spill light, as shown in Exhibit B, *Spill Light, Direct Glare, and Light Trespass.*

Sky Glow is light that reflects into the night sky and reduces visibility of the sky and stars. It is a concern in many jurisdictions, especially those with observatories.

Spill light is caused by misdirected light that illuminates areas outside the area intended to be lit. Spill light can contribute to light pollution.

Municipal Code

City of Porterville Municipal Code Chapter 21, Article - 300.07, *Lighting and Illumination*, sets the standard for outdoor artificial light that may have a detrimental effect on the environment which includes standards for height, shielding and filtering of outdoor light fixtures (Porterville 2024h)

Proposed Project lighting

The proposed project would construction of two new classroom buildings (Building 700 and 800), a new parking lot ("Parking lot 3") and reconfigure Parking lot 2 which includes a new pickup/drop-off area and increase the number of vehicles traveling to and from the project site, which would introduce new sources of light and glare to the project site and surrounding area. New sources of lighting would include indoor lights emanating from windows, outdoor security lights, vehicle headlines in the parking lots and traveling along public rights-of-way to and from the project site. New sources of glare would include vehicles associated with the proposed project and proposed buildings with light-colored building material.

The proposed project would be similar to existing buildings and landscaping on the SFES campus. Outdoor light fixtures would be installed with light-shields or filters. The proposed light-fixtures include shielded luminaires and fully-shielded luminaries, which would reduce sky glow, spill light, and light trespass. Further, existing and proposed landscaping and vegetation and fences surrounding residential properties would further block light and glare from the project site. Vehicles associated with the proposed project would be similar to existing vehicles at the campus and surrounding public rights-of-way and would not generate a new substantial source of light and glare. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase new sources of light and glare and would not significantly impact day or nighttime views. Therefore the proposed project would have a less than significant impact.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

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 Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program produces maps and statistical data for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status and is divided into five categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, Unique Farmland, and Grazing Land. The best quality land is Prime Farmland (DOC 2018). Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture (DOC 2024a). Unique Farmland is farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops.

According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the project site is mapped as 'Urban and Built-up Land' (DOC 2018). The proposed project would be developed on the western portion of the existing SFES campus and would expand the SFES campus with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre portion of the adjacent City-owned parcel, that is vacant/disturbed. The project site is surrounded by residential development, vacant land, and commercial development. The closest farmland is Farmland of Local Importance approximately 0.20 miles southeast of the project site. However, the project site does not contain any farmland and would not disturb any type of farmland. Therefore, the proposed project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use. No impact would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Less than significant. The City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS and PK, respectively (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). Agriculture and crop cultivation is permitted after review and approval of a minor conditional use permit (MCUP) by the City Council for zoning designations PS and PK (Porterville 2020). Based on the Development Ordinance of Porterville agriculture and crop cultivation is outright permitted or permitted under a CUP or MCUP under every zoning designation in Porterville (Porterville 2020). The proposed project would not change the zoning designation of the existing campus or the City-owned parcel, thus the use of agriculture with a MCUP would remain. The proposed project would exempt the project site from local zoning.

Additionally, the project site is developed with the SFES school campus and vacant/disturbed land, and the project site is not used for agricultural uses and no active agricultural uses exist in the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the potential of agricultural uses on the project site in the future, and a less than significant impact would occur.

Williamson Act contracts restrict the use of privately owned land to agriculture and compatible open-space uses under contract with local governments; in exchange, the land is taxed based on actual use rather than potential market value. There is no Williamson Act contract in effect on the project site (DOC 2024b). Therefore, the project would not conflict with an existing Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur.

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 City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS and PK, respectively (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). The project site is developed with the SFES school campus and vacant/disturbed land, and the project site is not used for agricultural uses. No forested land nor timberland exists onsite. Furthermore, the Development Ordinance of Porterville does not include forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production and an identified permitted use within the City (Porterville 2020). Therefore, development of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production. No impact would occur.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The project site would be developed on the western portion of the existing SFES campus, and would expand the SFES campus with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre portion of the adjacent City-owned parcel, that is vacant/disturbed. As discussed in section 3.2(c) the City of Porterville does not include forest land as an identified permitted use within the City (Porterville 2020). No forest land uses are present onsite nor in the immediate vicinity. Development of the proposed project would not require any changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

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?

No Impact. The project site would be developed on the western portion of the existing SFES campus, and would expand the SFES campus with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre portion of the adjacent City-owned parcel, that is vacant/disturbed.. No significant forest land uses are present onsite nor in the immediate vicinity. The closest classified farmland is approximately 0.20 miles southeast of the project site and is classified as "Farmland of Local Importance". Construction of the proposed project would occur on the project site and would not disturb any type of farmland. Vehicles associated with the proposed project would travel on existing public rights-of-way and would not affect the operation of this farmland. Construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in any changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses or forest land to non-forest use.

No significant impacts would occur as a result of the proposed project. No impact would occur.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

The Air Quality section addresses the impacts of the proposed project on ambient air quality and the exposure of people, especially sensitive individuals, to unhealthy pollutant concentrations. A background discussion on the air quality regulatory setting, meteorological conditions, and existing ambient air quality in the vicinity of the project site can be found in Appendix A.

The primary air pollutants of concern for which ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been established are ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), fine inhalable particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and lead (Pb). Areas are classified under the federal and California Clean Air Act as either in attainment or nonattainment for each criteria pollutant based on whether the AAQS have been achieved. The San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB), which is managed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), is designated nonattainment for O_3, and $PM_{2.5}$ under the California and National AAQS, nonattainment for PM_{10} under the California AAQS (CARB 2024).

SJVAPCD's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts on Air Quality (GAMAQI) recommends that an ambient air quality analysis (AAQA) be conducted if, after mitigation, on-site construction or operational emissions of any criteria pollutant would exceed 100 pounds per day or any applicable threshold of significance. To streamline the process of assessing significance of criteria pollutant emissions from commonly encountered projects, SJVAPCD developed a screening tool known as Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL). Using project type and size, the District has pre-quantified emissions and determined a size below which it is reasonable to conclude that a project would not have an adverse impact on air quality and thus, an AAQA is not required (SJVAPCD 2012). The land use of the proposed project is applicable to the SPAL Table 5, Educational, Elementary School threshold which states that projects that result in less than 1,880 students or 156,000 square feet of building space and less than 1,000 average daily one-way trips would result in less than significant construction and operation emissions and would not warrant a detailed, quantified AAQA. As

discussed below, the proposed project is below the SPAL criteria, and therefore air quality impacts are discussed qualitatively.

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. CEQA requires that General Plans be evaluated for consistency with applicable air quality management plans (AQMPs). A consistency determination plays an important role in local agency project review by linking local planning and individual projects to the AQMPs. It fulfills the CEQA goal of informing decision makers of the environmental impacts of the project under consideration early enough to ensure that air quality concerns are fully addressed. It also provides the local agency with ongoing information as to whether they are contributing to clean air goals in the AQMPs. Only new or amended general plan elements, specific plans, and major projects need to undergo a consistency review. This is because the AQMP strategies are based on projections from local general plans. Projects that are consistent with the local general plan are considered consistent with the air quality-related regional plan. The project site currently operates as a school and an undeveloped City-owned parcel, the proposed additions to the campus would construct new school-serving buildings available to the public for community events, consistent with the intended use of the site under the City's Education and Parks and Recreation land use designations (Porterville 2008a). The proposed project would allow the school to further accommodate the demand for current student education within the City of Porterville.

SJVAPCD has prepared several plans to attain the National AAQS and California AAQS. Emission reductions achieved through implementation of SJVAPCD's New Source Review offset requirements are a major component of SJVAPCD's air quality plans. The established thresholds of significance for criteria pollutant emissions are based on SJVAPCD offset requirements for stationary sources. Thus, projects with emissions below the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants would be determined to not conflict or obstruct implementation of the SJVAPCD's air quality plans. The proposed project would result in an increase of 16,181 square feet of elementary school building space, 269 students (based on existing enrollment), 17 staff (nine of which are new staff), and 610 average daily trips (ADT), which are under the SJVAPCD SPAL screening criterion of 156,000 square feet, 1,880 students, and 1,000 average daily vehicle trips, respectively, for elementary school projects (SJVAPCD 2020). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with nor obstruct implementation of SJVAPCD's AQMPs, and a less than significant impact would occur.

b) 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above, the proposed project qualifies under SJVAPCD's SPAL methodology for construction and operational criteria air pollutant emissions; and therefore, a quantified analysis of the project's construction and operational emissions is not warranted. Per SJVACPD's methodology, a qualitative analysis of the project's construction and operational impacts based on SJVACPD's screening level sizes is provided.

Regional Short-Term Construction Impacts

Construction activities produce combustion emission from various sources, such as on-site heavy-duty construction vehicles, vehicles hauling materials to and from the site, and motor vehicles transporting the crew. Site preparation activities produce fugitive dust emissions (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) from demolition and soil-disturbing activities, such as grading and excavation. Air pollutant emissions from construction activities on site would vary daily as construction activity levels change. Construction activities associated with the proposed project would result in emissions of VOC, NOX, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.

The proposed project includes the construction of two new classroom buildings together totaling 16,181 square feet. The proposed project would also construct a new parking lot at the northeast end of the campus. As identified in Section 3.17, *Transportation*, and in Appendix J, the proposed project would generate a net increase of approximately 610 weekday vehicle trips, due to the increase in students. Construction activities associated with development of the proposed project would include building demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and painting. As discussed above, SJVAPCD has pre-quantified emissions to determine the sizes of projects that would produce emissions that exceed the SJVAPCD's air quality significance thresholds for criteria pollutants. Projects that do not exceed the sizes (in dwelling units, square feet, etc.) that SJVACPD has modeled for specific land uses are not required to conduct an AAQA and are considered to result in emissions under SJVAPCD's criteria pollutant thresholds. Since proposed project would be below the SJVAPCD SPAL screening criteria of 156,000 elementary school building square feet and 1,000 average daily vehicle trips, project-related construction activities would not exceed the SJVAPCD's regional significant thresholds. Additionally, the construction activities under the proposed project would be required to comply with SJVAPCD's Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibition). Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Long-Term Operation-Related Air Quality Impact

Typical long-term air pollutant emissions are generated by area sources (e.g., landscape fuel use, aerosols, architectural coatings, and asphalt pavement), energy use (natural gas), and mobile sources (i.e., on-road vehicles). The proposed project would result in an increase in overall student capacity by 275 students (or 269 students based on current enrollment) as well as 17 staff, nine of which would be new staff. Due to the increase in students and staff, the proposed project is expected to result in approximately 610 net new ADT. SJVAPCD's SPAL screening criteria for elementary school land uses is 156,00 square feet, 1,880 students and less than 1,000 average daily one-way trips. Since the increase in building square footage, students and trips is less than the corresponding SPAL criteria, the air pollutant emissions generated by the proposed project are considered to be less than SJVAPCD's significance thresholds for regional criteria air pollutants. Additionally, the proposed buildings would be all-electric and constructed to meet the latest California Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, eliminating new operational emissions associated with on-site natural gas use. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant long-term operational air quality impacts.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact. Land uses that have the potential to be substantial stationary sources that would require a permit from SJVAPCD to operate include industrial land uses, such as chemical processing,

and warehousing operations where substantial truck idling could occur onsite. Operation of the proposed project would include occasional use of landscaping equipment and would not result in the operation of land uses expected to generate substantial amounts of toxic air contaminants (TAC).

Construction Health Risk

Health risk assessments are based on risk accumulated over a 70-year lifetime. Given the short-term nature of the proposed construction activities (approximately 12 months), the proposed project would not result in a long-term substantial source of TAC emissions. Since the proposed construction activities would include demolition of existing buildings that could contain asbestos, construction contractors would be required to comply with SJVAPCD guidance to minimize and avoid worker and receptor exposure to asbestos containing material. In addition, the proposed project was previously identified as falling below the applicable SPAL screening criteria, indicating it would not exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds for criteria pollutants or AAQS during construction or operation. While the SJVAPCD significance thresholds and AAQS are not directly associated with potential health risks, health risk impacts are the product of the quantity and concentration of pollutants generated and the duration of off-site sensitive receptors' exposure to those pollutants. Considering construction of the proposed project would be short-term and the proposed project's size would be well below the applicable SPAL screening criteria, implying it would not generate substantial emissions during construction and operation, project-related diesel particulate matter impacts during construction would be less than significant.

Operation Health Risk

Carbon Monoxide Hotspots

Vehicle congestion has the potential to create pockets of CO called hotspots. Hotspots are typically produced at intersections, where traffic congestion is highest because vehicles are backed-up and idle for longer periods and are subject to reduced speeds. These pockets could exceed the state one-hour standard of 20 parts per million (ppm) or the eight-hour standard of 9.0 ppm. Because CO is produced in greatest quantities from vehicle combustion and does not readily disperse into the atmosphere, adherence to ambient air quality standards is typically demonstrated through an analysis of localized CO concentrations. The GAMAQI previously required CO hotspot monitoring. However, emissions from motor vehicles, the largest source of CO emissions, have been declining since 1985 despite increases in VMT due to the introduction of new automotive emission controls and fleet turnover. Consequently, no CO hotspots have been reported in the SJVAB even at the most congested intersections.

The SJVAB has been designated as in attainment under both the national and California AAQS for CO, and SJVAPCD does not have screening criteria for determining whether a project has the potential to generate a localized CO hotspot. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), a project would have to increase traffic volumes at a single intersection to more than 44,000 vehicles per hour—or 24,000 vehicles per hour where vertical and/or horizontal mixing is substantially limited—in order to generate a

significant CO impact (BAAQMD 2023)[3]. As shown in Appendix J, the proposed project would generate 202 AM peak hour vehicle trips beyond existing conditions. As seen in the City of Porterville's projected traffic counts for 2030, the intersection of the South Plano Street and Date Avenue, approximately 700 feet southeast of the project site, is projected to accommodate an estimated 19,232 ADT (Porterville 2008g). Utilizing the industry standard of dividing daily vehicle trips by 10 to identify an estimated peak-hour volume, this intersection would experience approximately 1,923 peak hour trips in 2030. When added to the project's net new AM peak hour trips, the intersection of Plano Street and Date Avenue would experience an estimated 2,125 AM peak hour vehicle trips in 2030 and would not exceed the 44,000 vehicles per hour or 24,000 vehicles per hour where mixing is substantially limited screening criteria. The proposed project would not result in a CO hotspot at nearby intersections and impacts would be less than significant.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not result in objectionable odors. The threshold for objectionable odor is if a project creates an odor nuisance pursuant to SJVAPCD Regulation IV, Prohibitions, Rule 4102, Nuisance, which states:

> A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property.

The type of facilities that are considered to have objectionable odors include wastewater treatments plants, compost facilities, landfills, solid waste transfer stations, fiberglass manufacturing facilities, paint/coating operations (e.g., auto body shops), dairy farms, petroleum refineries, asphalt batch plants, chemical manufacturing, and food manufacturing facilities. The proposed project involves construction of new school uses, including classroom buildings, outdoor spaces, and a new parking lot (among other accessory structures, see section 1.3, *Project Description*) on the project site and would not fall within the objectionable odors land uses or generate odors different than what is already generated on-site. Emissions from construction equipment, such as diesel exhaust and volatile organic compounds from architectural coatings and paving activities may generate odors. However, these odors would be low in concentration, temporary, and would not affect a substantial number of people. Odor impacts would be less than significant.

[3] The CO hotspot analysis refers to the modeling conducted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) for its CEQA Guidelines because SJVAPCD does not provide screening criteria for CO hotspot analyses. The BAAQMD modeling also considers the improvement in mobile-source CO emissions. Although meteorological conditions in the Bay Area differ from those in the San Joaquin Valley region, the modeling conducted by BAAQMD demonstrates that the net increase in peak hour traffic volumes at an intersection in a single hour would need to be substantial.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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. Special status species include those listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act or California Endangered Species Act; species otherwise given certain designations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; and plant species listed as rare by the California Native Plant Society. The City of Porterville Open Space and Conservation Element identifies a variety of biological resources both animal species and native plants, which include endangered, or threatened species, throughout the City. The *Special Status Species and Sensitive Vegetation* (Figure 6-4) of the General Plan indicates that the project site and surrounding area are within the Striped Adobe Lily area (Porterville 2008b). However, the project site has been previously disturbed by the development of the existing building 200A, an existing parking lot, concrete walkways, a portion of the grass playfield, a playground, picnic benches, a pavilion, fencing, a bike rack, lighting, landscaping, trees, and an undeveloped but disturbed portion of City-owned land. Due to the project sites being disturbed and developed it does not contain suitable habitat for the Striped Adobe Lily.

Additionally, a Biological Resource Evaluation was conducted on the project site, and the Biological Study Area (BSA) which includes the project site and a 500-foot buffer zone, and the Striped Adobe Lily was determined to have no potential to occur within the BSA (see Appendix B). The Biological Resource Evaluation literature review identified a total of 26 special plant species are known to occur within the BSA and surrounding area, yet all were identified to have a low or no potential to occur within the BSA. The Biological Resource Evaluation concluded that no focused surveys are required, and none of the sensitive plant species have a suitable habitat present due to the project site being largely developed, disturbed with non-native vegetation, and next to residential development. The Biological Resource Evaluation's literature review identified one vegetation community, "Northern Claypan Vernal Pool," has a low potential to occur. No vegetation communities were considered to have a high or moderate potential to occur within the BSA.

The literature review identified 31 special-status wildlife species that have been known to occur within the BSA and surrounding area. Four special-status species have a moderate potential to occur within the BSA, and 27 special-status species have a low or no potential to occur within the BSA. The four wildlife species with moderate potential to occur include the tricolored blackbird (Agelaius tricolor), California gull (*Larus californicus*), the Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*), and the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus*). Although the project site is not a suitable breeding or nesting habitat, there is the potential for nesting to occur.

Nesting birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (US Code, Title 16, Sections 703–712). The MBTA prohibits the take, possession, import, export, transport, sale, purchase, barter, or offering of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except under a valid permit or as permitted in the implementing regulations. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service administers permits to take migratory birds in

accordance with the MBTA. Further, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure BIO-1, which would require the preparation of preconstruction surveys for nesting birds and raptors (birds of prey) if vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities occur during the nesting season (February 15 through August 31). Compliance with the MBTA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations, and implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1 would ensure that impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed project are less than significant to nesting and migratory birds.

The monarch butterfly is a migratory species whose potential for occurrence is limited to the time of year. The BSA is within the spring and summer migratory range. Although the BSA lacks suitable habitat, is only within part of their migratory route, and the species is dependent on milkweed (Asclepias spp.) as a source of food and location where eggs are laid, the potential for the monarch butterflies exist onsite remains. The proposed project would implement mitigation measure BIO-2, which includes preconstruction surveys for adult monarch butterflies and milkweed. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2 below would ensure that project impacts to the monarch butterfly are less than significant.

