**California Environmental Quality Act**

# Initial Study

# Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project

**Oakhurst, California**

(State Clearinghouse No. 2019090336)

**Lead Agency and Project Sponsor:**


## State Center Community College District

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# Executive Summary

State Center Community College District (SCCCD or District) is proposing to develop the Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project (project), which involves the construction and operation of a new community college center campus to serve students in Oakhurst, Ahwahnee, Coarsegold, North Fork, and other nearby communities. The project location is an approximately 30-acre site on the west side of Westlake Drive (40800 Westlake Drive), north of Liberty Drive, in the unincorporated community of Oakhurst, in Madera County (see Figures 1 and 2). This new campus will replace the existing Oakhurst campus, which consists of eight portable buildings located on a 2.5-acre site located at Road 426 and Civic Circle in Oakhurst, approximately 1.2 miles southeast of the proposed project site.

The project consists of a single structure containing 22,002 square feet of enclosed building area and 9,654 square feet of open covered area for an overall area of 31,656 square feet (see Figure 3). The Administration (6,250 sq. ft.) and Classroom (7,684 sq. ft.) Wings are connected by an enclosed "Learning Commons" (2,509 sq. ft.) The Science Wing (5,005 sq. ft.) is connected to the Administration and Classroom Wings by covered patios. The buildings and covered areas surround an open courtyard. The project also includes a 159-stall parking lot, a utility yard, pedestrian pathways, landscaping, approximately 900 feet of new 8-inch sewer main, and an off-site sign near the intersection of Westlake and State Route 49. The sewer line will extend down the west side of Westlake Drive from the project site to the existing location of the line in Liberty Drive near its intersection with Westlake. The project will also include either the signalization of the State Route 49/Westlake Drive intersection or the installation of a roundabout (pending further analysis and approval by Caltrans).

As initially constructed, the campus will serve the existing approximately 1,030 students and 24 faculty and staff. The campus will expand as needed to accommodate future growth, serving an estimated 1,582 students and 30 faculty and staff by 2040. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in fall 2021 and be completed by late 2023.

Based on the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines), the purpose of this Initial Study is to provide State Center Community College District with environmental information on the project to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an EIR or a Negative Declaration for the project. This Initial Study concluded:

1. The Initial Study identified potentially significant environmental effects of the project in the following subject areas: aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, noise, and tribal cultural resources. The District can avoid or reduce to an insignificant level these impacts by incorporating in the project the mitigation measures listed in the table on the following pages.
2. The project would have a less than significant impact or no impact on most of the environmental resources and conditions evaluated in the Initial Study. The Initial Study explains why there would be no impacts or the impacts would be less than significant.
3. Based on items 1 and 2, above, the District should adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project.

| Mitigation Measures | |
|---|---|
| | **Aesthetics: Mitigation for Light and Glare** |
| **AE-1** | All parking area lighting shall have full cut-off type fixtures. A full cut-off type fixture is a luminaire or lighting fixture that, by design of the housing, does not allow any light dispersion or direct glare to shine above a 90-degree horizontal plane from the base of the fixture. Full cut-off type fixtures must be installed in a horizontal position as designed. |
| **AE-2** | All external signs and lighting shall be lit from the top and shine downward except where uplighting is required for safety or security purposes. The lighting shall also be, as much as physically possible, contained to the target area. |
| **AE-3** | Project lighting features shall be designed to prevent direct glare and minimize spill over illumination on neighboring non-college properties. |
| **AQ-1** | **Air Quality: Mitigation for Diesel Particulate Matter and Fugitive Dust During Construction**<br><br>The following measures shall be implemented to reduce potential expose of nearby sensitive receptors to localized pollutant concentrations of DPM and fugitive dust associated with project construction:<br><br>1. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles:<br>a. Shall not idle the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and,<br>b. Shall not operate a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation.<br>2. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall comply with the 5-minute idling restriction identified in Section 2449(d)(2) of the California Air Resources Board's In-Use Off-Road Diesel regulation. The specific requirements and exceptions in the regulations can be reviewed at the following web sites: www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/truck-idling/2485.pdf and ww.arb.ca.gov/regact/2007/ordiesl07/frooal.pdf.<br>3. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall be fitted with diesel-particulate filters, per manufacturer's recommendations, or shall meet Tier 4 emissions standards.<br>4. Signs shall be posted at the project site construction entrance to remind drivers and operators of the state's 5-minute idling limit.<br>5. To the extent available, replace fossil-fueled equipment with alternatively-fueled (e.g., natural gas) or electrically-driven equivalents. |

6. Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent feasible, to occur during non-peak hours.
7. The burning of vegetative material shall be prohibited.
8. The proposed project shall comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII for the control of fugitive dust emissions. Regulation VIII can be obtained on the SJVAPCD's website at website URL: https://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm. At a minimum, the following measures shall be implemented:
    a. All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, covered with a tarp or other suitable cover or vegetative ground cover.
    b. All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
    c. All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut & fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking.
    d. With the demolition of buildings up to six stories in height, all exterior surfaces of the building shall be wetted during demolition.
    e. When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.
    f. All operations shall limit or expeditiously remove the accumulation of mud or dirt from adjacent public streets at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions.) (Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)
    g. Following the addition of materials to, or the removal of materials from, the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized of fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
    h. On-road vehicle speeds on unpaved surfaces of the project site shall be limited to 15 mph.
    i. Sandbags or other erosion control measures shall be installed sufficient to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.
    j. Excavation and grading activities shall be suspended when winds exceed 20 mph (Regardless of wind speed, an owner/operator must comply with Regulation VIII's 20 percent opacity limitation).
9. The above measures for the control of construction-generated emissions shall be included on site grading and construction plans.

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| **BR-1** | **Biological Resources: General Avoidance**<br>1. Due to the Project's location within, and proximity to, quality habitats for wildlife, the following typical avoidance and minimization measures for during construction are recommended for the Project. These measures will help ensure that impacts to all habitats, plant, and wildlife species are reduced to a less-than-significant level.<br>a. All workers onsite will receive environmental training on the project's sensitive biological resources and species potentially present, the project avoidance and minimization measures, and any permit-specified (if applicable) project requirements.<br>b. Before they are filled, all holes or trenches will be thoroughly inspected (to prevent wildlife mortality). All excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches should be covered with plywood or similar materials at the end of each workday to prevent trapping animals. Biologist-approved escape ramps should be established in a hole or trench, if covering it is not possible.<br>c. Any pipes greater than 4 inches in diameter that are stored onsite must be sealed on both ends at all times.<br>d. Project design, BMPs, and grading and stormwater permits required for project construction are all ways to avoid and minimize sediment influx into the creek and pond.<br>e. Construct biologist-approved wildlife barriers to keep wildlife out of the construction site and minimize construction-related wildlife mortality. Where practicable, directional fencing should be actively maintained and/or modified during construction to allow any onsite turtles or other wildlife to exit the Project Footprint, and to prevent wildlife from entering the Project Footprint during construction. This directional fencing will be no less than 36 inches high, buried 6 inches deep and backfilled, and made of silt fence or similar material. This fencing shall be installed and maintained under the direction of a qualified biologist. Please note that this fence may be located so that it doubles as the Project's silt fencing, which will likely be required by any grading permits. |
| **BR-2** | **Biological Resources: Mitigation for Potential Impacts to Special Status Bats**<br>1. <u>Pre-construction Surveys</u>: Prior to the onset of construction activity, a CDFW-approved biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for active roosting, breeding, or hibernacula sites (roosts) in large trees within the Project Area. Construction will not take place as long as a roost site is occupied. Therefore, depending on when construction begins, bat surveys should be timed to be prior to the change in season (maternity vs. hibernation) so that special status bats can be correctly excluded without take (see seasons below). If no active bat roosts, breeding, or hibernacula sites are detected, no further action is required.<br>2. <u>Avoidance & Minimization</u>:<br>a. If any active bat sites are discovered or if evidence of recent occupation is established, the following measures will be implemented in order to minimize impacts on special status bats:<br>i. Construction will be scheduled to minimize impacts upon pallid bats. Type and status of active roosts shall be determined, and bat eviction shall be |

