

March 2025 | Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

HOPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYMNASIUM/CLASSROOM BUILDING PROJECT

Hope Elementary School District

Prepared for:

Hope Elementary School District

Contact: Melanie Matta, Superintendent/Principal
613 W Teapot Dome Ave,
Porterville, California 93257
559.784.1064

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Contact: Malia Durand, Associate Principal
3 MacArthur Place, Suite 1100
Santa Ana, California 92707
714.966.9220
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com



Table of Contents

Section	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PROJECT LOCATION.....	1
1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	1
2. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST	21
2.1 PROJECT INFORMATION.....	21
2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED	24
2.3 DETERMINATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD AGENCY).....	24
2.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.....	25
3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	33
3.1 AESTHETICS	33
3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES	37
3.3 AIR QUALITY	39
3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.....	45
3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES	50
3.6 ENERGY.....	52
3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS.....	56
3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.....	60
3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	63
3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	68
3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING.....	72
3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES	73
3.13 NOISE.....	74
3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING.....	81
3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES.....	82
3.16 RECREATION	85
3.17 TRANSPORTATION.....	86
3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.....	91
3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.....	93
3.20 WILDFIRE.....	97
3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.....	99
4. REFERENCES.....	101
5. LIST OF PREPARERS.....	109
HOPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT (LEAD AGENCY)	109
PLACEWORKS (CEQA CONSULTANT)	109
ECORP CONSULTING, INC. (BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES)	109
ASM AFFILIATES (CULTURAL RESOURCES)	109
KRAZAN & ASSOCIATES, INC. (GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING/GEOLOGIC HAZARDS INVESTIGATION)	110
PADRE ASSOCIATES, INC. (PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT).....	110
GARLAND ASSOCIATES (TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTION).....	110

Table of Contents

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Report
Appendix B	Air Quality, Energy, and Greenhouse Gas Modeling and Background
Appendix C	Biological Resources Due Diligence Survey
Appendix D	Cultural Letter Report
Appendix E	Geologic and Environmental Hazards Assessment
Appendix F	Geotechnical Engineering/Geologic Hazards Investigation Report
Appendix G	Preliminary Environmental Assessment
Appendix H	Noise
Appendix I	Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Figure		Page
Figure 1	Regional Location	3
Figure 2	Local Vicinity	5
Figure 3	Aerial View with Photo Locations	7
Figure 4	Project Site and Surrounding Uses Photographs	9
Figure 5	Hope Elementary School Site Plan	13
Figure 6	Proposed Gymnasium Classroom Building Elevations	17

List of Tables

Table		Page
Table 1	Extracurricular Games and Events	12
Table 2	Proposed Gymnasium and Classroom Building (Interior Spaces)	15
Table 3	Proposed Uses and Extracurricular Games and Events	19
Table 4	Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Construction	42
Table 5	Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Operation	43
Table 6	Project Consistency with Scoping Plan Priority Areas	61
Table 7	Project-Related Construction Noise Levels	77
Table 8	Project-Related School Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet	79
Table 9	Project-Related Gymnasium and Theater Event Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet	79
Table 10	Vibration Impact Levels for Typical Construction Equipment	80
Table 11	Project-Generated Traffic - School	87
Table 12	Project-Generated Traffic- Gymnasium and Theater	88
Table 13	Project-Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes- School Only	88
Table 14	Project-Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes – With Theater Event	89

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAQS	ambient air quality standards
AAQA	ambient air quality analysis
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
ADT	average daily traffic
amsl	above mean sea level
AQMP	air quality management plan
AST	aboveground storage tank
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
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
CMP	congestion management program

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂ e	carbon dioxide equivalent
Corps	US Army Corps of Engineers
CSO	combined sewer overflows
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DSA	Division of State Architects
EIR	environmental impact report
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
ES	Elementary School
EV	Electric Vehicle
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gases
GWP	global warming potential
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HQTA	high quality transit area
HVAC	heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system
IC	Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
L _{DN}	day-night noise level
L _{eq}	equivalent continuous noise level
LBP	lead-based paint
LCFS	low-carbon fuel standard
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

Abbreviations and Acronyms

LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
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
MPO	metropolitan planning organization
MT	metric ton
MWD	Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
O ₃	ozone
OES	California Office of Emergency Services
PEA	Preliminary Environmental Assessment
PM	particulate matter
POTW	publicly owned treatment works
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRDs	Permit Registration Documents
PV	photovoltaic system
RCNM	Roadway Construction Noise Model
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental condition
RMP	risk management plan
RMS	root mean square
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RPS	renewable portfolio standard
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments

Abbreviations and Acronyms

SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCE	Southern California Edison
SIP	state implementation plan
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SLM	sound level meter
SoCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SO _x	sulfur oxides
SPAL	Small Project Analysis Level
SQMP	stormwater quality management plan
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
TNM	transportation noise model
tpd	tons per day
TRI	toxic release inventory
TTCP	traditional tribal cultural places
TCAG	Tulare County Association of Governments
TCAT	Tulare County Area Transit
TCL	Tulare County Library
TCS	Tulare County Sheriff
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
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

Abbreviations and Acronyms

VOC	volatile organic compound
WQMP	water quality management plan
WSA	water supply assessment

1. Introduction

Hope Elementary School District (District) is the lead agency and applicant for the Hope Elementary School Gymnasium/Classroom Project (proposed project). The District would construct a new gymnasium building with three classrooms on an approximately 2.45-acre project site adjacent to Hope Elementary School (Hope ES or campus). The proposed project would expand the Hope ES campus and increase the enrollment capacity of the campus by 60 students. As part of the proposed project, the new stormwater retention basin and decomposed granite parking lot would be constructed.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Hope Elementary School District, 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, 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

Hope Elementary School is at 613 West Teapot Dome Avenue in the southwestern portion of unincorporated Tulare County, within the City of Porterville's urban area boundary. The proposed project would be adjacent to the existing Hope ES campus on property owned by the District. The proposed project encompasses approximately 2.45 acres, which includes approximately 0.03 acres of the developed eastern section of the Hope ES campus (APN 303-060-009) and approximately 2.42 acres of the District-owned parcel (APN 303-060-041) adjacent to Hope ES (project site) (Tulare County 2024a). The proposed project would redevelop the project site and would not disturb other areas of the Hope ES campus.

Regional access to the Hope ES campus and the project site are provided by State Route (SR) 65 located 0.45 miles west of the project site, and SR-190 approximately 2.0 miles north (see Figure 1, *Regional Location*). West Teapot Dome Avenue provides local access to the Hope ES campus and the project site (see Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*).

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1.2.1 Existing Land Use

Hope ES is approximately 3.9 acres. The campus is developed with a classroom and administration building (Building A), classroom buildings (Buildings B and D), five portable classroom buildings (Buildings E, G, H, I and J), a hard top play area with three basketball courts, two tetherball courts, two foursquare courts, and two

1. Introduction

hopscotch courts and a playground toward the center of campus. A parking lot with driveways is on the north side of the campus. A grass open play field and a row of solar panels are on the south side of the campus. Paved storage and mechanical areas are on the east side of the campus, which includes a fire protection tank, pump house, a propane tank, shed, two storage containers and an equipment storage building. The campus includes paved walkways connecting classroom buildings to the campus concrete pad and is landscaped throughout. A chain-link fence encloses the entire campus. See Figure 3, *Aerial View with Photo Locations*, and Figure 4, *Project Site and Surrounding Uses Photographs*.

The project site is to the east of Hope ES and encompasses approximately 2.45 acres, which includes approximately 0.03 acres paved area of the Hope ES campus, approximately 0.60 acres of an unpaved parking lot, and approximately 1.64 acres of agricultural citrus trees. The unpaved parking lot on the project site is used as overflow parking and storage for Hope ES; the citrus trees are an active agricultural use that operates on a lease to local farmers. The project site is unfenced. A Southern California Edison power line runs along the western side of the project site with three utility poles on the project site. The project site is generally flat, with a slight incline west to east. See Figure 3 and Figure 4.

1.2.2 Existing General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

Hope ES and the project site are currently in unincorporated Tulare County, in the County-adopted Urban Area Boundary (UAB) for the City of Porterville, that is, in an area of Tulare County that the city may expand to and develop in the future (Tulare County 2015). According to the Porterville Area Community Plan, a component of the city's general plan, the campus land use designation is Public/Quasi-Public: School (Tulare County 2015). Hope ES is zoned as AE-10, which indicates an exclusive agricultural zone with a 10-acre minimum (Tulare County 2024a, 2024b). The City of Porterville General Plan Land Use Element designates the campus as Public/Semi-Public. The campus has a zoning designation of Public and Semi-Public (PS) (Porterville 2008a, 2024a).

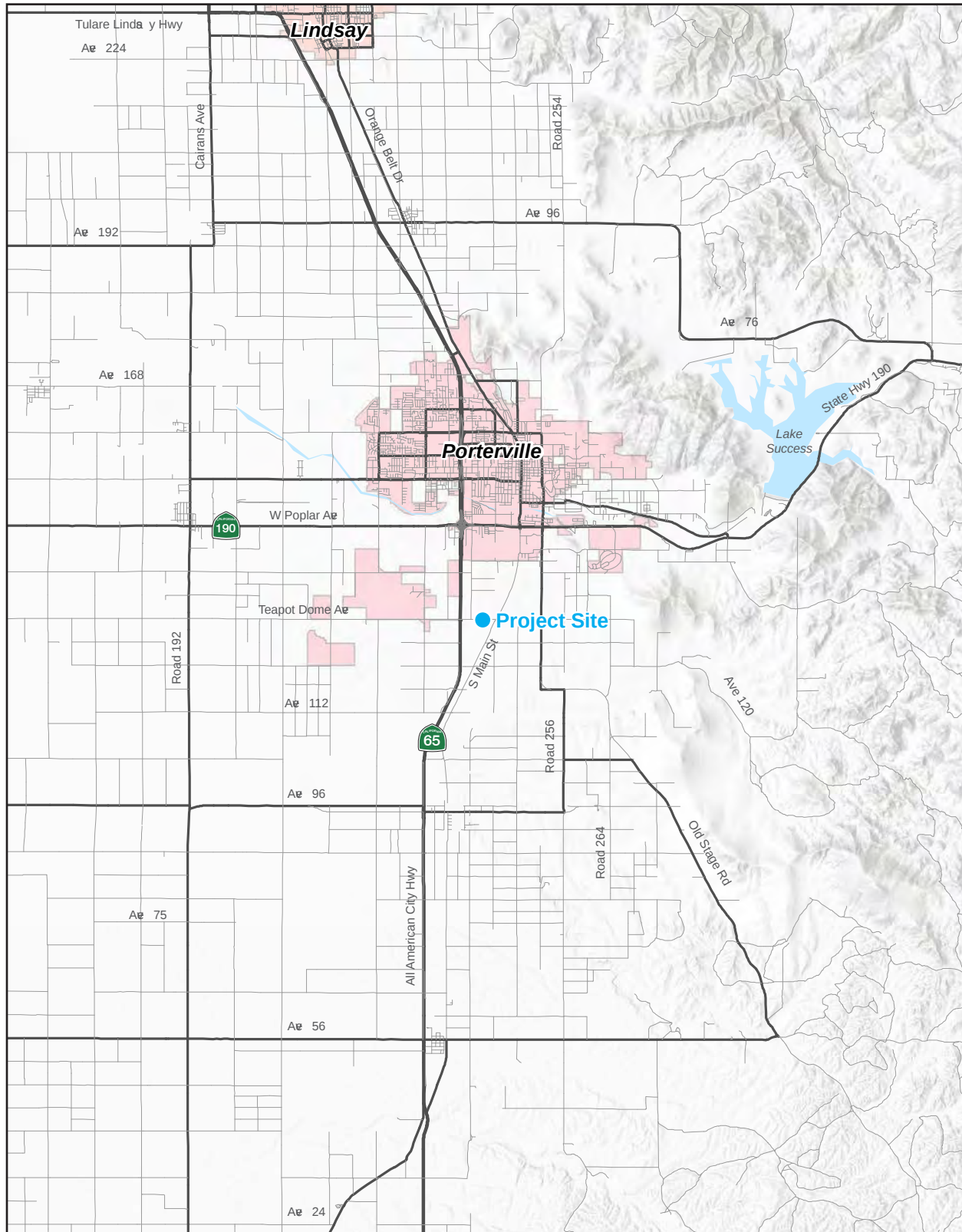
The 0.03 acres of the project site on the developed Hope ES contains the same land use and zoning designation as the Hope ES campus. The remainder of the project site has a county land use designation of Rural Density Residential and is zoned AE-10 (Tulare County 2015, 2024a, 2024b). According to the City of Porterville, the project site has a land use designation of Rural/Agriculture/Conservation and is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation (AC) (Porterville 2008a, 2024a).

The project site and campus are in the Airport Overlay District for the Porterville Municipal Airport (Porterville 2024a).

1.2.3 Surrounding Land Uses

Hope ES is bounded by West Teapot Dome Avenue to the north, single family residential uses to the west, the project site to the east, and agricultural (citrus orchards) to the south. The project site is bounded by West Teapot Dome Avenue to the north, Hope ES to the west, and agricultural uses to the south and east (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). Commercial uses are approximately 0.30 miles east and 0.45 miles west of the campus and project site.

Figure 1 - Regional Location



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

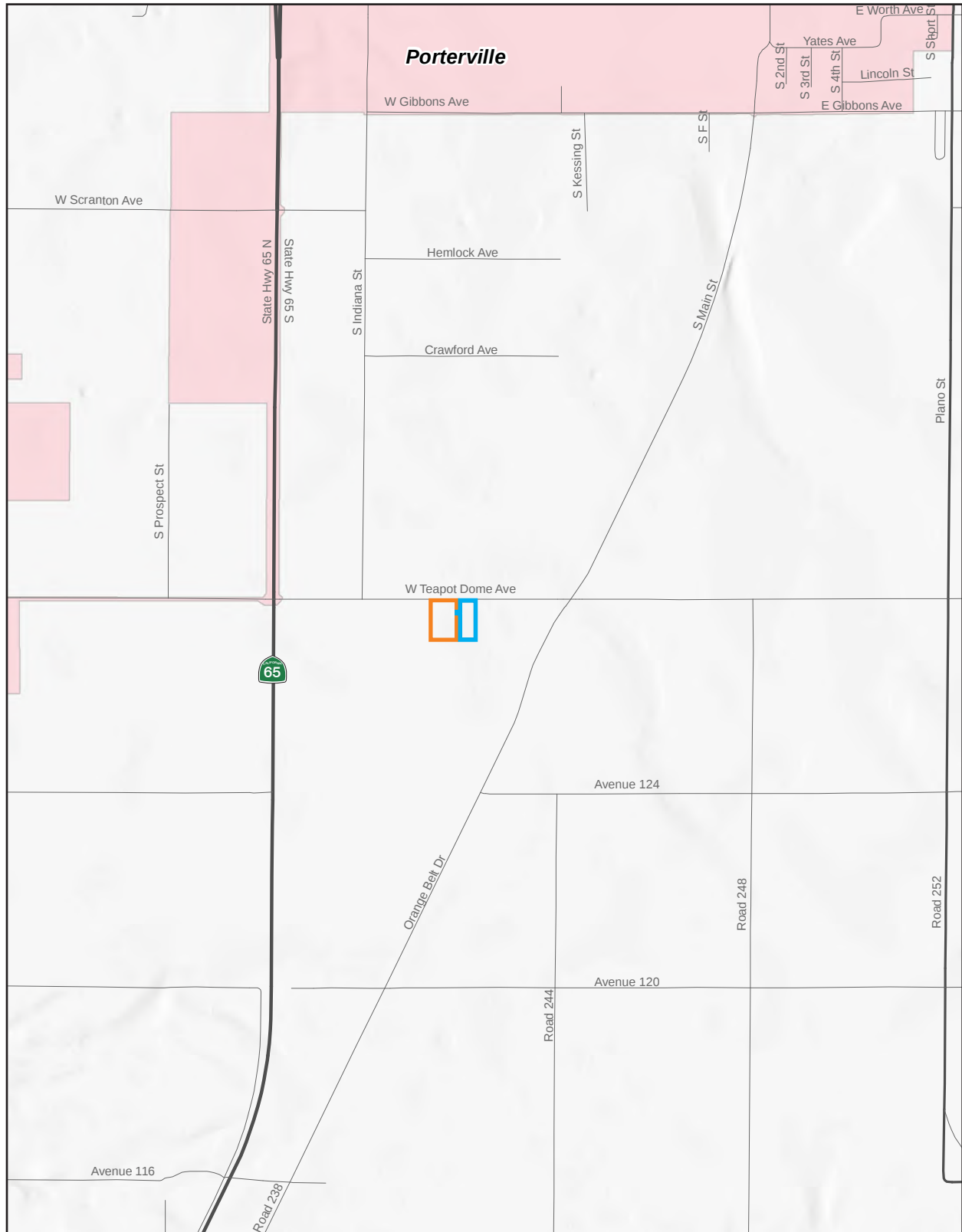
0 3
Scale (Miles)



1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 2 - Local Vicinity



Project Site Hope Elementary School

0 2,000
Scale (Feet)

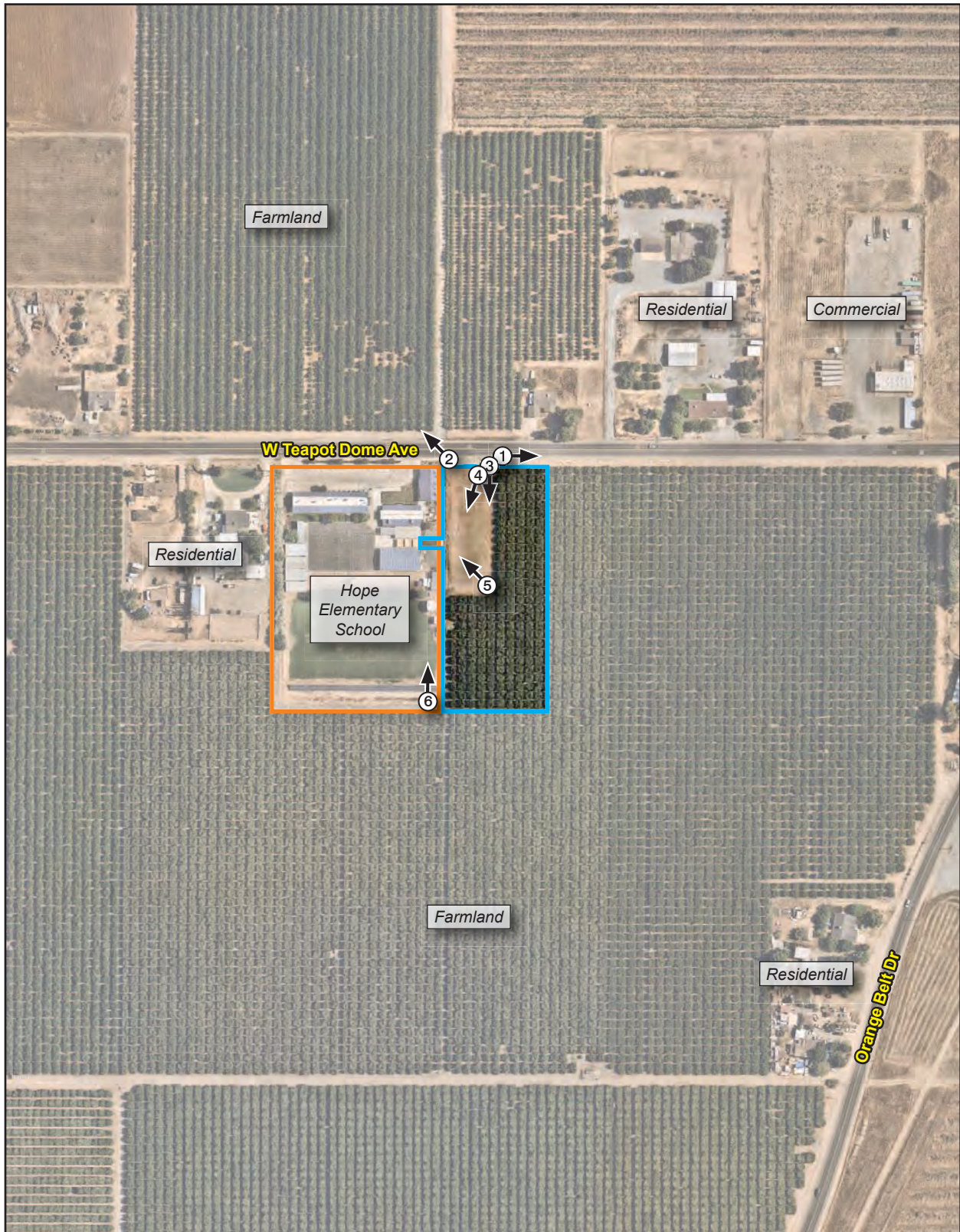


Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in light grey.
Source: Generated using ArcMap 2024.