Furthermore, the western burrowing owl was petitioned for listing under the California Endangered Species Act in March 2024; the petition is ending and the burrowing owl is not listed as a candidate species (CFGC 2024, CDFW 2024a). A record search of the California Natural Diversity Database was conducted using a five-mile radius from the project site it yielded no burrowing owl listings, and the Biological Resource Evaluation did not identify the potential for burrowing owls within the BSA (see Appendix B). Therefore, burrowing owls are not a concern for the proposed project (CNDDB 2024). No impact would occur.

The City of Porterville, including the project site, is not within a habitat conservation plan/national community conservation plan area (HCP/NCCP) (CDFW 2024b). The closest conservation area is approximately 51 miles southwest of the project site. The project site and surrounding area are outside of any federally designated critical habitat (USFWS 2024a). The proposed project would result in the removal of a total of 37 trees on campus, which include approximately 31 Raywood Ash, four Chinese Pistache, and two pear trees. The three tree species that would be removed are not state or federally listed endangered, threatened, or rare plants (CDFW 2024c). No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 **Preconstruction Avian Survey.** To the extent feasible, in order to minimize potential impacts to avian species, vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities should be conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1 to February 14) in order to limit impacts to nesting birds. If vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities need to take place during the breeding season (February 15 through August 31), a pre-construction avian survey(s) will be required. The last survey day should be conducted a minimum of three days prior to the start of work. The District shall hire a qualified biologist to prepare the preconstruction avian survey.

If any bird listed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is found to be nesting within the project site or within the area of vegetation or ground disturbing activities, an adequate protective buffer zone shall be established by a qualified biologist to protect the nesting site. The distance

shall be determined by a qualified biologist based on the site conditions (topography, if the nest is in a line of sight of the construction, and the sensitivity of the birds nesting). Additional protective measures shall include establishment of clearly delineated exclusion zones (i.e., demarcated by identifiable fencing, such as orange construction fencing or equivalent) around each nest location as determined by a qualified biologist, taking into account the species of birds nesting, their tolerance for disturbance, and proximity to existing development. The nest site(s) shall be monitored by a qualified biologist periodically to see if the birds are stressed by the construction activities and if the protective buffer needs to be increased. Once the young have fledged and are flying well enough to avoid project construction zones (typically by August), the project can proceed without further regard to the nest site(s).

BIO-2 **Preconstruction Monarch Butterfly Survey.** The District shall hire a qualified biologist to prepare the preconstruction monarch butterfly survey if clearing or ground disturbing activities need to take place between February 15 through August 31. The last survey day should be conducted a minimum of three days prior to the start of work. The preconstruction monarch butterfly survey shall determine the presence or absence of adult butterflies and milkweed, if neither are found then no additional mitigation efforts are needed. If adult butterflies or milkweed are present, a mitigation plan shall be prepared. The contents of the mitigation plan shall include a restoration/revegetation plan, avoiding direct impacts to individuals and host plants, and compensatory mitigation. If needed, the mitigation plan shall be prepared and implemented before construction activities proceed.

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. Sensitive natural communities are natural communities that are considered rare in the region by regulatory agencies; that are known to provide habitat for sensitive animal or plant species; or are known to be important wildlife corridors. The project site is entirely developed and distributed within developed area. The project site is not within any HCP/NCCP. The closest conservation area approximately 51 miles southwest of the project site (CDFW 2024b). No federally designated critical habitat exists on site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2024a). The Biological Resource Evaluation identified no jurisdictional drainages/areas nor wetlands within the project site; however, a single wetland, Porter Slough, is within the BSA approximal 670 feet north of the project site (Appendix B). Construction and operation of the proposed project would be limited to the project site and would not impact the Porter Slough. The project site does not contain any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community and would not impact the riverine habitat or other sensitive natural community. Therefore, no impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities would occur.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is currently developed with the existing development of the existing building 200A, an existing parking lot, concrete walkways, a portion of the grass playfield, a playground, picnic benches, a pavilion, fencing, a bike rack, lighting, landscaping, trees, and an undeveloped but disturbed portion of City-owned land. As discussed in section 3.4(b), no jurisdictional drainages/areas were identified on the project site. Aa wetland habitat, the Porter Slough is located approximately 670 feet north of the project site (Appendix B). No wetlands exist within the project site. Construction-related activities would occur within the project site. As further discussed in Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed project would prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan which would include best management practices (BMPs) to properly manage stormwater during construction of the proposed project. Further, stormwater generated by the proposed project would be routed to existing stormwater infrastructure onsite and to existing stormwater infrastructure in public rights of way. A portion of stormwater may transform into runoff and be absorbed by impervious surfaces onsite and surrounding the project site.

During operation of the proposed project would adhere to the requirements of the SWRCB Trash Amendments, site design, source control BMPs, as described in Section 3.10(a). Additionally, the proposed project would be designed to meet the City of Porterville's stormwater management and rainwater retention ordinance (25-32A.18) which requires all landscape areas to have friable soil to maximize water retention and infiltration (Porterville 2024k). The City ordinance would allow onsite runoff to be treated through infiltration of soil. Therefore, given the distance between the proposed project and the offsite riparian habitat, compliance with regulatory compliance measures, and incorporation of best management practices, the proposed project would not affect the offsite wetland habitats (Appendix B). Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on protected wetlands, and less than significant impact would occur.

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 With Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is in an urbanized area of the City of Porterville. The project site is developed with the existing SFES building 200A, an existing parking lot, concrete walkways, a portion of the grass playfield, a playground, picnic benches, a pavilion, fencing, a bike rack, lighting, landscaping, trees, and an undeveloped but disturbed portion of City-owned land. No federally designated critical habitat exists on site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2024a). The BSA, while largely occurring as a migratory pathway and not providing suitable breeding or nesting habitat to resident or breeding species, has the potential for nesting to occur (see Section 3.4(a))(Appendix B). The project site contains several trees that could be used for nesting by bird species. The proposed project would remove up to 37 trees which could have the potential impact to nesting birds. Nesting birds are protected by the MBTA (US Code, Title 16, Sections 703–712). The MBTA prohibits the take, possession, import, export, transport, sale, purchase, barter, or offering of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except under a valid permit or as permitted in the implementing regulations. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service administers permits to

take migratory birds in accordance with the MBTA. Compliance with the existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations and implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1 would ensure that impacts are less than significant to nesting and migratory birds.

As discussed above in Section 3.4(a), there is a moderate potential for the monarch butterfly, a migratory species, to occur onsite. Although the BSA lacks suitable habitat, is only within part of their migratory route, and the species is dependent on milkweed (Asclepias spp.) as a source of food and location where eggs are laid, the potential presence of the monarch butterflies exist (Appendix B). Due to the potential presence of monarch butterflies on-site, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure BIO-2. Implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2 would ensure impacts are less than significant.

With incorporation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 and with compliance with the MBTA and existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations, the proposed project would not interfere with native or migratory wildlife or established wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is developed with the existing Santa Fe ES building 200A, an existing parking lot, concrete walkways, a portion of the grass playfield, a playground, picnic benches, a pavilion, fencing, a bike rack, lighting, landscaping, trees, and an undeveloped but disturbed portion of City-owned land. No federally designated critical habitat exists on site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2024a). The proposed project would remove a 31 Raywood Ash, four Chinese Pistache, and two pear trees; none of which are state or federally listed endangered, threatened, or rare plants (CDFW 2024c). However, 16 Raywood Ash trees are located along the public right of way and would be required to comply with Section 19.58, Street Tree Removal Permits, of the City of Porterville Municipal Code (Porterville 2024b). The District would retain permits from the City, and upon issuance of the permit the District would remove trees in the public right of way within 30-days. Additionally, compliance with the existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations and implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1 would ensure that the proposed project would not impact nesting and migratory birds. There are no other local biological-related policies or ordinances, such as a preservation policy or ordinance that are applicable to the project site. The proposed project would comply with the City Municipal Code associated with tree removal within the public right-of-way and would not conflict with local policies or ordinances; therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

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 developed with the existing SFES campus and undeveloped but disturbed portion of City-owned land. The City of Porterville, including the project site, is not within a habitat conservation plan/national community conservation plan area (HCP/NCCP) (CDFW 2024b). The proposed project would not affect the HCP/NCCP, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan, and therefore no impact would occur.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section is based in part on the *Cultural Letter Report,* dated June 4 2024, prepared by ASM Affiliates (ASM). The Cultural Letter Report is contained in Appendix C to this IS/MND.

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact. Section 15064.5 defines historic resources as resources listed or determined to be eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission, a local register of historical resources, or the lead agency. Generally a resource is considered "historically significant" if it meets one of the following criteria:

i) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;

ii) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

iii) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;

iv) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The SFES campus first opened in August 2004, other structures on campus were developed after 2004 (CDE 2024). ASM evaluated if historical resources per Section 15064.5 exist on or within the vicinity of the project site. A records search completed at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (IC), concluded four previous studies have been conducted within the project site and three cultural resources are known to exist within it.

A field survey of the project site was conducted on April 17, 2024, to investigate the three previously identified cultural resources and other potential cultural resources. The three identified cultural resources include: P-54-004632 (Burlington Northern and Southern Pacific Railroad) which was removed from the project site; P-54-002906 (historic residential buildings) was identified outside the project site; and P-54-003900 (Porterville Slough Ditch) which is mapped near the northeast corner of the project site, however, the resource does not appear to be underneath the project site (see Appendix C). The field survey found no cultural resources of any kind exist on the project site (ASM 2024). Additionally, the campus is not listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2024). The campus is not listed in the California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, nor State Historic Structures (OHP 2023). Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site or campus that would be considered historically significant pursuant to Section 15064.5. No impact to historical resources would occur.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Earthwork associated with the construction of the proposed project would include grading and utility trenching. The earthwork activities associated with the proposed project would generally be surface level since no subterranean levels are proposed, which typically requires extensive excavation. Additionally, the project site has been previously disturbed with the existing SFES campus, and grading and vegetation control on the portion of the project site that is owned by the City. The Cultural Letter Report included a records search for historical archeological sites within the project site and within the vicinity of the project site. The records search did not identify archeological resources within the project site. A field study of the project site concluded no cultural resources of any kind exist within the project site (ASM 2024).

Since no subterranean levels are proposed and no archaeological resources are known to exist onsite, it is unlikely that the proposed project would encounter unknown archaeological resources. Nevertheless, the potential still exists that ground disturbing activities from the proposed project may uncover unknown archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure, in the event archaeological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, that archaeological resources would be recovered in accordance with state and federal requirements. Additionally, as part of the Cultural Letter Report, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) was conducted and yielded a negative result, which indicates that no known sacred sites or tribal cultural resources (TCR) existing within the vicinity of the project site (ASM 2024). However, the potential unearthing TCRs exist. Implementation of mitigation measure TCR-1 (see Section 3.18), which would ensure a tribal archaeological monitor is present during ground disturbing activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 and TCR-1 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-1 Prior to issuance of grading permits, a qualified archaeological monitor shall be identified to be on call during ground-disturbing activities. If archeological resources are discovered during excavation and/or construction activities, construction shall stop within 25 feet of the find, and the qualified archaeologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resource requires further study. The archaeologist shall make recommendations to the District to protect the discovered resources. Archaeological resources recovered shall be offered to a repository with a retrievable collection system and an educational and research interest in the materials, such as the University of California Museum of Paleontology, or a responsible public or private institution with a suitable repository willing to and capable of accepting and housing the resource.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Less Than Significant Impact. A significant impact would occur if the proposed project would disturb previously interred human remains. Given the project site was previously disturbed, it is unlikely to support

conditions conducive to the discovery of human remains. However, there is a remote possibility that human remains could be encountered during excavation and grading activities associated with the proposed project.

If human remains are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that disturbance of the site would halt and remain halted. The county coroner would investigate the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death and recommend the treatment and disposition of the human remains to the person responsible for the excavation or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the California Public Resources Code. The coroner is required to make a determination within two working days of being notified of the discovery of the human remains. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority or has reason to believe they are Native American, he or she would contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the NAHC, who will contact the "most likely descendant." The most likely descendant would receive access to the discovery and will provide recommendations or preferences for treatment of the remains within 48 hours of accessing the discovery site. Disposition of human remains and any associated grave goods, if encountered, would be treated in accordance with procedures and requirements in Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code; Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code; and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

While unlikely, any accidental discovery of human remains during project construction and operation would be required to comply with all applicable laws and regulations establishing the proper handling of human remains. Compliance with these laws and regulations would ensure that proposed project would result in a less than significant impact.

3.6 ENERGY

Would the project:

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 following discusses the potential energy demands from construction activities associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project.

Short-Term Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed project would create temporary increased demands for electricity and vehicle fuels compared to existing conditions and would result in short-term transportation-related energy use.

Electrical Energy

The majority of construction equipment would be gas- or diesel-powered, and electricity would not be used to power most of the construction equipment. Electricity use during construction would vary during different phases of construction. Later construction phases could result in the use of electric-powered equipment for interior demising wall construction and architectural coating. It is anticipated that the majority of electric-powered construction equipment would be hand tools (e.g., power drills, table saws) and lighting, which would result in minimal electricity usage during construction activities. Because the consumption of these energy

resources would be necessary for the construction and finishing of the proposed project, project-related construction activities would not result in wasteful or unnecessary electricity demands, and impacts would be less than significant.

Natural Gas Energy

It is not anticipated that construction equipment used for the proposed project would be powered by natural gas, and no natural gas demand is anticipated during construction. Therefore, there would be no impact with respect to natural gas usage during construction.

Transportation Energy

Transportation energy use during construction of the proposed project would come from delivery vehicles, haul trucks, and construction employee vehicles. In addition, transportation energy demand would come from use of off-road construction equipment. It is anticipated that the majority of off-road construction equipment would be gas or diesel powered.

The use of energy resources by vehicles and equipment would fluctuate according to the construction activity and would be temporary. In addition, fuel use associated with construction vehicles and equipment would be considered necessary for the construction of the proposed project, and all construction equipment would cease operating upon completion of the proposed project. Thus, impacts related to transportation energy use during construction would be temporary and would not require expanded energy supplies or the construction of new infrastructure. Furthermore, to limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption, the construction contractors would be required to minimize nonessential idling of construction equipment during construction, in accordance with Section 2449 of the California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Article 4.8, Chapter 9.

Construction trips would also not result in unnecessary use of energy since the project site is centrally located and is served by numerous regional freeway systems (e.g., SR-65 and SR-190) that provide the most direct routes from various areas of the region. Thus, energy use during construction of the proposed project would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary. Impacts would be less than significant.

Long-Term Impacts During Operation

Operation of the proposed project would generate new demand for electricity and transportation energy on the project site. Operational use of energy would include heating, cooling, and mechanical ventilation of the classrooms and the administration and multipurpose building; water heating; operation of electrical systems, use of on-site equipment and appliances; and indoor and outdoor lighting for the new buildings and parking lot. In addition, the two proposed classroom buildings would be all-electric.

Electrical Energy

The proposed project would be designed with all-electric classroom buildings. While the proposed project would generate additional energy demand at the site, it would be required to comply with the applicable Building Energy Efficiency Standards and California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) requirements. In addition to the proposed building energy efficiency, Southern California Edison is required to comply with the

state's renewable portfolios standard (RPS), which mandates utilities to procure a certain proportion of electricity from eligible renewable and carbon-free sources and increasing the proportion through the coming years with an ultimate procurement requirement of 100 percent by 2045. The RPS requirements would support project use of electricity that is generated from renewable or carbon-free sources. Overall, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals outlined in Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines regarding increasing energy efficiency, decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, and increasing renewable energy sources. Because the proposed project would comply with these regulations, it would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary electricity demands. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact related to electricity.

Transportation Energy

The proposed project would result in the consumption of transportation energy during operation from the use of motor vehicles associated with students, staff, and visitors to the project site. The efficiency of the motor vehicles in use (average miles per gallon) is unknown and highly variable. Thus, estimates of transportation energy use are based on the overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and related transportation energy use. The project-related VMT would primarily come from vehicle trips associated with pick-up/drop-off of students and staff arriving/department work. However, while the proposed project would increase the student capacity at school by 269 students and would generate an estimated increase of 610 vehicle trips per day, most or all of these vehicle trips would already be traveling on the area's roadway network. The 269 new students would have been attending a school in the District regardless of the status of the proposed project. The trips generated by the proposed project do not represent an overall increase in vehicle trips in the area, but instead represent trips that would be re-directed to this school site as opposed to another school in the District. Furthermore, as the proposed project would involve expansion of the existing elementary school, it would continue to be a locally serving use.

Moreover, fuel efficiency of vehicles after buildout would on average improve compared to vehicle fuel efficiencies experienced under existing conditions, resulting in a lower per capita fuel consumption assuming travel distances, travel modes, and trip rates remain the same. The improvement in fuel efficiency would be attributable to the statewide fuel reduction strategies and regulatory compliances (e.g., CAFE standards), resulting in new cars that are more fuel efficient and the attrition of older, less fuel-efficient vehicles. The CAFE standards are not directly applicable to land use development projects, but to car manufacturers. Thus, the parent and employee drivers associated with the proposed project do not have direct control in determining the fuel efficiency of vehicles that are manufactured and available. However, compliance with the CAFE standards by car manufacturers would ensure that vehicles produced in future years have greater fuel efficiency and would generally result in an overall benefit of reducing fuel usage by providing the population of the project site's region more fuel-efficient vehicle options.

As electricity consumed in California is required to meet the increasing renewable energy mix requirements under the State's RPS, accelerated by SB 100, greater and greater proportions of electricity consumed for transportation energy demand envisioned under the proposed project would continue to be sourced from renewable energy sources rather than fossil fuels. Since vehicle fuel efficiencies would improve year over year

through the buildout and result in a decrease in overall per capita transportation energy consumption, impacts would be less than significant with respect to operation-related fuel usage.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less Than Significant Impact. The following evaluates consistency of the proposed project with California's Renewables Portfolio Standard program and the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program

The state's electricity grid is transitioning to renewable energy under California's Renewable Energy Program. Renewable sources of electricity include wind, small hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, and biogas. Electricity production from renewable sources is generally considered carbon neutral. Executive Order S-14-08, signed in November 2008, expanded the state's renewable portfolios standard (RPS) to 33 percent renewable power by 2020. This standard was adopted by the legislature in 2011 (SB X1-2). Senate Bill 350 (de Leon) was signed into law September 2015 and establishes tiered increases to the RPS—40 percent by 2024, 45 percent by 2027, and 50 percent by 2030. Senate Bill 350 also set a new goal to double the energy-efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas through energy efficiency and conservation measures.