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| | undertaken in a manner that does not exclude bats during times of inclement weather, or exclude females from young still in a roost.<br>ii. Hibernation sites with evidence of prior occupation will be sealed before the hibernation season (November–March), and nursery sites will be sealed before the nursery season (April–August).<br>iii. If the site is occupied by the bats, then construction will occur outside the hibernation season (for hibernacula), and after August 15 (for nursery colonies). Construction/building demolition will not take place as long as the roost site is occupied.<br>iv. If exclusion devices are used, they will be employed based on current best practices and will be regularly monitored by a qualified biologist.<br>b. All new lighting shall be down-cast to reduce disturbance impacts to bat species. |
| **BR-3** | **Biological Resources: Mitigation for Potential Impacts to Special Status Birds**<br>1. <u>Avoidance</u>. If feasible, any vegetation removal or ground disturbance will take place between September 1 and February 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, project construction is at risk of being delayed due to actively nesting birds and their required protective buffers.<br>2. <u>Pre-construction Surveys.</u><br>a. If vegetation removal or ground disturbance will commence between February 1 and August 31, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within 14 days prior to the initiation of disturbance activities. This survey will cover:<br>i. Potential nest sites in trees, bushes, or grass within species-specific buffers of the Project Area (raptor species such as red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, etc. – 500 ft, non-raptor species (loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, etc.) – 250 ft).<br>b. If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction survey, then no further action is required. If an active nest is detected, then the following minimization measures will be implemented.<br>3. <u>Minimization/Establish Buffers.</u><br>a. Special status bird species and MBTA-protected species: If any active nests are discovered (and if construction will occur during bird breeding season), the USFWS and/or CDFW will be contacted to determine protective measures required to avoid take. These measures could include fencing off an area where a nest occurs, or shifting construction work temporally or spatially away from the nesting birds. Biologists are required on site to monitor construction while protected migratory birds are nesting in the Project Area to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. If an active nest is found after the completion of the pre-construction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities will stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected the appropriate buffer around the nest. |

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| **BR-4** | **Biological Resources: Mitigation for Potential Impacts to Special Status Reptiles**<br>1. Avoidance. Any western pond turtle discovered at the site immediately prior to or during Project activities shall be allowed to move out of the area on their own volition. If this is not feasible, they shall be captured by a qualified biologist who holds a CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit for the species, and relocated out of harm's way to the nearest suitable habitat from the Project Area. |
| **BR-5** | **Biological Resources: Mitigation for Sensitive Natural Communities**<br>1. Valley Foothill Riparian Habitat<br>a. To ensure impacts to Valley Foothill Riparian habitat is minimized,<br>i. The District's grading plans shall ensure that the buffer around riparian habitats is widened to encompass the entire riparian corridor and provides a 50-foot buffer from the canopy edge as per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.4.<br>ii. During construction activities within 100 feet of riparian habitats, such as the construction of road crossings, valley foothill riparian habitat that is not proposed for removal shall be protectively fenced in the areas where construction activity will directly impact the habitat. This fence shall be maintained until all construction activities are completed.<br>b. If the Project configuration were to change and encompass any area to the east of the existing paved road:<br>i. Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a Wetland Delineation would be required and a Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFW, pursuant to Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, for any stream impacts and any other activities affecting the bed, bank, or associated riparian vegetation of the stream or existing pond.<br>ii. Any riparian vegetation removed as part of construction activities shall be replaced at a 3:1 (3 new acres per one lost acre) mitigation ratio, per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.6.<br>2. Cismontane Woodland (oak woodland) Habitat<br>a. To ensure impacts to Cismontane Woodland habitat, specifically oak trees, is minimized,<br>i. Prior to the onset of construction activities, the District shall contract with an Arborist to complete a tree survey in the Project Footprint focused on landmark/legacy trees, but documenting any oak trees (Tree is >4 inch dbh; Landmark/Legacy tree is >/= 24 inches dbh). Upon completion of the survey, the Arborist will submit a tree survey map of trees that may be disturbed during development.<br>ii. Disturbance to all native oak trees and their canopy drip lines (branches and soils beneath) shall be avoided to the largest extent feasible during construction. This includes installing a fence 20 ft from the dripline of any trees to be retained within the Project Footprint to avoid any unplanned, accidental, or construction related impacts. |