1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 3 - Aerial View with Photo Locations



Project Site
Hope Elementary School
Photograph Location and Direction (6)

Source: Nearmap 2024.

0 300
Scale (Feet)



PlaceWorks

1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 4 - Project Site and Surrounding uses Photographs



View 1: From the north side of the project site, looking east along Teapot Dome Avenue and at residential uses and agricultural uses along Teapot Dome Avenue.



View 2: From the north side of the project site, looking northwest along West Teapot Dome Avenue and at agricultural uses and Hope ES buildings west of the project site.



View 3: From the north side of the project site, looking south at the agricultural citrus trees and unpaved parking lot on the project site.



View 4: From the north side of the parking lot, looking southwest at the parking lot and agricultural citrus trees on the project site and Hope ES campus buildings to the west of the project site.



View 5: From the southeast corner of the on-site parking lot (near the center of the project site), looking northwest across the parking lot and Hope ES campus buildings.



View 6: From the southwest corner of the project site, looking north at the agricultural citrus trees on the project site and the Hope ES campus west of the project site.

1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

1. Introduction

According to the Porterville Area Community Plan, the properties surrounding the campus and project site have a land use designation of Rural Density Residential to the north, west, south, and east (Tulare County 2015). Based on the Tulare County Public Parcel zoning lookup tool, the surrounding properties have a zoning designation of AE-20, which indicates exclusive agricultural zone 20-acre minimum to the north and AE-10 to the west, south, and east (Tulare County 2024a, 2024c). Based on City of Porterville General Plan Land Use Element, the properties surrounding the campus and project site have a land use designation of Rural Residential to the north and Agriculture Rural Conservation to the west, south, and east (Porterville 2008a). The properties surrounding the campus and project site are zoned Rural Residential (RR) to the north and Agricultural/Conservation to the west, south, and east (Porterville 2024a).

1.2.4 Parking and Access

Main vehicular access to Hope ES is provided by one ingress-only driveway along West Teapot Dome Avenue, which provides access to the student pick-up/drop-off zone and parking lot. An egress-only driveway allows drivers to exit the parking lot. The project site can be accessed from Hope ES through a gated driveway or by two ingress-egress driveways from Teapot Dome Avenue (see Figure 3). Additionally, the western driveway on the project site serves as a maintenance/fire lane connecting to the concrete and asphalt pads at the center of campus. Pedestrians can access Hope ES and the project site from West Teapot Dome Avenue. Pedestrians can also access the project site from the Hope ES gated access point.

Tulare County Area Transit (TCAT) operates Route C80, which has two bus stops approximately 0.30 miles east of Hope ES on both sides of Main Street/Orange Belt Drive.

1.2.5 Enrollment and Schedule

Hope ES has a current enrollment of 226 students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through eighth grade and enrollment capacity is 260 students. Monday through Friday, a typical school day extends from 8:15 am until 2:45 pm. The school day consists of a 15-minute morning recess and three 40-minute lunch/recess periods staggered between the TK/K, 2nd to 4th grades, and 5th to 8th grades (Hope ESD 2023). When the campus hosts home games or events, the duration of the school day remains the same; however, these days consist of a 30-minute spirit circle, two 40-minute lunch/recess periods staggered between athletes, TK to 2nd grades, and 3rd to 8th grades. On home game days athletes begin their games at 1:00 pm. “Minimum days” start at 8:15 am until 1:10 pm and consist of a 15-minute morning recess and 40-minute lunch periods staggered between the TK/K, 2nd to 4th grades, and 5th to 8th grades. A typical school year has about nine minimum days. During the school year, CHOICES After School Program provides extracurricular activities and homework assistance with staff for TK to 8th-grade students on campus from dismissal until 6 pm on regular and minimum days (Hope ESD 2023).

1. Introduction

Table 1, *Extracurricular Games and Events*, summarizes existing games and events on campus.

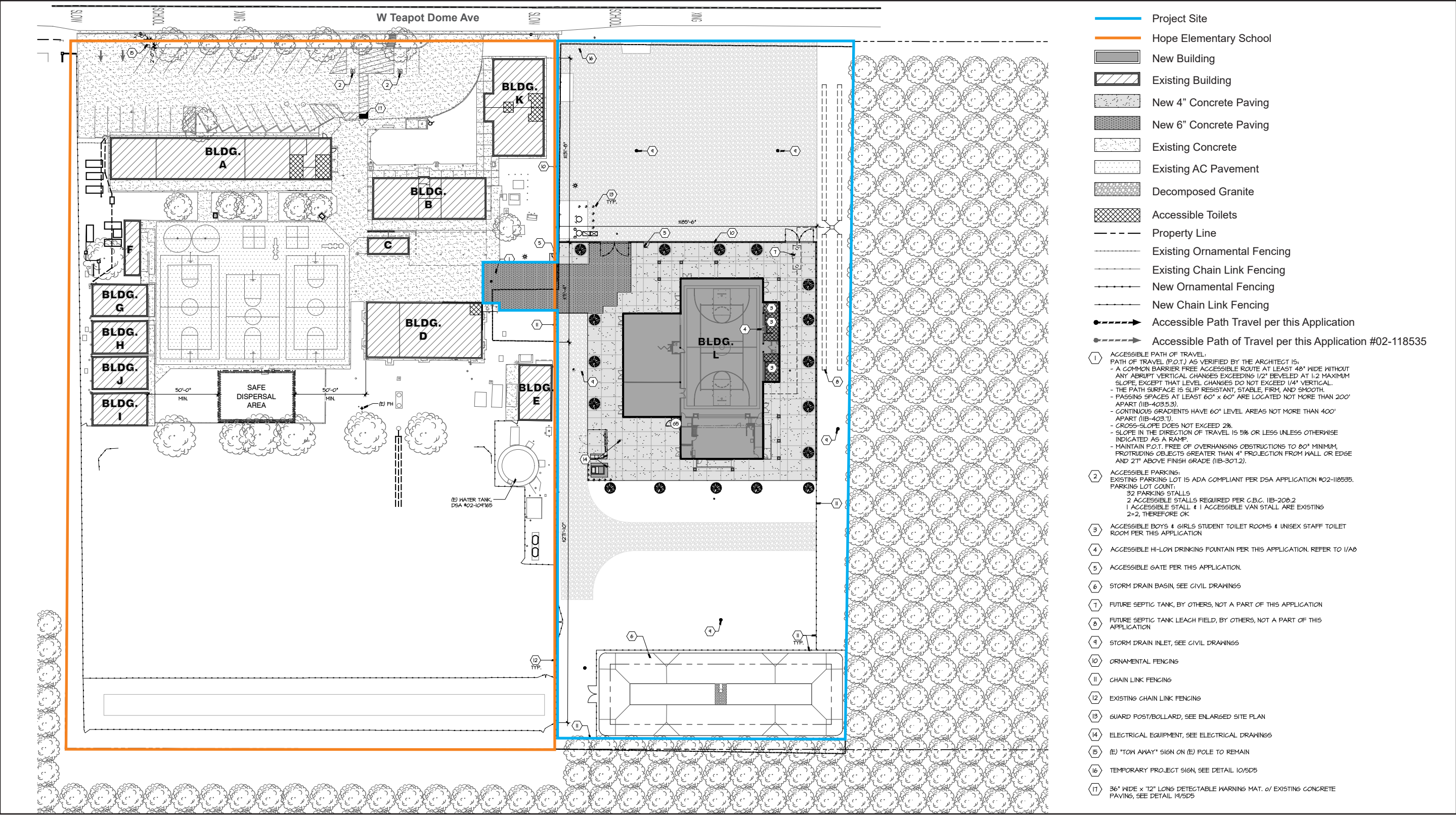
Table 1 Extracurricular Games and Events

Event	Existing Hope ES Players/Staff per Event	Maximum Existing Spectators	Number of Events per Year	Time of Year
Physical Education	Standard class size	0 spectators	Daily	Year-Round
Basketball	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	50 spectators	Varies per Season	December–March
Volleyball	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	50 spectators	Varies per Season	September–November
Assemblies	30 Staff 50 Performers	250 spectators	Nine	Monthly
Graduation	30 Staff 260 Students	250 spectators	Once	May

1.2.6 Proposed Development

The District is proposing to develop an 11,462-gross-square-foot gymnasium and classroom building (Building L) with an interior of 11,182 square feet (i.e., interior/functional space). The proposed project includes the removal of the existing unpaved parking lot, approximately 223 citrus trees, and one driveway onto the project site. As part of the proposed project, chain-link fencing and a rolling gate on the east side of the Hope ES campus would be removed and replaced to allow for grading and installation of a new concrete walkway that would connect the proposed Building L to the campus. See Figure 5, *Hope Elementary School Site Plan*.

Figure 5 - Hope Elementary School Site Plan



1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

1. Introduction

Gymnasium and Classroom Building

The gymnasium and classroom building would include three classrooms on the western side of the building, a multi-use gymnasium near the center, and a stage area on the southern side of the building. The multi-use gymnasium would include basketball striping and a ceiling mounted basketball hoop, and associated uses such as two water fountains, two student bathrooms with a vestibule area (Vestibule-1), a janitor closet, a roof access space, and one staff bathroom. The proposed stage area would include one accessible ramp and one wheelchair lift, folding partitions and an associated electrical room, a vestibule area (Vestibule-2), an instrument room, a control room, and a data room. See Table 2, *Proposed Gymnasium and Classroom Building*.

Table 2 Proposed Gymnasium and Classroom Building (Interior Spaces)

Room	Square feet (sq-ft)
Multi-use/Gymnasium	5,798 sq-ft
Boys Bathroom	198 sq-ft
Vestibule-1	45 sq-ft
Janitor Closet	47 sq-ft
Girls Bathroom	208 sq-ft
Vestibule-2	185 sq-ft
Control Room	31 sq-ft
Stage Area/Music Classroom	1,325 sq-ft
Electrical Room	79 sq-ft
Instruments Room	98 sq-ft
Data Room	51 sq-ft
Classroom 1	992 sq-ft
Classroom 2	968 sq-ft
Classroom 3	968 sq-ft
Roof Access Area	39 sq-ft
Staff Bathroom	80 sq-ft
Storage room	70 sq-ft
Interior Square Footage Total	11,182 sq-ft
Gross Building Square Footage Total	11,462 sq-ft

Source: Mangini 2023.

The proposed building would include lighting, a sound system, and a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) unit. The proposed building would include a modern design that would complement the existing buildings on the Hope ES campus. The proposed building would be approximately 28 feet in height. It would use various exterior materials such as cement plaster, cement plaster with accent finishes, glass windows, solid cast letters and a metal cap on the roof trim. The northern elevation, facing West Tea Pot Dome Avenue, would be adorned with the name of the school and mascot. See Figure 6, *Proposed Gymnasium/Classroom Building Elevations*.

1. Introduction

Other Site Improvements

The proposed project would be landscaped throughout and would include 17 ornamental trees around the proposed building and grass turf on the south side of the project site. The proposed project also includes walking paths around the entirety of the building and connects to the main Hope ES campus. As part of the proposed project, a new decomposed granite parking lot will be installed on the north side of the project site with one full-access driveway to West Tea Pot Dome Avenue. Additionally, although not required, in accordance with Tier 2 CALGreen EV charging standards (Section A5.106.5.3.2), the proposed project would include infrastructure to accommodate future EV parking stalls. However, it should be noted that EV parking stall are not required and not proposed as part of the proposed project. Chain-link fencing would surround the project site, and ornamental fencing would control access from the new parking lot to the proposed building (See Figure 5).

Utilities

Stormwater captured onsite would continue to percolate into the soil or would be directed to new storm drain inlets and routed to the new 46,448 cubic feet (CF) stormwater retention basin on the south side of the project site. Under existing conditions, there are no storm water drainage facilities within the public right-of-way; runoff directed to the public right-of-way percolates into the soil.

The proposed project would connect to the waterline on West Teapot Dome Avenue. A new 3,000-gallon septic tank, located on the east side of the project site, would capture the wastewater generated by the proposed project. It should be noted that the District is currently working with the City of Porterville through its water consolidation program (Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience [SAFER] Program), which aims to provide safe drinking water by consolidating neighboring water systems into the City of Porterville's system.

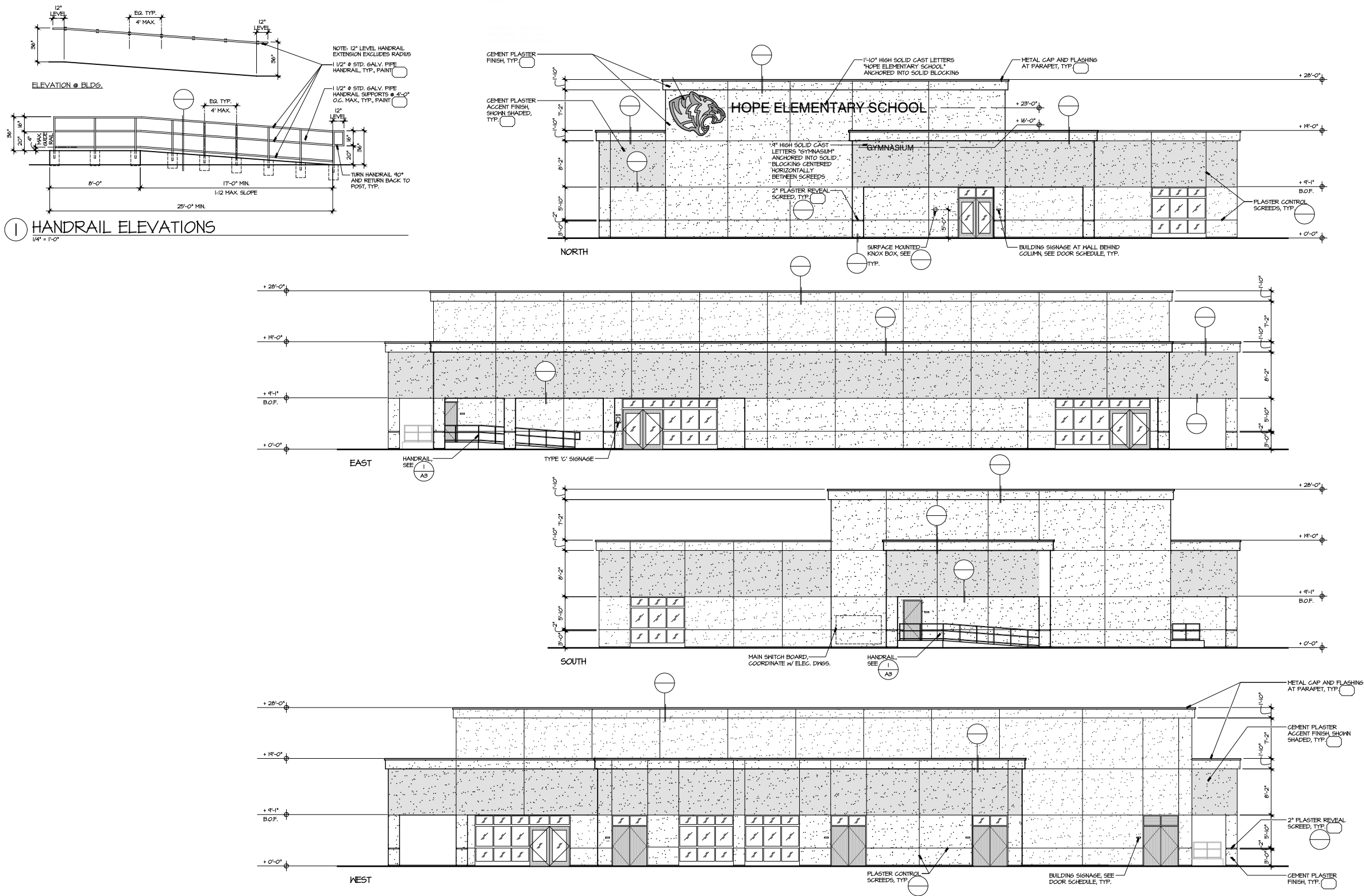
The proposed project would include a rooftop solar photovoltaic system that would service the building. In addition, the proposed project would install a transformer, switchboard and photovoltaic battery storage on a concrete pad to the southwest of the proposed building. The transformer would connect to an existing Southern California Edison power line that runs along the western side of the project site. No natural gas is proposed.

Emergency Access and Systems

Emergency access to the campus and the project site continue to be provided along the western boundary of the project site. Emergency access would be provided directly on the proposed concrete paving and in front of the proposed building. The emergency lane is approximately 20-feet wide, with one access point along the northern boundary of campus along West Teapot Dome Avenue. Additionally, a decomposed granite emergency access lane would be installed south of the walking path, gymnasium and classroom building.

The proposed project also includes a new 8-inch fire hydrant and a Fire Department Connection (FDC) check valve for the proposed building.

Figure 6 - Proposed Gymnasium/Classroom Building Elevations



Source: Mangini 2024.

1. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.

1. Introduction

Proposed Enrollment and Building Capacity and Use

The proposed project would increase the enrollment capacity of Hope ES by 60 students. With the proposed project, Hope ES would have an enrollment capacity of 320 students. To serve the increase in enrollment the proposed project would increase on-campus staff by four. The design capacity of the proposed building would be a maximum of 1,064 persons, which includes classrooms (235 persons) and gymnasium (829 persons). Typical daily use of the proposed building would be approximately 100 persons.

1.2.7 Proposed Sports and Events on Campus

The proposed project would be utilized for various sports and events; see Table 3, *Proposed Extracurricular Games and Events*. Existing events on campus, which include physical education, basketball, volleyball, assemblies, and graduation would maintain the same number of participants and staff per event. However, spectators would increase for basketball and volleyball events from 50 spectators to 100 spectators, and spectators for assemblies and graduations would increase from 250 spectators to 400 spectators. No changes to the number nor frequency of existing events would occur. The theater performances would be a new event as a result of the proposed project. Theater performances would occur periodically and would include approximately 5 staff, 50 performers, and 400 spectators on campus during a theater event.

Table 3 Proposed Uses and Extracurricular Games and Events

Event	Existing Hope ES Players/Staff per event	Maximum existing spectators	Proposed Hope ES Players/Staff per event	Proposed Spectators per event
Physical Education	Standard class size	0 spectators	Standard class size	0 spectators
Basketball	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	50 spectators	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	100 spectators
Volleyball	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	50 spectators	2 Teams 4 Coaches 60 Players	100 spectators
Theater Performances	0 Staff 0 Students	0 spectators	5 Staff 50 Performers	400 spectators
Assemblies	30 Staff 50 Performers	250 spectators	30 Staff 50 Performers	400 spectators
Graduation	30 Staff 260 Students	250 spectators	30 Staff 260 Students	400 spectators

1.2.8 Construction

Construction for the proposed project would occur in one phase with construction starting Spring 2027. Construction for the proposed project is anticipated to take approximately 12 months. Construction activities would include tree removal, site preparation, grading, construction, paving and architectural coating and landscaping/finishes. Construction of the proposed project would include approximately 2,990 cubic yards of

1. Introduction

soil export. All construction personnel and equipment would be staged on the project site. No offsite staging would occur.

