

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
8800 Grossmont College Drive
El Cajon, CA 92020

County Clerk
County of: San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway, Suite 260
San Diego, CA 92101

Project Title: Grossmont College Storm Drain Repair Project

Project Applicant: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

Project Location – Specific:

The project is proposed in the open space area in the southeastern corner of the Grossmont College campus, east of Grossmont College Drive and west of State Route 125.

Project Location – City: El Cajon

Project Location – County: San Diego

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project consists of the replacement of a failed storm drainpipe and restoration of the surrounding site to pre-failure conditions. See Attachment 1 for complete project description.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 1, Existing Facilities (Section 15301);
Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (Section 15302)
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project involves replacement of a failed storm drainpipe and degraded concrete drainage ditch in the same locations and to serve the same purpose as the existing facilities. Backfilling of the site with imported soils and deposited sediment would restore the project site to pre-failure conditions. The project's biological resources assessment concluded that the project would not adversely affect sensitive biological resources with the inclusion of project design features and adherence to regulatory agency permit conditions. The project is not proposed on a listed hazardous material site and would not have the potential to result in significant or cumulative environmental impacts.

Lead Agency Contact Person: ANGELO PELLEGRINI **Telephone:** 619-744-7032

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption filing.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature:  **Date:** 6/6/2026 **Title:** AVC

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Attachment 1 – Project Description

Grossmont College Storm Drain Repair Project

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (District) Grossmont College Storm Drain Repair Project (project) consists of the replacement of a failed storm drainpipe, replacement of a degraded concrete drainage ditch, and restoration of the site back to pre-failure conditions. After removal of the damaged pipe, the site would be excavated in preparation for the installation of a new pipe within the slope. Following installation, the site would be backfilled with both imported soil and the removed sediment deposition from within the drainage. The project does not propose new permanent features as the pipe, concrete ditch, and associated structures would be replaced in-kind.

The existing corrugated metal drainpipe failed in early 2024 and subsequent rains created a deep gully on the hillside, depositing sediment in the drainage below. Repair activities would require temporary clearing of the proposed access routes from Grossmont College Drive to the west of the site, clearing vegetation within work areas adjacent to the failed storm drainpipe for access, and removal of approximately 1,130 cubic yards of sediment from the drainage. Staging areas would be located in developed areas of the campus. Removal of existing vegetation would be limited to only areas needed to perform the repair work and sediment removal; impacts to sensitive vegetation communities would be minimized to the greatest extent practicable and a habitat avoidance area would be established.

As a regulatory requirement, the District would obtain permits from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the potential temporary effects to jurisdictional resources that have been determined to be necessary to implement the project. The following project design features would be implemented to avoid impacts to biological resources.

BIO-1 Oak Tree Avoidance. To avoid or minimize impacts to inland scrub oaks and Nuttall's scrub oaks and to preserve the scrub oak chaparral community, project activities will be designed and implemented to avoid impacts to existing oak trees to the maximum extent feasible. No mature oak trees (with a diameter at breast height of six inches or more) are expected to be removed, though trimming of branches or removal of smaller trees will be performed under the supervision of a certified arborist and all equipment will avoid operating within the dripline of the trees. Removal of sediment located under trees will be performed by equipment stationed outside the drip line to the extent possible and monitored by a qualified biologist. If sediment removal is required within the dripline of oak trees, removal will be performed under the supervision of a certified arborist.

BIO-2 Avoidance of Nesting Birds, Raptors, and Coastal California Gnatcatcher. To prevent direct impacts to nesting birds, including Cooper's hawk, coastal California gnatcatcher, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, and other species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), California Fish and Game (CFG) Code, and the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), project construction activities requiring the removal and/or trimming of vegetation suitable for nesting birds (including clearing, grubbing, trenching, grading, or any land disturbances) will occur outside of the breeding season for general birds, including raptors (January 15 to September 15).

If the construction activities cannot avoid the bird breeding season, a qualified biologist holding a 10(a)1(A) recovery permit for coastal California gnatcatcher will be retained to conduct a series of three pre-construction nesting bird surveys within seven days prior to the initiation of

vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities, with the third survey occurring within 24 hours prior to the initiation of construction activities to confirm the presence or absence of active bird nests within 500 feet of the impact area(s).

If the qualified biologist finds no active bird nests, then the activities will proceed. If active nests or nesting birds are observed within the area, the biologist will establish a buffer around the active nest where construction activities are prohibited until nesting behavior has ceased, nests have failed, or young have fledged. Construction near an active nest (within 300 feet for passerines, 500 feet for raptors and coastal California gnatcatcher, or as otherwise determined by a qualified biologist) will either: (1) be postponed until a qualified biologist determines the nest(s) is no longer active or until after the respective breeding season; or (2) not occur until a temporary noise barrier or berm is constructed at the edge of the development footprint and/or around the piece of equipment to confirm that noise levels are reduced to below 60 A-weighted decibels (dBA) or ambient. If coastal California gnatcatcher is observed, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurrence will be required before working within 500 feet of an active nest. Should construction activities be paused for a period of seven consecutive days during the nesting season, an additional nesting bird survey will be performed prior to restarting work.

BIO-3 Restoration of Temporary Impact Areas: To minimize impacts associated with the temporary disturbance of vegetation and soils, the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (District) will ensure that all areas temporarily disturbed by construction activities are restored and revegetated to pre-project conditions or better. A revegetation plan will be prepared and submitted to the District and applicable agencies for review and approval prior to ground-disturbing activities. At a minimum, the plan will describe restoration methods (e.g., seeding and/or container stock installation), erosion and sediment control measures, weed management requirements, monitoring methods, and a monitoring schedule consisting of a 120-day plant establishment period followed by either 25 months or five years of maintenance and monitoring, as applicable. The plan will also include performance standards and contingency measures to address unsuccessful revegetation. Temporarily disturbed areas will be restored as soon as feasible following completion of construction activities and no later than the first appropriate planting season (typically fall or early winter).

BIO-4 Temporary Construction Fencing: Temporary construction fencing, including silt fencing as appropriate, will be installed at the edges of the approved impact limits of grading, focused adjacent to the habitat avoidance area, for the project before construction, to confirm that work is contained within the work area limits. Temporary fencing and Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be installed consistent with the project Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, if applicable, at all locations where the project grading components occur adjacent to sensitive vegetation communities and jurisdictional resources. A qualified biologist will be retained to monitor the installation of the temporary construction fencing. Construction activities will be restricted to areas within the approved development area at all times during construction.

BIO-5 Regulatory Permitting. Prior to commencement of activities that would result in impacts to sensitive habitats that are also aquatic resources subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the RWQCB and/or CDFW (waters of the State, streambed and riparian habitat), the District will submit the appropriate notifications and obtain the required regulatory permits and approvals from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), as appropriate. The District will also prepare and implement a revegetation

plan detailing the on-site rehabilitation activities at a minimum 1:1 ratio. The revegetation plan will be submitted to the RWQCB and/or CDFW for approval, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable regulatory permit requirements. At a minimum, the revegetation plan will detail the following obligations: responsible parties for implementing the rehabilitation activities; target native habitat types to be rehabilitated and associated plant palettes; performance standards and success criteria that must be met for the rehabilitation effort to be considered a success; and five-year maintenance, monitoring, and reporting requirements.