On September 10, 2018, Governor Brown signed SB 100, which supersedes the SB 350 requirements. Under SB 100, the RPS for public owned facilities and retail sellers consist of 44 percent renewable energy by 2024, 52 percent by 2027, and 60 percent by 2030. Additionally, SB 100 also established a new RPS requirement of 50 percent by 2026. The bill also established a state policy that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of all in-state retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by December 31, 2045. Under SB 100 the state cannot increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid or allow resource shuffling to achieve the 100 percent carbon-free electricity target.

The statewide RPS goal is not directly applicable to individual development projects, but to utilities and energy providers such as Southern California Edison (SCE), which is the utility that would provide all of electricity needs for the proposed project. Compliance of SCE in meeting the RPS goals would ensure the State in meeting its objective in transitioning to renewable energy. In addition, the proposed project would be required to comply with the applicable Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen requirements. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of California's RPS Program, and impacts would be less than significant.

TCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

As discussed in criterion (b) of Section 3.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the proposed project would be consistent with the applicable goals in the TCAG RTP/SCS. As a transportation plan, the 2022 RTP/SCS contains goals and a policy direction that encourages the reduction of transportation energy. The transportation improvements under the 2022 RTP/SCS would generally result in a more efficient transit system, of which the proposed project indirectly benefit. The RTP/SCS also aims to increase the availability of public transit and

other alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling, which does not consume fuel energy and would reduce traffic congestion. While the proposed project would result in an increase in vehicle trips, this would not directly conflict the RTP/SCS goals since the overall aim of the document is to improve the transportation system in the region for all vehicle types. In addition, as discussed above, improvements to State fuel efficiency standards for vehicles and State mandated increases in the supply and use of alternative transportation fuels would further reduce fuel consumption associated with the proposed project, further aiding in the implementation of the air quality and greenhouse gas emissions-related policies in the RTP/SCS. The proposed project would not conflict nor obstruct the TCAG RTP/SCS, and a less than significant impact would occur.

Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with nor obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency; a less than significant impact would occur.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

This section is based in part on the *Geotechnical Engineering/Geologic Hazards Investigation Proposed Santa Fe Elementary School New Classroom Buildings and Pavement Improvements, 286 E. Orange Avenue Porterville, Tulare County, California*, dated January 5, 2024, prepared by Krazan & Associate, INC. (Krazan).

The Geotechnical Engineering/Geologic Hazards Investigation is contained in Appendix D to this IS/MND.

Would the project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential 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.

No Impact. The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone for fault rupture hazard for fault rapture hazard. The nearest zoned fault is the Great Valley Fault system located more than 51 miles west of the subject site. The project site does not lie on or near a Fault Rupture Hazard Zones Map (Krazan 2024). Since no active faults exist onsite, surface rupture would not occur. No impact would occur.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is not located within an established Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. However, the project site, like all areas in Southern California, is subject to ground movement associated with earthquakes along the active faults. The Porterville specifically, has historically experienced low to moderate degree of seismicity. The degree of ground shaking, and earthquake-induced damage is dependent on multiple factors, such as distances to causative faults, earthquake magnitudes, and expected ground accelerations. No active faults are within the Porterville, with the closest active fault is more than 51 miles west of the project site (Krazan 2024). The proposed project would be required to

comply with the seismic design parameters of the California Building Code (CBC), which regulates all building and construction projects and implements a minimum standard for building design and construction that includes specific requirements for seismic safety, evacuation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. Additionally, the Division of State Architects (DSA) would be required to review and approve the project plans which will ensure that the structures are sufficiently designed to withstand ground shaking. Compliance with CBC and recommendations from the geotechnical hazards investigation and DSA review, would ensure that impacts are less than significant.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Liquefaction refers to loose, saturated sand, or gravel deposits that lose their load-supporting capability when subjected to intense shaking. Liquefaction potential varies based upon five main contributing factors: 1) Groundwater depth; 2) Soil type; 3) Relative density; 4) Initial confining pressure; 5) Intensity and duration of ground shaking. The soils encountered within a depth of 29 feet on the project site predominately consist of loose to dense silty sands, sandy silts, silty sand/sands, and sands. Groundwater was encountered within at a depth of 20 to 24 feet during subsurface exploration. The soils underlying the project site are considered to be slightly to moderately susceptibility to liquefaction. The Geotechnical Hazards Investigation concluded that the project site has a moderate liquefaction potential (Krazan 2024). The proposed project would be designed and constructed to withstand liquefaction potential consistent with CBC and the geotechnical hazards investigation recommendations. As previously described in Section 3.7(a)(ii), the proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC and the recommendations from the geotechnical hazards investigation and DSA review, which would ensure that impacts related to liquefaction would be less than significant.

iv) Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. Due to the generally flat-lying nature of the project site and surrounding area, landslides would not affect the project site (Krazan 2024). Additionally, as discussed in Section 3.7(a)(ii), the proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC and would be reviewed by DSA. A less than significant impact would occur.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. Erosion is a normal and inevitable geologic process whereby earthen materials are loosened, worn away, decomposed, or dissolved and removed from one place and transported to another. The project site contains relatively flat terrain, which decreases the project's potential to accelerate erosion. Implementation of the proposed project would require limited earthwork which include grading for proper base and slope for the two classroom buildings, parking lot and pickup/drop-off area, and utility trenching.

Additionally, the proposed project does not contain any subterranean levels and would not require extensive excavation, which could expose more soils to erosion. In addition, because the proposed project encompasses an area of more than one acre, the proposed project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. These include the preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implementation of best management practices that would describe minimum

and advanced construction best management practices for erosion control at the site. Additionally, adherence with existing state and local laws regulating construction activities would minimize soil erosion. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and a less than significant impact would occur

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is relatively flat and, as discussed above Thresholds 3.7 (a)(iv), landslides would not affect the project site. The Geotechnical Hazards Investigation concluded that the project site has a low to moderate liquefaction potential. As discussed in Thresholds 3.7(a)(iii), proposed project would be designed and constructed to withstand liquefaction potential consistent with CBC and the geotechnical hazards investigation recommendations. With compliance with CBC and geotechnical recommendations from the geotechnical hazards investigation along with DSA's review, the proposed project would not result in or contribute to on- or off-site liquefaction.

The proposed project would excavate and recompact the upper soils and any loose fill soils within the project site. Due to recompacting of the soils and the relatively low to moderate seismicity of the region, seismic settlement or lateral spreading would not occur .

The project site is within the San Joaquin Valley which has been subject to land subsidence due to fluid withdrawal (groundwater and petroleum). However, no fluid withdrawal would occur onsite, and the project site is not known to be subject to subsidence hazards (Krazan 2024). The proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC and the geotechnical recommendations outlined in the Geotechnical Hazards Investigation, which would minimize the potential effects of unstable earth materials. Further, DSA would review and approve project plans which would ensure that structures are designed to withstand unstable soils. A less than significant impact would occur.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Expansive soils contain certain types of clay minerals that shrink when they dry out and swell when soils become wet, resulting in the potential for cracking building foundations and in some cases, structural distress of the buildings themselves. Arid or semiarid areas with seasonal changes of soil moisture experiences, such as Southern California, have a higher potential of expansive soils than areas with higher rainfall.

Based on the Geotechnical Hazards Investigation, soils observed on the site surface consist of silty sands, clayey sands, sandy silts and sands. Such soils are considered to have a low expansion potential. The proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC and the geotechnical recommendations outlined in the Geotechnical Hazards Investigation, which would minimize the potential effects of unstable earth materials (Krazan 2024). Therefore, expansive soils are expected to have less than significant impact on direct or indirect risk to life or property due to expansive soils.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No Impact. The proposed project does not propose the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. The proposed project is in an urbanized area of the City of Porterville, and the proposed project would connect to the City's wastewater system. No impacts related to septic systems would occur.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Paleontological resources or fossils are remains of ancient plants and animals that can provide scientifically significant information about the history of life on earth. This sensitivity is determined by rock type, history of the geologic unit in producing significant fossils, and fossil localities that are recorded from that unit. As described in the Porterville General Plan fossil localities have been located with Tulare County (Porterville 2008b). The University of California Museum of Paleontology lists 26 localities within the County of Tulare, 14 of which are from the Quaternary period and Epoch of the Pleistocene (UCMP 2024). Based on the Geotechnical Hazards Investigation geologic materials in the vicinity of the site include Quaternary fan deposits and Pleistocene Nonmarine deposits. However, the project site has been previously developed with the existing SFES campus facilities and along with disturbed land on the City-owned portion of the project site. A total of four borings of the project site occurred as part of the Geotechnical Hazards Investigation and indicated that a range of approximately 2 to 7 feet fill material underling the project site (Krazan 2024). Development activities primarily would impact fill material. Nevertheless, while paleontological resources are not expected to be discovered during project construction, it is possible that unknown paleontological resources could be discovered during grading activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would ensure that impacts to unknown paleontological resources are less than significant.

The project site is partially developed with the SFES campus and the distributed City-owned parcel. No unique geologic features exist on the project site. The proposed project would not directly nor indirectly destroy unique geologic features. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1 In the event that fossils or fossil locality deposits are discovered during construction, excavations within 50-feet of the fossil locality shall be temporarily halted until removal of the fossil localities. The contractor shall notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate its significance. If the fossil locality is determined to be significant by the qualified paleontologist the paleontologist shall work with the District to follow accepted professional standards such as further testing for evaluation or data recovery, as necessary. The paleontologist shall notify the appropriate agencies to determine procedures that would be followed before construction is allowed to resume at the location of the find. If the project proponent determines that avoidance is not feasible, the paleontologist shall prepare an excavation plan for mitigating the effect of the project based on the qualities that make the resource important.

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Scientists have concluded that human activities are contributing to global climate change by adding large amounts of heat-trapping gases, known as greenhouse gases (GHGs), into the atmosphere. The primary source of these GHG is fossil fuel use. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified four major GHGs—water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and ozone (O_3)—that are the likely cause of an increase in global average temperatures observed within the 20th and 21st centuries. Other GHG identified by the IPCC that contribute to global warming to a lesser extent include nitrous oxide (N_2O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and chlorofluorocarbons.[4]

Information on manufacture of cement, steel, and other "life cycle" emissions that would occur as a result of the project are not applicable and are not included in the analysis.[5] Black carbon emissions are not included in the GHG analysis because the California Air Resources Board (CARB) does not include this pollutant in the state's Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) and Assembly Bill 1279 (AB 1279) inventory and treats this short-lived climate pollutant separately.[6] A background discussion on the GHG regulatory setting can be found in Appendix A to this Initial Study.

Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Global climate change is not confined to a particular project area and is generally accepted as the consequence of global industrialization over the last 200 years. A typical project, even a very large one, does not generate enough greenhouse gas emissions on its own to influence global climate change significantly; hence, the issue of global climate change is, by definition, a cumulative environmental impact.

As discussed in Appendix A, SJVAPCD's methodology for evaluating GHG emissions directs project to conduct an analysis of whether the project would reduce GHG emissions by 29 percent from business as usual (BAU) through implementation of Best Performance Standards. However, November 30, 2015, *Center for*

[4] Water vapor (H_2O) is the strongest GHG and the most variable in its phases (vapor, cloud droplets, ice crystals). However, water vapor is not considered a pollutant, but part of the feedback loop rather than a primary cause of change.

[5] Life cycle emissions include indirect emissions associated with materials manufacture. However, these indirect emissions involve numerous parties, each of which is responsible for GHG emissions of their particular activity. The California Resources Agency, in adopting the CEQA Guidelines Amendments on GHG emissions found that lifecycle analyses was not warranted for project-specific CEQA analysis in most situations, for a variety of reasons, including lack of control over some sources, and the possibility of double-counting emissions (CNRA 2018). Because the amount of materials consumed during the operation or construction of the proposed project is not known, the origin of the raw materials purchased is not known, and manufacturing information for those raw materials are also not known, calculation of life cycle emissions would be speculative. A life-cycle analysis is not warranted (OPR 2008).

[6] Particulate matter emissions, which include black carbon, are analyzed in Section 3.3, Air Quality. Black carbon emissions have sharply declined due to efforts to reduce on-road and off-road vehicle emissions, especially diesel particulate matter. The state's existing air quality policies will virtually eliminate black carbon emissions from on-road diesel engines within 10 years (CARB 2017).

3. Environmental Analysis

Biological Diversity v. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Newhall Ranch) ruling effectively limits use of this performance metric. The 29 percent below BAU established in the CARB Scoping Plan is derived from the statewide reduction target set by AB 32 for year 2020. The court held that the 29 percent is the statewide goal, but there is no substantial evidence that establishes a nexus between the statewide goal and the percent reduction a specific land use project would need to achieve to be consistent with the goals of AB 32. Projects must determine the reduction target specific to the land use type being proposed.

Because SJVAPCD's significance criteria does not establish a nexus that connects the statewide GHG emissions reductions identified in the Scoping Plan to GHG reductions needed for new development projects, an alternative approach to use of the performance metric is being used by the District until SJVAPCD revises their Guidance Methodology to address the Newhall Ranch ruling. The Best Management Practices (BMPs) approach, based on 2022 Scoping Plan, requires a project to evaluate consistency of the project with three primary objectives of the 2022 Scoping Plan: transportation electrification, VMT reduction, and building decarbonization. In accordance with the updated BMP approach to evaluating GHG impacts, projects would be determined to have less than significant impacts if they are: 1) determined consistent with a local qualified GHG reduction strategy (i.e., Climate Action Plan) via CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, or 2) designed to be 100 percent electric (no natural gas), provide electric vehicle charging spaces in conformance with the voluntary Tier 2 standards of the CALGreen, and are consistent with locally adopted VMT thresholds. Table 1, *Project Consistency with Scoping Plan Priority Areas*, discusses the proposed project's consistency with the scoping plan's BMPs.

Table 1 Project Consistency with Scoping Plan Priority Areas

Priority Area	Priority Area Attributes	Project Consistency
Transportation Electrification	Provide EV charging infrastructure that, at a minimum, meets the most ambitious voluntary standards in the California Green Building Standards Code at the time of project approval.	**Inconsistent:** At the time of drafting the environmental analysis, project plans do not show conformity with CALGreen Tier 2 EV charging standards.
VMT Reduction	Meets local jurisdiction adopted SB 743 threshold for VMT.	**Consistent:** As discussed in Section 3.17, *Transportation*, the proposed project is considered a local-serving public facility per the Tulare County SB 743 Guidelines. It is therefore considered to result in less than significant impacts respect to VMT.
Building Decarbonization	Use all electric appliances without any natural gas connections and does not use propane or other fossil fuels for space heating, water heating, or indoor cooking.	**Consistent:** The proposed project would be designed to have all-electric buildings.

Source: CARB 2022

As discussed in Table 1, in accordance with the second BMP pathway, the proposed project would be designed to be 100 percent electric and would have less than significant VMT impacts. However, current project plans do not reflect the inclusion of EV charging infrastructure that would meet the CALGreen Tier 2 standards, making the proposed project inconsistent with the transportation electrification BMP. Therefore, the proposed project would have potentially significant impacts with respect to GHG emissions.

Mitigation Measures

GHG-1 The proposed project shall install electric vehicle (EV) spaces in compliance with the Tier 2 standards under Section A5.106.5.3.2 of the Non-Residential Voluntary Measures, in the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen). Plans shall identify the number of EV parking spaces with chargers that meet the current CALGreen Tier 2 standards in Section A5.106.5.3.2.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, the proposed project would be required to install the applicable number of EV parking spaces per CALGreen Tier 2 requirements in compliance with the 2022 Scoping Plan BMP approach to ensure less than significant GHG impacts. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with all three primary objectives of the 2022 Scoping Plan, by design and through the incorporation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Applicable plans adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions include CARB's Scoping Plan and the TCAG's RTP/SCS. A consistency analysis with these plans is presented below.

CARB Scoping Plan

CARB's latest Climate Change Scoping Plan (2022) outlines the State's strategies to reduce GHG emissions in accordance with the targets established under AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279 (CARB 2022). The Scoping Plan is applicable to State agencies and is not directly applicable to cities/counties and individual projects. Though as described above, the proposed project would comply with BMPs that are consistent with two of the primary objectives of the 2022 Scoping Plan: VMT reduction and building decarbonization. Additionally, as discussed in Section 3.8a, Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would be incorporated to ensure that the proposed project is consistent with the third primary objective of the 2022 Scoping Plan, transportation electrification. Compliance with Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce impacts from GHG emissions to less than significant.

Statewide strategies to reduce GHG emissions in the 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan include: implementing SB 100, which expands the RPS to 60 percent by 2030; expanding the Low Carbon Fuel Standards (LCFS) to 18 percent by 2030; implementing the Mobile Source Strategy to deploy zero-electric vehicle buses and trucks; implementing the Sustainable Freight Action Plan; implementing the Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy, which reduces methane and hydrofluorocarbons to 40 percent below 2013 levels by 2030 and black carbon emissions to 50 percent below 2013 levels by 2030; continuing to implement SB 375; creating a post-2020 Cap-and-Trade Program; and developing an Integrated Natural and Working Lands Action Plan to secure California's land base as a net carbon sink.

3. Environmental Analysis

Statewide strategies to reduce GHG emissions include the low carbon fuel standards, California Appliance Energy Efficiency regulations, California Renewable Energy Portfolio standard, changes in the CAFE standards, and other early action measures as necessary to ensure the State is on target to achieve the GHG emissions reduction goals of AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. In addition, new developments are required to comply with the current Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen. The proposed project would comply with these GHG emissions reduction measures since they are statewide strategies. The proposed project GHG emissions would be further reduced from compliance with statewide measures that have been adopted since AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279 were adopted. With incorporation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 to ensure compliance with the 2022 Scoping Plan's transportation electrification BMP, the proposed project would not obstruct implementation of the 2022 Scoping Plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

TCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

TCAG adopted the 2022 RTP/SCS in August 2022 (TCAG 2022). The plan is meant to provide a long-range, fiscally constrained guide for the future of Tulare County's Transportation system. It defines how the region plans to invest in the transportation system over 20 years based on regional goals, multi-modal transportation needs for people and goods, and estimates of available funding. It contains eleven policy areas, each with supporting goals, policies and objectives, to address the County's traffic congestion, mobility needs, and maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure. Some of the overarching goals in the 2022 RTP/SCS is to maintain countywide roadway systems, provide regionally and locally coordinated transit service that connects residential areas with employment centers, improve passenger rail service, promote aviation services that complement the countywide transportation system, provide safe and efficient movements of goods throughout the County, and to promote a convenient non-motorized transportation system. The 2022 RTP/SCS transportation projects help more efficiently distribute population, housing, and employment growth, and forecast development is generally consistent with regional-level general plan data to promote active transportation and reduce GHG emissions. The projected regional development, when integrated with the proposed regional transportation network in the 2022 RTP/SCS, would reduce GHG emissions related to vehicular travel and improve air quality.