1.2.9 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 the project site from local zoning, (2) approval of the proposed project, (3) adoption of the IS/MND, and (4) adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

1.2.10 Other Agency Action Requested

The District would require approval and/or coordination from the following agencies to implement the proposed project.

State Agencies

The District will seek approval of the proposed project from the Division of the State Architect (DSA).

Local Agencies

The District would seek approval of a new fire hydrant from the Tulare County Fire Department and approval of a new septic tank from the Tulare County Health Department.

2. Environmental Checklist

2.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Project Title:** Hope Elementary School Gymnasium/Classroom Building Project

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**

Hope Elementary School District
613 West Teapot Dome Avenue,
Porterville, CA 93257

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**

Melanie Matta
(559) 784-1064

4. **Project Location:**

613 West Teapot Dome Avenue
Porterville, CA 93257

5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**

Hope Elementary School District
613 West Teapot Dome Avenue,
Porterville, CA 93257

6. **General Plan Designation:**

Tulare County: Public/Quasi-Public: School and Rural Density Residential
City of Porterville: Public/Semi-Public and Rural/Agriculture/Conservation

7. **Zoning:**

Tulare County: Exclusive Agricultural Zone 10-acre minimum (AE-10)
City of Porterville: Public and Semi-Public (PS) and Agriculture/Conservation (AC)

8. **Description of Project:**

The District is proposing to develop an 11,462 gross-square foot gymnasium and classroom building (Building L), with an interior square footage of 11,182 square feet (i.e., interior/functional space). The proposed project includes the removal of the existing unpaved parking lot, approximately 223 citrus trees, and one driveway onto the project site. As part of the proposed project, a chain link fencing and rolling gate on the east side of Hope ES campus would be removed and replaced to allow for grading and installation of new concrete walkway that would connect the proposed Building L to the campus.

The Building L would include three classrooms; a multi-use gymnasium (5,798 square feet) with basketball striping and a ceiling mounted basketball hoop, two water fountains, and four direct entrances; two student bathrooms; a janitor closet; a stage area/ music classroom (1,325 square feet) with one accessible ramp and

2. Environmental Checklist

one wheelchair lift, folding partitions and associated vestibule area, electrical, instrument and data rooms; a roof access space; and one staff bathroom. The gymnasium would include lighting, sound system, and HVAC. Additionally, Building L would include a rooftop solar photovoltaic system that would service the building.

The proposed Building L would be surrounded by 17 ornamental trees. The project also proposes a new 8-inch wet-type fire hydrant and FDC/check valve for Building L. The proposed project would include construction of a new septic tank system connected to the proposed gym/classroom building. Additionally, the proposed project would construct new stormwater drain inlets and 46,448 cubic feet (CF) stormwater retention basin. A new 3,000-gallon septic tank, located on the east side of the project site, would capture the wastewater generated by the proposed project. Additionally, a decomposed granite fire access lane would be installed south of the walking path and gymnasium and classroom building.

The proposed project would increase enrollment capacity at Hope Elementary School by a total of 60, from 260 to 320 students. To serve the increase in enrollment the proposed project would increase on-campus staff by four. Typical daily use of the proposed building would have approximately 100 persons.

Existing events on campus, which include physical education, basketball, volleyball, assemblies, and graduation would maintain the same number of participants and staff per event. However, spectators would increase for basketball and volleyball events from 50 spectators to 100 spectators, and spectators for assemblies and graduations would increase from 250 spectators to 400 spectators. The theater performances would be a new event as a result of the proposed project. Theater performances would occur periodically and would include approximately 5 staff, 50 performers, and 400 spectators on campus during the theater event.

The construction of the proposed project would occur in one phase. Construction is anticipated to begin Spring 2027 and complete Spring 2028. 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 include approximately 2,990 cubic yards of soil export.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

According to the Porterville Area Community Plan, the properties surrounding the campus and project site have a land use designation of Rural Density Residential to the north, west, south and east. Based on the Tulare County Public Parcel zoning lookup tool, the surrounding properties have a zoning designation of AE-20, which indicates exclusive agricultural zone 20-acre minimum, to the north, and AE-10 to the west, south and east. Based on City of Porterville General Plan Land Use Element, the properties surrounding the campus and project site have a land use designation of Rural Residential to the north and Agriculture Rural Conservation to the west, south and east. The properties surrounding the campus and project site are zoned Rural Residential (RR) to the north, and Agricultural/Conservation to the west, south, and east.

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

- State Agency
 - Division of the State Architect (DSA)
- Local Agency
 - Tulare County Fire Department (Approval of a new fire hydrant)
 - Tulare County Health Department (Approval of a new septic tank)

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

2. Environmental Checklist

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 proposed project would comply with tribal consultation requirements pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52). The District sent formal consultation letters to the Kern Valley Indian Community, Tubatulabal of Kern Valley, Tule River Indian Tribe and the Wukachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band. The District provided notification letters to these tribes on July 10, 2024.

After the 30-day AB52 consultation request window, no tribes requested to consult. The District is in compliance with Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1.

2. Environmental Checklist

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


Date

2. Environmental Checklist

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) **Impacts 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.

2. Environmental Checklist

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:
- the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - 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		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	
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	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			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	
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	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	
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	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	
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	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			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	

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. Hope ES and the project site are currently within unincorporated Tulare County. Hope ES and the project site are within the County Adopted Urban Area Boundary (CACUAB) for the City of Porterville, which are areas within the County of Tulare that a city may expand to and develop in the future (Tulare County 2015). The Tulare County General Plan Policy FGMP-8.18 discusses the maintenance of scenic vistas by ensuring hilltop development maintains scenic views of the foothills (Tulare County 2012). The proposed project is not located on a hilltop and would not impact views of the foothills. 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. Additionally, the General Plan implements a Hillside Overlay District to protect views of the foothill area of the City, and views along the Tule River (Porterville 2008b). The Hope ES campus and project site is in a predominantly flat area surrounded by agricultural and residential uses, the nearest area with a Hillside Overlay District is approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the project site. Additionally, the Tule River is approximately 2.5 miles north of the project site. No other scenic vistas are identified.

The proposed gymnasium would be part of the Hope ES and would have similar heights (one-story and 28 feet above grade) to the other school buildings on the campus and residential buildings near the campus that extend one to two stories. The proposed gymnasium would not be visible from the identified scenic vistas due to the distance to the scenic vistas existing development around the project site, and existing agricultural vegetation. The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse 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. The project site does not contain rock outcroppings, historic buildings, nor significant trees. The project site contains approximately 223 agricultural citrus trees which are typical of the area. The nearest officially state designated state scenic highway to the project site is a portion of State Route 180 (SR-180) near the City of Fresno approximately 50 miles to the north of the project site (Caltrans 2024). Additionally, the nearest eligible state designated state scenic highway to the project site is a portion of State Route 190 (SR-190)

3. Environmental Analysis

traversing the City of Porterville approximately 2 miles to the north of the project site. Due to the distance, topography, and intervening development, the project site is not visible from the SR-180 and SR-190. No scenic resources would be damaged, 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. Hope ES and the project site are currently within unincorporated Tulare County. Hope ES and the project site are within the County Adopted Urban Area Boundary (CACUAB) for the City of Porterville, which are areas within the County of Tulare that a city may expand to and develop in the future (Tulare County 2015). Therefore, for this analysis the project site would be considered nonurbanized.

The visual character of the project site and the surrounding area includes an educational facility surrounded by agricultural and residential uses. As discussed in Section 3.1(a) there are no scenic vistas in the vicinity of the proposed project and impacts to such resources would be less than significant. The proposed project would not disturb the foothills, a visual resource to the County and City of Porterville. Although the proposed project would disturb agricultural uses, the surrounding area's agricultural character would remain, and development of the proposed project would be visually similar to the existing Hope ES buildings. No other scenic resources would be impacted.

Tulare County General Plan Policy FGMP-1.5 discusses preserving visual resources of the foothills (Tulare County 2012). Additionally, visual resources within the City of Porterville are characterized by ridgelines, hillsides, agricultural areas, the Tule River, and the Rocky Hill area (Porterville 2008b). The Tule River and the Rocky Hill area is approximately 2.5 miles and 5.40 miles away from the project site, respectively; therefore, due to distance, the proposed project would not affect these visual resources. 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. Views of a ridgeline are visible from the public right-of-way, Teapot Dome Avenue, looking east along the roadway. The proposed project would construct a new gymnasium/classroom building on the project site on the south side of Teapot Dome Avenue and would not impede views of the distant ridgeline to the east. Further, Teapot Dome Avenue is not designated as a scenic route or corridor (Porterville 2008b; Tulare County 2012).

The proposed project would construct a gymnasium building, parking lot, and other site improvements that are visually similar to the existing educational buildings on the Hope ES campus. The proposed project would be a similar height to the existing educational and residential buildings near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views and its surroundings, impacts would be less than significant.

3. Environmental Analysis

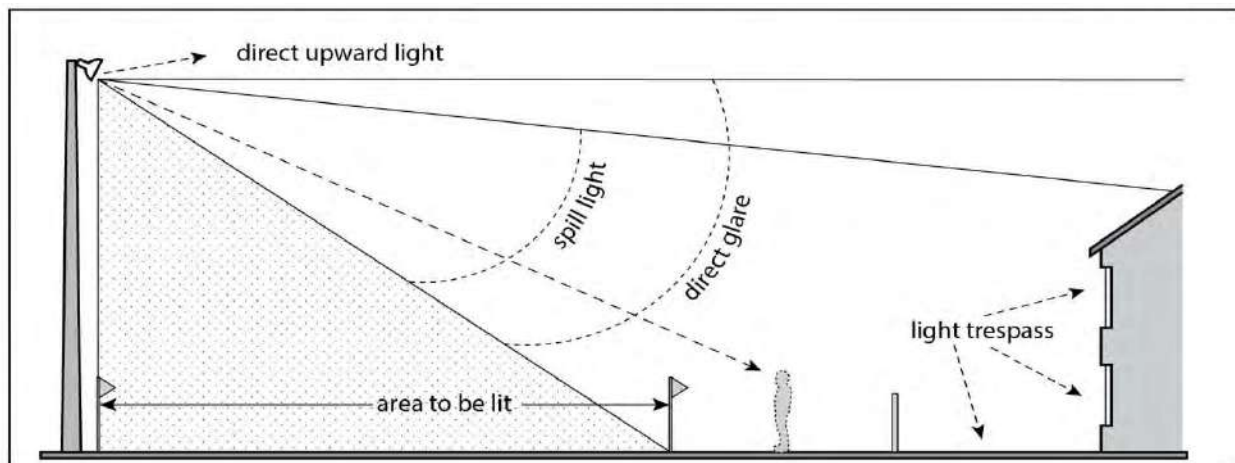
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. Existing sources of lighting on the project site include headlights from vehicles parking and maneuvering on the project site. Existing sources of lighting around the project site include security/building lighting (which includes light poles); light emanating from windows on the Hope ES campus and residential buildings; and vehicles headlights from vehicles in the parking lots, traveling in the agricultural fields, and traveling along Teapot Dome Avenue. Existing sources of glare onsite include parked cars. Existing sources of glare in the surrounding community include vehicle headlights from vehicles parked in parking lots and traveling in the agricultural fields and Teapot Dome Avenue, light-colored building materials and windows, and lighting (both exterior lighting and light emanating from windows). Provided below is a discussion of terms related to light and glare.

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 A, *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 A: Spill Light, Direct Glare, and Light Trespass



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).

3. Environmental Analysis

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.

Proposed Project Lighting

The proposed project would introduce new sources of light and glare to the project site that would be similar to existing and surrounding conditions, including construction a new building and lights from parked vehicles and vehicles traveling to/from the project site. The proposed gymnasium/classroom building lighting would increase light emanating from windows and introduce a building with light-colored building materials and windows on the project site which could reflect light. However, the proposed project’s lighting and glare would be similar to existing and surrounding conditions. Outdoor light fixtures would be downward facing and installed with light-shields or filters, which would reduce sky glow, spill light, and light trespass. Further, the existing Hope ES campus and surrounding agricultural uses would block light and glare of the project site from nearby and distant sensitive receptors. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase new sources of light and glare and would not significantly impact day or nighttime views. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 (LESA) Model (1997a) prepared by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) 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?**

Less Than Significant 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. 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 2024). For the purposes of analysis, agricultural lands mean Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 21061.2.

According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2.42-acres of the project site are mapped as Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 0.03 acres are mapped as Urban and Built-up Land (DOC 2022a). The Farmland of Statewide Importance, despite being utilized for agriculture, is on a 7.72-acre parcel (APN 303-060-041) owned by the District. The majority of the project site, excluding the 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES campus, has a County land use designation of Rural Density Residential and is zoned as AE-10 (Tulare County 2015; Tulare County 2024a; Tulare County 2024b). According to the City of Porterville, the project site has a land use designation of Rural/Agriculture/Conservation and is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation (AC) (Porterville 2008; Porterville 2024). Currently 0.6-acres of the 2.42-acres of the project site designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance are utilized as an unpaved parking lot.

PlaceWorks prepared a LESA report for the proposed project to provide a rating related to the quality of agricultural land on the project site; assess potential effects, if any, to agricultural land that may be present on the project site; and if any impacts to agricultural land would occur, determine the significance of impacts under the CEQA. The California LESA Model is made up of two components, known as "Land Evaluation" (LE) and "Site Assessment" (SA), that are scored and weighted separately to yield a total LE subscore and SA subscore (DOC 1997a). The Final LESA Score is the sum of the LE and SA subscores and has a maximum possible score of 100 points; specific numeric thresholds are used to determine the significance of a project's impacts on agricultural resources (see Appendix A).

3. Environmental Analysis

For the purposes of the LESA report the acreage of the project site was rounded to the nearest tenth, 2.5 acres, and the LESA report was prepared in accordance with the DOC's optional model (see Appendix A). The LESA Report concluded that the project site received a cumulative score of 41.9. Impacts to agricultural resources for sites that receive a LESA score between 40 and 59 are considered significant under CEQA if the LE and SA sub-scores are each greater than or equal to 20 points. As shown in Table 4-7, *Total LESA Score Sheet*, of Appendix A of this IS/MND, the proposed project's LE score is 22.5 and the SA score is 19.4. Therefore, because the SA score is not greater than or equal to 20, the conversion of the project site's agricultural resources to non-agricultural use is not considered significant under CEQA. Thus, impacts to farmland would be considered less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site covers approximately 2.45 acres, which includes a 0.03-acres developed portion of the Hope ES campus. As previously discussed, 2.42-acres is Farmland of Statewide Importance, 0.6-acres of which are an unpaved parking lot with no agricultural uses (DOC 2022a). The project site, excluding the 0.03-acre developed portion of the Hope ES, has a County land use designation of Rural Density Residential and is zoned as AE-10 (Tulare County 2015; Tulare County 2024a; Tulare County 2024b). The 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES campus, has a County land use designation is Public/Quasi-Public (Tulare County 2015). According to the City of Porterville, the project site has a land use designation of Rural/Agriculture/Conservation and is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation (AC) (Porterville 2008; Porterville 2024). It should be noted that the District will exempt the project site from local zoning under its authority, pursuant to Government Code 53094. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning and agricultural uses.

As discussed in Section 3.2(a), the project site received a cumulative score of 41.9, and a LESA score between 40 and 59 is considered significant under CEQA if the LE and SA sub-scores are each greater than or equal to 20 points (See Appendix A). Although the project's LE score is 22.5, the SA score is 19.4 which is below the 20-point threshold. Therefore, the conversion of the project site's agricultural resources to non-agricultural use is not considered significant under CEQA. Additionally, the project site's parcel is owned by the District and is leased to farmers for agricultural uses. Development of the proposed project would not prohibit the future use of agricultural uses on the district owned parcel; and the remaining approximately 5.3 acres of the APN 303-060-041 parcel would continue to be utilized for agricultural uses. Therefore, with District exemption from local zoning, the existing zoning would remain unchanged, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, and impacts would be less than significant.

Williamson Act contracts restrict the use of privately owned land for 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. As determined by the LESA Report, the project site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract, and the proposed project would not conflict with an existing Williamson Act contract (see Appendix A). Therefore, no impacts to a Williamson Act Contract would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

- 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 majority of the project site, excluding the 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES campus within the western portion of the project site, has a County land use designation is Rural Density Residential and is zoned as AE-10 (Tulare County 2015; Tulare County 2024a; Tulare County 2024b). According to the City of Porterville, the project site has a land use designation of Rural/Agriculture/Conservation and is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation (AC) (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). The 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES campus, has a County land use designation is Public/Quasi-Public (Tulare County 2015). The project site contains no significant forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production uses onsite nor in the immediate vicinity (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). 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.

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

No Impact. The project site contains no significant forest land uses onsite nor in the immediate vicinity of the project site (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024a). 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?**

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 3.2(a), the proposed project would result in the removal of 2.2-acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance. However, a LESA Report prepared for the proposed project concluded the conversion of the project site's agricultural resources to non-agricultural use is not considered significant under CEQA (see Appendix A). Further, there are no forest land uses onsite nor in the immediate vicinity, and no impact or conversion of forestland to non-forest use would occur. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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 B.

The primary air pollutants of concern for which ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been established are ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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 O₃, and PM_{2.5} under the California and National AAQS, nonattainment for PM₁₀ under the California AAQS (CARB 2024).

SJVAPCD's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts on Air Quality (GAMAQI) recommends CEQA thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants. To streamline the process of assessing significance of criteria pollutant emissions under CEQA from commonly encountered projects, SJVAPCD developed a screening tool known as Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL). Using project type and size, the SJVAPCD 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 under CEQA (SJVAPCD 2015). The SPAL Table 5, *Educational, Elementary School*, screening criteria would apply to the proposed project, 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. In addition, SJVAPCD's GAMAQI recommends that an ambient air quality analysis (AAQA) be conducted if the project exceeds the AAQA Analysis Screening Levels for Development Projects found in Table 4 of the GAMAQI (2015), which identifies 9,000 square feet for educational uses. The GAMAQI further states that if the AAQA shows the project, after mitigation, generates on-site construction or operational emissions of any criteria pollutant exceeding 100 pounds per day, dispersion modeling should be prepared. As discussed below, the proposed project is below the SPAL screening criteria but is above the AAQA screening size criteria; therefore, air quality impacts are discussed qualitatively except for the AAQA which quantifies construction and operational emissions and compares them against the 100 lbs/day AAQA screening thresholds.

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 projects 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 decisionmakers of the environmental impacts of the project under consideration early enough to ensure that air quality concerns are fully addressed. AQMP strategies are based on growth projections from local general plans. Projects that are consistent with the local general plan are generally considered consistent with the AQMP. The project site currently operates as an overflow parking lot for the existing Hope ES campus and citrus orchard. The proposed additions to the campus, a new school-serving building, would be consistent with the intended use of the site under the City's Public/Quasi-Public land use designation for the 0.03-acre portion of the site (Porterville 2008a). While the remaining 2.42 acres of the project site are designated Rural Density Residential by Tulare County and Rural/Agriculture/Conservation by the City of Porterville, the District will exempt the site from its local zoning under its authority pursuant to Government Code 53094. The proposed project would also allow the school to further accommodate the demand for current student education within the District's enrollment boundaries at the Hope Elementary School campus adjacent to the project site.