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| | iii. If oak trees are found during the tree survey that must be removed during construction activities, then an oak tree mitigation and monitoring plan shall be prepared by an Arborist or Biologist. Typical mitigation ratios recently accepted by CDFW, for example are:<br>• oak trees between 4 inches and 24 inches dbh - 3:1 replacement ratio;<br>• landmark/legacy oak trees (>24 inches dbh) - 10:1 replacement ratio.<br>3. <u>If avoidance and minimization of special habitats is not feasible,</u> a qualified biologist will develop appropriate mitigations that will reduce project impacts to sensitive biological resources to a less than significant level. The type and amount of mitigation will depend on the resources impacted, the extent of the impacts, and the quality of habitats to be impacted. Mitigations may include but are not limited to: 1) Compensation for lost habitat in the form of preservation or creation of in-kind habitat protected by conservation easement; 2) Purchase of appropriate credits from an approved mitigation bank or land trust servicing the Madera County Area; 3) Payment of in-lieu fees. |
| **BR-6** | **Biological Resources: Additional Mitigation for Oak Woodland**<br>1. In addition to the measures listed for avoidance and minimization of Sensitive Natural Communities (above), the project shall, where feasible, follow the Voluntary Oak Woodland Management Guidelines (Coarsegold Resource Conservation District 1995), specifically those designed for "Building within Oak Woodland." These include, but are not limited to:<br>a. Cluster improvements to preserve wildlife corridors.<br>b. Protect existing oaks during construction, replace trees with seedlings if removal is unavoidable.<br>c. Avoid root compaction by limiting heavy equipment in the root zone.<br>d. Minimize root cutting during road construction, building foundations or septic systems.<br>e. Avoid grade changes in dripline zones of trees.<br>f. Avoid landscaping which requires or allows irrigation within the dripline of a crown of a tree. |
| **CR-1** | **Cultural Resources: Subsurface Resources**<br>If cultural resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified cultural resources specialist shall be consulted to determine the significance of the resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. If potentially significant, the qualified cultural resources specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2 |
| **CR-2** | **Cultural Resources: Human Remains**<br>If human remains are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the County Coroner notified in accordance with Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(e). If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the procedures and requirements set forth in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) and (e) and Public Resources Code §5097.98 shall be implemented. |

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| **GEO-1** | **Geology and Soils: Subsurface Paleontological Resources**<br>If paleontological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified paleontologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resources require further study. If the resources are determined to be potentially significant, the qualified paleontologist shall make recommendations to the District on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to, excavation and evaluation of the find, as well as providing the resources to an appropriate institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study. |
| **N-1** | **Noise: Mitigation for Construction Noise**<br>Construction activities (excluding activities that would result in a safety concern to the public or construction workers) shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and prohibited on Sundays and legal holidays. |
| **N-2** | Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent feasible, to occur during non-peak hours and truck haul routes shall be selected to minimize impacts to the nearby childcare center. |
| **N-3** | Construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with noise-reduction intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Equipment engine shrouds shall be closed during equipment operation. |
| **N-4** | Stationary construction equipment (e.g., portable power generators) should be located at the furthest distance possible from the nearby childcare center. |
| **N-5** | When not in use, all equipment shall be turned off and shall not be allowed to idle. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site. |
| **T-1A** | **Transportation: Mitigation for Increased Traffic Generated by Project**[1]<br>The project shall fund an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether a traffic signal roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location. |
| **T-1B** | The project shall install the traffic signal or roundabout recommended by the ICE report. Because this improvement is already needed and will benefit the balance of Liberty Village, the project shall be responsible for its fair share of the cost of the improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Initial Study Appendix F. (However, there are a number of developed properties in the area that have previously agreed to contribute to traffic improvements either through CC&Rs or separate agreements. Any mechanism to fund future improvements should include the participation of these developed properties.) |
| **T-3A** | The project shall contribute its fair share to the cost of an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether a traffic signal roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location. |
| **T-3B** | The project shall contribute its fair share of the cost of the identified improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Initial Study Appendix F. |

[1] Although the congestion-based potential impacts and recommended intersection improvements of the traffic analysis are no longer required for CEQA purposes, the District wishes to work with the County and Caltrans to provide for transportation improvements that will be of mutual benefit to all parties.