The 2022 RTP/SCS Plan does not require that local general plans, specific plans, or zoning be consistent with the SCS, but provides incentives for consistency to governments and developers. The proposed project would development new classroom buildings on the project site and increase student capacity by 275 students, (or 269 students based on current enrollment). Additionally, 17 total staff would be needed to fill positions at the new facilities, though eight of these staff members would be transferred from elsewhere in the district while the remaining nine would new staff. Due to this increase in students and staff, the proposed project is expected to result in approximately 610 net new ADT. However, most or all of these vehicle trips would already be traveling on the area's roadway network since these new students would have attended a school in the District regardless of the status of the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project is a locally serving use that is consistent with the project site's designation in the General Plan. The proposed project would therefore be consistent with the 2022 RTP/SCS and would not interfere with TCAG's ability to implement the regional strategies in 2022 RTP/SCS.

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section is based in part on the *Geological and Environmental Hazards Assessment,* dated May 2024, prepared by PlaceWorks; *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment,* dated February 2024, prepared by Padre Associates; and a *Preliminary Environmental Assessment,* dated December 2024, prepared by Padre Associates. The Geological and Environmental Hazards Assessment, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, and Preliminary Environmental Assessment are contained in Appendix E, F and G to this IS/MND, respectively.

Would the project:

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. The activities of the proposed project would require small amounts of hazardous materials during construction, such as vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease and transmission fluids, and paints and coatings. The handling, use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials during the construction phase of the proposed project would comply with existing regulations of several agencies—the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and US Department of Transportation (USDOT).

The proposed project includes construction and ground-disturbing activities that would use vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, transmission fluids, solvents, paints, cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities typical of construction for school facilities. The use of these materials and chemicals during construction is not considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of these chemicals and materials during construction is common, and the use, storage, transport and disposal of these chemicals and materials would comply with manufacturer specifications and health and safety regulations.

Similarly, operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of potentially hazardous materials typical of school facilities such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (cleaners, gasoline, paint, and pesticides). The use of these chemicals and materials during operation is common, and the use, storage, transport and disposal of these chemicals and materials would comply with manufacturer specifications and health and safety regulations.

Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not create substantial hazards to the public or the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 Impact. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was prepared to evaluate whether current or previous land use at or adjacent to the project site may have involved, or resulted in the use, storage, disposal, treatment, and/or release of hazardous substances to the environment, resulting in the determination of a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) at the project site (Appendix F). Historical Aerial maps identify the project sites historical uses as a vacant lot with railroad tracks uses, and formally unknown structures; the SFES campus began to occupy the project site in 2003. Historical surrounding uses include railroad uses and farmland uses which were replaced by private development such as residential and commercial properties beginning in 1942. Based on the California Geological Survey's Geologic Map of California – Fresno several potentially asbestos-bearing ultramafic rock outcrops are within 10-miles of the project site, with the nearest approximately 1,200 feet northeast. Thus, there is the potential for naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) to occur and is considered a REC. The Phase I ESA identified no environmental liens or other activity use limitations were found; however, a portion of the project site within SFES was identified as a hazardous waste site on EnviroStor, a Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) website. A Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was completed in 2000 with DTSC oversight due to historic railroad activities and subsequent illegal storage and dumping at the project site. In February 6, 2001 DTSC issued a letter identifying "no further action" with respect to investigation and remediation of hazardous materials on the project site. As part of the Phase I ESA a copy of the PEA was requested; however, records pertaining to the project site were destroyed in August 2020 per DTSC's record retention schedule. The Phase I ESA was unable to identify if the entirety of the project site was included in the PEA, and due to the historical railroad uses and structures the project site is consisted a REC.

During the site reconnaissance on January 26, 2024, no evidence of leaks or spills, petroleum and/or chemical containers, groundwater wells were observed; and due to the existing site buildings were constructed in 2003-2004 or later asbestos containing materials, polychlorinated biphenyls are not considered a REC. The Phase I ESA conducted additional database searches including but not limited to the Tulare County Environmental Health Department (TCEHD) the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA), GeoTracker, the City of Porterville Building Department, National Priorities List - Federal Superfund, and etc., and the project site was not included in any other list. However, since the Phase I ESA was unable to identify if the entirety of the project site was included in the PEA, several potentially asbestos-bearing ultramafic rock outcrops within 10-miles of the project site, and historical aerials former historical buildings present on the western portion of the project site has the potential for petroleum products (diesel fuel and motor oil), metals, pesticides, NOA, lead-based paint, and Organochlorine Pesticides (OCPs) in the soil, which are considered a REC.

Due to the presence of RECs on the project site, a new PEA was prepared to establish whether a release or potential release of hazardous substances or naturally occurring material, which would pose a threat to human health via ingestion, dermal contact, and inhalation exposure pathways, exists at the project site. Chemicals of potential concern (COPC) identified at the project site included Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and metals from a historic railroad track activity; lead, pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from former buildings; and NOA from the weathering and deposition of ultramafic rock outcrops located within 10 miles of the project site (see Appendix G).

PEA soil sampling occurred on October 3 at the project site. Based on the analytical laboratory results of the initial PEA sampling event, additional soil sampling occurred on November 19, 2024, which collected step-out soil samples at four locations. At the location of soil sample "RR-2" step-out soil samples were collected and analyzed for the presence of TPH-diesel (d). At the location of "FB-8", and "FB-13" step-out soil samples were collected and analyzed for the presence of lead, and at the location of "FB-12" step-out soil samples were collected and analyzed for the presence of PCBs. Refer to Appendix G to this IS/MND for the map of the location of these soil sample locations. The analytical laboratory results of step-out soil samples indicated that elevated levels of COPC at these locations were not present. Therefore, the 95 percent upper confidence limit (UCL) was used to calculate the risk for these COPC.

Using the 95 percent UCL for TPH-d and Aroclor 1248, the total risk for COPC was calculated to be 3.5 x 10-7, which does not present an increased cancer risk of greater than 1 in 1,000,000 (>10-6), and the total health hazard is calculated to be 0.6 which does not present an increased health hazard (i.e., >1).

Using the 95 percent UCL for lead in soil as the input concentration, a risk assessment was performed using DTSC's lead risk assessment spreadsheet model (*LeadSpread Version 9*). Based on the LeadSpread output, exposure to the lead concentrations detected at the project site will result in a 90th percentile blood lead concentration of 0.3 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dl) in children which is below the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) blood toxicity level of 1 µg/dl.

Arsenic concentrations in soil ranged from 1.3 to 5.0 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). Arsenic concentrations were compared to an arsenic data set from a school site located approximately 1 mile northeast of the project site. The property has a similar geologic setting (Pleistocene Nonmarine (Qc) sedimentary deposits) as the project site and consists of similar type soils (sandy loam). The arsenic concentrations at the background site ranged from 1.02 to 4.04 mg/kg. Arsenic concentrations identified in surface soil at the project site are comparable to background concentrations.

OCPs in soil were not detected at or above their respective reporting limits.

NOA in soil was not detected at or above the asbestos percent type target analytical sensitivity.

The findings of the PEA did not identify the presence of COPC in soil that has adversely impacted the project site from historic or current land-use activities. Therefore, the PEA recommends the issuance of a "No Further Action" designation from the DTSC regarding the completion of the PEA for the proposed project. Thus, the project site is not a site of current or former hazardous waste or solid waste disposal facility. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. See Appendix G for more information.

Additionally, as discussed previously in Section 3.9(a), construction activities would require small amounts of hazardous materials, such as vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease and transmission fluids, as well as paints and coatings. Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (cleaners, gasoline, paint, and pesticides). The potentially hazardous materials are typical of the construction and operation of school facilities and would be used in small quantities and stored and handled so they do not pose significant safety hazards. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with

regulatory standards and manufacturers' specifications. Compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

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. The proposed project would expand the existing Santa Fe ES campus and is immediately adjacent to the Santa Fe ES campus. Aside from Santa Fe ES, the closest school to the project site is Olive Street Elementary School, approximately 0.70 miles northeast of the project site. As discussed in Section 3.9(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would handle small amounts of potentially hazardous materials typical of construction and operation of school facilities. The use, transportation, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply to all applicable State and federal regulations that would ensure the proper handling of such materials. The proposed project would not emit or handle significant hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Impacts would be less than significant.

Additionally, the project site is an expansion of the existing school site. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15186 (c)(1), the project site was reviewed for the following information:

A. The site of a current or former hazardous waste or solid waste disposal facility and, if so, whether wastes have been removed.

B. A hazardous substance release site identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control in a current list adopted pursuant to Section 25356 of the Health and Safety Code for removal or remedial action pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 25300) of Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code.

C. The site of one or more buried or above ground pipelines which carry hazardous substances, acutely hazardous materials, or hazardous wastes, as defined in Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code. This does not include a natural gas pipeline used only to supply the school or neighborhood.

D. Within 500 feet of the edge of the closest traffic lane of a freeway or other busy traffic corridor.

Based on a review of federal and state regulatory agency databases as reported in the Phase I ESA report, the project site is not a former hazardous waste disposal site or solid waste disposal site. The project property is not listed by DTSC on the hazardous waste and substances site list (Cortese List). The proposed project is not within a 1,500-foot radius of high-pressure gas pipelines, and no chemical or petroleum pipelines. There are no freeways or busy traffic corridors within 500 feet of the project site (see Appendix E). Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15186 (c)(1).

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, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less Than Significant. As stated above in Section 3.9(b), although the proposed project is listed within the EnviroStor database, the 2000 PEA of the SFES campus received a "no further action" determination by DTSC, and the current PEA prepared for the proposed project recommends a "no further action" determination by DTSC (see Appendix F and Appendix G). The project site does not have the potential for hazardous materials release or threatened release to occurred on the project site or its immediate vicinity as COPC were either not detected or at levels below identified thresholds and does not present an elevated health hazard. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a hazard to the public because of a hazardous materials site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Additionally, the campus, including the project site, is not identified within the DTSC Cortese list (DTSC 2025). Impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. The nearest public airport is the Porterville Municipal Airport. The Porterville Municipal Airport is located at 1893 Newcomb Street in the City of Porterville and is approximately three miles southwest of the project site. According to the Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan, the proposed project is not within the Porterville Municipal Airport's Influence Area (Tulare County 2012). Therefore, no airport land use plan policies would apply to the proposed project. Additionally, the nearest privately-owned airport, Eckert Field, is approximately seven miles and would not impact the proposed project. No impact would occur.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The City of Porterville utilizes the 2023 Tulare County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Tulare County LHMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan with the purpose of reducing or eliminating long-term risk to people and property from hazards in Tulare County. According to the Tulare County LHMP, the Santa Fe Elementary School campus is considered a Class 3 Critical Facility and is open and accessible during emergencies. Class 3 Critical Facilities can be used as evacuation centers, shelters, and mass prophylaxis sites (Tulare County 2023).

The proposed project would not interfere with the use of the Santa Fe Elementary School campus during an emergency. The proposed project would not close the campus during construction and the campus could still be used as a Class 3 Critical Facility during construction and operation in case of an emergency. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with any known evacuation routes. Construction-related vehicles and materials would be stored and parked onsite and would not block vehicle circulation or access onto the project site. No vehicles or materials would be stored on public rights-of-way. The proposed project would comply with the CBC, California Fire Code, and California Department of Education (CDE) regulations for site design and life and safety. DSA would review the project plans to ensure adequate emergency access and circulation during operation. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere

with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. A less than significant impact would occur.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would increase the number of students and staff on campus. The proposed project is located within a local responsibility area (LRA) and within an urban setting in the City of Porterville. The project site is not located in a state responsibility area nor lands classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (Cal Fire 2022). However, based on Figure 6-1, *Wildland Fire Hazards*, of the Porterville General Plan Public Health and Safety Element, the project site is within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (MFHSZ) (2008d). Additionally, the project site is not within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or intermix, however the campus is bounded by the WUI to the north of the grass playfields (USFS 2020). The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC and California Fire Code and would be reviewed and approved by DSA. The project site would be served by the Porterville Fire Department (PFD), and as further discussed in Section 3.15, *Public Services*, the proposed project would be adequately served by PFD. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, and less than significant impact would occur.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less Than Significant Impact. Urban runoff from storms or nuisance flows (runoff during dry periods) from development projects can carry pollutants to receiving waters. Runoff can contain pollutants such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, trash, and sediment. This runoff can flow directly into local streams or into storm drains and continue through stormwater pipes until it is released untreated into a local waterway and eventually the ocean. Untreated stormwater runoff degrades water quality in surface waters and groundwater and can affect drinking water, human health, and plant and animal habitats. The construction and operational phases of the proposed project could have the potential to impact water quality. The following is a discussion of the potential impacts that the construction and operational phases of the proposed project could have on water resources and quality.

Construction

Clearing, grading, excavation, and construction activities associated with the proposed project may impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of silt and debris carried in runoff. Additionally, the use of construction materials such as fuels, solvents, and paints may present a risk to surface water quality. Finally, the refueling and parking of construction vehicles and other equipment on-site during construction may result in oil, grease, or related pollutant leaks and spills that may discharge into the storm drain system.

The proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable regulatory requirements governing water quality. The proposed project would be required to comply with comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit (CGP; 2022-0057-DWQ). The CGP requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that incorporates BMPs to control sedimentation, erosion, and hazardous materials contamination of runoff during construction. The State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) mandates that projects that disturb one or more acres of land must obtain coverage under the Statewide CGP. Prior to the start of construction activities, the project applicant must file Permit Registration Documents (PRDs) with the SWRCB, which includes a Notice of Intent, risk assessment, site map, annual fee, signed certification statement, SWPPP, and post-construction water balance calculations. The construction contractor is required to maintain a copy of the SWPPP on-site at all times and implement all construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP during construction activities. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the project applicant is required to provide proof of filing of the PRDs with the SWRCB, which include preparation of SWPPP.

The SWPPP must describe construction BMPs that address pollutant source reduction and provide measures/controls to mitigate potential pollutant sources. These include, but are not limited to:

- Erosion controls (e.g., earth dikes and swales, mulching, slope drains, compost blankets)
- Sediment controls (e.g., silt fence, sediment trap, sandbag or straw bale barriers)
- Tracking controls (e.g., stabilized construction entrance/exit, tire wash)
- Non-storm water management (e.g., dewatering practices, vehicle and equipment cleaning)
- Materials and waste management (e.g., material storage, hazardous waste management, soil management)
- Good housekeeping practices

Which include, but are not limited to: erosion controls, sediment controls, tracking controls, non-storm water management, materials and waste management and good housekeeping practices. Submittal of the PRDs and implementation of the SWPPP and its associated BMPs throughout the construction phase would result in an impact of less than significant.

Operation

Once the proposed project has been constructed, urban runoff could include a variety of contaminants that are typical of operation of school facilities, that could impact water quality. The proposed project would be required to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials and would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project is required to comply with the post-construction performance standards under the SWRCB's construction general permit. Typical site-design BMPs and source-control BMPs include the following examples. The proposed project would use a combination of BMPs to meet SWRCB's requirements.

3. Environmental Analysis

Site Design BMPs

Site design BMPs would be incorporated into the project's design to reduce the potential impacts on surface and groundwater quality. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Maximizing pervious areas and minimizing directly connected impervious areas
- Using on-site ponding areas (i.e., at-grade detention basins)
- Constructing hardscape with permeable materials and implementing hydrologically functional landscape design.
- Incorporating trees, open space, and landscaping to mitigate urban heat island impacts.
- Including mostly native plants and drought-tolerant plants in landscaping plans.
- Using effective irrigation systems to minimize water usage.

Source Control BMPs

Source control BMPs effectively minimize the potential for typical urban pollutants to contact stormwater, thereby limiting water quality impacts downstream. Source control BMPs would be incorporated into the proposed project and implemented throughout the operation of the campus. These BMPs could include the following:

- Educational materials related to urban runoff provided to all employees, students, and staff.
- Inspection and maintenance of site BMPs—catch basins, grate inlets, etc.
- Providing storm drain stenciling or signage on all storm drain inlets and catch basins.
- Properly designing and inspecting all trash storage areas, loading docks, outdoor storage areas, and outdoor work areas on a regular basis.

As part of the statewide mandate to reduce trash in receiving waters, the proposed project would adhere to the requirements of the SWRCB Trash Amendments. The requirements include the installation and maintenance of full-capture trash screening devices at curb inlets, grate inlets, and catch basin inlets. The trash screening devices must be certified by the SWRCB. Furthermore, the proposed project would be designed to meet the City of Porterville's stormwater management and rainwater retention ordinance (25-32A.18) which requires all landscape areas to have friable soil to maximize water retention and infiltration (Porterville 2024k).

With the implementation of the BMPs features described above, to control and amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site, and compliance with State and local regulations the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

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. The project site is located within the Tule subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin (Porterville 2015a). Although the Tule subbasin is not adjudicated, the basin is considered to be critically overdraft (CDWR 2024). The groundwater is accessed by wells on the western portion of the City contains better quantity and quality water; however, a few wells adjacent to Porter Slough and in the Downtown area, northwest of the project site, have been closed due to contamination of hazardous chemicals (i.e. perchloroethylene and nitrate) (Porterville 2015a). The City does not treat any of the groundwater supply, as all active wells meet the state and federal drinking water quality standards. The City solely relies on groundwater to meet all of the City's water demands. The main source of recharge for the groundwater is natural recharge is characterized water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains and seepage from the Tule River and irrigation ditches.

The project site is partially developed. The eastern side of the project site is developed with the SFES campus, and the western side contains undeveloped but disturbed land. As such, the project site contains impervious and pervious surfaces. Stormwater from the project site percolates into the ground in pervious areas or is directed to the storm drains along East Orange Avenue and on campus as runoff. The proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions with the construction of the two classroom buildings, parking lot 3, and paved walkways (and other project components). The project site is not used for groundwater recharge activities, nor does it represent a source of groundwater recharge or extraction. Additionally, as discussed in the Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) the Downtown area groundwater, directly northwest of the project site, is contaminated and not utilized for groundwater use (Porterville 2015a). Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially interfere with groundwater supplies or recharge. Impacts to groundwater supplies would be less than significant.

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 which would:

i) Result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact. Erosion and siltation impacts that could result from alteration of drainage patterns would, for the most part, occur during the proposed project's construction phase, which would include site preparation and grading activities. Environmental factors that affect erosion include topography, soil type, wind, and rainfall. Siltation is associated with sediment transport and deposition in waterways. The proposed project would not involve the alteration of any natural drainage channels or any watercourse, since none exist onsite. The proposed project would result in an increase of approximately 90,000 square feet (2.00 acres) of impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions. The increase in impervious surfaces would be considered a minor increase in comparison to the Tule Subbasin 475,895 acres and represents less than one percent[7] increase in impervious surfaces (Porterville 2015a). Additionally, the proposed project would include acquisition of a portion of City property that is undeveloped but

[7] ((475,893 acres-475,895 acres) ÷ 475,895-acres) 100 = -0.000420%

disturbed. While the proposed project would develop the project site and the undeveloped but disturbed land onsite, most of the property (not transferred to the District) would remain in its current state.