3. Environmental Analysis

The proposed project would also be consistent with the AQMP that SJVAPCD has prepared 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 current AQMP. The proposed project would result in an increase of 11,462 square feet of elementary school building space and an increase in the enrollment capacity of Hope Elementary by 60 students. Additionally, four new staff members would be employed, and the increased enrollment would result in a net increase of 200 average daily trips. The SJVAPCD's SPAL screening criteria show that elementary school projects under 156,000 square feet, 1,880 students, and 1,000 average daily vehicle trips would have less than significant impacts with respect to air quality (SJVAPCD 2020). Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to air quality and would not obstruct implementation of SJVAPCD's AQMPs.

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 conforms to 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 SJVAPCD's methodology, a qualitative analysis of the project's construction and operational impacts based on SJVAPCD'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 soil-disturbing activities including grading. 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, NO_x , CO, PM_{10} , and $PM_{2.5}$.

The proposed project includes the construction of a new gymnasium and classroom building that has a gross square footage of 11,462. The proposed project would also repave the existing parking lot at the north end of the campus. Construction activities associated with development of the proposed project would include tree removal, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, painting, and landscaping. As discussed above, SJVAPCD has pre-quantified emissions to determine the sizes of projects that would produce emissions that could 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 SJVAPCD 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 the 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 are not anticipated to exceed the SJVAPCD's regional significant thresholds. Additionally, the

3. Environmental Analysis

construction activities under the proposed project would be required to comply with SJVAPCD's Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM₁₀ Prohibition). Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Ambient Air Quality Analysis

As previously stated, SJVAPCD's GAMAQI requires that an AAQA be prepared for projects that exceed the applicable AAQA screening size criteria. Because the proposed project is a school, the "Education" criterion of 9,000 square feet would apply to the proposed project. As the proposed project would introduce 11,462 square feet of new building space, construction emissions were quantified and compared against the AAQA emissions screening of 100 pounds per day. As shown in Table 4, *Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Construction*, the proposed project would not exceed the AAQA emissions screening of 100 pounds per day, and dispersion modeling is therefore not warranted. This impact would be less than significant.

Table 4 Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Construction

Construction Year	Construction-Related Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds/day) ¹					
	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Proposed Project Construction						
2027	2	19	16	<1	<1	5
2028	8	13	18	<1	1	<1
Maximum	8	19	18	<1	1	5
SJVAPCD AAQA Emissions Screening	100	100	100	100	100	100
Exceeds Screening?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1; PlaceWorks 2024 (see Appendix B)

¹ CalEEMod default equipment was relied on and the default construction schedule was extended to reflect the District's anticipated timeline of 12 months. Maximum daily emission rates are drawn from the highest between Winter and Summer results. Emissions shown herein conservatively include both on-site and off-site emissions during project construction.

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 60 students, from 260 students to 320 students, and an increase in four on-campus staff. As identified in Section 3.17, *Transportation*, and in Appendix I, the proposed project is expected to result in approximately 200 net new average daily trips (ADT). SJVAPCD's SPAL screening criteria for elementary school land uses is 156,000 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 would be less than SJVAPCD's significance thresholds for regional criteria air pollutants. Additionally, the proposed buildings would be constructed to meet the latest California Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, which would result in further reductions to emissions associated with building energy use when compared to existing buildings on the campus. Therefore, the proposed project would result in less than significant long-term operational air quality impacts.

3. Environmental Analysis

Ambient Air Quality Analysis

As previously stated, SJVAPCD's GAMAQI requires that an AAQA be prepared for projects that exceed the applicable AAQA screening size criteria. Because the proposed project is a school, the "Education" criterion of 9,000 square feet would apply to the proposed project. As the proposed project would introduce 11,462 square feet of new building space, operational emissions were quantified and compared against the AAQA emissions screening of 100 pounds per day. As shown in Table 5, *Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Operation*, the proposed project would not exceed the AAQA emissions screening of 100 pounds per day, and dispersion modeling is therefore not warranted. This impact would be less than significant.

Table 5 Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Operation

Emission Sources	Construction-Related Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds/day) ¹					
	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Proposed Project Operation						
Mobile	1	1	7	<1	2	<1
Area	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	8	<1	2	<1
SJVAPCD AAQA Emissions Screening	100	100	100	100	100	100
Exceeds Screening?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1; PlaceWorks 2024 (see Appendix B)

¹ Maximum daily emission rates are drawn from the highest between Winter and Summer results. Emissions shown herein conservatively include both on-site and off-site emissions during project operation.

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. The proposed school buildings are not within this category of land uses and would not 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 starting in Spring 2027), the proposed project would not result in a long-term substantial source of TAC emissions. 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

3. Environmental Analysis

it would not generate substantial emissions during construction and operation, project-related diesel particulate matter impacts during construction are not anticipated to be 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 vehicle miles traveled (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 attainment under both the national and California AAQS for CO; however, 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)¹. The proposed project would result in an increase of 200 trips, which includes 68 new AM peak hour trips. As provided in the Traffic Impact Analysis for the proposed project (see Appendix I), Teapot Dome Avenue is projected to experience up to 4,290 daily vehicle trips east of the project site in 2028 with implementation of the proposed project. Considering daily vehicle trip volumes on Teapot Dome Avenue would not exceed BAAQMD's recommended hourly screening criteria, the proposed project would not introduce new vehicle trips which may result in a CO hotspot when combined with existing traffic volumes 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 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

¹ 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. Environmental Analysis

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 a new school building on the project site contiguous to the existing elementary school campus 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.

3.4 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 project site has been previously disturbed by the development of the existing Hope ES (0.03-acres), an unpaved parking lot, and agricultural uses. Tulare County, which includes the project site, is not within any habitat conservation plan/national community conservation plan area (HCP/NCCP) as identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2022).

A Biological Resource Due Diligence Survey was conducted on the project site (see Appendix C). As part of the report a literature review was performed to determine the special-status plant and wildlife species that have been documented near the project site, which includes but not limited to burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), slender clarkia (*Clarkia exilis*), San Joaquin woollythreads (*Monolopia congdonii*), San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), and San Joaquin kit fox.

Following the literature review a site survey was performed by a qualified biologist on May 15, 2024. The site survey identified no natural vegetation communities exist onsite and observed plant species were generally characteristic of disturbed vegetation. Plant species observed were generally characteristic of disturbed vegetation communities and included nonnative weedy and/or ruderal species, including black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and red stemmed fillaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). Some of the wildlife species present on the project site at the time of the survey included Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), house finch (*Haemorrhous mexicanus*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*),

3. Environmental Analysis

and mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*). No special status wildlife was observed during the site survey. Due to human activities and the disturbed nature of the project site, the project site lacks a suitable habitat for special status species identified from the literature review. However, based on the literature review, database searches, and biological survey, the burrowing owl and San Joaquin kit fox were determined to have a low potential to occur on the project site. Construction of the proposed project could impact burrowing owls and/or San Joaquin kit fox in the event they are present on-site. However, impacts to burrowing owls and the San Joaquin kit fox would be avoided with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4. Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measures impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 Preconstruction Surveys for Burrowing Owl and San Joaquin Kit Fox. Preconstruction surveys for burrowing owl and San Joaquin kit fox shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the initiation of ground disturbing activities. The surveys shall follow the methods described in the CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (California Department of Fish and Game 2012) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (USFWS 2011). Two surveys shall be conducted, with the first survey being scheduled between 30 and 14 days before initial ground disturbance (grading, grubbing, and construction), and the second survey being conducted no more than 24 hours prior to initial ground disturbance. If burrowing owls, suitable burrowing owl burrows with sign (e.g., whitewash, pellets, feathers, prey remains), San Joaquin kit fox, and/or suitable San Joaquin kit fox dens are identified on the project site during the survey, the proposed project shall follow the avoidance methods and buffer distances listed in the CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation and the USFWS Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance. These features must be completely avoided; however, if impacts to those features are unavoidable then the District or designated representative shall consult with CDFW and USFWS prior to moving forward with construction.

BIO-2 Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. Due to the presence of suitable nesting habitat for bird species protected under the MBTA, ground-disturbing activities and tree removal shall be conducted during the non-breeding season for birds (approximately September 1 through January 31) to the greatest extent possible. If project construction-related activities are scheduled to occur during the nesting bird season (generally February 1 through August 31), a preconstruction nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified avian biologist to ensure that active bird nests will not be disturbed or destroyed. The survey shall be completed no more than three days prior to initial ground disturbance. The nesting bird survey shall include the project site and adjacent areas where project construction activities have the potential to affect active nests, either directly or indirectly, due to construction activity, noise, human activity, or ground disturbance. If an active nest is identified, a qualified avian biologist shall establish an appropriately sized non-disturbance buffer around the nest using flagging or staking. Construction activities shall not occur within any non-disturbance buffer zones until

3. Environmental Analysis

the nest is deemed inactive by the qualified avian biologist. If initial ground-disturbing activities are scheduled to occur during the nesting bird season, then a biological monitor shall be present during all vegetation and tree removal activities to ensure no impacts to nesting birds occur.

BIO-3

San Joaquin Kit Fox Construction Measures.

- During construction, project-related vehicles shall observe a daytime speed limit of 15 miles per hour (mph) throughout the project site, except on county roads and State and Federal highways; this is particularly important at night when kit foxes are most active. Night-time construction shall be minimized to the extent possible. However, if it does occur, then the speed limit shall be reduced to 10-mph. Off-road project-related traffic outside of the designated project site shall be prohibited.
- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction phase of a proposed project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 2-feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials. If the trenches cannot be closed, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen-fill, or wooden planks shall be installed. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the USFWS and the CDFW shall be contacted by the District or its designated representative.
- Kit foxes are attracted to den-like structures such as pipes and may enter stored pipes and become trapped or injured. All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of 4-inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods should be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe should not be moved until the USFWS has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of a qualified biologist, the pipe may be moved only once to remove it from the path of construction activity, until the fox has escaped.
- All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps should be disposed of in securely closed containers and removed at least once a week from the project site.

BIO-4

San Joaquin Kit Fox Operational Measures.

- No pets, such as dogs or cats, shall be permitted on the project site to prevent harassment, mortality of kit foxes, or destruction of dens.
- Use of rodenticides and herbicides in the project site should be restricted. This is necessary to prevent primary or secondary poisoning of kit foxes and the depletion of

3. Environmental Analysis

prey populations on which they depend. All uses of such compounds should observe label and other restrictions mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other State and Federal legislation, as well as additional project-related restrictions deemed necessary. If rodent control must be conducted, zinc phosphide should be used because of a proven lower risk to kit fox.

- In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures should be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape, or the USFWS/CDFW should be contacted for guidance.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. Tulare County, which includes the project site, is not within an HCP/NCCP as identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2022). The City of Porterville is part of the Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley; however, the project site is not identified within the plan as a habitat or area for upland species (USFWS 1998). The Biological Resource Due Diligence Survey concluded that no potential jurisdictional waters, wetlands, or aquatic features were identified during the literature review or observed during the site survey (See Appendix C).

The Porterville General Plan, Figure 6-4, *Special Status and Sensitive Vegetation*, identifies that the project site abuts the San Joaquin Kit fox habitat (Porterville 2008b). As discussed in Biological Resources Threshold 3.4(a), the San Joaquin kit fox and the Burrowing Owl were determined to have a low potential to occur on the project site. The Biological Resource Due Diligence Survey did not identify any other sensitive natural communities or habitats on the project site (see Appendix C). Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. No potential jurisdictional waters, wetlands, or aquatic features were identified in the Biological Resource Due Diligence Survey (see Appendix C) (ECORP 2024). Therefore, no impacts to state or federally protected wetlands 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 has been previously disturbed by the development of the existing Hope ES (0.03-acres), the unpaved parking lot, and agricultural uses. The USFWS Critical Habitats for Threatened & Endangered Species had identified no critical habitats within or in the vicinity of the project site. According to the CDFW Habitat Connectivity viewer (BIOS-6) the

3. Environmental Analysis

proposed project is not within an identified essential connectivity area, wildlife corridors, or core reserves and corridors areas (CDFW 2024).

However, according to the Porterville General Plan the project site abuts the San Joaquin Kit fox habitat (2008b). As discussed in Section 3.4(a), San Joaquin kit fox and burrowing owl were determined to have a low potential to occur on the project site. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Additionally, the proposed project would require the removal of up to 223 citrus trees from the project site. Although the USFWS identified no critical habitats, which includes special status avian species, the potential for nesting bird species exists. 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 take, possession, import, export, transport, sale, purchase, barter, or offering of these activities, 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-2 would ensure that impacts remain less than significant to nesting and migratory birds.

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

No Impact. There are no local biological-related policies or ordinances, such as preservation policy or ordinance that is applicable to the project site. The project site contains trees and up to 223 agricultural citrus trees would be removed from the project site. The proposed project would not remove trees in the public right of way. The 223 agricultural citrus trees are not a protected species. The proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances; therefore, no 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?

Less than Significant Impact. Tulare County, which includes the City of Porterville, is not within an HCP/NCCP as identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2022). The City of Porterville is part of the Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley; however, the project site is not identified as a habitat or area of concern for upland species (USFWS 1998).

The proposed project would not affect the HCP/NCCP, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan, and therefore less than significant impact would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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

No 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 Hope ES campus opened in 1980 and subsequent improvements and installation of portable classrooms occurred after 1980 (CDE 2024). Additionally, 2.42-acres of the 2.45-acre project site are primarily used as farmland and is regularly disturbed by agricultural uses. Of the 2.42 acres, 0.6 acres of the Farmland of Statewide Importance is an unpaved parking lot and would be considered disturbed. It should be noted that 0.03-acres of the project site include a developed portion of the Hope ES campus. The campus and project site are not listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2024). Additionally, Hope ES and project site are not listed in the California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures (OHP 2024). Further, a Cultural Letter Report was conducted for the proposed project, which included a records search and field survey (see Appendix D). The records search was completed at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (IC) and identified one cultural resource within 0.5-miles of the project site, the Historic Railroad Grade (P-54-004626) (ASM Affiliates 2024). During the field survey, no cultural resources of any kind were identified on the project site. Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site or campus that would be considered historically significant pursuant to § 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. Implementation of the proposed project would result in ground disturbing activities for the construction of the proposed project. Earthwork activities associated with the proposed project would include grading and utility trenching. The ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed project would include earthwork activities to ensure the proper base and slope for the proposed building, installation of a septic tank and a stormwater retention basin, and general site grading and landscaping. The 2.45-acre project site has previously been disturbed. Specifically, 0.03-acres

3. Environmental Analysis

includes a developed portion of the Hope ES campus and the remaining 2.42-acres are regularly disturbed by agricultural uses and an unpaved parking lot.

The Porterville General Plan states that the IC has documented 45 archaeological sites within the City (Porterville 2008b). The General Plan identified Murry Hill as the main village of the Yokuts, Chokowisho which is approximately 3.25 miles northeast of the project site. As part of the Cultural Letter Report, a Sacred Lands File request was submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on December 4, 2023, with a negative result that there are no known sacred sites or Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR) within or in the vicinity of the project site (Appendix D) (ASM Affiliates 2024).

Therefore, 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. In the unlikely event that archaeological resources are discovered during excavation or grading, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure construction would cease in the area of the find and a qualified archaeologist would be contacted. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

CUL-1 Prior to initiating any ground-disturbing activities for the proposed project, the District shall ensure that an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards for professional archaeology has been retained for the project and will be on-call during all grading and other significant ground-disturbing activities. The Qualified Archaeologist shall ensure that the following measures are followed for the Project:

- Prior to any ground disturbance, the Qualified Archaeologist, shall provide worker environmental awareness protection training to construction personnel regarding regulatory requirements for the protection of cultural (prehistoric and historic) resources. As part of this training, construction personnel shall be briefed on proper procedures to follow should unanticipated cultural resources be made during construction.
- In the event that unanticipated cultural material is encountered during any phase of project construction, all construction work within 100 feet of the find shall cease and the Qualified Archaeologist shall assess the find for importance. Construction activities may continue in other areas. If the discovery is determined to not be important by the Qualified Archaeologist, work will be permitted to continue in the area.
 - If a find is determined to be important by the Qualified Archaeologist, he or she shall immediately notify the District. The Qualified Archaeologist shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the Qualified Archaeologist and District, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: (1) is

3. Environmental Analysis

not eligible for the CRHR; or (2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. A significant impact would occur if previously interred human remains would be disturbed during excavation of the project site. 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 shall halt and remain halted. The Tulare County Coroner shall 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 shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the NAHC, who will contact the “most likely descendant.” The most likely descendant shall 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, shall 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 the 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.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 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 project construction. 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., State Route [SR]-65) 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. Operational use of energy would include heating, cooling, and mechanical ventilation of the gymnasium and classroom building; water heating; operation of electrical systems, use of on-site equipment and appliances; indoor and outdoor lighting for the new building and parking lot; and transportation fuels from vehicles

3. Environmental Analysis

traveling to and from the project site. In addition, the proposed gymnasium and classroom building would be all-electric.

Electrical Energy

The proposed project would be designed with an all-electric gymnasium and classroom building. While the proposed project would generate additional electrical 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 sold in-state 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 generally 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. The proposed project would also install a photovoltaic system (PV) that is expected to generate 30,600 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, offsetting approximately 26 percent of the building's annual electricity use. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact related to electricity.

Natural Gas Energy

While the proposed project's increase in enrollment capacity would result in nominal increases in natural gas consumption at existing Hope ES campus buildings, the uses proposed under the project would not consume natural gas and would be designed as all-electric. As such, the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary natural gas demands. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would result in no impacts with respect to natural gas usage.

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 school campus. The efficiency of the motor vehicles in use (average miles per gallon) is unknown and highly variable. While the proposed project would increase the student enrollment capacity at school by 60 students and would generate an estimated increase of 200 vehicle trips per day, these vehicle trips would already be traveling on the area's roadway network. The 60 new students would have been attending another school in a different area if not Hope ES because the proposed project is intended to accommodate forecasted student growth in the District. This site-generated traffic does not represent an overall increase in vehicle trips in the area. It instead represents 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 that would continue to be a locally serving use.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 District does not have direct control in determining the fuel efficiency of vehicles that are manufactured and available to students and employees. 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 students and employees with more fuel-efficient vehicle options.

Moreover, with the accelerated adoption of electric vehicles in recent years, electricity is increasingly becoming another notable transportation energy source. 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 increasingly be sourced from renewable energy sources. 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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. Additionally, the proposed project's use of a PV system would offset a portion of the project's electricity energy demand. 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 Section 3.8(b), *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. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the TCAG RTP/SCS and impacts would be less than significant.

3.7 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.**

Less than Significant Impact. The location of the proposed project is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone for fault rupture hazard (Porterville 2024e). Since no known active faults exist onsite, surface rupture would not occur. Additionally, as stated in the Geological and Environmental

3. Environmental Analysis

Hazards Assessment (GEHA) prepared for this project site (Appendix E), the site is not located within or immediately adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. According to the geotechnical investigation prepared for the project site, the nearest zoned fault is a portion of the Great Valley Fault system, more than 49 miles west (see Appendix E; Appendix F). A less than significant 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 most areas in Central California, is subject to ground movement associated with earthquakes along the active faults in the region. 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. The City of Porterville has a minimal hazard due to ground shaking (Porterville 2024e). The closest active Owens Valley fault group and Sierra Nevada Fault Zone is approximately 50 miles to the east of the project site (Porterville 2024e). 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 the State Architect (DSA) will ensure that the structures are sufficiently designed to withstand ground shaking. Compliance with CBC and recommendations from the geotechnical re 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 three main contributing factors: 1) cohesionless, granular soils having relatively low densities (usually of Holocene age); 2) shallow groundwater (generally less than 50 feet); and 3) moderate to high seismic ground shaking. According to the geotechnical investigation, the project site predominately consisted of medium dense to very dense silty sand, clayey sand, sandy silt, silty sand/sandy silt, clayey sand/sandy clay, and silty sand/sand or very stiff to hard sandy clay. Groundwater was also not encountered within 50 feet of the ground surface. Additionally, the project site is not located within close proximity to an Alquist-Priolo fault zone which would have severe shaking effects to the project site (see Appendix F). The geotechnical investigation for the project site determined the liquefaction potential is considered low and mitigations for liquefaction are not recommended (Krazan 2023 [Appendix F]).

iv) Landslides?