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| **T-4A**<br><br>**T-4B** | The project shall contribute its fair share to the cost of an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether left turn prohibition, a traffic signal or roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location.<br>The project shall contribute its fair share of the cost of the identified improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Initial Study Appendix F. |
| **TC-1**<br><br>**TC-2** | **Tribal Cultural Resources: Tribal Monitoring and Unanticipated Discoveries**<br>If requested by a Native American tribe notified of the project, a tribal monitor or observer shall be present at the project site during ground-disturbing construction and pre-construction activities. The tribal monitor or observer shall be identified and approved by the requesting tribe.<br>If tribal cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified professional with expertise in tribal cultural resources shall be consulted to recommend an appropriate course of action with the input of potentially affected tribes. If it is determined that the project may cause a substantial adverse change to a tribal cultural resource, mitigation measures to be considered should include those identified in Public Resources Code Section 21084.3. |

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# A. Project Background Information

## 1. Project Title, Lead Agency, and Lead Agency Contact Information

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|---|---|
| **Project Title:** | Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project |
| **Lead Agency and Project Sponsor's Name and Address:** | State Center Community College District<br>1171 Fulton Street, Fresno, CA 93721 |
| **Contact Information:** | George Cummings<br>District Director of Facilities Planning<br>Telephone: (559) 243-7191<br>Email: George.cummings@scccd.edu |

## 2. Project Location and Description

The Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project (project) involves the construction and operation of a community college center campus to serve students in Oakhurst, Ahwahnee, Coarsegold, North Fork, and other nearby communities. The project location is an approximately 30-acre site on the west side of Westlake Drive (40800 Westlake Drive), north of Liberty Drive, in the unincorporated community of Oakhurst, in Madera County (see Figures 1 and 2, and Table A-1). This new campus will replace the existing Oakhurst campus, which consists of eight portable buildings located on a 2.5-acre site located at Road 426 and Civic Circle in Oakhurst, approximately 1.2 miles southeast of the proposed project site.

**TABLE A-1**
**Project Location**

| | |
|---|---|
| **City or CDP, County, and Zip Code** | Oakhurst, Madera County, 93644 |
| **Assessor's Parcel Number(s)** | 064-142-039, 064-142-040; 064-142-009 (off-site sign) |
| **Situs** | No situs |
| **Nearest Existing Major Cross Streets** | Westlake and Liberty Drives |
| **Elevation** | Approximately 2430 ft. MSL |
| **USGS Map** | Ahwahnee Quadrangle |
| **Section, Township & Range** | Section 10, Township 7S, Range 21E, MDB&M |
| **Latitude/Longitude** | 36°20'33"N -119°40'4"W |

The project consists of a single structure containing 22,002 square feet of enclosed building area and 9,654 square feet of open covered area for an overall area of 31,656 square feet (see Figure 3). The Administration (6,250 sq. ft.) and Classroom (7,684 sq. ft.) Wings are connected by an enclosed "Learning Commons" (2,509 sq. ft.) The Science Wing (5,005 sq. ft.) is connected to the Administration and Classroom Wings by covered patios. The buildings and covered areas surround an open courtyard. The project also includes a 159-stall parking lot, a utility yard, pedestrian pathways, landscaping, approximately 900 feet of new 8-inch sewer main, and an off-site sign. The sewer line will extend down the west side of Westlake Drive from the project site to the existing location of the line in Liberty Drive near its intersection with Westlake. The project will

also include either the signalization of the State Route 49/Westlake Drive intersection or the installation of a roundabout (pending further analysis and approval by Caltrans).

The campus, as initially constructed, will serve the existing approximately 1,030 students and 24 faculty and staff. The campus will expand as needed to accommodate future growth, serving an estimated 1,582 students and 30 faculty and staff by 2040.

To meet fire flow requirements, the project will include a booster pump apparatus to increase water pressure for fire fighting purposes. An emergency diesel generator will be installed to provide power to the booster pump apparatus to ensure that appropriate water pressure can be provided if power is not available.