The proposed project's construction includes grading, utilities trenching, and asphalt demolition. If not controlled, the transport of soil from earthwork to local waterways could temporarily increase suspended sediment concentrations and release pollutants attached to sediment particles into local waterways. As discussed in Section 3.10(a), the proposed project would be required to submit PRDs and a SWPPP to the SWRCB for approval prior to the commencement of construction activities. The SWPPP would describe the BMPs to reduce the impact of erosion and siltation (as described above). The operational phase of the project would be required to comply with State and local regulations which would include, SWRCB Trash Amendments, site design, source control BMPs, as described in Section 3.10(a) to reduce erosion and siltation. Implementation of the project BMPs during the construction phase and operational phase would therefore ensure that erosion and siltation impacts would be less than significant.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is partially developed with the existing SFES campus and contains an undeveloped but disturbed land. The proposed project would not involve the alteration of any natural drainage or watercourse, since none exist onsite. The proposed project would substantially alter the existing drainage on the undeveloped portion of the project site. The proposed project would continue to use the existing stormwater infrastructure onsite and in public rights of way, and would direct runoff from the proposed project to the existing stormwater infrastructure. The proposed project would result in an increase of impervious surfaces on the project site; however, with the implementation of site BMPs (as discussed in Section 3.10(a), the amount of stormwater runoff reaching the City's storm drain system would be similar to existing conditions. Since the site BMPs would be designed to collect and detain peak runoff flows, the proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would cause flooding.

Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage and flooding are less than significant. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would cause flooding on or off site. Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage and flooding would be less than significant.

iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is partially developed with the existing SFES campus and contains an undeveloped but disturbed land. The proposed project would result in an increase of approximately 90,000 square feet (2.00 acres) of impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions, which would contribute to runoff water. The increase in impervious surfaces would be considered negatable (as discussed in Threshold 3.10(c)(i) above), and stormwater from the proposed project would percolate in the ground or would be directed to the storm drains along East Orange Avenue and on campus. Therefore, the proposed project would generate stormwater similar to existing conditions. As discussed

above, construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to implement BMPs that would control the amount and quality of stormwater leaving the project site.

Construction and operation of the proposed project would use small quantities of hazardous materials, such as oil, solvents, paint, and gasoline during construction (among other materials) and chemicals used for cleaning and maintenance and paints during operation (among other materials). All potentially hazardous materials used onsite are typical of construction activities and of educational uses. All potentially hazardous materials would be properly handled, stored, used and disposed of and would not represent a substantial source of pollution.

The proposed project would not exceed the capacity of existing stormwater drainage systems and would not create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be less than significant.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is partially within Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Flood Zone Designation of X and AO, which is an area with 0.2% of annual chance of flood hazard, and an area with one percent or greater chance of flooding, respectively. See Figure 11, *FEMA Flood Map* (FEMA 2009). FEMA flood zone X covers the western end of the project site which currently includes parking lot 2, pedestrian walkways and a benched seating area. The proposed project would construct the proposed parking lot 3, and a pick-up/drop off area in parking lot 2 within FEMA flood Zone X. The City Municipal Code does not set standards for Zone X and since no structures are proposed within Zone X, the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows.

FEMA flood zone AO covers the majority of the existing SFES campus and would cover the eastern portion of the project site which currently includes the grass field, paved walking paths and the City-owned parcel. The proposed project would construct the proposed Building 800 and paved walkways within FEMA flood zone AO. According to the Porterville Municipal Code, Zone AO is an area of shallow flooding, with a base flood depth of 1 foot (FEMA 2009, Porterville 2024c). The proposed project would be constructed in accordance with FEMA flood policies, with Building 800 building base elevation above floodwaters. The proposed project would be designed and constructed to be consistent with CBC and Title 24 building requirements and incorporate recommendations from the project's geotechnical report. The proposed project would be similar to the existing campus which currently has several classroom buildings, athletic play courts and the grass field within flood zone AO. Since the proposed project would be designed above the base flood depth of 1 foot and be constructed in accordance with CBC and geotechnical design recommendation, the proposed project would not substantially alter the drainage of the project site by impeding or redirecting flood flows.

According to the California Department of Water Resources' Dam Breach Inundation Map, the campus is not within any other inundation area (DWR 2024). However, based on the National Inventory of Dams, the project site and the entire City of Porterville is within an inundation area (USACE 2024). As discussed above, construction of the proposed project would not greatly impede or redirect flood flows. Additionally, the geotechnical engineering/geologic hazards investigation report recommended that that proposed project be constructed with footings at minimum depth of 18 feet below grade soil and installation of

geogrid, and engineered fill, with the understanding of geohazards and the potential for flooding and inundation.

With adherence to the CBC, geotechnical recommendations, FEMA flood policies and state policies the proposed project would not substantially alter the drainage of the project site, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is partially within Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Flood Zone Designation of X and AO, which is an area with 0.2% of annual chance of flood hazard, and an area with one percent or greater chance of flooding, respectively see Figure 11, *FEMA Flood Map* (FEMA 2009). The proposed project would comply with FEMA flood policies, State, local policies and DSA review, would ensure the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows, and impacts would be less than significant.

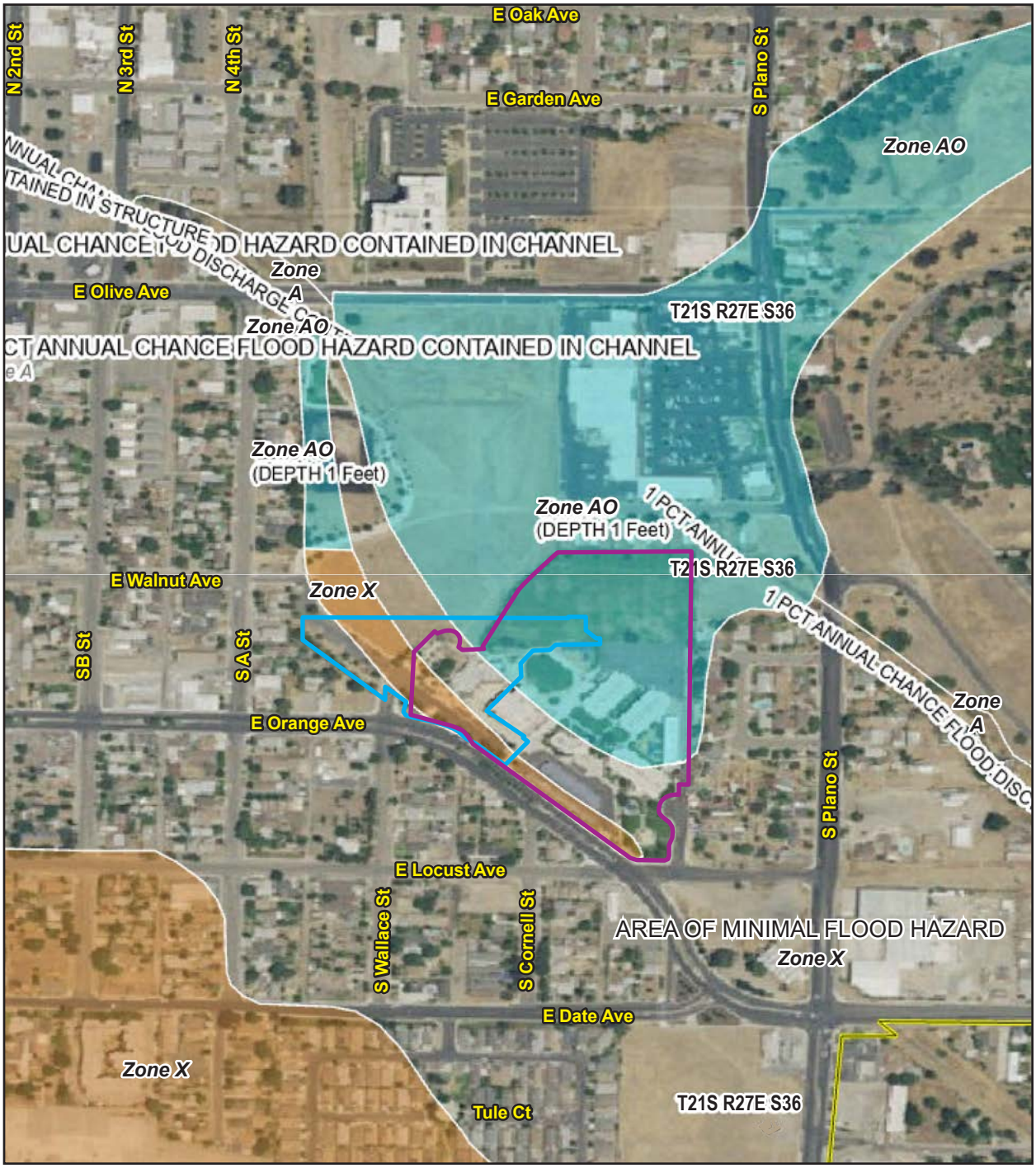
A tsunami is a series of ocean waves caused by a sudden displacement of the ocean floor, most often due to earthquakes. The campus is approximately 112 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, at an elevation of approximately 480 feet above mean sea level (amsl) and is outside of the tsunami hazard zone identified by the California Department of Conservation's California Tsunami Maps (DOC 2024c). Therefore, the proposed project would not risk release of pollutants due to tsunamis.

A seiche is a surface wave created when an enclosed body of water (such as a lake or a reservoir) is shaken, usually by earthquake activity. Inundation from a seiche can occur if the wave overflows a lake or a containment wall, such as the wall of a reservoir, water storage tank, dam or other artificial body of water. Based on the National Inventory of Dams, the project site and the entire City of Porterville is within an inundation area (USACE 2024). Although, the proposed project is expected to use small amounts of hazardous materials during construction and operation (e.g., paints, cleaners, oils, etc.), the construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable regulations for proper handling, usage, and storage of potentially hazardous materials (see Section 3.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*). Additionally, due to adherence with State and local policies and DSA review, the proposed project would not release pollutants in the event of project inundation. A less than significant impact would occur.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than Significant. The project site is within the Tule subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin (Porterville 2015a). The City of Porterville is within the Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)(SGMA 2022)

Figure 11 - FEMA Flood Map



School Boundary — Project Boundary

Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE)
Zone A, V, A99

With BFE or Depth
Zone AE, AO (Depth 1'), AH, VE, AR

0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% Annual Chance Flood with Average Depth Less Than One Foot or with Drainage Areas of Less Than One Square Mile

NO SCREEN — Area of Minimal Flood Hazard *Zone X*

Jurisdiction Boundary

0 500
Scale (Feet)

Source: FEMA 2009.

3. Environmental Analysis

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The proposed project would not conflict or obstruct with implementation of the Eastern Tule GSP. The project construction would be subject to the Statewide CGP and implementation of BMPs specified in the SWPPP. This would minimize the potential for erosion or siltation impacts to occur that could impact receiving waters. During operational phase, the proposed project would be required to comply with State and local regulations which would include, SWRCB Trash Amendments, site design, source control BMPs, as described in Section 3.10(a).

Furthermore, the proposed project would be designed to meet the City of Porterville's stormwater management and rainwater retention ordnance (25-32A.18) which requires all landscape areas to have friable soil to maximize water retention and infiltration (Porterville 2024k). Infiltration through the soil would ensure no additional pollutants are caught offsite and existing pollutants would be filtered through the soil. Additionally, stormwater generated by the proposed project would be routed to existing stormwater infrastructure onsite and to existing stormwater infrastructure in public rights of way and would not degrade or impair the water quality or supply of ground water. Therefore, the project would comply with the Tule Subbasin GSP.

The City does not contain a water quality control plan. As substantiated in Sections 3.10 (a) and (b), above, the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards and would not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or obstruct with implementation of a water quality control plan or a sustainable groundwater management plan, and a less than significant impact would occur.

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The project site is developed with the existing SFES campus on the western side of the site and contains an undeveloped but disturbed City-owned parcel on the eastern side of the site. The proposed project would expand the SFES campus. The proposed project would include construction of two new buildings to serve TK, preschool and K students, a new parking lot, a new pickup/drop-off area, and renovate the existing parking lot 2 (among other associated improvements, see Section 1.3, *Project Description*). The proposed project does not include the construction of any roadways nor channels nor remove any thoroughfares that could physically divide an established community. The proposed project improvements would be limited to the project site. The proposed project would not create any new land use barriers, divide, or disrupt the physical arrangement of any surrounding communities. No impact would occur.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would construct two new buildings to serve TK, preschool and K students, a new parking lot, a new pickup/drop-off area, and renovate the existing parking lot 2 (among other associated improvements, see Section 1.3, *Project Description*) that would expand and support the SFES campus. The City's General Plan land use designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as Education

and Parks and Recreation, respectively. The City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS and PK, respectively. The District would exempt a portion of parcel APN 261-150-056 being acquired from the City of Porterville from local zoning. Nevertheless, consistent with the Civic Center Act, the project site and the SFES, including classrooms, library, and the multipurpose room, would be available to the public for community events, which could support recreational activities in the City of Porterville. Therefore, the construction and operation of the proposed project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The City of Porterville contains Mineral Resource Zone's (MRZ) 2a, 2b, and 3a; which are zones that contain or may contain significant aggregate deposits of known mineral resources of value to the region (Porterville 2008b). Based in Figure 6-3, *Soil and Mineral Conservation*, of the Porterville General Plan, the project site is not within MRZ 2a, 2b or 3a, which are areas with known and valuable mineral resources. Additionally, Figure 6-3 identifies an active mining area within the City of Porterville approximately 3.75 miles southeast of the project site, which contains a sand and gravel open pit mine (Porterville 2008b, DOC 2024d).

The project site is developed with the SFES campus and vacant/disturbed land. No mining activities currently exist on the project site nor on campus. Construction and operation of the proposed project would not interfere with the availability of known mineral resources, since the project site is not located within MRZ 2a, 2b or 3a, and no mining activities exist onsite. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource valuable to the region and the state, and no impact would occur.

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. Based on Figure 6-3, *Soil and Mineral Conservation*, of the Porterville General Plan, the project site is not within MRZ 2a, 2b, or 3a, which are areas with known and valuable mineral resources (Porterville 2008b). Additionally, Figure 6-3 identifies an active mining area within the City of Porterville approximately 3.75 miles southeast of the project site, which contains a sand and gravel open pit mine (Porterville 2008b, DOC 2024d).

The City's zoning ordinance designates the campus and the City-owned parcel as PS and PK, respectively (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). No mining activities currently exist on the project site, SFES campus, nor surrounding properties. Construction and operation of the proposed project would not interfere with the availability of known mineral resources, since the project site is not located within MRZ 2a, 2b or 3a, and no mining activities exist onsite. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of locally important mineral resource site on a local plan, and no impact would occur.

3.13 NOISE

Environmental Setting

Noise is defined as unwanted sound. It is known to have several adverse effects on people, including hearing loss, speech and sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Based on these known adverse effects of noise, the federal government, State of California, and City of Porterville have established criteria to protect public health and safety and to prevent disruption of certain human activities. Noise modeling was prepared by PlaceWorks in June 2024 which is summarized herein and included as Appendix H. Additional information on noise and vibration fundamentals and applicable regulations are also contained in Appendix H.

Sensitive Receptors

Certain land uses are particularly sensitive to noise and vibration. The City of Porterville General Plan Noise Element identifies include residences, schools, hospital facilities, houses of worship, and public libraries. The nearest noise sensitive receptors to the project site are single-family residential uses to the north, south, east, and west of the project site.

Existing Conditions

The project site and campus are in a predominantly residential neighborhood. The existing noise environment is characterized primarily by traffic noise on Orange Avenue. Typical conditions would include noise from children yelling and playing on existing school and park grounds, dogs barking, typical residential activities, birds, and wind noise also contribute to the existing ambient noise environment.

Applicable Standards

City of Porterville General Plan

Chapter 9, *Noise Element,* in the Porterville General Plan establishes noise related goals and land use compatibility standards under the Safety and Noise Element. The City has adopted the following applicable goals and policies:

Guiding Policies

- **N-G-1** Minimize vehicular and stationary noise levels and noise from temporary activities.

Implementation Policies

- **N-I-5** Reduce noise intrusion generated by miscellaneous noise sources through conditions of approval to control noise-generating activities.
- **N-I-6** Require new noise sources to use best available control technology (BACT) to minimize noise emissions.
- **N-I-7** Require noise from existing mechanical equipment to be reduced by soundproofing materials and sound-deadening installation.

3. Environmental Analysis

City of Porterville Municipal Code

The City of Porterville Municipal Code includes noise regulations (referred to generally as the Noise Ordinance). The City of Porterville's regulations with respect to noise are included in Chapter 18, Article IX, Noise, of the City Code. Section 18-90.4, Exterior Noise Standards, presents exterior noise standards for the various land uses measured at any residence, school, hospital, church or public library. These standards are presented in Table 2, *Exterior Noise Level Standards*.

Table 2 Exterior Noise Level Standards

Category	Daytime (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)	Nighttime (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.)
Hourly L_{eq}	50	45
Maximum sound level (L_{max})	70	65

Source: City of Porterville Municipal Code 18-90.4
Notes: The following are applicable to the exterior noise standards:
Section 18-90.4 (B In the event the measured ambient noise level without the alleged offensive source in operation exceeds the applicable noise level standard in either category above, the applicable standard or standards shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.
Section 18.90. (C), each of the noise level standards specified above shall be reduced by five (5) dB for pure tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises.
Section 18.90-4 (D) If the intruding noise source is continuous and cannot reasonably be discontinued or stopped for a time period whereby the ambient noise level without the source can be measured, the noise level measured while the source is in operation shall be compared directly to the noise level standards. (Ord. 1757, 8-18-2009)

Section 18-90.6 of the Municipal Code consists of exemptions from noise emanating sources associated with different uses. Section 18-90.6 (D) exempts activities conducted in public parks, public playgrounds and public or private school grounds, including, but not limited to, school athletic and school entertainment events, except as otherwise noted the Code. Section 18-90.6 (F) exempts noise sources associated with construction, whether private or public, within five 500 feet of the uses mentioned in subsection 18-90.4, provided such activities do not take place before 6:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. on any day except Saturday or Sunday, or before 7:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday.

The City of Porterville does not have a quantified threshold for temporary construction noise and vibration. Therefore, to determine impact significance, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) criteria are used in this analysis. A construction noise impact would occur if project construction generates noise levels greater than 80 dBA L_{eq} at noise sensitive residential property lines. A vibration impact would occur if project vibration levels exceed 0.20 inches/second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) at the façade of a non-engineered structure (e.g., wood-frame residential) at the nearby sensitive residential uses.