No Impact. A landslide is a type of erosion in which masses of earth and rock move downslope as a single unit. Susceptibility of slopes to landslides and other forms of slope failure depends on several factors. These are usually present in combination and include steep slopes, condition of rock and soil materials, presence of water, formational contacts, geologic shear zones, and seismic activity. The project sites and their adjoining properties are relatively flat and exhibit no substantial elevation changes or unusual geographic features (see Appendix F). Therefore, there would be no impact. The project would not expose people or the new school buildings to adverse effects associated with landslides.

3. Environmental Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. A Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was prepared for the proposed project which identified the soil make-up at the project site (see Appendix G). According to the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service's, Soil Survey of Tulare County, California, Central Part dated February 1982, the surface soil at the project site includes San Joaquin loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes and San Joaquin loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes in the north portion of the project site. San Joaquin loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes consists of moderately deep, well drained soils which formed on terraces in alluvium derived from weathered granitic rock sources. Permeability is very slow and the surface runoff is slow. San Joaquin loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes consists of moderately deep, well drained soils which formed on terraces in alluvium derived from weathered granitic rock sources. Permeability is very slow and the surface runoff is slow or medium. The proposed project would be required to comply with the recommendations from the geotechnical investigation and the seismic design parameters of the CBC, which regulates all building and construction projects and implements a minimum standard for building design and construction evacuation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. Additionally, the DSA will ensure that the structures are sufficiently designed to withstand ground shaking. Compliance with CBC, DSA, and recommendations from the geotechnical investigation would ensure that impacts are less than significant.

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. As previously stated in Section 3.7(b), the soil make-up was evaluated as part of the geotechnical investigation, which concluded there are elements of unstable soils. The proposed project would be required to comply with the recommendations of the geotechnical investigation and the seismic design parameters of the CBC, which regulates all building and construction projects and implements a minimum standard for building design and construction evacuation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. Additionally, the DSA review would ensure that the structures are sufficiently designed to withstand ground shaking. Compliance with CBC, DSA and recommendations from the geotechnical investigation would ensure that impacts are less than significant.

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 have a higher potential of expansive soils than areas with higher rainfall.

As stated previously in Section 3.7(b), soils were evaluated as part of the geotechnical investigation (see Appendix F). Since the project site contains soils with clay content, soils onsite may be expansive. Based on the expansion index, the soils onsite have a very low to low expansion potential. Additionally, as described in Section 3.7(a), compliance with the CBC and geotechnical recommendations outlined in the Geotechnical Investigation

3. Environmental Analysis

would ensure adequate structural integrity. 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 wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Less Than Significant Impact. The existing campus is currently served by a septic system. A new 3,000-gallon septic tank, located on the east side of the project site, would capture the wastewater generated by the proposed project. The District would seek approval of a new septic tank from the Tulare County Health Department. The proposed project would be required to comply with the recommendations of the geotechnical investigation and the seismic design parameters of the CBC, which regulates all building and construction projects and implements a minimum standard for building design and construction evacuation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. Compliance with CBC, DSA and recommendations from the geotechnical investigation would ensure that the proposed septic tank is adequately designed and supported by soils onsite. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. According to the City of Porterville Open Space and Conservation Element, the paleontological resources in Tulare County have been located, but not mapped due to paleontological sensitivity. Implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and CUL-1 would ensure that impacts to unknown paleontological resources are less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1 Prior to the start of construction, the District shall retain a Qualified Paleontologist to be on-call during earthwork activities. Prior to any ground disturbance, the Qualified Paleontologist, shall provide worker environmental awareness protection training to construction personnel regarding regulatory requirements for the protection of paleontological resources. As part of this training, construction personnel shall be briefed on proper procedures to follow should unanticipated paleontological resources be made during construction. 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 District/contractor shall notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate its significance. If the fossil locality is determined to be significant by the qualified 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.

CUL-1 Shall also apply.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 GHGs is fossil fuel use. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified four major GHGs—water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and ozone (O₃)—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 (N₂O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and chlorofluorocarbons.²

Information on the manufacturing 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.³ 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.⁴ A background discussion on the GHG regulatory setting can be found in Appendix B 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. 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 B, 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 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

² Water vapor (H₂O) 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.

³ 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).

⁴ 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

statewide reduction target set by AB 32 for the 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 6, *Project Consistency with Scoping Plan Priority Areas*, discusses the proposed project's consistency with the scoping plan's BMPs.

Table 6 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.	Not Applicable: The proposed project does not include any off-street paved parking that is subject to CALGreen EV charging infrastructure standards, and therefore, is not subject to this priority area
VMT Reduction	Meets local jurisdiction adopted SB 743 threshold for VMT.	Consistent: As discussed in Section 3.17, <i>Transportation</i> , 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. As discussed in Section 3.6, <i>Energy</i> , the proposed buildings would be constructed as all-electric and comply with the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen. The proposed project would not require natural gas infrastructure.

Source: CARB 2022

As discussed in Table 6, the proposed project would comply with the three priority areas of the 2022 Scoping Plan that that are applicable to the project. Therefore, the proposed project would have less than significant impacts with respect to GHG emissions.

3. Environmental Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. 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 three primary objectives of the 2022 Scoping Plan: transportation electrification, VMT reduction, and building decarbonization to 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.

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. As shown in Table 6, the proposed project would comply with all three Scoping Plan BMPs. Therefore, 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 (Tulare 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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 projects be consistent with the SCS, but provides incentives for consistency to governments and developers. The proposed project would involve the development of a new school building on the project site and increase student capacity by 60 students, from 260 to 320 students. Additionally, four new staff would be needed to fill positions at the new facilities. Due to this increase in students and staff, the proposed project is expected to result in approximately 200 net new ADT. However, most or all of these vehicle trips would already be traveling on the area's roadway network because these new students would have attended a school in the surrounding area, if not Hope ES. Additionally, the proposed project would expand the adjacent Hope ES campus but not alter its function as a locally serving elementary school. 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

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).

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 proposed project includes construction, and ground-disturbing activities that would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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.

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. The project site is currently undeveloped and adjacent to the existing Hope Elementary School. Recent Investigations found the site was previously developed with agricultural uses (Appendix G [Padre 2024]). Due to the historic agricultural uses on site chemicals of potential concern (COPC) were identified such as organochlorine pesticides (OCPs), arsenic, and lead from historic agricultural use; OCPs, petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), and naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) related to undocumented imported fill material; and petroleum hydrocarbons and metals related to a bus barn located west and adjacent to the project site. However, the PEA identified that none of the COPC warranted further assessment and/or remedial action. The project site was not adversely impacted by historic or current land uses and “No Further Action” is recommended.

As part of the PEA, a database search was conducted in EnviroStor and GeoTracker to determine if the project site or sites within a mile of the project site would be located on any hazardous material database. There were no identified hazardous facilities within a mile of the project site (Padre 2024).

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires referencing a list of hazardous materials sites, hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Control Board has issued certain types of orders, public drinking water wells collecting detectable levels of organic contaminants, underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases, and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Five additional environmental lists were searched for hazardous materials on the project site:

- **EJ Screen.** United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024a)
- **EnviroMapper.** United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024b)
- **Solid Waste Information System (SWIS).** California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (Cal Recycle 2024)
- **Cortese List.** Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2024b)
- **CalEPA.** California EPA (CalEPA 2024)

The project site is not listed on any of the above listed databases. Therefore, the project site would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and no impact would occur.

The State of California’s health and safety standards for school sites were analyzed in the project site specific GEHA (Appendix E). The following determinations were made based on the standards set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15186(c)(1). As a result of the review of GeoTracker, EnviroStor, EnviroMapper, and Solid Waste Information System (SWIS) databases, the site is not located on a current or former hazardous waste

3. Environmental Analysis

disposal site or solid waste disposal site. The subject property is also not listed by DTSC on the hazardous waste and substances list (Cortese List) and there are no chemical or petroleum pipelines within a 1,500-foot radius according to the National Pipeline Mapping System online mapping database. Additionally, the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) confirmed there are no high-pressure natural gas pipelines within 1,500 feet of the site. No evidence that a hazardous materials release or threatened release have occurred on the project site or within a 1,500-foot radius, which is the standard distance required to assess hazards by DTSC's school hazards investigation standards pursuant with CCR Title V Section 14010.

As discussed previously in Section 3.9(a), construction activities would require small amounts of hazardous materials, which include vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease and transmission fluids, as well as paints and coatings. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and manufacturers' specifications. Hazardous materials would be used in small quantities and stored so they do not pose significant safety hazards. 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). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which are not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. 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. Hope ES, and the project site are located in a rural area within unincorporated Tulare County. The project site is an expansion of the existing school site. The closest school to the project site is Vandalia Elementary School, approximately 2.1 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 hazardous materials typical of construction activities and used in the 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. As discussed in Section 3.9(b), no hazardous materials release or threatened release have occurred on the project site or its immediate vicinity. 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.

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?

No Impact. As stated above in Section 3.9(b), the PEA conducted a database search of EnviroStor and GeoTracker and no hazardous facilities were identified within a mile of the project site (Padre 2024). Five additional environmental lists were searched for hazardous materials on the project site:

- **EJ Screen.** United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024a)

3. Environmental Analysis

- **EnviroMapper.** United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2024b)
- **Solid Waste Information System (SWIS).** California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (Cal Recycle 2024)
- **Cortese List.** Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2024b)
- **CalEPA.** California EPA (CalEPA 2024)

The project site is not listed within the five identified databases. Additionally, there are no freeways or busy traffic corridors within 500 feet of the site. Public Resources Code Section 21151.8(b)(9) and Education Code Section 17213(d)(9) define a “freeway or other busy traffic corridors” as roadways that on an average day have traffic in excess of 50,000 vehicles in a rural area or 100,000 vehicles in an urban area. Therefore, the project site would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and no impact would occur.

- 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?**

Less Than Significant Impact. The Porterville Municipal Airport is less than 2 nautical miles from the project site. The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics is currently in the process of conducting an aeronautical review of the project site, which has not been completed upon completion and submittal of this IS/MND.

The project site is an expansion of the existing Hope ES campus. The proposed project would increase staff by 4 and increase enrollment by 60; however, as discussed in Section 3.14(a), the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly or indirectly. Thus, the proposed project would not introduce a substantial number of people into the Porterville Municipal Airport area. Additionally, the project site is located approximately 0.75 miles outside of the 55 A-weighted decibel (dBA) Community Noise Equivalence Level (CNEL) noise contour for the Porterville Municipal Airport (Porterville 2008d). Implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased exposure of people working at or visiting the project site to aircraft noise. Therefore, impacts from aircraft noise would be less than significant (see section 3.13c for further discussion).

The project site is also located within one of the safety zones of the Porterville Municipal Airport Influence Area. Specifically, the project site is located in Safety Zone 6 – Traffic Pattern Zone. Land Use controls within the Porterville Municipal Airport Influence Area are provided by the City of Porterville General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and the Tulare County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance (CTALUC 2012). For development in Safety Zone 6, Article 500 of the Porterville Municipal Code states that school uses are considered “Normally Compatible” which are uses that are considered compatible within Safety Zone 6 (Porterville 2024h). The compatibility requirements detail that to be “Normally Compatible,” a school facility must be in a zone where the Exterior Noise Exposure does not exceed 60 CNEL dB. As previously stated, the project site is outside of the 55 dBA CNEL contour for the airport, thus making it “Normally Compatible.”

3. Environmental Analysis

Since the proposed project is a school use, maximum lot coverage development standards do not apply to the proposed project (Porterville 2024h).

In addition, the Tulare County Zoning Ordinance includes the Airport Impact Zone (AP Zone), which establishes land use regulations between airport activities and adjacent urban area land uses within the airport environment (Tulare 1980). As such, the project site is zoned AE-10 and not zoned AP Zone. Therefore, the project site is not subject to the regulations under the AP Zone.

A preliminary search of the recommendations/constraints for the Porterville Municipal Airport for development was conducted where no evident impacts were noted to be possibly hazardous. However, if the aeronautical review results in a determination of an unseen significant impact, further review and determination of final impact will be addressed as an addendum to this IS/MND.

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 and the purpose of the Tulare County LHMP is to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards in Tulare County (Tulare County 2023a).

The proposed project would not interfere with any known evacuation routes. Construction-related vehicles and materials would be properly stored 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 (CFC), and California Department of Education (CDE) guidelines for site design and circulation. 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 project site is located in a local responsibility area (LRA) within a Non-Very High Fire Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Approximately 43 percent of the Porterville planning area, which is in proximity the Hope ES campus and project site, is considered to be within a moderate FHSZ (MFHSZ) (Porterville 2008c). The project site is surrounded by lands classified as MFHSZ and pockets of non-FHSZ (Porterville 2008c). The project site does not contain lands classified as VHFHSZ, or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (HFHSZ). Portions of eastern Porterville are located within moderate to high FHSZs. Figure 7-4, *Wildland Fire Hazard*, of the Porterville General Plan, identifies the project site being within a MFHSZ with a VHFHSZ approximately 0.25 miles west of the project site (Porterville 2008c). According to the CalFire FHSZ Viewer (2024), the project site is not within a FHSZ in a State Responsibility Area (SRA). The project site is approximately 2.2 miles northwest from the closest moderate FHSZ and is approximately 3.2 miles west of the closest high FHSZ in an SRA (CalFire 2024). The closest VHFHSZ in an SRA is approximately 11 miles away,

3. Environmental Analysis

in the mountainous areas, east of the project site (CalFire 2024). The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC, CFC, and would be reviewed and approved by DSA. The project site would be served by the Tulare County Fire Department, and as further discussed in Section 3.15, *Public Services*. Additionally, based on the U.S. Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), the project site is not within or bounded by the WUI or intermix (USFS 2023). 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. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, and a 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. 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 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 2.45-acre project site includes approximately 0.03-acres paved area of the Hope ES campus, approximately 0.60 acres of an unpaved parking lot and approximately 1.64-acres of agricultural citrus trees. All runoff from the existing campus directly drains into the immediate soil and neighboring agricultural lands. The proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces and runoff would continue to percolate into the soil in pervious areas or would be directed to new storm drain inlets and routed to the new 46,448 CF stormwater retention basin on the south side of the project site, and percolate into the ground. 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 leach into the soil.

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 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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 includes preparation of SWPPP.

The SWPPP must describe construction BMPs that address pollutant source reduction and provide measures/controls to mitigate potential pollutant sources. 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 classroom/athletic facilities, that could impact water quality. As discussed in Section 3.9(b), above, 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 would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

Further, the proposed project would implement BMPs to control the amount and quality of the stormwater and includes a 46,448 CF stormwater retention basin on the south side of the project site. 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 San Joaquin Valley – Tule Ground Water Basin (DWR 2024a). The project site is partially developed, and contains impervious and pervious surfaces, and runoff from the proposed project would to the public right of way or to new storm drain inlets and routed to the new stormwater retention basin. The project site is not used for groundwater recharge activities nor extraction. The proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions with the construction of the new gymnasium/classroom building and walking paths. The increase in impervious surfaces due to the proposed project would be captured by the new stormwater retention basin and control the amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site. Stormwater captured by the retention basin would not result in a decrease in ground water supplies, as the retention basin would allow for the same amount of stormwater to percolate into the ground at a controlled rate as to not result in on-site flooding. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially interfere with rainwater percolating into the groundwater.

3. Environmental Analysis

As discussed in Section 3.10(a), the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable regulations governing water quality and use. The District purchases water for Hope ES and will continue to do so until they connect with the City of Porterville Water in the future. The Tule Ground Water Basin covers approximately 475,895 acres or 744 square miles and the increase in impervious surfaces would be considered negatable (SWRCB 2024). Further the Tule Groundwater Basin is a high priority basin, a basin under the management of the Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Agency and their Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) (DWR 2019). The proposed project would not impede the implementation of the Eastern Tule GSP. Therefore, the slight increase of impervious surfaces on the project site would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies nor interfere with groundwater recharge. Thus, impacts 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 result in an increase in impervious surfaces on the project site, and the installation of new stormwater inlets and the stormwater retention basin would control the amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site; thus, reducing the potential for erosion and siltation on- or off-site.

The proposed project's construction includes grading, and utilities trenching. If not controlled, the transport of these materials to local waterways would 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 to 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 2.45-acre project site includes approximately 0.03-acres paved area of the Hope ES campus, approximately 0.60 acres of an unpaved parking lot and approximately 1.64-acres of agricultural citrus trees. The proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, and alteration of the existing natural drainage on the project site. Furthermore, as discussed above, the proposed project would include the installation of new stormwater inlets, and the stormwater retention basin would control the amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site. Thus, the amount of stormwater runoff reaching the public right of way would be similar to existing conditions. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that

3. Environmental Analysis

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 developed with hardscape, an unpaved parking lot, and agricultural uses. Currently, the project site and campus do not have an existing stormwater drainage system and runoff either percolates into the ground or leaves the campus and project site to the public-right-of-way or neighboring properties. The proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, decreasing the area of preamable soil on the project site, potentially increasing the rate of runoff water and potential additional sources or polluted runoff.

As discussed in section 3.10(a), construction of the proposed project would require a SWPPP and implement BMPs for construction and operation (i.e., stormwater retention basin). Stormwater that does not percolate into the ground would be directed to the new storm drain inlets and directed to the new stormwater retention basin. As discussed above, the new stormwater retention basin would control the amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site. The new stormwater retention basin would ensure that runoff levels would be consistent with existing conditions. The small quantities of hazardous materials used onsite would be properly handled, stored, and used. The proposed project would not create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be less than significant.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. The project site is not within a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year flood hazard zone (FEMA 2009). The project site is within Flood Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard. According to the California Department of Water Resources' Dam Breach Inundation Map and the National Inventory of Dams the project site is not within any dam inundation area (DWR 2024b; USACE 2024). No other maps or documents from the Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Tulare County LHMP, and City of Porterville General Plan identify the proposed project within a flood risk zone (Tulare County 2018; Tulare County 2023a; Porterville 2008c). Therefore, the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows, and no impact would occur.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. A tsunami is a series of ocean waves caused by a sudden displacement of the ocean floor, most often due to earthquakes. The project site is approximately 112 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, at an elevation of approximately 472 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 2022c). Therefore, the proposed project would not risk release of pollutants due to tsunamis.

A seiche is a surface wave created when a body of water is shaken, usually by earthquake activity. Seiches are of concern relative to water storage facilities because inundation from a seiche can occur if the wave overflows a containment wall, such as the wall of a reservoir, water storage tank, dam, or other artificial body of water.

3. Environmental Analysis

Seiches can cause inundation if the wave overflows a containment wall. According to the California Department of Water Resources' Dam Breach Inundation Map and the National Inventory of Dams the project site is not within any dam inundation area (DWR 2024b, USACE 2024).

Additionally, no other maps or documents from the Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Tulare County LHMP, and City of Porterville General Plan identify the proposed project within a flood risk zone (Tulare County 2018; Tulare County 2023a; Porterville 2008c).

While 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*). Therefore, the proposed project would not release pollutants due to project inundation. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The Central Valley Region Regional Water Quality Control Board prepares and maintains the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River Basin and San Joaquin Basin (Basin Plan) and designates beneficial uses for surface water bodies and groundwater within the area. The Basin Plan also contains water quality criteria for groundwater. The proposed project would not conflict or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan or a sustainable groundwater management plan. Project construction would be subject to the Statewide Construction General Permit (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. Therefore, the proposed project would comply with the Basin Plan.