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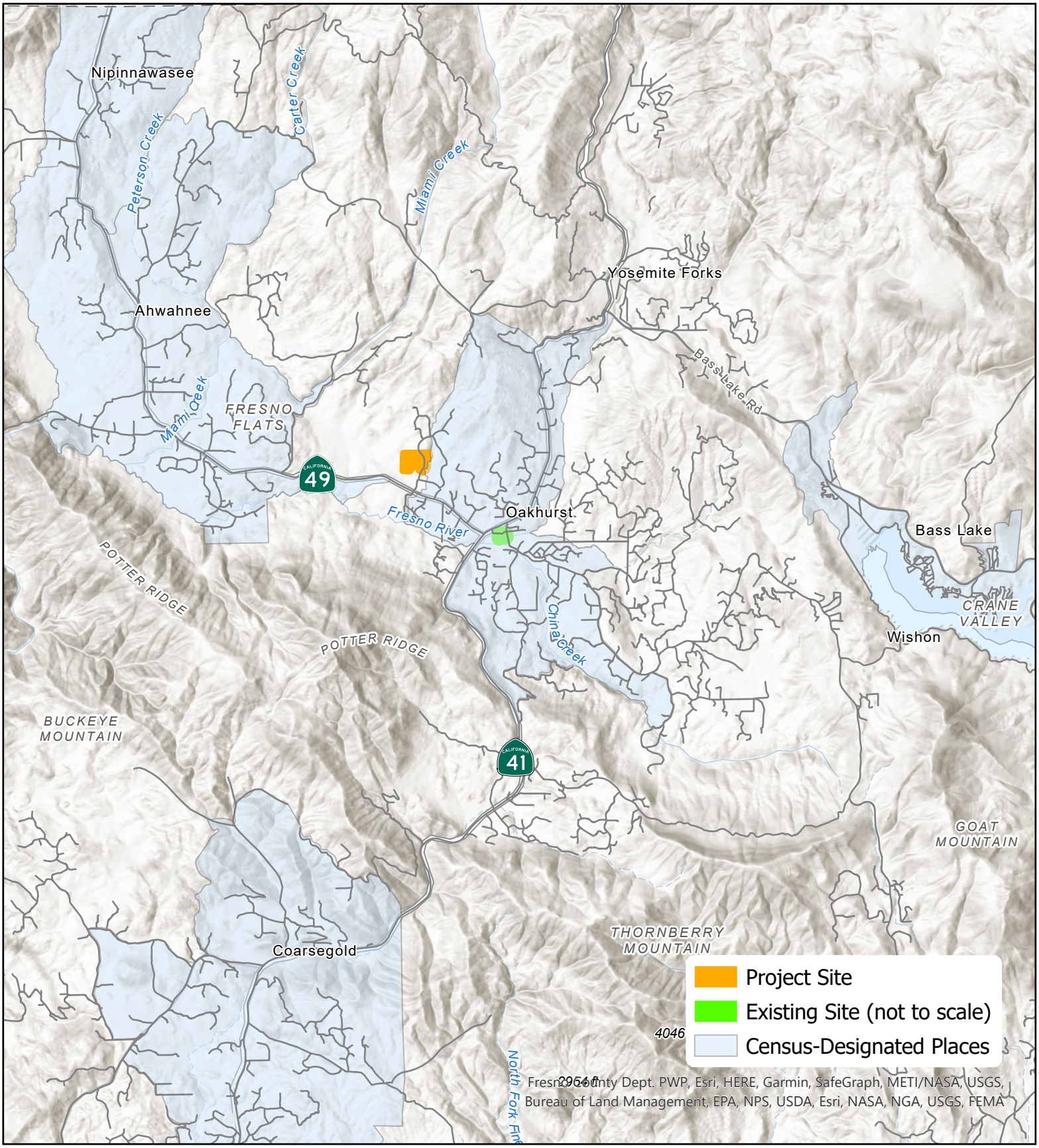



