

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: ☒ Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Twin Rivers Unified School District

3222 Winona Way

North Highlands, CA 95660

☒ County Clerk- Recorder
County of Sacramento

3636 American River Drive, Suite 110

Sacramento, CA 95864

Garden Valley Elementary School Permanent Universal TK Building Project
Project Title

3601 Larchwood Drive
Project Location - Specific

Sacramento
Project Location – City

Sacramento
Project Location – County

The proposed project will be developed on the southeastern corner of the Garden Valley Elementary School campus, along Larchwood Drive. The area is currently occupied by 24 trees that will be removed. The proposed project will not require demolition of any existing buildings or structures.

The proposed project will include the construction of a new 4,331-square-foot transitional kindergarten (TK) building that will contain two new TK classrooms, a TK support room, three TK restrooms, one staff restroom, a storage room, and an electrical room. The proposed project will accommodate an additional 40 students, representing a 10 percent increase in total campus capacity. Additionally, the proposed project will include surrounding hardscape and improvements surrounding the new classroom building. New utility connections will serve the classroom building. A new playground will be constructed just north of the proposed classroom building, replacing an existing one.

Construction of the proposed project will occur in one phase, beginning in winter 2027 and will be completed in fall 2027. Less than one acre of the project site would be disturbed during project construction.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Twin Rivers Unified School District
Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Twin Rivers Unified School District
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

☐ 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 3, CCR § 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 14, CCR §15314, Minor Additions to Schools

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

The proposed project will consist of the construction of a new classroom building and associated hardscape and utility improvements within an existing elementary school campus. The proposed classroom building will function as a small institutional structure accessory to the continued operation of the school campus and will remain consistent with the existing educational use of the site. The proposed project will occur entirely within the existing developed school grounds and will not require expansion of campus boundaries or off-site improvements. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

The proposed project will include the addition of a single building and associated hardscape and utility improvements to the existing school campus. The proposed project will add two classrooms, accommodating an additional 40 students, which represents a 10 percent increase in total campus capacity. Accordingly, the proposed project would not increase student capacity by more than 25 percent and would add fewer than 10 classrooms, consistent with the requirements of Section 15314. All project components will occur entirely within the existing developed school campus and will not require expansion of the campus boundaries or result in off-site improvements. The proposed project will maintain the existing educational use of the site and will involve only minor additions and improvements to the campus. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply.

Reasons why project is exempt

Victoria Garcia

916.566.1600 ext. 36205

Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

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

Date
Received for
Filing: _____

Signature: _____



Title: Director Facilities Construction & Planning

Attachment to Notice of Exemption
Garden Valley Elementary School Permanent Universal TK Building Project
Twin Rivers Unified School District
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Twin Rivers Unified School District (District) proposes improvements to the Garden Valley Elementary School (ES) campus with the construction of a new classroom building that will contain a new transitional kindergarten (TK) building with two TK classrooms, a support room, restrooms, an electronic room, and a storage room (proposed project). This supplemental information provides justification for the categorical exemptions pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15303 and 15314. The District is the lead agency for the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15051(c).

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

1.1 Project Location

The Garden Valley ES campus is at 3601 Larchwood Drive in the City of Sacramento (Assessor's Parcel Number 250-0390-034) in Sacramento County (project site) (see Figure 1, *Regional Location*).

The campus is bound by residential uses to the north and west, Garden Valley Park to the south, and Larchwood Drive, commercial uses, and undeveloped land to the east (see Figure 2, *Aerial Photograph*). Regional access to the campus is provided by Interstate 80 (I-80), approximately 0.5 miles north of the campus, and Interstate 5 (I-5), approximately 2 miles west of the campus. Vehicular access to the campus is provided via Larchwood Drive to the east.

1.2 Local Setting

Surrounding land uses primarily consist of single-family homes to the north and west, undeveloped land to the east, and Garden Valley Park located immediately south of the campus.

1.3 Existing Land Use and Zoning

The Garden Valley ES campus has a City of Sacramento General Plan land use designation of Public/Institutional (Sacramento 2024). The campus has zoning designation of Standard Single Family (R-1), which is applied to low-density residential uses composed of single-unit detached

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

residences and duplex dwellings on corner lots and may also include recreational, religious, and educational facilities (Sacramento 2026).