Additionally, the project site is in the San Joaquin Valley – Tule Ground Water Basin. The groundwater basin is categorized as a high priority by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR 2019). As discussed in Section 3.19(a), the proposed project would not impede the implementation of the Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Furthermore, the District purchases water, and the project site is not used for groundwater recharge activities nor extraction; and the slight increase of impervious surfaces on the project site would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies nor interfere with groundwater recharge. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The project site is developed with a portion of the Hope ES campus (0.03-acres), an unpaved parking lot and includes agricultural uses. The proposed project would be adjacent to the existing developed Hope ES campus. The proposed project would include the development of a gymnasium/classroom building with concrete paving connecting to the existing campus. The proposed improvements would be limited to the

3. Environmental Analysis

project site and the proposed project would not change any existing driveways leading to the campus, create any new land use barriers, divide, or disrupt the physical arrangement of any surrounding communities. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. 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 is within unincorporated Tulare County. Hope ES and the project site are within the CACUAB for the City of Porterville, which are areas within the County of Tulare that a city may expand to and develop in the future (Tulare County 2015). The majority of the project site, excluding the 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES campus, has a county land use designation of Rural Density Residential and is zoned as AE-10 (Tulare County 2015; Tulare County 2024a; Tulare County 2024b). According to the City of Porterville, the project site has a land use designation of Rural/Agriculture/Conservation and is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation (AC) (Porterville 2008; Porterville 2024). The 0.03 acres of the developed Hope ES within the project site contains land use designation of Public/Quasi-Public: School and is zoned as AE-10 (Tulare County 2015; Tulare County 2024a). The City of Porterville General Plan Land Use Element designates the campus, and 0.03 acres of the project site as Public/Semi-Public, and the campus has a zoning designation of PS (Porterville 2008a; Porterville 2024).

The District owns the project site and would expand the existing Hope ES campus with the development of the proposed project adjacent to the campus to better serve the needs of existing students and the community. The project site already supports the Hope ES campus by providing overflow parking. As discussed in Section 1.2.9, *Discretionary Actions*, the District, as Lead Agency under CEQA, would exempt the project site from local zoning; however, the underlying zoning would remain. Additionally, the proposed project would not alter or modify the project site's current land use and zoning designations. The proposed project would support the guiding policies LU-G-1 and LU-G-3 of the Tulare County Land Use Element for the Porterville area by developing an educational facility adjacent to the existing Hope ES campus that supports the needs of the community and provides a balanced development (Tulare 2012). Further, the proposed project would comply with the California Building Code and Green Building Code which promotes sustainability.

While the proposed project would remove agricultural use onsite, as discussed in Section 3.2, *Agriculture and Forestry Resources*, the removal of the agriculture use is less than significant based on the LESA analysis. The proposed project would expand the existing Hope ES campus to better serve students and the community. The development of the project site immediately adjacent, which would cluster similar uses together. Development of the proposed project would not hinder nor impede the continued operations of the surrounding agricultural uses. Thus, 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, the proposed project would be less than significant.

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

3. Environmental Analysis

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. Based on Figure 6-3, *Soil and Mineral Conservation*, of the Porterville General Plan the Hope ES campus including the project site is not within or near any state classified mineral resource zones (MRZ), which are areas known or presumed to contain economically significant mineral resources (Porterville 2008b). Figure 6-3, *Soil and Mineral Conservation*, of the Porterville General Plan shows MRZ-2b and MRZ-3a are approximately 2.5 miles from the project site; however, the MRZs are no longer suitable for mining operations as urban development (Porterville, 2008b). MRZ-2b is an area with a high likelihood of significant aggregate deposit, and MRZ-3a is an area which may contain significant aggregate deposits. The closest MRZ of significance is approximately 2.0 miles southwest of the project site, outside the City of Porterville, within the Old Deer Creek Channel (DOC 1997b). The Hope ES campus is developed and used as a school. The closest mine is an open pit mine producing sand and gravel, approximately 2.0 miles southwest of the project site (DOC 2021). No mining activities exist on the project site nor at the campus. Additionally, the project site is not within any oil and gas fields or wells (DOC 2024b). 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 an MRZ-1 nor MRZ-2 zone and no mining activities or oil/gas 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. The County of Tulare contains several important mineral resources such as sand, gravel, crushed rock, and natural gas (Tulare County 2012). The City of Porterville contains similar mineral resources and includes scientific resources which includes occurrences of rocks, minerals or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance (Porterville 2008b). As discussed in Section 3.7(b), paleontological resources in Tulare County have been discovered, but not mapped due to paleontological sensitivity and Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and GEO-3 would reduce impacts to less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.12(a), the construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of a known mineral resource including resources within MRZ-1 nor MRZ-2 zone and no mining or oil/gas activities exist onsite. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a loss of availability of a locally important resource, 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

3. Environmental Analysis

prepared by PlaceWorks in August 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 County of Tulare and the City of Porterville General Plan Noise Element identify residences, schools, hospital facilities, houses of worship, and public libraries as noise sensitive. Residential and agricultural uses are across West Teapot Dome Avenue and directly west to the campus. The nearest noise sensitive receptors to the project site are single-family residential uses to the north, across West Teapot Dome Avenue, to the west, beyond the existing campus, and to east, along Orange Belt Drive.

Existing Conditions

The project site is in a predominantly agricultural area. The existing noise environment is characterized primarily by traffic noise on West Teapot Dome Avenue, seasonal agricultural activities, and aircraft overflights. Typical conditions would include noise from children yelling and playing on the existing school campus, typical rural residential activities, birds, and wind noise also contribute to the existing ambient noise environment.

Applicable Standards.

Tulare County General Plan

Section 10.8, Noise, in the Tulare County General Plan establishes noise related goals and land use compatibility standards under the Safety and Noise Element. The County has adopted the following applicable goals and policies:

- **HS-8.2 Noise Impacted Areas.** The County shall designate areas as noise-impacted if exposed to existing or projected noise levels that exceed 60 dB L_{dn} (or Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)) at the exterior of buildings.
- **HS-8.3 Noise Sensitive Land Uses.** The County shall not approve new noise sensitive uses unless effective mitigation measures are incorporated into the design of such projects to reduce noise levels to 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less within outdoor activity areas and 45 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) or less within interior living spaces.
- **HS-8.4 Airport Noise Contours.** The County shall ensure new noise sensitive land uses are located outside the 60 CNEL contour of all public use airports.
- **HS-8.8 Adjacent Uses.** The County shall not permit development of new industrial, commercial, or other noise generating land uses if resulting noise levels will exceed 60 dB L_{dn} (or CNEL) at the boundary of areas designated and zoned for residential or other noise-sensitive uses, unless it is determined to be necessary to promote the public health, safety and welfare of the County.

3. Environmental Analysis

- **HS-8.12 Foothill and Mountain Noise.** For areas designated by Tulare County as being within Foothill and Mountain Planning Areas and outside Foothill Development Corridors, the hourly L_{eq} resulting from the development or new noise-sensitive land uses or new noise-generating sources shall not exceed 50 dB during the day (7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.) or 40 dB during the night (10:00 p.m.- 7:00 a.m.) when measured at the boundary of areas containing or planned and zoned for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses. For these same areas and under the same circumstances, the maximum A-weighted noise level (L_{max}) shall not exceed 70 dB during the day or 60 dB during the night.
- **HS-8.18 Construction Noise.** The County shall seek to limit the potential noise impacts of construction activities by limiting construction activities to the hours of 7 am to 7pm, Monday through Saturday when construction activities are located near sensitive receptors. No construction shall occur on Sundays or national holidays without a permit from the County to minimize noise impacts associated with development near sensitive receptors.

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 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 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 campus of Hope Elementary School with the development of an 11,462 square foot gymnasium/classroom building. The gymnasium/classroom building would include three

3. Environmental Analysis

classrooms; a multi-use gymnasium, two water fountains, and a roof access space. The proposed project would accommodate up to 60 additional students to current enrollment capacity, the gymnasium would have a maximum capacity of 100 spectators, and the theater could accommodate up to 400 spectators.

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 7, *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 49 dBA and 71 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 and would occur during the limited hours of 7:00 am to 7:00 p.m. per Tulare County Policy HS-8.18. Therefore, construction noise impacts would be less than significant.

Table 7 Project-Related Construction Noise Levels

Construction Activity Phase	Noise Levels in dBA L_{eq}				
	RCNM Reference Noise Level	Receptor to North	Receptor to South	Receptor to East	Receptor to West
<i>Distance in feet</i>	50	250	940	915	450
Demolition	84	70	59	59	65
Site Preparation	83	69	58	58	64
Rough Grading	85	71	60	60	66
<i>Distance in feet</i>	50	250	940	915	450
Building Construction	79	65	54	54	60
Architectural Coating	74	60	49	49	55
<i>Distance in feet</i>	50	200	850	870	320
Paving	79	67	54	54	63
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 L_{eq} = Energy-Average (L_{eq}) Sound Levels.

See Appendix H for construction noise calculations.

On Campus Receptors

Students would remain on site during demolition, site preparation, and building construction. Construction activities could occur within 85 feet of existing classroom buildings. As shown in Table 7, construction noise levels would range between 74 dBA and 85 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet per the RCNM Reference Noise Level and would

3. Environmental Analysis

propagate to 69 dBA and 80 dBA L_{eq} at 85 feet⁵. Typical exterior-to-interior noise attenuation with windows and doors closed is 25 dBA. This would result in interior noise levels of approximately 44 dBA to 55 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 85 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 limited hours of 7:00 am to 7:00 p.m. per Tulare County Policy HS-8.18. Therefore, on-campus construction noise impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Noise

The proposed project's primary onsite operational noise sources would primarily be gymnasium/theater building rooftop HVAC units. The proposed project could include eight rooftop HVAC units.

The proposed gymnasium/theater building rooftop HVAC units would generate noise levels of up to 74 dBA (York 2006). All proposed HVAC units operating continuously would result in a combined HVAC noise levels of 44 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (residence to the north at 260 feet from the center of rooftop HVAC units). The proposed gymnasium/theater building would include rooftop parapets that would break line of sight from source to receiver and reduce HVAC noise levels at nearby receptors to below 40 dBA L_{eq} . Operational noise from the HVAC equipment would not exceed daytime and nighttime noise standards of 50 dBA and 40 dBA L_{eq} , respectively, per Tulare County Policy HS-8.12. 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.

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 dBA 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 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.

3. Environmental Analysis

- 5 dBA in ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL

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 5 dBA CNEL for West Teapot Dome Avenue.

With the additional classroom capacity, student enrollment would also increase by up to 60 students. Traffic volume data for the new trips associated with the project are provided by Garland Associates (2024). The proposed project is expected to increase from the existing 890 weekday daily trips to 1,090 weekday daily trips, 200 additional daily trips. The proposed gymnasium and the theater events are expected to increase from the existing 890 weekday daily trips to 1,230 daily trips, an additional 380 daily trips during events. The data provided by the traffic engineer presents the street and locations with scenarios for existing, existing with project conditions, 2028 baseline, and 2028 baseline with project conditions. With the project trip additions, noise levels along the segments of West Teapot Dome Avenue would increase less than 1 dBA. Table 8, *Project-Related School Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet*, and Table 9 *Project-Related Gymnasium and Theater Event Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet*, shows the project trip addition of proposed project trips would not result in a 5 dBA increase over existing conditions. Therefore, traffic noise impacts would be less than significant.

Table 8 Project-Related School Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet

Roadway	Segment		Traffic Noise Increase Existing CNEL at 50 Feet					
	From	To	Existing No Project	Existing with Project	Existing Increase	Baseline (2028) No Project	Baseline with Project (2028)	Future (2028) Increase
W. Teapot Dome Ave	School Site	To the West	58	58	<1	58	58	<1
W. Teapot Dome Ave	School Site	To the East	58	58	<1	58	58	<1

Source: Garland Associates (2024).
See Appendix I for calculations.

Table 9 Project-Related Gymnasium and Theater Event Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet

Roadway	Segment		Traffic Noise Increase Existing CNEL at 50 Feet					
	From	To	Existing No Project	Existing with Project	Existing Increase	Future (2028) No Project	Future with Project (2028)	Future (2028) Increase
W. Teapot Dome Ave	School Site	To the West	58	58	<1	58	59	1
W. Teapot Dome Ave	School Site	To the East	58	58	<1	58	58	<1

Source: Garland Associates (2024).
See Appendix I for calculations.

3. Environmental Analysis

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 10, *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 project construction activities would occur 85 feet from on-campus buildings to the west of the project site. The closest residential buildings to the project site are 215 feet north of the project site along Teapot Dome Avenue. At 85 feet, construction vibration levels would be up to 0.033 in/sec PPV or less, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Vibration Impact Levels for Typical Construction Equipment

Equipment	in/sec PPV			
	Reference Levels at 25 Feet	Receptor to North along Teapot Dome Ave at 215 feet ¹	Receptor to West along Teapot Dome Ave at 360 feet ¹	On-Campus Receptors to West at 85 feet ¹
Vibratory Roller	0.21	0.008	0.004	0.033
Hoe Ram	0.089	0.004	0.002	0.014
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.004	0.002	0.014
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.003	0.001	0.012
Jackhammer	0.035	0.001	0.001	0.006
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: FTA 2018.

¹ As measured from the edge of construction site using Google Earth Pro.

See Appendix H for vibration calculations.

Tulare County 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 on-campus building to the west, is approximately 85 feet away from the proposed construction. At this distance, construction vibration from a vibratory roller would attenuate to 0.033 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.

3. Environmental Analysis

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?**

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located approximately 1.35 miles southeast of Porterville Municipal Airport. According to Figure PTV-3 of the Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Plan (County of Tulare Airport Land Use Commission 2012), the project site is located approximately 0.75 miles outside of the 55 dBA CNEL noise contour for the Porterville Municipal Airport. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased exposure of people working at or visiting the project site to aircraft noise. Therefore, impacts from aircraft noise would be less than significant.

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. Construction of the proposed gymnasium/classroom building would result in an increase in enrollment capacity from 260 to 320 students, an increase of 60 students. The increase in capacity would serve the existing students at Hope ES and students within the District enrollment boundaries. Additionally, to serve the increase in enrollment four new on-campus staff would be hired. According to the Tulare County Housing Element unincorporated Tulare is expected to develop 9,243 units by 2031 or accommodate 29,027 residents⁶ within unincorporated Tulare County (Tulare County 2023b; US Census 2020). Therefore, the proposed project is well within the anticipated growth of unincorporated Tulare County. Further, construction of the proposed project would not create a new employment opportunity that could result in a greater demand for local housing; as construction work would be short term and come from the regional job market. The proposed project would continue to utilize the existing roads and infrastructure; with no new roads, expanded utility lines, or housing are proposed. Therefore, project development would not induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly or indirectly. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

⁶ $473,117 \text{ residents} \div 150,652 \text{ units} = 3.14 \text{ residence per dwelling unit (RPU)}$

³ $14 \text{ RPU} * 9,243 \text{ units} = 29,027 \text{ new residences}$

3. Environmental Analysis

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

No Impact. The proposed project would be constructed within the existing Hope ES, and the project site, which includes a decomposed granite parking lot and agricultural trees. No housing exists on the Hope ES campus nor upon the project site. The proposed project would not disturb or necessitate the construction of replacement housing. Therefore, no impact would occur.

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

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:

Request for information letters were submitted to Tulare County Fire Department and the Tulare County Sheriff's Department on July 17, 2024, and no responses were received.

a) Fire protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Tulare County Fire Department (TCFD) would provide fire protection and emergency services to the project site. TCFD provides fire protection, emergency services, a hazard abatement program, mutual aid response, public education fire prevention and inspections (TCFD 2022). The closest TCFD fire station to the project site is Fire Station #19 at 22315 Avenue 152 approximately 3.70 miles northeast of the project site.

Construction

During the construction phase of the proposed project, construction workers would temporarily be 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 plans of the proposed project would be reviewed and inspected by the DSA to ensure all requirements are met, such as adequate emergency access to the project site during construction. Construction of the proposed project would further implement OSHA regulations to ensure the building would not interfere with access and travel of emergency vehicles. 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, construction-related impacts on fire protection would be less than significant.

Operation

The proposed project includes the construction of the proposed gymnasium/classroom building and would result in an increase in enrollment capacity from 260 to 320 students, an increase of 60 students. The proposed project would serve the existing students at Hope ES and students within the District boundaries. Additionally,

3. Environmental Analysis

to accommodate the increase in enrollment four additional on-campus staff would be hired. The proposed project would be an expansion of the existing Hope ES campus and would enable the campus to provide a space for student theater performances (new event). Existing events held on campus are projected to have an increase in spectators per event (see Table 3). The increase in events, spectators, and student/staff capacity may create an increase in demand for fire protection services compared to existing conditions onsite.

The existing access and circulation features at Hope ES, including the parking lot, and fire lanes, would continue to accommodate emergency ingress and egress by fire trucks, police units, and ambulance/paramedic vehicles. A decomposed granite emergency access lane would be installed south of the walking path, gymnasium and classroom building to provide emergency access to the new building. The proposed project would be designed to accommodate emergency access to the facility in accordance with the fire code and would be reviewed by the Division of State Architects (DSA). DSA review would ensure that plans, specifications, and construction comply with access, fire, and life safety design standards established by DSA and California's building codes (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations). DSA would review fire department and emergency access roadways to ensure adequate emergency access is maintained. Therefore, the proposed project would not affect emergency access to the project site. New students, spectators, and events onsite would be monitored and supervised by District staff or other authorized supervisor. Although the proposed project may create a slight 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 a manner that would require new or physically altered fire protection facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

b) Police protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Tulare County Sheriff (TCS) provides police protection services out of the Porterville Substation located at 1839 South Newcomb Street approximately 1.4 miles northwest of the project site.

Construction

During the construction of the proposed project, construction workers would temporarily be 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 on the project site, the project site during construction would be fenced, and 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 sheriff facilities, which could result in environmental impacts, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The construction of the proposed gymnasium/classroom building and would increase enrollment capacity by 60 students; the increase in in capacity would serve the existing students at Hope ES and students within the District boundaries. The proposed project is intended to allow space for student theater performances (new

3. Environmental Analysis

event), and an increase in spectators per event (see Table 3). The increase in events, spectators, student capacity and on-campus staff may create an increase in demand for police protection services compared to existing conditions onsite. New students, spectators, and events onsite would be monitored and supervised by District staff or other authorized supervisor. As discussed in Section 3.15(a), adequate emergency access to the project site would be provided. Although the proposed project may result in an increase in demand for police protection services onsite compared to existing conditions, the proposed project would not generate an increase in police protection facilities nor personnel in a manner that would require new or physically altered police protection facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

c) Schools?

No Impact. The proposed project includes development of a new gymnasium/classroom building as an expansion to the existing Hope ES campus. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity, demand for schools is largely generated by new housing development. The proposed project would serve existing students and students within the District enrollment boundaries. To accommodate the increase in student enrollment, four additional staff members would be hired. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity onsite, the proposed project would not generate an increase in school facilities in a manner that would require new or physically altered school facilities elsewhere in the District. As discussed in Section 3.14(a) the proposed project would not induce population growth nor result in any housing development. Therefore, no impacts to schools would occur.

d) Parks?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is served by County parks within the region, managed by the County of Tulare Parks Division, a division of the Tulare County General Services Agency. Tulare County operates and manages 11 parks countywide and one museum. The County offers normal park and recreational uses including special events (Tulare County Parks 2024). Additionally, 309.7 gross acres of parks and recreational facilities are within the vicinity of the project site are managed by the Parks & Leisure Services Department of the City of Porterville (Porterville 2008b). Typically, an increase in demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or population generating actions.