# Regional Location

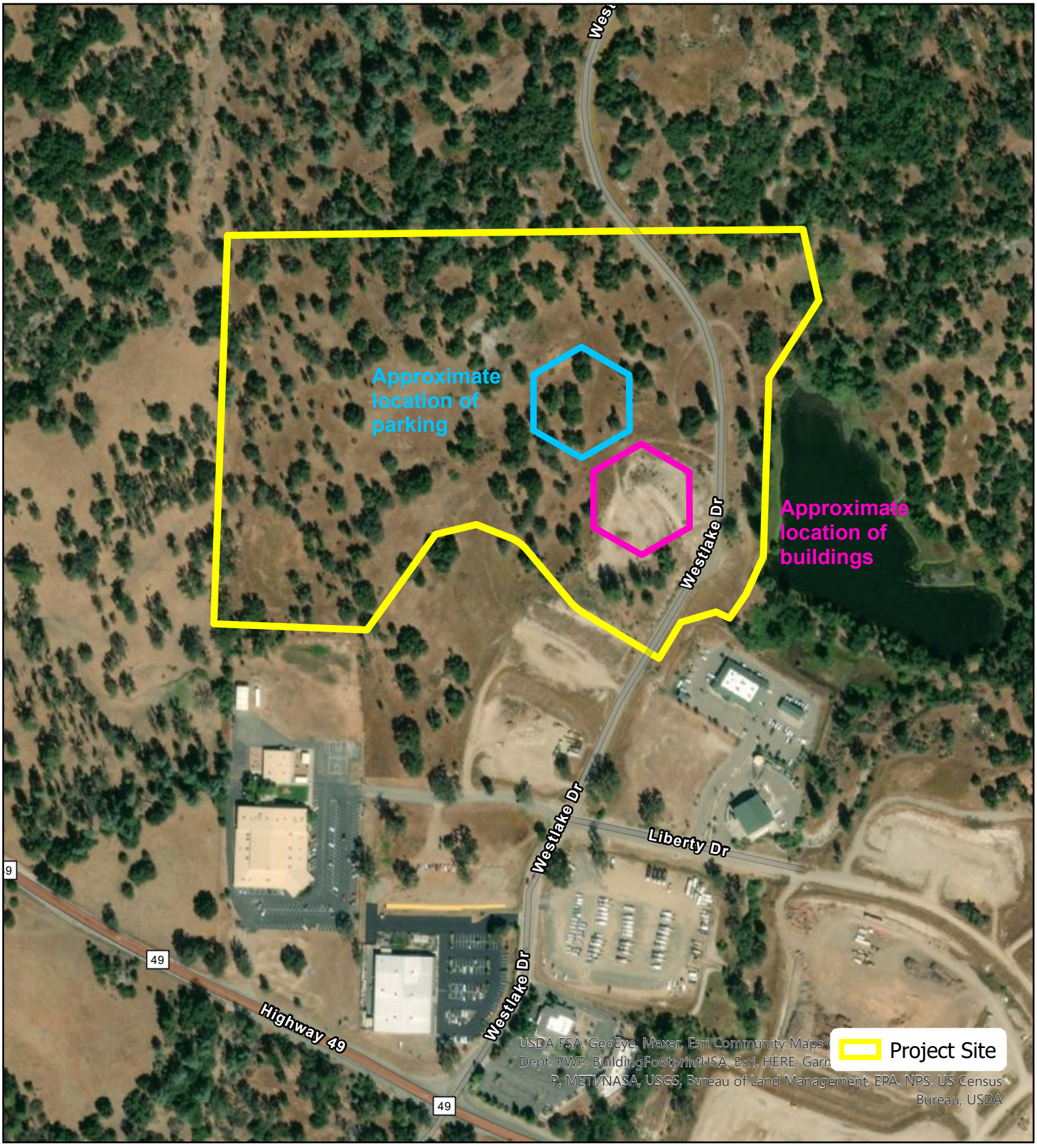
**Figure 1**

Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project
State Center Community College District

ODELL *Planning & Research, Inc.*
*Environmental Planning • School Facility Planning • Demographics*