1.4 Surrounding General Plan Land Use Designation

The campus is surrounded by R-1 zones to the north and west. Garden Valley Park to the south is also zoned R-1. East of the campus is zoned Multi-Family (R-3) (30 dwelling units per net acre [du/ac]) and Shopping Center (SC-PUD) zones. SC-PUD zones are intended for general commercial uses that are compatible with a retail shopping center (Sacramento 2026). Land use designations surrounding the site include Residential to the north, west, and south, and Vacant and Commercial to the west (Sacramento 2024).

1.5 Twin Rivers Unified School District

The District provides school services to the City of Sacramento and includes 53 schools, including 29 elementary schools, 6 intermediate/middle schools, 5 high schools, 8 K–12 schools, 1 special education school, 1 adult education center, 1 alternative school, and 2 continuation high schools. The District had a districtwide enrollment of 31,502 students in the 2025–2026 school year (CDE 2026a).

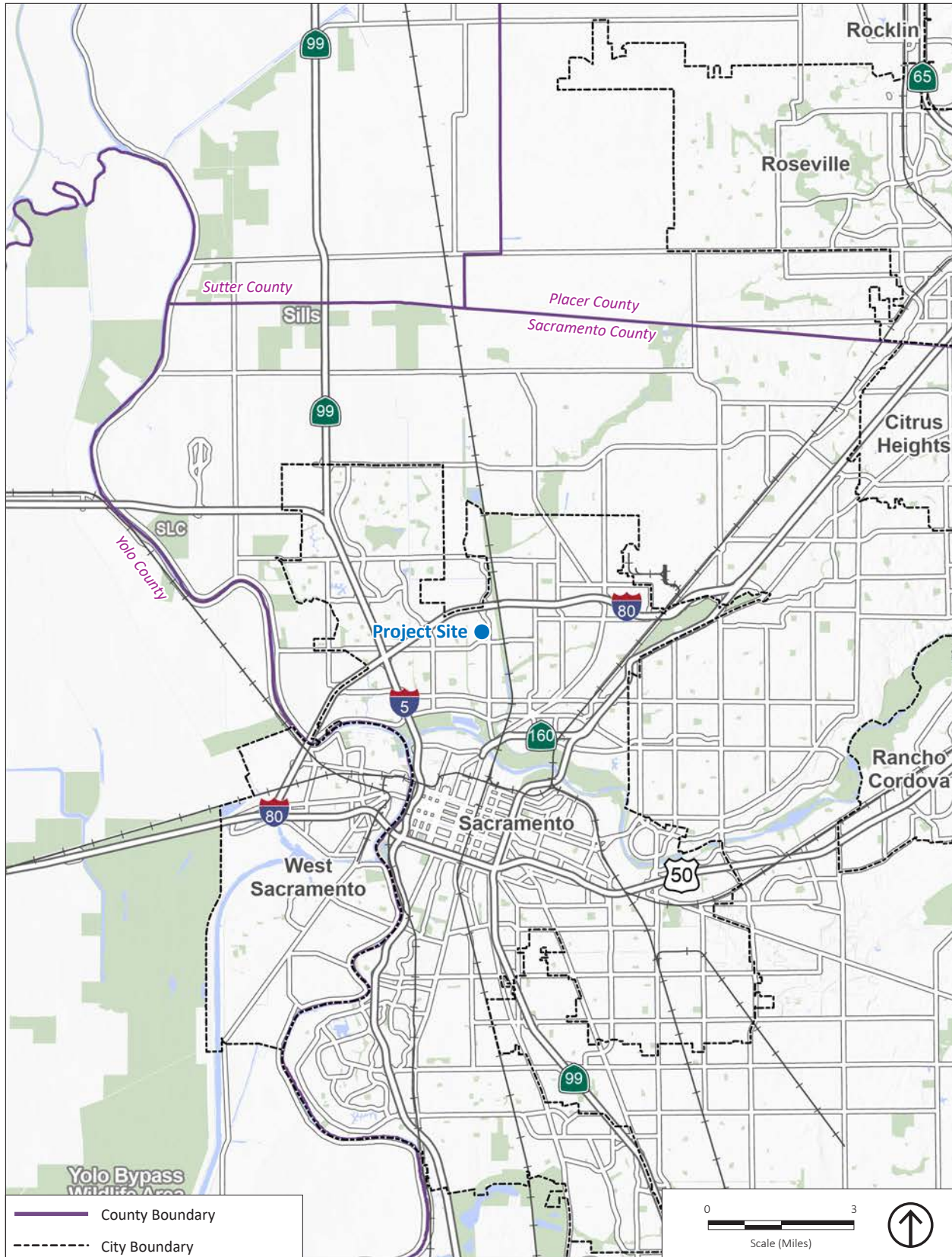
1.6 Garden Valley Elementary School

Garden Valley ES is a TK–6 elementary school. Garden Valley ES had a schoolwide enrollment of 394 students in the 2025–2026 school year (CDE 2026b).

1.7 Existing Facilities

The Garden Valley ES campus contains a variety of permanent and portable structures that support educational and extracurricular functions. The campus includes a parking lot at the northeastern portion of the campus, hardscaped play courts, a field at the western portion of the campus, and two playgrounds. On-site circulation, parking, utilities, fencing, hardscape, and landscaping already exist. The campus is currently fully developed. Infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical, lighting, walkways) are already in place supporting current operations.

GARDEN VALLEY ES PERMANENT UNIVERSAL TK BUILDING PROJECT
TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Generated using GIS Pro 2026.

Figure 1
Regional Location

GARDEN VALLEY ES PERMANENT UNIVERSAL TK BUILDING PROJECT
TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Nearmap 2026.

Figure 2
Aerial Photograph

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will occur on less than one acre of the campus and will include the construction of a new classroom building that will contain two new TK classrooms. The proposed project will accommodate an additional 40 students, representing a 10 percent increase in total campus capacity.

2.1 New Classroom Building

The proposed project will be developed on the southeastern corner of the campus, along Larchwood Drive. The area is currently occupied by 24 trees that will be removed. The proposed project will not require demolition of any existing buildings or structures. The proposed project will include the construction of a new 4,331-square-foot classroom building that will contain two new TK classrooms, a TK support room, three TK restrooms, one staff restroom, a storage room, and an electrical room.

2.2 Site Improvements