Would the project result in:

a) 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. Noise generated by on-site construction equipment is based on the type of equipment used, its location relative to sensitive receptors, and the timing and duration of noise-generating activities. Each phase of construction involves different types of equipment and has distinct noise

characteristics. Noise levels from construction activities are typically dominated by the loudest three pieces of equipment. The dominant equipment noise source is typically the engine, although work-piece noise (such as dropping of materials) can also be noticeable.

The noise produced at each construction phase is determined by combining the L_{eq} contributions from the top-three loudest pieces of equipment used at a given time, while accounting for the ongoing time-variations of noise emissions (commonly referred to as the usage factor). Heavy equipment, such as a dozer or a loader, can have maximum, short-duration noise levels of up to 85 dBA at 50 feet. However, overall noise emissions vary considerably, depending on what specific activity is being performed at any given moment.

Noise attenuation due to distance, the number and type of equipment, and the load and power requirements to accomplish tasks at each construction phase would result in different noise levels from construction activities at a given receptor. Since noise from construction equipment is intermittent and diminishes at a rate of at least 6 dBA per doubling of distance (conservatively disregarding other attenuation effects from air absorption, ground effects, and shielding effects provided by intervening structures or existing solid walls), the average noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors could vary considerably, because mobile construction equipment would move around the site (site of each development phase) with different equipment mixes, loads, and power requirements.

The proposed project would expand the SFES campus with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel and the construction of two new buildings, a new parking lot, and a new pickup/drop-off area (among other associated improvements). The project would also renovate the existing parking lot 2, located in front of existing buildings 200A and 200. The proposed project would accommodate up to 275 TK, preschool, and K students at the SFES campus.

The expected construction equipment mix was estimated and categorized by construction activity using the Federal Highway Administration Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM). Average noise levels from project-related construction activities are calculated by modeling the three loudest pieces of equipment per activity phase. Equipment for grading and site preparation is modeled at spatially averaged distances (i.e., from the acoustical center of the general construction site to the property line of the nearest receptors) because the area around the center of construction activities best represents the potential average construction-related noise levels at the various sensitive receptors for mobile equipment. Similarly, construction noise from demolition is modeled from the center of the project site. Building construction and architectural coating are measured from the edge of the proposed buildings to the nearest sensitive receptors. Additionally, paving is measured from the edge of the nearest paving areas to the nearest sensitive receptors. Results are summarized in Table 3, *Project Related Construction Noise Levels (dBA),* at the nearest receptors. Construction noise levels near existing residences to the north, west, east and south were modeled between 57 dBA and 72 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise sensitive residences to the north, south, east, and west to the project site. Construction noise levels would not exceed the FTA threshold of 80 dBA L_{eq} at residential uses near the project site. Therefore, construction noise impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3 Project-Related Construction Noise Levels (dBA)

Construction Activity Phase	Noise Levels in dBA L_{eq}				
	RCNM Reference Noise Level	Residential Receptors to South along Orange Avenue	Residential Receptors to East along Howard Lane	Residential Receptors to North along Eastridge Circle	Residential Receptors to West along A Street
Distance in feet	**50**	**250**	**290**	**700**	**760**
Demolition	85	71	70	62	61
Site Preparation	85	71	70	62	61
Grading	85	71	70	62	61
Distance in feet	**50**	**240**	**230**	**240**	**310**
Building Construction	80	66	67	66	64
Architectural Coating	74	60	61	60	58
Distance in feet	**50**	**130**	**100**	**400**	**670**
Paving	80	72	74	62	57
Exceeds FTA's 80 dBA L_{eq} Threshold?		**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: FHWA's RCNM software. Distance measurements were taken using Google Earth (2024) from the acoustical center of the project site.
dBA Leq = Energy-Average (Leq) Sound Levels.

On Campus Receptors

Students would remain on site during demolition, site preparation, and building construction. Construction activities could occur within 70 feet of existing classroom buildings. As shown in Table 3, construction noise levels would range between 74 and 85 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet per the RCNM Reference Noise Level and would propagate to 71 and 82 dBA L_{eq} at 70 feet[8]. Typical exterior-to-interior noise attenuation with windows and doors closed is 25 dBA. This would result in interior noise levels of approximately 46 to 57 dBA L_{eq}. Speech interference is considered intolerable when background noise levels exceed 60 dBA. Therefore, average construction noise levels are not expected to exceed 60 dBA L_{eq} within adjacent classrooms based on typical exterior-to-interior noise attenuation. Construction would occur throughout the project site and thereby would be further than 70 feet at times which would reduce interior noise levels. In addition, to avoid classroom disruption, some work would be done during instructional breaks when students are off campus. Additionally, construction of the proposed project would occur during the exempt hours per Porterville Municipal Code Section 18-90.6 (F) and Section 18-90.6 (D). Therefore, on-campus construction noise impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Noise

The proposed project's primary onsite operational noise sources would include rooftop heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units and an expanded pickup and drop off area. The proposed project could

[8] Since noise from construction equipment is intermittent and diminishes at a rate of at least 6 dBA per doubling of distance (conservatively disregarding other attenuation effects from air absorption, ground effects, and shielding effects), the average noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors could vary considerably, because mobile construction equipment would move around the site with different loads and power requirements.

include rooftop HVAC units consisting of 4-ton and 5-ton units. The proposed project is not anticipated to host any programming or large-scale events that could potentially disrupt nearby residential areas.

Building 700 would have four 4-ton units and two 5-ton rooftop HVAC units. Building 800 would have eight 4-ton units and three 5-ton rooftop HVAC units. Rooftop HVAC units would generate noise levels of up to 74 dBA (York 2006). Building 700 HVAC units (6 total) operating continuously would result in a combined HVAC noise levels of 43 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (residence to the west at 220 to 340 feet from HVAC units). Building 800 HVAC units (11 total) operating continuously would result in a combined HVAC noise levels of 40 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (residence to the west at 430 to 600 feet from HVAC units). The combined HVAC noise level of Buildings 700 and 800 would be 45 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise sensitive residential receptor to the west. Proposed school buildings do include rooftop parapets, similar to existing school buildings, that would break line of sight from source to receiver and reduce HVAC noise levels at nearby receptors below 45 dBA L_{eq}. Operational noise from the HVAC equipment would not exceed daytime and nighttime noise standards of 50 dBA and 45 dBA L_{eq}, respectively (per Section 18-90.4, Exterior Noise Standards, of the Porterville Municipal Code). Furthermore, operational noise from HVAC equipment would not substantially increase ambient noise levels at nearby residences. Thus, noise impacts from mechanical equipment would be less than significant.

The residences west of the parking lot along A Street would continue to experience noise due to vehicles idling and maneuvering at the parking lots, doors opening and closing, and voices in the parking lot areas and driveways, similar to existing conditions. These activities would occur for short periods of approximately 10 to 20 minutes during student drop-off in the morning and student pick-up midafternoon. However, these periods are short term and would occur only during the daytime. Based on measurements conducted from a previous project by PlaceWorks, during student drop-off at an elementary school for a similar project, the average noise level measured 55.1 dBA L_{eq} at 40 feet. Accounting for distances from the nearest school drop-off area expansion to the nearest sensitive receptor (200 feet), school drop-off noise would be 41 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest residential property line to the west of the project site. Project operational noise would not exceed daytime noise standards of 50 dBA L_{eq} (per Section 18-90.4, Noise Standards, of the Porterville Municipal Code). Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Off-Site Traffic Noise

A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment related to traffic noise if it substantially increases the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas. Most people can detect changes in sound levels of approximately 3 dBA under normal, quiet conditions, and changes of 1 to 3 dBA under quiet, controlled conditions. Changes of less than 1 dBA are usually indiscernible. A change of 5 dBA is readily discernible to most people in an outdoor environment. Noise levels above 65 dBA CNEL are normally unacceptable at sensitive receptor locations such as residences, and noise environments in these areas would be considered degraded. Based on this, a significant impact would occur if the following traffic noise increases occur relative to the existing noise environment:

- 1.5 dBA in ambient noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL and higher
- 3 dBA in ambient noise environments of 60 to 64 dBA CNEL
- 5 dBA in ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL

3. Environmental Analysis

Based on existing traffic noise modeling, a significant traffic noise impact occurs when the thresholds above are exceeded under cumulative conditions (with project) and the contribution of the project to future traffic is calculated to be greater than 3 dBA CNEL for Orange Avenue.

With the additional classroom capacity, student enrollment would also increase. Traffic volume data for the new trips associated with the proposed project are provided by Garland Associates (2024). The proposed project is expected to increase from the existing 1,870 weekday daily trips to 2,480 weekday daily trips. With the project ADT of 610 ADT, noise levels along the segments of Orange Avenue would increase by less than 1 dBA, respectively. Table 4, *Project-Related Increases in Traffic Noise*, *dBA CNEL at 50 Feet* shows the project trip addition of 610 trips would not result in a 3 dBA increase over existing conditions. Therefore, traffic noise impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4 Project-Related Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet

	Segment		Traffic Noise Increase			Traffic Noise Increased Baseline 2027 CNEL at 50 Feet		
Roadway	From	To	Existing No Project	Existing with Proposed Project	Existing Increase	Baseline 2027 With No Project	Baseline 2027 With Proposed Project	Baseline 2027 Increase
Orange Avenue	4th Street	Plano Street	68	68	0.1	60	60	<1
Orange Avenue	Date Avenue	Olive Avenue	61	62	0.4	60	60	<1

Source: Garland Associates (2024). See Appendix J

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact. Potential vibration impacts associated with development projects are usually related to the use of heavy construction equipment during the demolition phase of construction. Construction can generate varying degrees of ground vibration depending on the construction procedures and equipment. Construction equipment generates vibration that spreads through the ground and diminishes with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The effects from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that can damage structures.

Architectural Damage

For reference, a peak particle velocity of 0.20 in/sec PPV is used as the limit for nonengineered timber and masonry buildings (which would apply to the off-site surrounding residential structures) (FTA 2018). Table 5, *Vibration Impact Levels for Typical Construction Equipment*, shows typical construction equipment vibration levels and reference vibration levels at a distance of 25 feet. The nearest construction activity associated with would occur closest to the residences west of the project site along A Street. The closest residential buildings to the project site are 75 feet west from the parking lot along A Street. At 25 feet, as shown in Table 4, construction vibration levels would be up to 0.040 in/sec PPV or less.

Table 5 Vibration Impact Levels for Typical Construction Equipment

Equipment	in/sec PPV				
	Reference Levels at 25 Feet	Receptor to South along Orange Avenue at 100 feet	Receptors to East along Howard Street at 300 feet	Receptors to North along Eastridge Circle at 250 feet	Receptor to West along A Street at 75 feet
Vibratory Roller	0.21	0.026	0.005	0.007	0.040
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.011	0.002	0.003	0.017
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.010	0.002	0.002	0.015
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001

Source: FTA 2018.
[1] As measured from the edge of construction site using Google Earth Pro.

The City of Porterville does not have an established threshold for assessing construction vibration impacts. The FTA maximum acceptable vibration standard of 0.2 in/sec PPV for nonengineered timber and masonry buildings is applied for assessing vibration impacts from project construction-related activities. The nearest structure to the site's construction activities, the residential use to the west, is approximately 75 feet away from the proposed construction. At this distance, construction vibration from a vibratory roller would attenuate to 0.040 in/sec PPV or less. Proposed construction activities would not exceed the FTA vibration standard of 0.2 in/sec PPV at the building façade. Therefore, impacts from construction vibration would be less than significant.

Operational Vibration

The operation of the proposed project would not include any substantial long-term vibration sources from operations source. Thus, no impact would occur.

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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The nearest airport or airstrip to the project site associated with the project is the Porterville Municipal Airport, approximately 3.1 miles to the southwest. At this distance, project implementation would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive levels. No impact would occur.

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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 is an educational use and does not include new homes. The proposed project would accommodate an additional 269 TK, preschool, and K students at the SFES campus. The proposed project will serve school-aged children within the District enrollment boundaries and would not generate unplanned population growth directly or indirectly.

3. Environmental Analysis

Further, a total of 17 staff members would be required to accommodate the increase in students at SFES; the District would relocate eight existing staff members from other District campuses for the TK and K classrooms and hire nine new staff members for the preschool program. The relocation of eight teachers would not impact population or housing, as they are already employed by the District and reside in Porterville or the surrounding area. The proposed project would generate an increase in nine new staff members, which could result in new residents to Porterville or the surrounding area. The Porterville Housing Element anticipates a population of 74,455 persons in 2030 an increase of 10,950 persons from 2020 (Porterville 2015b). The increase of nine new staff members would conservatively result in a population growth of approximately 30[9] residents. This increase would account for approximately 0.27 percent [10] of the anticipated population growth and is well within the anticipated growth for the city. The population increase of approximately 30 persons is conservative because a portion of the 9 new employees (and their families) would likely already reside within the City of Porterville or the surrounding area and would not relocate because of the proposed project. The increase in new staff members would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area directly or indirectly.

The construction of the proposed project would result in a temporary increase in construction work opportunities. As discussed in Section 1.3.2, *Project Construction*, the construction period would be 12 months and would include various construction steps from site preparation, building construction to architectural finishings and landscaping. Each step of the construction process requires construction personnel from different skilled labor and trades. Each skilled labor and/or trade would only be present onsite for the duration of the respective construction step. A portion of the construction workers are anticipated to reside in the City of Porterville or the surrounding area. Given that construction is temporary, each skill/trade would only be needed for a portion of the construction period, and a portion of the construction workers are anticipated to reside in area, the temporary increase of construction work would not result in substantial unplanned population growth either directly or indirectly.

The proposed project includes various infrastructure improvements on the project site to serve the new buildings, such as but not limited to the construction of a new parking lot, utility connections to existing utilities, and a new fire lane. These components would serve the proposed project and the SFES campus and would not represent the type of infrastructure that result in indirect unplanned population growth.

Therefore, proposed project would not induce substantial population growth either directly or indirectly. Thus, a less than significant impact would occur.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. No housing exists on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace existing people or housing, and no impact would occur.

[9] 62,623 population ÷ 18,931 dwelling units = 3.307 persons per household (US Census 2020)
new staff members * 3.307 = 29.77 or 30 persons

[10] (30 persons ÷ 10,950 projected growth)*100 = 0.27%

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Notification letters and questionnaires were sent to the Porterville Fire Department and the Porterville Police Department, responses were received on June 13 and June 18, 2024, respectively. Responses are integrated into the discussion below. Copies of these responses are provided in Appendix I.

Would the project 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:

a) Fire protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. Porterville Fire Department (PFD) would provide fire protection and emergency services to the project site. PFD provides fire protection, emergency medical response, wild-land interface firefighting, emergency preparedness planning and coordinating, hazardous materials response, fire prevention inspections services to the project site (PFD 2023). The nearest PFD station to the project site is Fire Station #71, located at 40 West Cleveland approximately 0.70 miles northwest of the project site. Fire Station #71 would be the station of first response. In the event of a structure fire or additional fire protection need, both Station #72 at 500 North Newcomb Avenue and Station #73 at 980 South Jaye Street are approximately 2.50 miles and 1.30 miles from the project site, respectively, and can provide added fire protection support. See Table 6, *Porterville Fire Department Equipment and Personnel.*

Table 6 Porterville Fire Department Equipment and Personnel

Station	Location	Equipment	Daily Staffing
Porterville – Fire Station #71	40 West Cleveland Avenue Porterville, CA 93257	1 75-foot Aerial Ladder Truck 1 Type 1 Engine 1 Type 6 Patrol	5
Porterville – Fire Station #72	500 North Newcomb Street Porterville, CA 93257	1 Type 1 Engine 1 Type 6 patrol	4
Porterville – Fire Station #73	980 South Jaye Street Porterville, CA 93257	1 Type 1 Engine 1 Type 6 patrol 12,000-gallon Tactical Water Tender	4

Source: Dignam, 2024 (Appendix I)

Additionally, PFD has service aid agreements with Tulare County Fire and an Automatic Aid agreement with Cal Fire to respond for structure fires and mutual aid as requested. The PFD has adopted response related standards from the National Fire Protection Association 1710 (Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments). PFD response standard for the first arriving Emergency Medical unit Services (EMS) is five minutes (5 Minutes) and the first arriving engine to a fire is five minutes and twenty seconds (5.20 Minutes), 90 percent of the time. The PFD 2023 Annual Report, response times show that in 2023 PFD response time performance for EMS response time was met 74 percent of the time and to fires was met 80 percent of the time. PFD's response indicates that there are no existing deficiencies in equipment nor personnel

that would provide fire protection services to the proposed project, and the proposed project would not have a negative impact on the PFD's services (Appendix I). PFD's response indicates that the City of Porterville is assessing sites for the acquisition and placement of Fire Station 74, which would serve the proposed project in the future. The construction of a new fire station would occur independent of the proposed project, and a CEQA evaluation for the new fire station would occur independent of the proposed project and at the appropriate time (Appendix I).

Construction

During the construction phase of the proposed project, there would be a temporary increase of construction workers on-site. Construction of the proposed project would be required to comply with state building and fire codes to ensure onsite safety during construction. The code includes standards for building and construction, requirements for emergency access, hazardous material handling, and fire protection systems. Construction of the proposed project would further implement Occupational Safety and Health Administrative (OSHA) regulations to ensure onsite safety during construction. Construction plans of the proposed project would be reviewed and inspected by the Division of State Architects to ensure all requirements are met, such as adequate emergency access to the project site during construction. Further, PFD would review project plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers. Therefore, project construction would not affect fire/emergency response protection services to the extent that new or physically altered fire facilities would be needed to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection services. Further, as discussed above, adequate fire protection services currently serve the project site. Therefore, construction-related impacts on fire protection would be less than significant.

Operation

The proposed project would increase student capacity on campus by 275 students and this would increase SFES's capacity from 816 to 1,091 students. Additionally, the proposed project would expand the duration of the before-school Expanded Learning program by 20 minutes with an end time from 8:10 AM to 8:30 AM. To serve the increase in student capacity, eight staff members would be relocated to the SFES campus and nine new staff members would be hired. The increase in SFES's student capacity, staff members and the extension of the before-school Expanded Learning program would generate more people on the project site, which may create an increase in demand for fire protection services compared to existing conditions onsite. Additionally, with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel, the proposed project would increase buildings and infrastructure that could add additional fire protection demand.

The existing emergency/fire access features to the SFES campus would remain the same and would continue to accommodate emergency ingress and egress by fire trucks, police units, ambulance/paramedic vehicles, and other authorized vehicles. The proposed project would be designed and construction to accommodate emergency access to the proposed project in accordance with the fire code and would be reviewed and approved by the DSA. The PFD would review project plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers.