The proposed project would develop a gymnasium/classroom building as an extension of the existing Hope ES campus. The proposed project would continue to serve the existing population within the District. The proposed project would increase the school enrollment capacity by 60 students and four on-campus staff members. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity and on-campus staff, demand for parks is largely generated by new housing development. The proposed project would not result in the construction of new housing. The proposed project would not result in a substantial increase in use of existing parks or recreational facilities, or the need for new parks or recreational facilities. The proposed project would allow the Hope ES to better serve the recreational needs of existing students within the District, by providing a gymnasium with an indoor basketball and volleyball court. Thus, the proposed project would provide improved recreational opportunities to the school and potentially reduce the demand on local parks. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

e) Other public facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Tulare County Library (TCL) provides library services, free programs and events at 17 branch libraries, 4 book machines and online resources (TCL 2024). The TCL is member of the San Joaquin Valley Library System, a cooperative network of ten public library jurisdictions in California's Central Valley. The closest library resource is a book machine at 2293 E Crabtree Ave approximately 4.5 miles to the northeast and the Terra Bella Branch Library 23825 Avenue 92 in Terra Bella approximately 4.5 miles to the southwest. Additionally, students and residence can access the Porterville Public Library, part of the San Joaquin Valley Library System, providing library services to the City of Porterville (Porterville 2024b). In February 2020 the Porterville library was lost to a fire, and the City currently operates an interim library at 50 West Olive Avenue, Suite B (Porterville 2024e).

The proposed project would develop a gymnasium/classroom and would not include development of new housing that would generate a population resulting in an increase in demand for library services. The proposed project would continue to serve the existing population within the District. The proposed project would increase the school capacity by 60 students, and four on-campus staff members. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity and on-campus staff, demand for libraries is largely generated by new housing developments and population growth. The proposed project would not result in a substantial increase in use of existing libraries, or the need for library 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. The project site is served by County parks within the region, managed by the County of Tulare Parks Division, a division of the Tulare County General Services Agency. Tulare County operates and manages 11 parks county wide and one museum. The County offers park and recreational uses including special events (Tulare County Parks 2024). The closest County park is Bartlett Park at 28801 Worth Drive and is approximately 6.30 miles northeast of the project site.

Due to the project site's and the campus's proximity to the City of Porterville residence/students may use the parks in the City of Porterville which 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 2008b). Additionally, there are other recreational areas within the region including 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 2024f). The Porterville Sports Complex is the closest recreational facility to the project site, approximately 2.75 miles northwest.

Typically, the demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or actions that generate additional population. The proposed project would develop a gymnasium/classroom building adjacent to the

3. Environmental Analysis

existing Hope ES campus. The proposed project would increase student capacity on campus by 60 students; however, the proposed project would continue to serve the existing students within the District's enrollment boundaries. To accommodate the increase in student enrollment, four additional staff members would be hired. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity on campus, as discussed in Section 3.14(a), the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth nor result in any housing development. Thus, the proposed project would not induce population growth that would increase the use of recreational facilities.

Additionally, the proposed project includes an indoor gymnasium for basketball and volleyball, which would be available to students. 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. The proposed project would consist of a gymnasium/classroom adjacent to the existing Hope ES campus. The proposed project would serve the existing Hope ES student population and additional students and staff already served by the District. Although the proposed project would increase student capacity on campus, as discussed in Section 3.14(a) the proposed project would not induce population growth nor result in any housing development. 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

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.

Construction

Construction of the project would include large construction equipment, transportation of equipment to and from the project site, and worker vehicles. However, construction traffic would be temporary, and all construction activity and staging areas would be on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not obstruct traffic lanes or have any long-term effects on the circulation system.

3. Environmental Analysis

Operation

Project-Generated Trips

The proposed project would accommodate the increase in student enrollment capacity of 60, four additional on-site staff members, the existing sports programs and additional events at the Hope ES campus. The vehicle generation rates are based on the rates in the Institute of Transportation Engineers *Trip Generation Manual* for the elementary school land use category. The rates in the manual were increased by 50 percent, because Hope ES has a lower percentage of students walking to school as compared to the schools represented in the manual. The volumes of traffic generated by the existing campus and the proposed project on a typical school day are seen in Table 11, *Project-Generated Traffic-School*. During a typical school day, the proposed project would generate a net increase of 200 vehicle trips per day, 68 vehicle trips during the morning hour and 54 trips during the afternoon hour.

Table 11 Project-Generated Traffic - School

School Scenario	Daily Traffic	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
		Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out
Trip Generation Rates (trips per student)							
Elementary School	3.41	1.13	54%	46%	0.90	46%	54%
Generated Traffic Volumes							
Existing School Capacity (260 students)	890	294	159	135	234	108	126
Proposed School Capacity (320 students)	1,090	362	196	166	288	133	155
Net Increase (60 students)	200	68	37	31	54	25	29
Sources: Garland Associates, August 2024 (See Appendix I)							

With the construction of the proposed gymnasium/classroom building existing sports programs would receive an increase in capacity from 50 spectators to 100 spectators of 50 and assemblies and graduations capacity would increase from 250 spectators to 400 spectators (see Table 3). Additionally, the proposed gymnasium/classroom building would allow for new theater events, with an anticipated capacity level event of 400 spectators. As seen in Table 12, *Project Generated Traffic-Gymnasium and Theater*, the additional capacity for volleyball or basketball games would generate a net increase of 20 vehicle trips per hour prior to the beginning of a game, and 40 daily trips. As previously discussed, no theater performances exist at Hope ES, and an anticipated capacity level event of theater performances with 400 spectators would generate an established 160 trips prior to the beginning of a performance and 320 daily trips.

3. Environmental Analysis

Table 12 Project-Generated Traffic- Gymnasium and Theater

Facility	Pre-Event Arrivals			Daily Trips
	Inbound	Outbound	Total	
Trip Generation Rates				
Gymnasium/Theater - Vehicle Trips per Spectator	0.366	0.033	0.399	0.798
Generated Traffic Volumes - Gymnasium				
Existing (50 Spectators)	18	2	20	40
Proposed (100 Spectators)	36	4	40	80
Net Increase (50 Spectators)	18	2	20	40
Existing (50 Spectators)	18	2	20	40
Generated Traffic Volumes -Theater Performances				
Proposed (400 Spectators)	147	13	160	320
Sources: Garland Associates, August 2024 (See Appendix I)				

The impacts of the additional students at Hope ES on daily traffic volumes are shown in Table 13, *Project Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes-School Only*. Table 13 illustrates a typical day at the school with no major events at the gymnasium or theater. The daily traffic volume on Teapot Dome Avenue west of the school site, for example, would increase from 3,640 vehicles per day (vpd) to 3,810 vpd for the existing conditions scenario, which is an increase of 170 vehicles per day. The year 2028 was used for the future baseline scenario because it is anticipated to be the first year that the expanded school would be occupied.

Table 13 Project-Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes- School Only

Street/Location	Without Project	Project Traffic	With Project
Existing Conditions As Baseline			
Teapot Dome Ave – West of School Site	3,640	170	3,810
Teapot Dome Ave – East of School Site	3,640	30	3,670
Year 2028 as Baseline			
Teapot Dome Ave – West of School Site	4,260	170	4,430
Teapot Dome Ave – East of School Site	4,260	30	4,290
Sources: Garland Associates, August 2024 (See Appendix I)			

The impacts of school days when a major event would occur at the theater are shown in Table 14, *Project-Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes – With Theater Event*. On school days with a capacity level theater event would represents the worst-case scenario. The daily traffic volume on Teapot Dome Avenue west of the school site, for example, would increase from 3,640 vpd to 4,080 vpd for the existing conditions scenario, which is an increase of 440 vehicles per day. The Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis concluded the proposed project would result in a minor increase in traffic (See Appendix I).

3. Environmental Analysis

Table 14 Project-Impact on Daily Traffic Volumes – With Theater Event

Street/Location	Without Project	Project Traffic	With Project
Existing Conditions As Baseline			
Teapot Dome Ave – West of School Site	3,640	440	4,080
Teapot Dome Ave – East of School Site	3,640	80	3,720
Year 2028 as Baseline			
Teapot Dome Ave – West of School Site	4,260	440	4,700
Teapot Dome Ave – East of School Site	4,260	80	4,340
Sources: Garland Associates, August 2024 (See Appendix I)			

A capacity level event would only occur a few times each year for theater performances, and graduations. The estimated traffic volume generated by the proposed project on the day of a capacity-level event would be 4,080 vehicle trips per day. Other activities such as assemblies would generate vehicle trips compatible with a normal school day as only present students would attend assemblies and no additional trips from parents or otherwise would occur. The Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis concluded the proposed project is exempt from VMT analysis and a less than significant impact would occur, as further discussed in Section 3.17(b).

As discussed above the proposed project would increase vehicle trips compared to existing conditions. However, the proposed project's vehicle trips would not conflict with the County of Tulare's goals and policies related to transportation and circulation. The Tulare County Transportation and Circulation Element includes various programmatic policies that provide a guide for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of County streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel. The policy statement regarding roadways and highways is to promote an efficient roadway and highway system for the movement of people and goods, which enhances the physical, economic, and social environment while being safe, environmentally friendly, and cost-effective. The proposed project adhered to policy TC-1.15, Traffic Impact Study, which requires an analysis of the traffic impacts from a project (See Appendix I). The proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Tulare General Plan and would not conflict with the existing circulation system.

Non-Motorized Transportation and Transit

Tulare County Area Transit (TCAT) operates Route C80, which has two bus stops approximately 0.30 miles east of Hope ES on both sides of Main Street/Orange Belt Drive.

A yellow school crosswalk is in place on Teapot Dome Avenue in front of the school; however, no pedestrian walkways/sidewalks or bike lanes exist within the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, pedestrian travel and bike travel would occur on the shoulders of the roadways. Although unlikely, the proposed project may generate a minor increase in demand for non-motorized travel students and employees may elect to travel to and from the school site as pedestrians, and on bicycles. It is not anticipated that the proposed project would generate an increase in demand for buses. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan,

3. Environmental Analysis

ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; thus a less than significant impact would occur.

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 “vehicle miles traveled” (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 County of Tulare “SB 743 Guidelines”, dated June 8, 2020, lists the land use types that are considered local-serving and are exempt from VMT analysis. It provides a description of projects that would have a less than significant transportation impact due to project size or project type. If a project meets at least one of the screening criteria, it would not require a detailed VMT analysis.

The guidelines state that “local-serving public facilities are presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT. This would include government facilities intended to typically serve the local public, parks, and public elementary schools, public middle schools, and high schools.” As schools are included in the list of local-serving public facilities, and therefore are exempt from a VMT analysis. Thus, the proposed project would have a less than significant VMT impact according to the guidelines.

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. Access to the project site is provided by the existing circulation system on the Hope ES campus as described in Section 1.2.4, *Parking and Access*, above.

The proposed project would not introduce any on- or off-site access or circulation features that would create or increase any design hazards or incompatible uses. Access to the project site would be provided by the existing driveways as well as a new driveway on the south side of Teapot Dome Avenue. All street improvements in the public right-of-way would be designed and constructed consistent with the Tulare County standards and all improvements within the project site would be consistent with the criteria of the DSA and would be reviewed by the County Fire Department.

3. Environmental Analysis

The increased levels of traffic, the increased number of pedestrians, and the increased number of vehicular turning movements that would occur at the driveways and at the nearby intersections would 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 roads, intersections, and driveways are designed to accommodate the anticipated levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity. These roads and intersections have historically been accommodating school-related traffic on a daily basis for the existing school. Although the proposed project would increase vehicles on the roadway the additional vehicles would be compatible with the design and use of the affected roads. The proposed project would not alter or modify the existing roadways or pedestrian circulation in any way that would substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. A less than significant impact would occur.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. The existing access and circulation on campus, including the on-site roadways, parking lots, and fire lanes, would continue to accommodate emergency services. The proposed project would be required to accommodate emergency access to the project site. The existing emergency access route to the Hope ES campus would remain and provide access to the proposed project. The proposed project would construct a new paved driveway and a new parking lot would be provided at the project site. Additionally, a decomposed granite emergency access lane would be installed south of the walking path, gymnasium and classroom building. Emergency vehicles would continue to easily access the project site and all other areas of the campus via on-site travel corridors. The proposed project's design must satisfy the District design requirements and would be reviewed and subject to approval from DSA and the County Fire Department. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with emergency access and 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 Section 3.5(a), the project site is 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 (ASM Affiliates 2024; OHP 2024; NPS 2024). The project site does not meet any of the historic resource criteria and does not meet the definition of a historic resource pursuant to CEQA.

Additionally, a Sacred Lands File request was submitted to the NAHC and received a negative result that there are no known sacred sites or TCR within or in the vicinity of the project site. However, development

3. Environmental Analysis

of the proposed project could encounter previously unknown TCR and human remains. Therefore, although no known TCR have been identified on the project site, the proposed project has the potential to disturb subsurface deposits possessing traditional or cultural significance to Native American or other descendant communities. With implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and TCR-1, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

- 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. In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21080.1(d), a lead agency is required to provide formal notification of intended development projects to Native American tribes that have requested to be on the lead agency's list for receiving such notification. The formal notification is required to include a brief description of the proposed project and its location, lead agency contact information, and a notification that the California Native American tribe has 30 days to request consultation. Pursuant to AB 52, the District mailed and emailed tribal consultation letters to four tribes on their AB 52 list inviting the tribes to consult on the project, including the Kern Valley Indian Community, Tubatulabals of Kern Valley, Tule River Indian Tribe and the Wukachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band on July 10, 2024. However, no tribes requested to consult during the 30-day AB52 consultation request window. Further, a Sacred Lands File request was submitted to the NAHC and received a negative result that there are no known sacred sites or TCR within or in the vicinity of the project site.

Although unlikely, the potential to unearth TCR during ground disturbing activities may occur. In the event TCRs are discovered Mitigation Measure TCR-1, provides guidelines of how to proceed to protect TCR. Therefore, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1 would reduce impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

- TCR-1 If tribal cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during ground disturbing activities for this project. The following procedures will be carried out for treatment and disposition of the discoveries:
- Upon discovery of any Tribal Cultural Resources, construction activities shall cease in the immediate vicinity of the find (not less than the surrounding 100 feet) until the find can be assessed.
 - All Tribal Cultural Resources unearthed by project activities shall be evaluated by the qualified archaeologist and/or applicable Tribal monitor. If the resources are Native American in origin, the applicable tribe will retain the resource in the form and/or manner the Tribe deems appropriate, for educational, cultural and/or historic purposes.

3. Environmental Analysis

- Work may continue on other parts of the project site while evaluation and, if necessary, mitigation takes place (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[f]). If a non-Native American resource is determined by the qualified archaeologist to constitute a “historical resource” or “unique archaeological resource,” time allotment and funding sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures, or appropriate mitigation, must be available. The treatment plan established for the resources shall be in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(f) for historical resources and PRC Sections 21083.2(b) for unique archaeological resources.
- Preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) is the preferred manner of treatment. If preservation in place is not feasible, treatment may include implementation of archaeological data recovery excavations to remove the resource along with subsequent laboratory processing and analysis. Any historic archaeological material that is not Native American in origin shall be curated at a public, non-profit institution with a research interest in the materials, if such an institution agrees to accept the material. If no institution accepts the archaeological material, it shall be offered to a local school or historical society in the area for educational purposes.

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

Water is currently provided to the campus and project site by the District. The campus contains an existing 53,360 gallon above ground water tank (DSA #02-109765) at the southern portion of the campus. The above ground water tank is enclosed by a fire protection tank and attaches to the adjacent pump house. The District monitors and operates the above ground water tank, and purchases potable water on an as-needed basis. Potable water would be provided to the new gymnasium/classroom building through connections to the existing on-campus water mains. The proposed water system improvements would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC and CALGreen requirements, such as CALGreen Division 5.3, *Water Efficiency and Conservation*. Water for the proposed project would be supplied by the water tank/purchased water until the proposed project connects to the water line along Teapot Dome Avenue. 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.

3. Environmental Analysis

Wastewater

The proposed project includes construction of a gymnasium/classroom building, which would require the installation of a new 3,000-gallon septic tank, located on the east side of the project site. The new septic tank would capture the wastewater generated by the proposed project. Existing wastewater on-campus is serviced by two existing on-campus septic tanks; a 2,400-gallon septic tank is beneath the northern parking lot; and a 1,500-gallon septic tank is beneath an open-space play area at the southern portion of the Hope ES campus. Although the campus would require the construction of a new wastewater system, the septic tank would be for private use and restricted to the project site. The proposed project would comply with the State Water Board's Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS Policy) (SWRCB 2012). The proposed project would not use or result in the expansion of public wastewater facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause significant environmental effects related to wastewater and impacts would be less than significant.

Stormwater Drainage

The proposed project includes construction of a gymnasium/classroom building, which would require the installation of new storm drain inlets, and a 46,448 cubic feet (CF) stormwater retention basin on the south side of the project site. Since the proposed project would increase impervious surfaces compared to existing conditions, the proposed stormwater retention basin would control the amount and quality of the stormwater leaving the project site. The stormwater retention basin would release stormwater into the soil at a controlled rate. Stormwater that is not captured percolates into the soil, similar to existing conditions. The proposed project would not connect to a public stormwater drainage system and would not require the expansion of public storm drain facilities. Therefore, 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 than existing conditions, the increase would be negligible in Southern California Edison capacity. Additionally, the campus contains its own solar panel farm at the rear of campus, and the proposed gymnasium/classroom building would install solar panels, which would offset electrical demand. Furthermore, development of the new gymnasium/classroom building would be required to comply with energy efficiency standards set forth by Title 24. 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.

Gas

The existing Hope ES campus utilizes the existing propane tanks at the southern portion of campus. Although the proposed project would be an extension of the existing Hope ES campus, the proposed project would not use natural gas and would not require any connections to the natural gas or propane gas system. Therefore, no impact would occur.

3. Environmental Analysis

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. As discussed in Section 3.19(a), the District would purchase water that would be stored on campus at the existing 53,360 gallon above ground water tank (DSA #02-109765). The proposed project would increase enrollment capacity at Hope ES by a total of 60 students and would increase on-campus staff by four which would result in an increase of 263,532⁷ gallons per year or approximately 5 additional refills of the 53,360 gallon above ground water tank throughout the year (CAPCOA 2022). Water for the proposed project would be supplied by the water tank/purchased water until the proposed project connects to the water line along Teapot Dome Avenue.

In the future, the District intends to connect to the City of Porterville water system. The City of Porterville UWMP determines that there are adequate water supply to service the City through to year 2030 (Porterville 2015). The City relies on groundwater supplies and can also purchase water from the Pioneer Water Company. 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 2015). 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. When the District connects with the City of Porterville water system project specific analysis will occur. However, currently purchased water stores in the above ground water tank on site will sufficiently service the campus’s future water needs during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project, that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?