Additionally, the proposed project will include surrounding hardscape and improvements surrounding the new classroom building. New utility connections will serve the classroom building. A new playground will be constructed just north of the proposed classroom building, replacing an existing one. (see Figure 3, *Proposed Site Plan*).

2.3 Project Construction

Construction of the proposed project will occur in one phase, beginning in winter 2027, to be completed in fall 2027. All construction equipment and workers will remain within the boundaries of the project site, and contractors will adhere to the City of Sacramento Municipal Code, Chapter 8.68.080, *Noise Control Codes for Construction*, to avoid disruption to campus operations. All project improvements will occur on campus, and no off-site improvements will be included as part of the proposed project.

3. REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The proposed project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of the CEQA (Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Class 3 and 14 exemptions.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

Categorical Exemption

CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15303

CEQA Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel.

The proposed project will consist of the construction of a new classroom building and associated hardscape and utility improvements within an existing elementary school campus. The proposed classroom building will function as a small institutional structure accessory to the continued operation of the school campus and will remain consistent with the existing educational use of the site. The proposed project will occur entirely within the existing developed school grounds and will not require expansion of campus boundaries or off-site improvements. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

CEQA GUIDELINE SECTION 15314

Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines Section 15314), consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25 percent or 10 classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

The proposed project will include the addition of a single building and associated hardscape and utility improvements to the existing school campus. The proposed project will add two classrooms, accommodating an additional 40 students, representing a 10 percent increase in total campus capacity. Accordingly, the proposed project would not increase student capacity by more than 25 percent and would add fewer than 10 classrooms, consistent with the requirements of Section 15314. All project components will occur entirely within the existing developed school campus and will not require expansion of the campus boundaries or result in off-site improvements. The proposed project will maintain the existing educational use of the site and will involve only minor additions and improvements to the campus. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

FLOOR PLAN LEGEND

DOOR, FOR DOOR TYPES SEE **XX-XXX**

DOOR NUMBER, SEE DOOR SCHEDULE ON SHEET **XX-XXX**
SEE CBC TABLE 11B-404.2.4.1 FOR DOOR CLEARANCES INDICATED BY DASHED LINE