As discussed above, PFD's response indicates that there are no existing deficiencies in equipment nor personnel that would provide fire protection services to the proposed project, and the proposed project would not have a negative impact on the PFD's services. PFD states that the proposed project and the inclusion of the fully sprinklered classrooms with monitoring will not have a negative impact on the PFD for fire suppression. Additionally, PFD prevention division would be required to conduct an annual state mandated inspections on the proposed project's additional classroom buildings and site; however, PFD stated such impacts would be considered de-minimus (Appendix I). Although the proposed project may create an increase in the demand for fire protection services compared to existing conditions, the proposed project would not generate an increase in fire protection facilities nor personnel in manner that would require new or physically altered fire protection facilities.

The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on fire protection services.

b) Police protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Porterville Police Department (PPD) serves the City of Porterville and would provide police protection services to the project site. PPD operates one police station (Porterville Police Station), located at 350 North D Street, approximately 0.70 miles northwest of the project site. PPD further operates an animal control center and a public safety building. See Table 7, *Porterville Police Department Equipment and Personnel*. PPD's current response time standard to respond to emergency and non-emergency calls are three minutes (3-minutes); currently, the average response time to emergency and non-emergency calls are four-to-five minutes (4-to-5-minutes). PPD's response indicates that there are no existing deficiencies in personnel, equipment, nor facilities that would serve the project site, and PPD anticipates that it would have adequate existing resources to meet the demand of the proposed project (Appendix I).

Table 7 Porterville Police Department Equipment and Personnel

Station	Location	Equipment	Daily Staffing	Total Staffing
Porterville – Fire Station #71	350 North D Street, Porterville, CA 93257	89 Patrol Cars 1 SWAT Vehicle 7 Trailers 1 ATV	Approximately 30	Approximately 133
Animal Control	279 North "D" Street, Porterville, CA 93257	N/a	5	N/a
Public Safety Building	980 South Jaye Street, Porterville, CA 93257	N/a	3	N/a

Source: Castellow, 2024 (Appendix I)

Construction

During the construction phases of the proposed project, there would be a temporary increase of construction workers on-site. Construction of the proposed project would maintain emergency access and emergency egress routes during project construction. Active construction areas would be fenced during the construction phase, and construction site access would be limited to authorized personnel. Further, the storage and staging of construction equipment would occur on the project site or on the SFES campus, which would be fenced.

Equipment and vehicles would be locked and only accessible by authorized personnel. Therefore, the temporary construction of the proposed project would not materially increase the demand for police protection services. It would not result in the need for physically altered or new police facilities, which could result in environmental impacts, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The proposed project would increase student capacity on campus by 275 students and this would increase SFES's capacity from 816 to 1,091 students. Additionally, the proposed project would expand the duration of the before-school Expanded Learning program by 20 minutes with an end time from 8:10 AM to 8:30 AM. To serve the increase in student capacity, eight staff members would be relocated to the SFES campus and nine new staff members would be hired. The increase in SFES's student capacity, staff members and the extension of the before-school Expanded Learning program would generate more people on the project site, which may create an increase in demand for police protection services compared to existing conditions onsite. Additionally, with the acquisition of a 3.80-acre City-owned parcel, the proposed project would increase buildings and infrastructure that could generate additional police protection demand.

The proposed project would including fencing to control access and for children's safety. Further, the proposed project would be monitored by existing and new staff. During non-school hours, the campus, including the proposed project would be locked, and security lighting would provide an additional measure of visibility and security during evening and nighttime hours. Further as discussed under Threshold (a) above, the proposed project would maintain circulation and access points on the campus and project site. DSA would review and approve project design plans to ensure adequate emergency access to the project site. As discussed above, PPD indicates that there are no current deficiencies (personnel, equipment, facilities) in the police protection and PPD contains adequate resources to serve the proposed project. Additionally, PPD stated the proposed project would have no impact on PPD's ability to provide protection services to the project site (Appendix I). Although the proposed project may create a slight increase in the demand for police protection services compared to existing conditions, the proposed project would not generate an increase in police protection facilities nor personnel in manner that would require new or physically altered police protection facilities. The proposed project would not require new or physically alter police protection facilities or routes. The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on police protection services.

c) Schools?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes expanding and adding additional preschool, TK and K services to SFES campus. As discussed in Section 3.14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would generate nine new employees, which could generate new school aged children to be served by PUSD. However, as shown in Section 3.14, *Population and Housing,* this potential growth is conservative and is well within the City of Porterville's population growth projections. The potential generation of new students by nine new employees (and their families) moving to the area would be accommodated within PUSD. The new employment generated by the proposed project would not generate an increase demand in school facilities nor personnel in manner that would require new or physically altered school facilities.

The potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project are fully evaluated in this IS/MND. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate an increase in school facilities nor personnel in manner that would require new or physically altered school facilities. The proposed project would not require new or physically alter school facilities beyond what has been evaluated in this IS/MND. The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on school services.

d) Parks?

Less Than Significant Impact. Parks in the City of Porterville are managed by the Parks & Leisure Services Department. According to the Porterville General Plan the Department manages fifteen parks, ballfields, a community center, a heritage center, and trails/parkways with 309.7 gross park acreage (Porterville 2008c). Additionally, there are other recreational areas within the City includes the Golden Trout Wilderness Pack Train, Porterville Municipal Golf Course, a Skate Park, Success Lake Recreational area, Porterville Municipal Pool, the Sequoia National Park and various campgrounds (Porterville 2024d). Murry Park is the closest recreational facility to campus, approximately 0.65 miles northeast.

Typically, an increase in demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or population generating actions (such as large employment centers). The proposed project is an educational facilities project and would not build housing. As discussed in Section 3.14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would generate nine new employee positions, which would conservatively generate 30 new residents. As discussed in Section 3.14, the potential increase in residents to the City of Porterville due to the proposed project would be well within the buildout of the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate new population growth or housing that can increase the demand on parks. The proposed project would not increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities, or the need for new parks or recreational facilities.

The City's owned property adjacent to the existing SFES campus, which includes the to be acquired 3.8-acre parcel, is zoned for PK (on and off site) (City of Porterville 2024a). Although the project would acquire and develop a portion of the land designated as PK the majority of the City-owned property would remain in its current state. Additionally, the project would be available to the public for community events through Facilitron, a district-wide reservation platform, allowing for joint use of the school facilities (consistent with the Civic Center Act).

The proposed project would have a less than significant impact on parks.

e) Other public facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact. As of 2024, the City of Porterville owns and maintains one public library, that provide library services to the residence of Porterville. The branch library at 41 West Thurman Avenue was destroyed by a fire on February 18, 2020 (Porterville 2024i). Currently, the Porterville library operates out of an interim location at 50 West Olive Avenue, Suite B (Porterville 2024e). The Porterville library is a member of the San Joaquin Valley Library System. As a member of the San Joaquin Valley Library System, the Porterville library has access to a common patron database which provides a shared computer system platform, technical support, and facilitates the sharing of collection materials within the San Joaquin Valley. As discussed in Section 3.14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would generate nine new employee positions, which would

conservatively generate 30 new residents. As discussed in Section 3.14, the potential increase in residents to the City of Porterville due to the proposed project would be well within the buildout of the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate substantial population growth or housing that can increase the demand on libraries. The proposed project would not require new or physically altered libraries facilities, therefore, a less than significant impact to libraries would occur.

3.16 RECREATION

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less Than Significant Impact. Parks in the City are managed by the Parks & Leisure Services Department. According to the Porterville General Plan, the Department manages fifteen parks, ballfields, a community center, a heritage center, and trails/parkways with 309.7 gross park acreage (Porterville 2008c). Additionally, there are other recreational areas within the City includes the Golden Trout Wilderness Pack Train, Porterville Municipal Golf Course, a Skate Park, Success Lake Recreational area, Porterville Municipal Pool, the Sequoia National Park and various campgrounds (Porterville 2024d). Murry Park is the closest recreational facility to the SFES campus and is approximately 0.65 miles northeast of the project site.

The City's owned property adjacent to the existing SFES campus, which includes the to be acquired 3.8-acre parcel, is zoned for PK (on and off site) (City of Porterville 2024a). Although the project would acquire and develop a portion of the land designated as PK the majority of the City-owned property would remain in its current state. Additionally, the project would be available to the public for community events through Facilitron, a district-wide reservation platform, allowing for joint use of the school facilities (consistent with the Civic Center Act). An increase in the use of recreational facilities is generated by an increase in population growth. The proposed project would not develop any new housing and not induce substantial population growth and would be well within the buildout of the City (as discussed in Section 3.14). Therefore, the proposed project would not generate an increased demand for existing neighborhood, regional facilities or other recreational facilities and would not result in substantial physical deterioration of such facilities nor cause deterioration to accelerate. The proposed project would have less than significant impact on recreation.

b) Does the project 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 discussed in Section 3.16(a), the increase in use of recreational facilities is generated by an increase in population growth; however, the proposed project would not develop any new housing and would not induce substantial population growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not include the development of recreational facilities nor require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. A less than significant impact would occur.

3.17 TRANSPORTATION

This section is based in part on the *Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis for the Proposed Santa Fe Elementary School Expansion, Porterville Unified School District,* dated July 2024, prepared by Garland Associates (Garland)

The Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis is contained in Appendix J to this IS/MND.

Would the project:

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed circulation improvements associated with the proposed project include a new parking lot (Parking Lot 3), pick-up/drop-off area, new driveways within the existing surface parking lot and Howard Street (a gated roadway that provides access to the campus), restructuring of parking lot 2, and sidewalk along Orange Avenue, as further described in Section 1.3.1.3 above. The proposed project would not construct any new driveways nor change the existing driveway on Orange Street.

The primary ordinances and policies addressing the circulation system in the area are from the City of Porterville General Plan – Circulation Element. The Circulation Element discusses various policies, including but not limited to, promoting safe and efficient vehicular circulation; providing a wide variety of transportation alternatives and modes; improving accessibility to shops, schools, parks, and employment centers; protecting neighborhoods by discouraging through-traffic on local streets; promoting the use of public transit for daily trips to schools and work; promoting the use of bicycles; and promoting pedestrian activity.

The proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Circulation Element. The project would not conflict with any objectives, policies, or programs of the General Plan and it would not adversely affect the performance of any roadway, transit, or non-motorized (pedestrian and bicycle) transportation facilities. The proposed project would improve the existing circulation system and would be required to comply with applicable provisions of the Porterville Municipal Code for any improvements in the public right-of-way. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to comply with the CDE guidelines for site design and would be reviewed and approved by CDE. Further, the proposed project circulation and emergency access would be reviewed and approved by CDE and City of Porterville Fire Department. Furthermore, there are no bicycle paths near the SFES campus and there is one bus stop at the corner of S Cornell Street and E Orange Avenue, near SFES but not within the project site. As such, the proposed project would not hinder nor alter vehicle circulation on public rights-or-way nor interfere with existing bus and bicycle routes. Further, the proposed project would widen the public sideway along Orange Avenue supporting and promoting pedestrian mobility.

Based on the transportation analysis (contained in Appendix J), discussion of non-motorized transportation and transit, and a review of the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. Vehicle delays and levels of service (LOS) have historically been used as the basis for determining the significance of traffic impacts as standard practice in CEQA documents. On September 27, 2013, SB 743 was signed into law, starting a process that fundamentally changed transportation impact analyses as part of CEQA compliance. SB 743 eliminated auto delay, LOS, and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as the sole basis for determining significant impacts under CEQA. As part of the current CEQA Guidelines, the criteria "shall promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses" (Public Resources Code Section 21099(b)(1)). Pursuant to SB 743, the California Natural Resources Agency adopted revisions to the CEQA Guidelines on December 28, 2018, to implement SB 743. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 describes how transportation impacts are to be analyzed after SB 743. Under the Guidelines, metrics related to VMT were required beginning July 1, 2020, to evaluate the significance of transportation impacts under CEQA for development projects, land use plans, and transportation infrastructure projects. State courts ruled that under the Public Resources Code Section 21099, subdivision (b)(2), "automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment" under CEQA, except for roadway capacity projects.

The City of Porterville has adopted the County of Tulare "SB743 Guidelines" as the model for VMT impacts within the City. The County of Tulare guidelines present screening criteria that can be used to determine if a project would have a less than significant transportation impact and would not require a detailed VMT analysis. Screening Criteria 3.2.1, Small Projects, states that projects that generate less than 500 trips per day can be presumed to have a less than significant impact. In addition, Screening Criteria 3.2.3, Local-Serving Public Facilities, states that projects in this category would have a less than significant impact on VMT. As shown in Table 8, *Project Generated Traffic*, the proposed project would generate an estimated 610 ADT, which is above the threshold of 500 trips cited in Screening Criteria 3.2.1. However, the 610 ADT does not represent new traffic on the roadway network because students that would attend SFES would have attended schools in the District if the project were not implemented. Thus, there would be little or no net increase in VMT associated with the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project is a public elementary school, which is specifically listed in Screening Criteria 3.2.3 as a local-serving public facility that would have a less than significant VMT impact. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on VMT according to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.

Table 8 Project Generated Traffic

Facility	AM Peak Hour			Average Daily Trips
	Total	Inbound	Outbound	
TRIP GENERATION RATES				
Elementary School (vehicle trips per student)	0.75	54%	46%	2.27
GENERATED TRAFFIC VOLUMES				
Existing School (822 students)	616	333	283	1,870
Proposed School (1,091 students)	818	442	376	2,480
Net Increase (269 students)	202	109	93	610

Source: Garland, 2024

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 existing access to the project site is described in Section 1.2.2 above. The proposed circulation improvements associated with the proposed project include a new parking lot (Parking Lot 3), pick-up/drop-off area, new driveways within the existing surface parking lot and Howard Street (a gated roadway that provides access to the campus), restructuring of parking lot 2, and sidewalk along Orange Avenue, as further described in Section 1.3.1.3 above. The proposed project would not construct any new driveways nor change the existing driveway on Orange Street. Access to the campus would continue to be provided by the existing driveways on the northeast side of Orange Avenue and on the east side of A Street. In addition, one new driveway would be provided to connect to Howard Street, an internal campus roadway, which is connected to the existing driveway on Orange Avenue. The new driveway would provide improved access to the expanded parking lot 2 and circulation on campus.

The proposed project would result in increased levels of vehicle trips, number of pedestrians, and number of vehicular turning movements at the campus entrances and at the nearby intersections could result in an increased number of traffic conflicts and a corresponding increase in the probability of an accident occurring. These impacts would not be significant, however, because the streets, intersections, and driveways are designed to accommodate the anticipated levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity and have historically been accommodating school-related traffic on a daily basis. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to comply with the CDE guidelines for site design and would be reviewed and approved by CDE. Further, the proposed project circulation and emergency access would be reviewed and approved by CDE and City of Porterville Fire Department. Compliance with CDE's established design standards and implementation of signage and pedestrian circulation features would ensure that hazards due to design features would not occur and that the placement of the circulation improvements would not create a conflict for motorists, pedestrians, or bicyclists traveling within or around the project site. Furthermore, the proposed project would comply with applicable provisions of the Porterville Municipal Code for improvements in the public right-of-way (e.g. the sidewalk widening).

Although the proposed project would add more vehicles to the roadway network, the additional vehicles would be compatible with the design and use of the affected streets, and the proposed project would comply with applicable state and local regulations. Further, the proposed project would expand an existing elementary school campus and would not introduce incompatible uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature nor incompatible uses; thus, a less than significant impact would occur.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. Access to the campus would continue to be provided by the existing driveways on the northeast side of Orange Avenue and on the east side of A Street. The existing and proposed campus circulation features would accommodate emergency services. The proposed project would be required to accommodate emergency access to the project site. The proposed parking lot 3, would provide adequate emergency access to the proposed classroom buildings 700, and 800. The proposed parking lot 3 and the

associated drive aisle would improve emergency access to the western portion of campus, with access ability to other areas of the project site and campus, including the playfields and hard courts. The existing internal roadway, Howard Street, would continue to accommodate emergency vehicles and provide access to the campus. The proposed project would be required to comply with the CDE guidelines for site design and would be reviewed and approved by CDE. Further, the proposed project circulation and emergency access would be reviewed and approved by CDE and City of Porterville Fire Department that would ensure that adequate emergency access is provided. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

a) Would the project 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

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed under Threshold 3.5(a), the Cultural Letter Report evaluated if historical resources exist on the project site and determined through a field study that the three previously recorded cultural resources are not within the project site; and the project would not result in an adverse impact to significant or unique cultural resources (see Appendix C). Additionally, the project site and SFES campus are not listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, National Register of Historic Places, California State Historical Landmarks, or Points of Historical Interest or in a local register of historical resources (OHP 2024, NPS 2024).

As part of the Cultural Letter report, the NAHC SLF was conducted and yielded a negative result, which indicates that no known sacred sites or TCR existing within the vicinity of the project site. The NAHC provided a list of four California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project site area and may have additional information. These tribes were contacted during the preparation of the cultural resources report, one response from the Tule River Indian Tribe was received on March 18, 2024. The response states that there are rich resources within the general area and in close proximity to the project site. Due to the potential for unknown TCRs inadvertently being unearthed, Tule River Indian Tribe, recommended the use of a tribal archaeological monitor onsite during ground disturbing activities (ASM 2024).

Pursuant to AB 52, the Porterville Unified School District invited a total of five tribes to consult based on NAHC's Native American Contact List and the District's AB 52 list, which include Kern Valley Indian Community, Tubatulabals of Kern Valley, Tule River Indian Tribe, Wuksachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band, and Tule River Tribe of California. The invitation letters were sent to tribes on May 24, 2024 via email and/or mail to the available addresses. No responses were received.

Due to the potential of unearthing TCRs and Tule River Indian Tribe's recommendation for a tribal archaeological monitor during ground disturbing activities, mitigation measure TCR-1 would be implemented to ensure that impacts related to TCR are less than significant. With the incorporation of mitigation measure TCR-1, impacts to TCRs would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

TCR-1 Retain a Native American Monitor Prior to Commencement of Ground-Disturbing Activities

A. The project applicant/lead agency shall retain a Native American Monitor. The monitor shall be retained prior to the commencement of any "ground-disturbing activity" for the subject project at all project locations (i.e., both on-site and any off-site locations that are included in the project description/definition and/or required in connection with the project, such as public improvement work). "Ground-disturbing activity" shall include, but is not limited to, demolition, pavement removal, potholing, auguring, grubbing, tree removal, boring, grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching.

B. A copy of the executed monitoring agreement shall be submitted to the lead agency prior to the earlier of the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity, or the issuance of any permit necessary to commence a ground-disturbing activity.

C. The monitor will complete daily monitoring logs that will provide descriptions of the relevant ground-disturbing activities, the type of construction activities performed, locations of ground-disturbing activities, soil types, cultural-related materials, and any other facts, conditions, materials, or discoveries of significance to the Tribe. Monitor logs will identify and describe any discovered TCRs, including but not limited to, Native American cultural and historical artifacts, remains, places of significance, etc., (collectively, tribal cultural resources, or "TCR"), as well as any discovered Native American (ancestral) human remains and burial goods. Copies of monitor logs will be provided to the project applicant/lead agency upon written request to the Tribe.