Less Than Significant Impact. Wastewater on the project site and Hope ES campus would be held and treated by septic tanks, and would not require the use of a wastewater treatment provider. The existing Hope ES campus is serviced by two existing septic tanks including one 2,400-gallon tank and one 1,500-gallon septic tank. The proposed project would develop a new 3,000-gallon septic tank, located on the east side of the project site. The new septic tank would have sufficient capacity to capture the wastewater generated by the proposed project. Septic tanks do not require connection to any wastewater treatment provider as effluent is processed and filtered and slowly releases the effluent into the soil. As such, the proposed project would not require

⁷ 2424 gallons per student
2424 gallons * 60 students = 145,440 gallons
29,523 gallons per employee
29,523 gallons * 4 Staff = 118,092 gallons
145,440 gallons + 118,092 gallons = 263,532 gallons
263,532 gallons ÷ 53,360 gallon tank = 4.938 refills

3. Environmental Analysis

construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities. Therefore, 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 require 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 proposed project would increase student capacity from 260 to 320, an increase in capacity of 60 students, and four additional staff members would be hired to accommodate the increase in capacity. The solid waste generated by the proposed project's operational activities would increase the amount of solid waste generated by the Hope ES campus. Solid waste is transported by Tulare County Solid Waste to regional landfills (Tulare County 2024d). Solid waste generated by the Hope ES campus and project site is disposed of at the Teapot Dome Disposal Site (CalRecycle 2024a). The Teapot Dome Disposal Site has a remaining capacity of 432,707 tons. During operation of the proposed project during a normal 180-day school year would generate an additional 5.095 tons⁸ (CalRecycle 2024b). The proposed project would include additional events; however, such events would result in negligible increases in solid waste generation and the increase in waste generation would be within the remaining capacity of area landfills. Additionally, the proposed project would install a new 3,000-gallon septic tank which would need to be pumped every 3 to 5 years based on the amount of solids accumulated; however, such increases in solid waste would be considered negligible increases and would be handled in accordance with Environmental Protection Agencies recommended procedures (USEPA 2024c). The proposed project would continue to be serviced by Tulare County Solid Waste 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 District would continue to 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 continue to 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. Additionally, the use and disposal of waste from the new 3,000-gallon septic tank would be handled in accordance with the Environmental

⁸ (1 lb/student/day * 60 additional students)*(180-day) = 10,800 lb/year
(0.6 lb/person/day * 4 teaching staff) * 180-days = 432 lb/year
10,800 lb/year + 432 lb/year = 11,232 lb/year
11,232 lb/year * 0.000453 tons = 5.095 tons

3. Environmental Analysis

Protection Agency's recommended procedures (USEPA 2024c). The proposed project would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste disposal. 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 Hope ES campus and project site are not within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) (CalFire 2024). As discussed in Section 3.9(g), the site is located in a LRA as a Non-VHFHSZ; however, Figure 7-4, *Wildland Fire Hazard*, of the Porterville General Plan (2004) identifies the project site being within a MFHSZ with a VHFHSZ approximately 0.25 miles west of the project site. According to the CalFire FHSZ Viewer (2024), the project site is not within a FHSZ; the closest moderate, high, and very high FHSZ within an SRA is approximately 2.2 miles northwest, 3.2 miles west, and 11 miles east of the project site, respectively (CalFire 2024). Additionally, based on the U.S. Forest Service WUI the project site is not within or bounded by the WUI or intermix (USFS 2023). The proposed project would not intensify fire hazards as the proposed project would not include low-laying brush and grassland. Landscaping would be maintained by the District.

The project site is within unincorporated Tulare County, and part of the CACUAB for the City of Porterville, which are areas within the County of Tulare that a city may expand to and develop in the future (Tulare County 2015). Accordingly, the project site would be within the Tulare County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) area and the City of Porterville EOP, with evacuations being carried out by the Tulare County Fire Department.

The Tulare EOP is a guide document in the event of a large-scale emergency or disaster, and addressed response activities within Tulare County. Although, the County EOP is not publicly accessible and evacuation routes are not identified in the County General Plan or the County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the County contains AlertTC a Tulare County public mass notification system to alert residence of emergency events and important information (Tulare County 2020; Tulare County 2018; Tulare County 2024e).

Additionally, since the project site is within the CACUAB for the City of Porterville the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable emergency plans such as the City EOP, adopted in 2004 (Porterville 2008b). The City of Porterville has designated several evacuation routes through the City and the safest route shall be determined based on the extent and severity of a catastrophic emergency (Porterville 2008c). According to Figure 7-6, *Emergency Services*, of the Porterville General Plan, SR-65 and Union Pacific Road/South Main street are the nearest evacuation routes. The proposed project would be designed in accordance with the CBC and the CFC. Project design plans would be reviewed by the DSA. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically impede the evacuation routes or the circulation network surrounding the project site and Hope ES campus. Fire suppression equipment specific to construction would be maintained on site. Additionally, project construction would comply with applicable existing codes and ordinances related to the maintenance of mechanical equipment, handling and storage of flammable materials, and cleanup of spills of flammable

3. Environmental Analysis

materials. 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 is flat. The surrounding area of the project site is the Hope ES campus and agricultural uses which is relatively flat with a slight incline from west to east. The Porterville General plan states the City is within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and the valley typically experiences winds at less than 10 miles per hour (Porterville 2008a). The proposed project would not affect prevailing winds and would be designed in accordance with the CBC and CFC. Project design plans would be reviewed by the DSA. Fire suppression equipment specific to construction would be maintained on site. Project construction would comply with applicable existing codes and ordinances related to the maintenance of mechanical equipment, handling and storage of flammable materials, and cleanup of spills of flammable materials. Therefore, 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 Hope ES campus is currently served by existing electricity infrastructure and all other utility infrastructure (i.e., water, wastewater, natural gas) is provided by the Hope ES campus. Development of the proposed project would require new utility connections to the existing utilities that serve the Hope ES campus. All utility lines would be underground. The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC and the CFC. These project features would not exacerbate fire risk. Development of the proposed project would not require the installation of roads or 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 not within a FEMA designated 100-year flood zone and there are no nearby water bodies, streams, or other conditions that would result in flooding in the project site. According to the California Geological Survey (CGS), *Reported California Landslides* and *CGS information warehouse: landslides* maps there is no past evidence of landslides at or in the vicinity of the project site; and the proposed project would not be in the path of landslides (CSG 2023a; CSG 2023b). Based on the surface hydrology and soil, there is a low potential for the project site to be at risk of post-fire slope instability or drainage changes. Additionally, the project site is flat and would not result in drainage changes. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or

3. Environmental Analysis

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 in Sections 3.4, *Biological Resources*, 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, 3.7, *Geology and Soils*, and 3.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, with the incorporation of mitigation measures the proposed project would result in a less than significant impacts to biological resources (including nesting birds, burrowing owls, and the San Joaquin kit fox), paleontological resources, and cultural and tribal cultural resources. As discussed above in Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*, although the burrowing owl, nesting birds, and San Joaquin kit fox were determined to have a potential to occur on the project site, construction activities may impact the species in the event they are present on-site. Impacts to nesting birds, burrowing owl, and the San Jacquin kit fox would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4. As discussed under Section 3.5, *Cultural Resources*, and Section 3.7, *Geology and Soils*, the project site is disturbed with an unpaved parking lot, and agricultural uses. Since the project site has been previously disturbed, it is unlikely buried archaeological resources and/or fossils would be encountered. Nevertheless, Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and GEO-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*, no tribal consultation pursuant to AB 52 occurred as no tribe contacted the District for consultation. However, in the unlikely event TCR are discovered during ground disturbing activities Mitigation Measure TCR-1, provides guidelines of how to proceed to protect TCR, reducing impacts to TCR to less than significant. With identified mitigation measures, 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 mitigation 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

3. Environmental Analysis

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 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 or indirectly, result in environmental effects that could cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. A less than significant impact would occur.

4. References

- ASM Affiliates. 2014, May 15. Cultural Letter Report. Appendix D.
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). 2023, May. California Environmental Quality Act Air Quality Guidelines. <https://www.baaqmd.gov/plans-and-climate/california-environmental-quality-act-ceqa/updated-ceqa-guidelines>.
- California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA). 2022. California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). Version 2022.1. Prepared by: ICF in collaboration with Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District.
- California Air Resources Board. 2024, January 2 (accessed). Area Designations Maps/State and National. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/maps-state-and-federal-area-designations>.
- . 2022, 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022-sp.pdf>.
- . 2017, March 14. Final proposed Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy. <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/shortlived/shortlived.htm>.
- California Department of Conservation (DOC). 2024a. Important Farmland Categories. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Important-Farmland-Categories.aspx>
- . 2024b. Well Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/>.
- . 2022a. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciftimeseries/>
- . 2022b. California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/>.
- . 2022c. Tsunami Hazard Area Map. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/>. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/ts_evacuation/
- . 2021. Mines Online. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/index.html>.
- . 1997a. California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model Instruction Manual. *Mineral Land* https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/Pages/qh_les.aspx.

4. References

- _____. 1997b. *Mineral Land Classification of Concrete Aggregate Resources in the Tulare County*.
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2024, June 14 (accessed). *California State Scenic Highway System Map*.
<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>
- _____. 2013, September. Technical Noise Supplement (“TeNS”). <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tens-sep2013-a11y.pdf>
- California Department of Education (CDE). 2024, August 8. California School Directory - Hope Elementary.
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/details?cdscode=54719446054092>
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2024, January 17 (access). Habitat Connectivity viewer (BIOS-6). <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios6/?bookmark=648>.
- _____. 2022. Conservation Plan Boundaries – HCP and NCCP.
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=eab447e3e9f340019f00ac1b1640b308>.
- _____. 2012, March 7. Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation.
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=83843>
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). 2024, August 7. *FHSZ Viewer*.
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/03beab8511814e79a0e4eabf0d3e7247/>
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2024, June 14 (accessed). *California State Scenic Highway System Map*.
<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.
- California Geological Survey (CGS). 2023a. Reported Landslides.
<https://cadoc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bc48ad40e3504134a1fc8f3909659041>.
- _____. 2023b. CGS Information Warehouse: Landslides.
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/landslides/> _____ . 2022. Tsunami Hazard Area Map. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/ts_evacuation/
- California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). 2018, November. Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action. https://resources.ca.gov/CNRALegacyFiles/ceqa/docs/2018_CEQA_Final_State_ment_of%20Reasons_111218.pdf.
- CalRecycle. 2024a, August 28 (accessed). SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details - Teapot Dome Disposal Site (54-AA-0004). <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/817?siteID=3834>.

4. References

- _____. 2024b, August 28 (accessed). <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates>
- County of Tulare Airport Land Use Commission (CTALUC). 2012, December. Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan. <https://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/rma-documents/planning-documents/tulare-county-comprehensive-airport-land-use-plan/>
- Department of Water Resources (DWR). 2024a, September 3 (accessed). Basin and Groundwater Sustainability Agency lookup tool. <https://gispublic.waterboards.ca.gov/portal/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=0ef85805d6fb48f8b4ae61dd3f6f8cd8>.
- _____. 2024b, September 3 (accessed). Dam Breach Inundation Map Web Publisher. https://fmds.water.ca.gov/webgis/?appid=dam_prototype_v2.
- _____. 2019. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2019 Basin Prioritization. <https://water.ca.gov/programs/groundwater-management/basin-prioritization>.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2009. FEMA Flood Map Service Center. <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA). 2018, September. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2006, January. FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) User's Guide. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/construction_noise/rcnm/rcnm.pdf
- Garland Associates. 2024. *Traffic/Transportation Impact Analysis For the Proposed Hope Elementary School Gymnasium/Theater Building Tulare County Near Porterville*. Appendix I.
- Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). 2008, June. CEQA and Climate Change: Addressing Climate Change through CEQA Review. Technical Advisory. <http://www.opr.ca.gov/ceqa/pdfs/june08-ceqa.pdf>.
- Hope Elementary School District. 2023. Student/Parent Handbook. https://tb2cdn.schoolwebmasters.com/acnt_427828/site_427829/Documents/Student-Parent-Handbook-English.pdf.
- Institution of Lighting Engineers (ILE). 2003, May. Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution. <https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/SPG%20Lightpollution%202002.pdf>.
- Krazan & Associates, INC.. 2023, November 16. Geotechnical Engineering/Geologic Hazards Investigation. Appendix F.

4. References

- National Parks Service. 2024. *National Register of Historic Places Mapper*.
<https://www.nps.gov/maps/full.html?mapId=7ad17cc9-b808-4ff8-a2f9-a99909164466>,
- Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2015, February. Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Risk Assessment Guidelines. Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments. http://oehha.ca.gov/air/hot_spots/2015/2015GuidanceManual.pdf.
- Office of Historic Preservation, California. 2024 (accessed). California Historical Resources. <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=54>.
- Padre Associates, INC.. 2014, August. Preliminary Environmental Assessment. Appendix G.
- Porterville, City of. 2024a, May 27 (accessed). Zoning Map.
https://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/departments/communityF_development/zoning.php.
- _____. 2024b, February 18 (accessed). Library – About Us.
https://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/departments/library/about_us/index.php.
- _____. 2024c, February 18 (accessed). Library Updates - New Facility Plans, Donations & More.
https://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/get_the_latest_information_regarding_the_porterville_library_here.php
- _____. 2024d, February 19 (accessed). Parks, Trails, Recreation.
https://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/visitors/parks,_trails,_recreation.php.
- _____. 2024e, July 2024. (accessed). Public Health and Safety Element.
<https://porterville2030gp.com/documents/>
- _____. 2024f, July 2024 (accessed). Parks, Trails, Recreation.
https://ci.porterville.ca.us/visitors/parks,_trails,_recreation.php.
- _____. 2024g, September 16 (accessed). City Code of Porterville, California.
https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/portervilleca/latest/porterville_ca/0-0-0-8651.
- _____. 2024h, April 16. City Code of Porterville, California. Article 500. Airport Environs (AE) Overlay District. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/portervilleca/latest/porterville_ca/0-0-0-11008
- _____. 2023, June 20. City Code of Porterville, California.
https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/portervilleca/latest/porterville_ca/0-0-0-1.
- _____. 2015b. Urban Water Management Plan.
https://cms9files.revize.com/PortervilleCA/Document_Center/Department/Community%20Development/Planning/Documents/Porterville2010UWMPRequestedChangesFromtheState.pdf

4. References

- _____. 2008a. Porterville-Land use Element.
https://cms9files.revize.com/PortervilleCA/Document_Center/Department/Community%20Development/General%20Plan%20Update/Chapter2LandUse_000.pdf.
- _____. 2008b. Porterville Open Space and Conservation Element.
https://cms9files.revize.com/PortervilleCA/Document_Center/Department/Community%20Development/General%20Plan%20Update/Chapter6OpenSpaceandConservation_000.pdf
- _____. 2008c. Porterville Public Health and Safety.
https://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/departments/community_development/general_plan_update.php#outer-222sub-223
- _____. 2008d. Noise Element.
https://cms9files.revize.com/PortervilleCA/Document_Center/Department/Community%20Development/General%20Plan%20Update/Chapter9Noise_000.pdf
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). 2012, June. Small Project Analysis Levels for Ambient Air Quality Analysis – Combustion Exhaust Emissions.
<https://valleyair.org/transportation/CEQA%20Rules/FYI-329.pdf>
- _____. 2015, March 19. Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts.
<https://archive.valleyair.org/transportation/GAMAQI.pdf>
- _____. 2020, November 13. Small Project Analysis Levels (SPAL).
<https://www.valleyair.org/transportation/CEQA%20Rules/GAMAQI-SPAL.PDF>
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2024, August. Tule Subbasin Probationary Hearing Final Staff Report.
- Tulare, County of. 2024a, May 16. Tulare County Public Parcel Zoning Lookup.
<https://tularecounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e7d7da648dab43e1a9eb0233889b7c32>.
- _____. 2024b, May 16. Section 9.5:”AE-10” Exclusive Agricultural Zone 10 Acre Minimum
<https://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/rma-documents/planning-documents/tulare-county-zoning-ordinance/chapter-3-section-9-55-ae10/>
- _____. 2024c, May 16. Section 9.5:”AE-20” Exclusive Agricultural Zone 20 Acre Minimum.
<https://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/rma-documents/planning-documents/tulare-county-zoning-ordinance/chapter-3-section-9-6-ae20//>.
- _____. 2024d, August 28. Disposal Services. <https://tularecounty.ca.gov/solidWaste/disposal-services/>.
- _____. 2024e, August 11. Office of Emergency Services. <https://oes.tularecounty.ca.gov/oes/>.

4. References

- _____. 2023a, March. Tulare County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
<https://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/planning-building/tulare-county-adaptation-and-resiliency-plan/lhmP-FINAL-2023/>.
- _____. 2023b, Tulare County Housing Element.
<https://tulareregionalhousingelement.rinconconsultants.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/4-Regional-Housing-Resources.pdf>.
- _____. 2022. 2022 Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan.
<https://tularecog.org/tcag/planning/rtp/rtp-2022/chapter-a-executive-summary/>
- _____. 2020. Tulare County General Plan – Transportation and Circulation.
<https://generalplan.co.tulare.ca.us/documents/GP/001Adopted%20Tulare%20County%20General%20Plan%20Materials/000General%20Plan%202030%20Part%20I%20and%20Part%20II/GPA%2020-003%20Chp.%2013%20Transporation%20&%20Circulation%20SB%20743.pdf>
- _____. 2018, March. Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
<https://oes.tularecounty.ca.gov/oes/mitigation/tulare-county-mjlhmp/>
- _____. 2015. Porterville Area Community Plan.
<https://generalplan.co.tulare.ca.us/documents/GP/001Adopted%20Tulare%20County%20General%20Plan%20Materials/140Part%20III%20County%20Adopted%20City%20Plans%203%20of%207/005Porterville/001Porterville/GPA%2014-008%20PORTERVILLE%20AREA%20COMMUNITY%20PLAN.pdf>
- _____. 2012, August. 2030 Update Tulare County General Plan. <https://generalplan.co.tulare.ca.us/>
- _____. 1980, August 7. Section 14.1: “AP”. <https://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/rma-documents/planning-documents/tulare-county-zoning-ordinance/chapter-3-section-14-1-ap/>
- Tulare County Fire Department (TCFD). 2022. Tulare County Fire Department Annual Report 2022.
<https://tularecounty.ca.gov/sites/fire/assets/2022-Annual-Report-New-format.pdf>.
- Tulare County Library. 2024, August 14 (accessed). About the Library.
<https://www.tularecountylibrary.org/about-library>.
- Tulare County Parks. 2024, August 11 (accessed). Tulare County Parks. <https://tularecountyparks.org/>
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). 2024, September 3 (accessed). National Inventory of Dams. <https://nid.sec.usace.army.mil/#/>.
- United States Census. 2020. Tulare County, California.
https://data.census.gov/profile/Tulare_County,_California?g=050XX00US06107#populations-and-people.
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2024a. EJScreen. <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>.

4. References

- _____. 2024b. EnviroMapper. <https://enviro.epa.gov/enviro/em4ef.home>.
- _____. 2024c. Frequent Questions on Septic Tanks. <https://www.epa.gov/septic/frequent-questions-septic-systems>.
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).1998. Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California. https://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plan/980930a.pdf
- _____. 2011. Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance. <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/survey-protocols-for-the-san-joaquin-kit-fox.pdf>.
- United States Forest Service. 2023, October 2. Wildland Urban interface. <https://data-usfs.hub.arcgis.com/documents/7804d89ed1094ccb9aae753228e8d89a/explore>
- York. 2006. York Packaged Equipment – Heating and Cooling Outdoor Units. <https://www.york.com/residential-equipment/heating-and-cooling/residential-packaged-equipment>

4. References

This page intentionally left blank.

5. List of Preparers

HOPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT (LEAD AGENCY)

Malanie Matta, Superintendent/Principal

PLACEWORKS (CEQA CONSULTANT)

Malia Durand, Associate Principal

Mariana Zimmermann, Senior Associate II

Christhi Mroska, Associate II

Jared Bradford, Associate II

Angel Castro, Project Planner

Isabel Vega, Planner/Scientist

John Vang, Senior Associate, Air Quality/GHG

Lance Park, Senior Associate, Air Quality/GHG

Emily Parks, Associate, Air Quality/GHG

Steve Bush, Senior Engineer II

Chris Shields, Senior Associate, Noise and Vibration

Jacob Cisneros, Associate, Noise and Vibration

Lexie Zimny, Associate, Noise and Vibration

ECORP CONSULTING, INC. (BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES)

Phillip Wasz, Senior Wildlife Biologist

ASM AFFILIATES (CULTURAL RESOURCES)

Peter A. Carey, Director

5. List of Preparers

KRAZAN & ASSOCIATES, INC. (GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING/GEOLOGIC HAZARDS INVESTIGATION)

David R. Jarosz, Managing Engineer

PADRE ASSOCIATES, INC. (PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)

Alen Churchill, Senior Geologist

Alen J. Klein, Associate Senior Environmental Scientist

GARLAND ASSOCIATES (TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTION)

Richard Garland