WINDOW OR LOUVER TYPE, SEE SHEET **XX-XXX**

WALL TYPE, SEE SHEET **XX-XXX**

ROOM
NAME
A101

ROOM NAME AND NUMBER

NON-RATED METAL STUD WALL, SEE **XX-XXX**

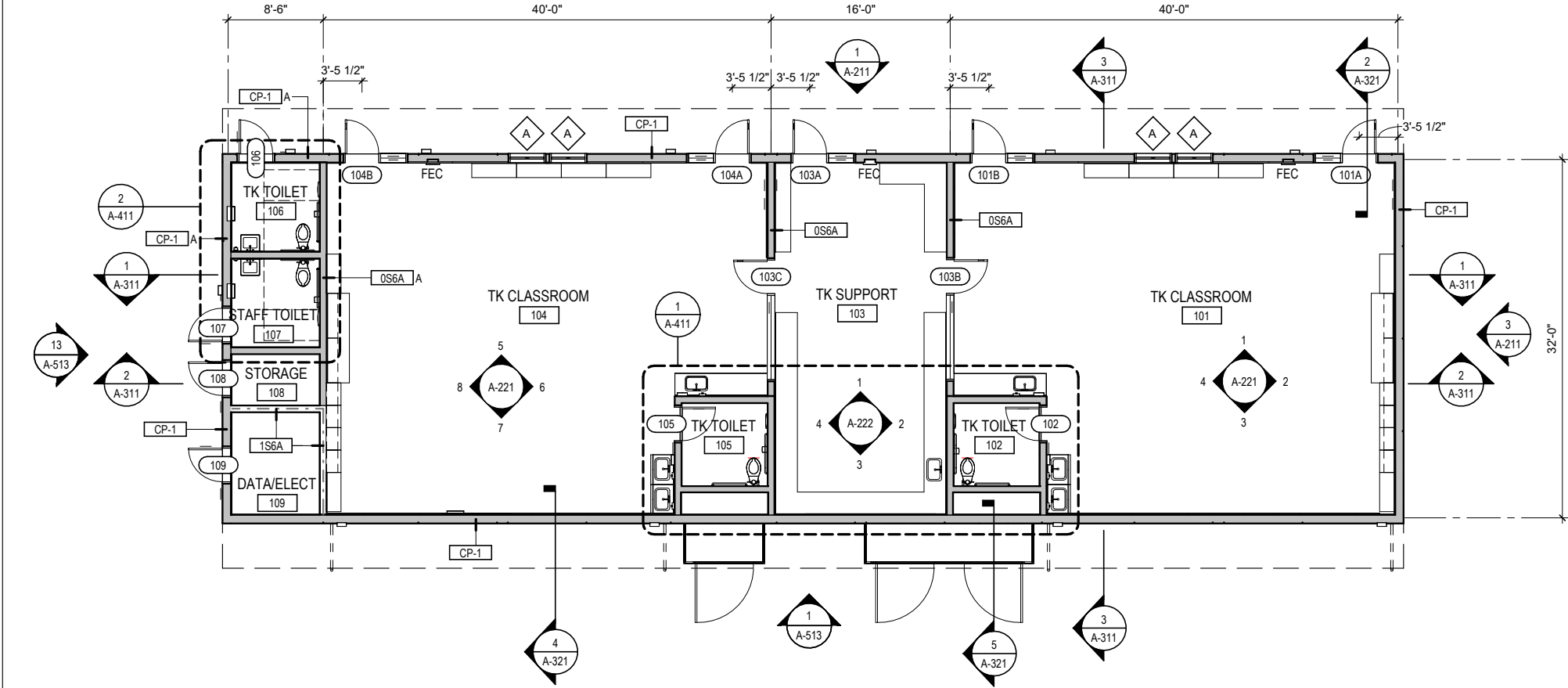
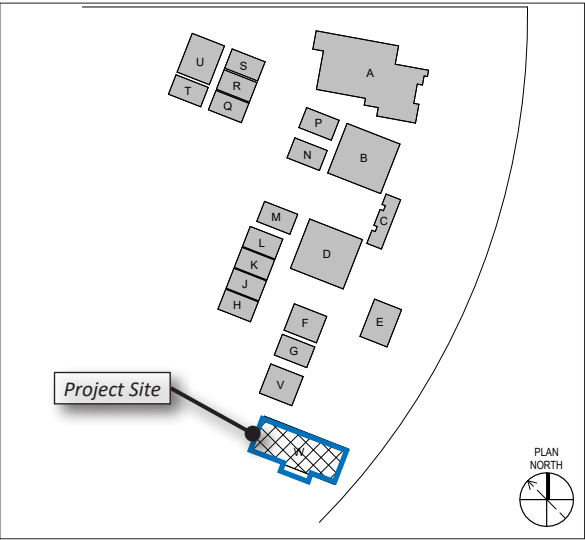
1-HR FIRE BARRIER