D. On-site tribal monitoring shall conclude upon the latter of the following (1) written confirmation to the Tribe from a designated point of contact for the project applicant/lead agency that all ground-disturbing activities and phases that may involve ground-disturbing activities on the project site or in connection with the project are complete; or (2) a determination and written notification by the Tribe to the project applicant/lead agency that no future, planned construction activity and/or development/construction phase at the project site possesses the potential to impact TCRs.

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 Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) requires meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes on potential impacts to tribal cultural resources, as defined in PRC Section 21074. Tribal cultural resources are sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either eligible or listed in the California Register of Historical Resources or local register of historical resources. As part of the AB 52 process, Native American tribes must submit a written request to the District (lead agency) to be notified of projects within their traditionally and culturally affiliated area. The District must then provide written, formal notification to those tribes, and the tribe must respond to the lead agency within 30 days of receiving this notification if they want to engage in consultation on the project. When these steps are completed, the District must begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving the tribe's request. Consultation concludes when either 1): the parties agree to mitigation measures to avoid a significant effect on a tribal cultural resource, or 2) a party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes mutual agreement cannot be reached.

The NAHC provided a list of four California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project site area and may have additional information. These tribes were contacted during the preparation of the cultural resources report, one response from the Tule River Indian Tribe was received on March 18, 2024. The response states that there are rich resources within the general area and in close proximity to the project site. Due to the potential for unknown TCRs inadvertently being unearthed, Tule River Indian Tribe, recommended the use of a tribal archaeological monitor onsite during ground disturbing activities (ASM 2024).

Pursuant to AB 52, the Porterville Unified School District invited a total of five tribes to consult based on NAHC's Native American Contact List and the District's AB 52 list, which include Kern Valley Indian Community, Tubatulabals of Kern Valley, Tule River Indian Tribe, Wuksachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band, and Tule River Tribe of California. The invitation letters were sent to tribes on May 24, 2024 via email and/or mail to the available addresses. No responses were received.

Additionally, as discussed in Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, in the unlikely event human remains are encountered during ground-disturbing activities the human remains would be treated in accordance with procedures and requirements in Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code; Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code; and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. No cultural or archaeological resources have been recorded or identified within the project site (ASM 2024). As part of the Cultural Letter Report, a sacred lands file request was submitted to the NAHC on February 5, 2024 and the response on February 13, 2023, which stated that there are no known sacred sites nor tribal cultural resources in the vicinity of the project site. However, as discussed in Section 3.18(a)(i) above, the Tule River Indian Tribe identified the potential for unknown TCRs to be discovered during ground disturbing

activities. With implementation of mitigation measure TCR-1 in Section 3.18(a)(i) above, impacts would be less than significant.

3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

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 proposed project would construct two classroom buildings, which would serve the additional 269 students and 17 staff members which would increase the demand for water. Water is currently provided to the campus and project site by the City. Water is currently provided to the campus and project site by the municipal water existing water mains. Portable water would be provided to the new buildings through connections to the existing water mains. The proposed water system improvements would be designed and constructed in accordance with the California Building Code and CalGreen requirements, such as CALGreen Division 5.3, *Water Efficiency and Conservation*, including those of Sections 5.303, *Indoor Water Use*, and 5.304, *Outdoor Water Use*. As further discussed under Threshold (b) below, the City provides water to the campus, which is sourced from the ground water, and City has sufficient water capacity to serve the proposed project (Porterville 2015a). The proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded water facilities that could cause significant effects. Impacts would be less than significant.

Wastewater

The proposed project includes construction of two classroom buildings, with a total of 18 bathrooms within each building and two janitor's closets with a service sinks. The City provides wastewater collection and conveyance service to the SFES campus and the project site. The City conveys wastewater generated at the project site and campus to the City of Porterville Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) for treatment (Porterville 2008e). As of 2006, the WWTF average influent was 5.1 mgd or approximately 117 gallons per capita. According to the City of Porterville General Plan, the WWTF would need a treatment capacity of 4.5 mgd to accommodate the City's projected population in 2030 (Porterville 2008e). Currently WWTF is designed to treat 8 mgd of wastewater, a surplus of 3.5 mgd over the projected 2030 need. Wastewater generated by the proposed project will be conveyed to the existing sewer lines on campus. Since the proposed project would not generate population growth, except for the potentially new employees moving to the area. The proposed project's wastewater generation would be well within the WWTF's available capacity. Therefore, the proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded wastewater facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Impacts would be less than significant.

3. Environmental Analysis

Stormwater Drainage

The proposed project would result in an increase of approximately 90,000 square feet (2.00 acres) of impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions. The increase in impervious surfaces would be considered negatable. The stormwater from the proposed project would be conveyed to existing stormwater infrastructure onsite, percolated into the ground or would be directed to the storm drains along East Orange Avenue in public rights of way. The proposed project would not significantly increase or change the stormwater volume, rate, or pattern. The proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded storm water drainage facilities (beyond what would be needed as part of the proposed project). Impacts would be less than significant.

Electric Power

Electricity is provided by Southern California Edison. The proposed project would connect to existing electric power infrastructure for operation. Although the proposed project would result in a higher electricity demand compared to existing conditions, the increase would be negligible in Southern California Edison capacity. The proposed project would be required to comply with energy efficiency standards set forth by the California Building Code and CalGreen. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in major construction related to electrical power facilities that could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service is provided by the Southern California Gas Company. The proposed project would not require the use of natural gas during construction nor operation, and therefore no impacts would occur.

Telecommunications

The proposed project would not require additional telecommunications facilities demand. The proposed project would not require off-site construction or relocation of utilities, and therefore no impacts would occur.

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. The City of Porterville UWMP determines that there are adequate water supply to service the City through to year 2030 (Porterville 2015a). The City relies on groundwater supplies and can also purchase water from the Pioneer Water Company (PWC). Additionally, if needed the City can purchase Friant-Kern Canal company stock for water access and can purchase surface water from "anywhere in the State through an exchange" (Porterville 2015a). The UWMP projects that the City to have sufficient water supplies to meet expected demands in normal years, single-dry years, and multiple-dry years through 2030.

The proposed project would serve the additional 269 students and 17 staff members which would increase the demand for water of the project site compared to existing conditions. The proposed project would increase the water use by approximately 658,056[11] gallons per year. The proposed project does not directly increase population growth. Students and staff are expected to already reside in the City of Porterville. Should new staff move to Porterville to work at the project site, such increase would be minor and within the anticipated growth of the City. The proposed project's water demand would be within the projected demand of the UWMP. Furthermore, development of the proposed project would be required to comply with the provisions of CALGreen Division 5.3, *Water Efficiency and Conservation*, including those of Sections 5.303, *Indoor Water Use*, and 5.304, *Outdoor Water Use*. Since the City contains adequate water supplies to meet the water demands of the proposed project and the City during normal, dry and multiple dry years. Impacts would be less than significant.

c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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. The proposed project would serve an additional 269 students which would increase the demand for wastewater services. Wastewater generated at the SFES campus is conveyed for treatment to the City of Porterville WWTF. According to the City of Porterville General Plan, WWTF would need a capacity of 4.5 mgd to accommodate the City's projected 2030 growth (Porterville 2008e). Currently the WWTF is designed to treat 8 mgd of wastewater per day, which represents an available capacity of up to 3.5 mgd. The proposed project would result in an increase in wastewater service at the project site yet would not substantially increase wastewater generation. Any increase in wastewater treatment would be negligible. WWTF has adequate capacity to serve the proposed project in addition to the existing commitments. Impacts would be less than significant.

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. During construction the proposed project would generate demolition debris from clearance and waste debris. Construction solid waste generation would be minimal, since the construction would not requirement the demolition of buildings. In accordance with CalGreen Section 5.408, *Construction Waste Reduction, Disposal, and Recycling*, requires that at least 65 percent of the nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse.

The solid waste generated by the proposed project's operational activities would increase the amount of solid waste generated by the SFES campus under existing conditions. In the City of Porterville, including the proposed project and SFES campus, solid waste is transported by the Tulare County Consolidated Waste Management Authority (CWMA) to regional landfills. Solid waste generated in the City of Porterville is disposed to landfills within Tulare County, which includes the Teapot Dome Landfill, and the Woodville Landfill (Cal Recycle 2024a; 2024b). The two landfills have a combined remaining capacity of 2.032 million tons (Cal

[11] Elementary School Student - 2424 gallons per year
(269 students x 2424 gallons per year) = 658,056 gallons per year

Recycle 2024a; 2024b). The proposed project would generate an additional 109.88 tons per year[12] which would account for less than a percent[13] of the remaining capacity at the two landfills. The increase in waste generation would be well within the remaining capacity of area landfills, and the proposed project would continue to be serviced by CWMA and regional landfills. The proposed project would not adversely impact landfill capacity or impair attainment of solid waste reduction goals, and impacts would be less than significant.

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less Than Significant Impact. The City's 2022 disposal rates is 3.40 pounds per day per capita population and 9.90 pounds per day per capita employment which is well below the assigned target per capita disposal rates for the jurisdiction of 5.3 pounds per day per capita population and 15.4 pounds per day per capita employment (CalRecycle 2022). The construction and operation of the proposed project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, such as the California Integrated Waste Management Act and local recycling and waste programs. The District and its construction contractor would comply with all applicable laws and regulations and make every effort to reuse and/or recycle the construction debris that would otherwise be taken to a landfill. CalGreen Section 5.408, *Construction Waste Reduction, Disposal, and Recycling*, requires that at least 65 percent of the nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. The proposed project would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste disposal during operation. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant.

3.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located within a LRA and is within a developed area (Cal Fire 2024). The project site is not located in a state responsibility area (SRA). However, based on Figure 6-1, *Wildland Fire Hazards*, of the Porterville General Plan Public Health and Safety Element, the project site is within a MFHSZ (2008d). Approximately 43 percent of the Porterville planning area is considered to have MFHSZ, and the project site is surrounded by lands classified as MFHSZ and pockets of non-FHSZ. The project site does not contain lands classified as very high (VH), or high (H) FHSZ. The nearest VHFHSZ in an LRA is approximately 0.80 miles southwest of the project site. Additionally, based on the U.S. Forest Service WUI the project site is not within the WUI or intermix, however the campus is bounded by the WUI to the

[12] 3.40 pounds per day * 169 students + 9.9 pounds per day * 9 = 663.7 pounds per day
663.7 pounds per day * 365 days = 242,250.5 pounds per year
1 pound = 0.000453 tons
0.000453 tons * 242,250.5 pounds per year = 109.88 tons per year

[13] (109.88 tons ÷ 2.032 million tons) * 100 = 0.054%

north of the grass playfields (USFS 2020). The proposed project would not intensify fire hazard as the proposed project would not include low-laying brush and grassland. Landscaping would be maintained by the District.

The City of Porterville Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), adopted in 2004, includes planning and response scenarios for seismic hazards, extreme weather conditions, landslides, dam failure, flooding, wildland fires, hazardous materials incidents, transportation emergencies, and civil disturbances. Evacuations would be carried out by the PPD (2008d). The City of Porterville has designated several evacuation routes through the City and the safest route would be determined based on the extent and severity of a catastrophic emergency (Porterville 2008d). Additionally, the District and individual campuses, including the SFES campus, contain their own emergency response plans in the event of an emergency occurs. Campus emergency response plans include disaster and emergency procedures, and campus staff are designated to evacuate children in the event of a major emergency (PUSD 2024).

Schools hold monthly Fire and earthquake drills and classrooms are equipped with emergency and first aid kits. According to Figure 7-6, *Emergency Services*, of the Porterville General Plan, Union Pacific Road, SR-65 and SR-190 are three nearby evacuation routes. The proposed project is not located on any of these routes and would not physically impede the evacuation routes or the circulation network surrounding the campus. The proposed project would be designed in accordance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code. Project design and site plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA. Further, the City of Porterville Fire Department would review site plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site and surrounding area are relatively flat with a slight downward slope from north to the southeast. The Porterville General Plan states the City is within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, and the valley experiences winds that are less than 10 miles per hour (Porterville 2008b). The proposed project includes buildings that are of similar to height to existing surrounding development. Therefore, the proposed project would not affect slope nor prevailing winds that could exacerbate wildfire risk.

The proposed project would be designed in accordance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code. Project design and site plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA. Further, the City of Porterville Fire Department would review site plans to confirm fire personnel accessibility, fire hydrant locations and distribution, water supply requirements for fire flow, and automatic fire sprinklers. During construction, construction personnel would handle, store, and operate construction and mechanical equipment and potentially flammable materials in accordance with manufacturers' specifications and standard safety practices. Fire suppression equipment during construction would be maintained on site.

Therefore, the construction and operation of the proposed project would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors. Impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located within a LRA and is within a developed area (Cal Fire 2024). The project site is not located in a state responsibility area (SRA). However, based on Figure 6-1, *Wildland Fire Hazards*, of the Porterville General Plan Public Health and Safety Element, the project site is within a MFHSZ (2008d). Approximately 43 percent of the Porterville planning area is considered to have MFHSZ, and the project site is surrounded by lands classified as MFHSZ and pockets of non-FHSZ. The project site does not contain lands classified as very high (VH), or high (H) FHSZ. The nearest VHFHSZ in an LRA is approximately 0.80 miles southwest of the project site. Additionally, based on the U.S. Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) the project site is not within the WUI or intermix, however the campus is bounded by the WUI to the north of the grass playfields (USFS 2020). The proposed project would not intensify fire hazard as the proposed project would not include low-laying brush and grassland. Landscaping would be maintained by the District.

The SFES campus is currently served by existing utility infrastructure, which includes water and electricity. Development of the proposed project would require new utility hook-ups to the existing utility lines that serve the project site. All utility lines would be underground. The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the California Building Code and the Fire Code. These project features would not exacerbate fire risk. Development of the proposed project would not require the installation of roads and fuel breaks. Therefore, the proposed project does not include the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located within a LRA and is within a developed area (Cal Fire 2024). The project site is not located in a state responsibility area (SRA). However, based on Figure 6-1, *Wildland Fire Hazards*, of the Porterville General Plan Public Health and Safety Element, the project site is within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (MFHSZ) (2008d). Approximately 43 percent of the Porterville planning area is considered to have MFHSZ, and the project site is surrounded by lands classified as MFHSZ and pockets of non-FHSZ. The project site does not contain lands classified as very high (VH), or high (H) FHSZ. The nearest VHFHSZ in an LRA is approximately 0.80 miles southwest of the project site. Additionally, based on the U.S. Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) the project site is not within the WUI or intermix, however the campus is bounded by the WUI to the north of the grass playfields (USFS 2020). The proposed project would not intensify fire hazard as the proposed project would not include low-laying brush and grassland. Landscaping would be maintained by the District.

The project site is within FEMA Flood Zone AO (river or stream flood hazard areas) with a depth of 1 foot. As discussed in Section 3.10 (d), the proposed project site would adhere to FEMA flood standards such as building proposed structures building base elevation above floodwaters. The Geotechnical Hazards Investigation stated that due to the generally flat-lying nature of the project site and surrounding area, landslides would not affect the project site (Krazan 2024). The project site and surrounding area is generally flat would have low potential of post-fire slope instability. The proposed project would designed and construction in compliance with California Building Code and the California Fire Code and plans would be reviewed and approved by DSA. Compliance with applicable building and fire codes and DSA review would ensure that the proposed project would not expose people or structures to flooding, landslides, slope instability or drainage changes. As discussed in Section 3.7, *Geology and Soils*, and Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact or no impact related to flooding, landslides, stormwater/drainage, and slope instability. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A less than significant impact would occur.

3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project 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 Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed above in Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*, there are no federally designated critical habitat exist on site or in the vicinity of the project site. Although, Porterville General Plan identifies the that the project site and surrounding area are within the Striped Adobe Lilys' area, the project site has been previously disturbed and would be unlikely to contain the Striped Adobe Lily. The Biological Resource Evaluation determined the Striped Adobe Lily was determined to have no potential to occur within the BSA (see Appendix B). Biological Resource Evaluation determined all other plant species and vegetation community known to occur within the BSA and surrounding area have a low or no potential to occur within the BSA due to the project site being largely developed, disturbed with non-native vegetation, or soil conditions. The proposed remove 37 trees, which include 31 Raywood Ash, four Chinese Pistache, and two pear trees. The three tree species are not state or federally listed endangered, threatened, or rare plants. However, these trees have the potential to contain nesting birds, and although the project site is not a suitable breeding or nesting habitat there is a moderate potential for three bird species (two nesting and one raptor) to occur on site. The proposed project would adhere to the MBTA and implement mitigation measure BIO-1 (see Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*), which would require preconstruction surveys. With the implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1, impacts to nesting birds would be less than significant.

Additionally, the Biological Resource Evaluation determined that the monarch butterfly has the potential to occur within the BSA during as the BSA is within the spring and summer migratory range. Although the BSA lacks suitable habitat, is only within part of their migratory route, and the species is dependent on milkweed (Asclepias spp.) as a source of food and location where eggs are laid, the potential presence of the monarch butterflies exist. Implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2 would reduce potential impacts to the monarch

butterfly, (see Section 3.4, *Biological Resource),* which would require a preconstruction surveys to determine the presence of adult monarch butterflies and milkweed. With the implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2, impacts to the monarch butterfly would be less than significant.

As discussed under Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, and Section 3.7, *Geology and Soils*, the project site is developed with the SFES and vacant/disturbed land, and therefore the overall project site has been previously disturbed. Since the project site has been previously disturbed and proposed project does not contain subterranean levels, it is unlikely buried archaeological resources and/or paleontological resources would be encountered. Nevertheless, mitigation measures GEO-1 and CUL-1 include processes in the unlikely event that archaeological or paleontological resources are encountered. With incorporation of mitigation measures GEO-1 and CUL-1, impacts to paleontological and archaeological resources would be less than significant. Further, as discussed in Section 3.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, with the incorporation of mitigation measure TCR-1, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

With identified mitigation, the proposed project would not 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 nor eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. A less than significant impact would occur with the incorporation of measures.

b) Does the project 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 Impact. The potential for cumulative impacts occurs when the independent impacts of a given project are combined with the impacts of related projects in proximity to the project site that would create impacts that are greater than those of the project alone. As discussed previously in this IS/MND, the proposed project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact with mitigation measures to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, GHG emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Therefore, all impacts are individually limited and would not result in any cumulatively significant impact. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. The implementation of required mitigation measures specified in this IS/MND would reduce impacts to less than significant. The proposed project would not, directly nor indirectly, result in environmental effects that could cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. A less than significant impact would occur.

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