FIRE EXTINGUISHER IN CABINET

ROOF ACCESS LADDER

PANIC HARDWARE

60" DIA & 30" x 48" CLEAR ACCESSIBLE SPACE



Source: LIONAKIS 2026.

Figure 3
Proposed Site Plan

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEORICAL EXEMPTION

The proposed project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2—Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below, followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

- a. Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may, in a particularly sensitive environment, be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may have an impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to the law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is on the existing Garden Valley ES campus, which includes classroom buildings, athletic fields and facilities, a parking lot, concrete walkways, and ornamental landscaping. Due to the school's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any biological resources of critical concern. The project site is in an urbanized and developed area of the city. There are wetlands approximately 0.3 miles east of the project site (USFWS 2026). However, all project improvements will occur entirely within less than one acre of the campus and will not impact the identified wetlands. Additionally, there is no evidence of hazardous materials or substances on the campus (see Section (e), *Hazardous Waste Sites*). As such, the project site is not considered to be a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- b. Cumulative Impacts.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place over time is significant.

There are no other planned projects proposed on the campus at this time that, in combination with the proposed project, will result in cumulative impacts. Any future campus improvements will be implemented as independent projects, confined to their respective sites, and subject to their own environmental review under CEQA, as applicable. Other projects within the District include the construction of new classroom buildings at Foothill Oaks ES and Hazel Strauch ES. The projects are 8.6 miles northeast and 0.5 miles southwest from the proposed project, respectively. The planned projects consist of minor improvements on separate campuses, within their own established school sites. Projects at other campuses will be executed individually. All construction equipment and activities will remain within the boundaries of each campus and will not extend to the other campuses. As such, they will not combine with the proposed project to create significant cumulative environmental impacts. Construction of the proposed project will be scheduled and phased to minimize disruption to on-campus activities and the surrounding community.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

Additionally, the proposed project consists of a minor addition to the campus and will not expand campus boundaries, significantly increase student or staff capacity, or introduce new operational activities. Thus, it will not contribute to cumulative environmental effects. Significant cumulative impacts are not anticipated to occur with the implementation of any other projects. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- c. Significant Effects.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

The project site is on a currently occupied school campus that is entirely developed, disturbed, and used throughout the year. The proposed project involves the construction of a new classroom building, which will add new development consistent with the existing uses on the project site. The proposed project will remove up to 24 trees on the project site. During a site visit conducted in May 2026, the trees were identified as Waxleaf privet, Valley oak, Emerald Sunshine Japanese elm, Italian stone pine, common olive, Chinese photinia, littleleaf linden, and coast redwood. The 24 trees are not special-status species within the State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California list or the Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List (CDFW 2026a, 2026b). Therefore, the proposed project will not result in impacts to special-status species.

Nesting birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which governs the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests (US Code, Title 16, Sections 703–712). The MBTA prohibits the taking, possession, import, export, transport, sale, purchase, barter, or offering of these activities, except under a valid permit or as permitted in the implementing regulations. Construction of the proposed project will be required to comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, such as the MBTA. As part of the construction process and as standard practice, the District will implement a preconstruction nesting bird survey if ground disturbance and tree removal activities occur during the nesting season.

As such, there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Proposed improvements will not change access and circulation of the surrounding area. All construction activities will comply with current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction best management practices, and District standards and guidelines. Therefore, this exemption does not apply to the proposed project.

- d. Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

There are no designated state scenic highways near the campus. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest eligible state scenic highway is State Route 49 (SR-49) from Post Mile (PM) R8.8 to PM R14.475, approximately 12 miles northeast of the project site. The closest officially designated scenic highway is SR-160 from PM L0.0 to PM 35, approximately 10 miles southwest of the project site (Caltrans 2026). All proposed improvements will occur within the boundaries of the existing Garden Valley ES campus and are not visible from any eligible or designated scenic highways due to distance; thus, the proposed project will not affect any scenic highways. Additionally, due to the distance between the project site and these highways, the proposed project will not result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- e. Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to compile, maintain, and update specified lists of hazardous release sites. The required lists of hazardous material release sites are commonly and collectively referred to as the “Cortese List,” named after the legislator who authored the legislation. Because the statute was enacted more than 20 years ago, some of the provisions refer to agency activities that were conducted many years ago and are no longer being implemented and, in some cases, the information required in the Cortese List does not exist. Those requesting a copy of the Cortese Lists are now referred directly to the appropriate information resources on internet websites hosted by the boards or departments referenced in the statute. The following five data sources, which are compiled by CalEPA to meet Cortese List requirements, were searched for hazardous materials on the site:

- EnviroStor. Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (DTSC 2026a)
- GeoTracker. Leaking Underground Storage Task Sites (SWRCB 2026)
- CalEPA. Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by the Water Board with Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit (CalEPA 2026a)
- CalEPA. List of Active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the Water Board (CalEPA 2026)
- Hazardous Waste Facilities Subject to Corrective Action. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2026b)

The search of these databases did not identify any active hazardous waste sites within 0.25 miles of the project site. Thus, the project site is not identified as a hazardous materials site

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and the project will not create a hazard to the public. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- f. Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code Section 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be a historical resource.

The Garden Valley ES campus is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or as a California Historical Landmark or California Point of Historical Interest, nor is there a listed historic resource within a 0.25-mile radius of the project site (NPS 2026; OHP 2026a, 2026b). Additionally, neither the school nor any adjoining property is listed as a historic resource or potential historic resource by the City of Sacramento. No historical resources have been identified on site during preparation of this Notice of Exemption. Therefore, the historical sites exception does not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at Garden Valley ES is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15303 and 15314. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project will not meet the conditions specified in Section 15300.2, *Exceptions*, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the project is categorically exempt under Classes 3 and 14.

6. REFERENCES

- CalEPA. 2026a. Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by the Water Board with Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit. https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/CorteseList-Solid-Waste-Facilities_2026.pdf.
- _____. 2026b. List of Active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the Water Board. https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2026_scp_cortese.list_lat.long_.pdf.
- CDE (California Department of Education). 2026a. Twin Rivers Unified School District Report (34-76505). DataQuest. Enrollment Report. Enrollment Multi-year Summary by Grade. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/enrgrdlevels.aspx?aggllevel=District&year=2025-26&cde=3476505>.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION ATTACHMENT

- _____. 2026b. Garden Valley Elementary Report (34-76505-6032957). DataQuest. Enrollment Report. Enrollment Multi-year Summary by Grade.
<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrGrdLevels.aspx?cds=34765056032957&agglevel=School&year=2025-26>.
- CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2026a, July 6 (accessed). State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California.
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109390&inline>.
- _____. 2026b, July 6 (accessed). Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List.
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109383&inline>
- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2026. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.
- DTSC (Department of Toxic Substances Control). 2026a. EnviroStor.
<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.
- _____. 2026b. Hazardous Waste Facilities Subject to Corrective Action.
<https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/section-65962-5a/>.
- NPS (National Park Service). 2026. National Register of Historic Places.
<https://www.nps.gov/maps/full.html?mapId=7ad17cc9-b808-4ff8-a2f9-a99909164466>.
- OHP (Office of Historic Preservation). 2026a. California Historical Resources.
<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=34>.
- _____. 2026b. California Historical Landmarks. https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21454.
- Sacramento, City of. 2024. 2040 General Plan. <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/planning/long-range/general-plan/2040-general-plan>.
- _____. 2026. Zoning.
https://data.cityofsacramento.org/datasets/13a456d86b0d47459a61e2dacfc8f609_0/explore?location=38.633754%2C-121.477850%2C16.
- SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2026. GeoTracker.
<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.
- USFWS (United States Fish and Wildlife Service). 2026. National Wetlands Inventory: Wetlands Mapper. <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.HTML>.