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N




# Project Site

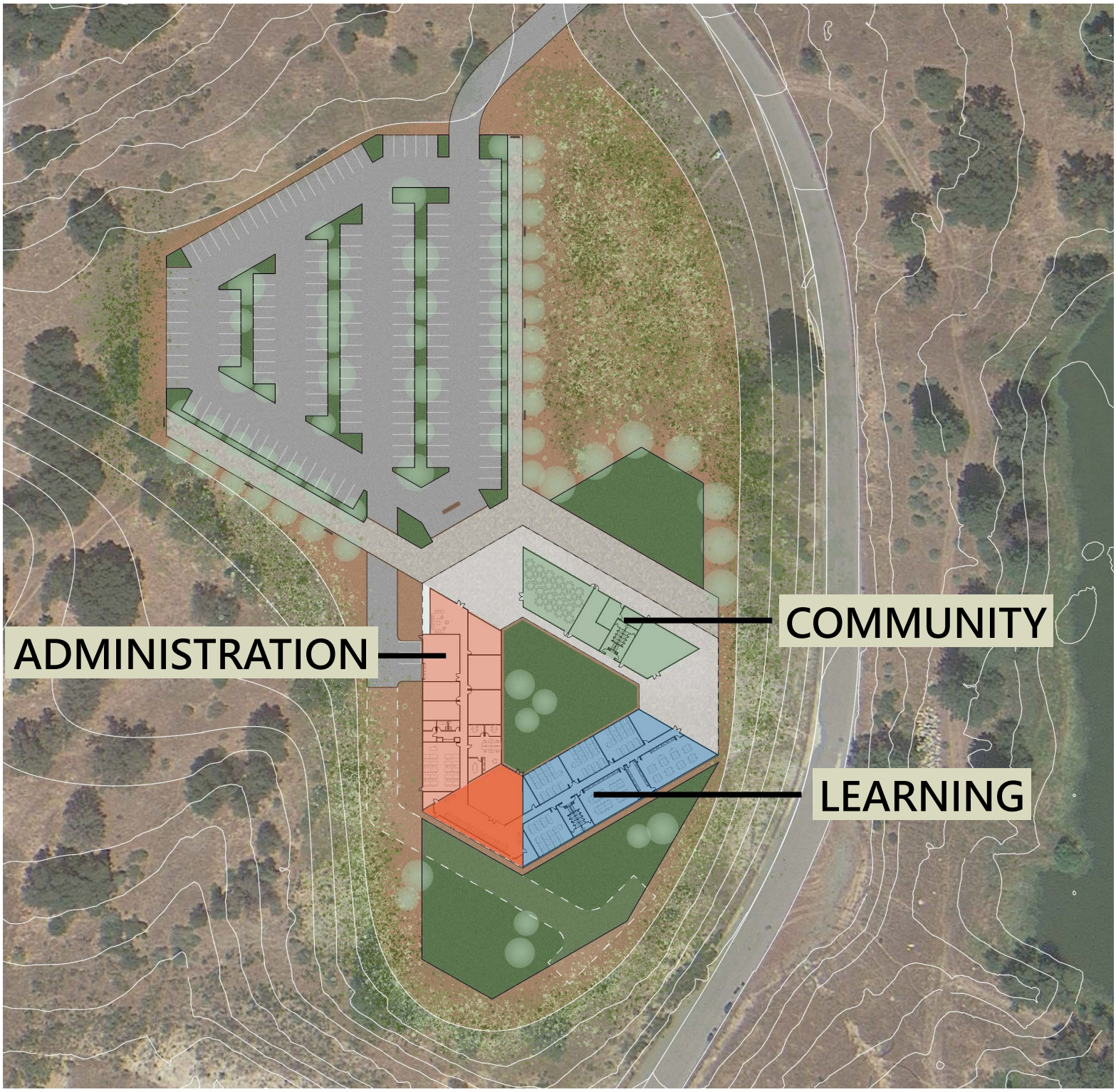
Figure 2

Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project
State Center Community College District

ODELL *Planning & Research, Inc.*
*Environmental Planning • School Facility Planning • Demographics*

0 125 250 500 Feet

N




Site Plan

Figure 3

Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project
State Center Community College District

ODELL Planning & Research, Inc.
Environmental Planning • School Facility Planning • Demographics

PAUL HALAJIAN ARCHITECTS

## 3. Actions Required to Implement Project

The District must undertake the following actions in order to implement the project:

- Complete the California Environmental Quality Act process for the project. This would involve either the adoption of a mitigated negative declaration for the project or the preparation of an environmental impact report. Based on the results of this Initial Study, the District should consider the adoption of a mitigated negative declaration for the project;
- Adopt and implement the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program identified in Section F of this Initial Study;
- Approve the project;
- Secure approvals, permits, and agreements, as necessary, from agencies and utilities that are responsible for public facilities the project would construct, modify, or otherwise affect within or near the site.

## 4. Project Schedule

The District anticipates that the project will begin construction in fall 2021 and that it will become operational in late 2023.

## 5. Project Setting

### a. Existing Land Uses

The proposed project site is undeveloped foothill land that is largely in its natural condition as an oak woodland. Although the size of the parcels acquired for the college center comprise approximately 30 acres, the project footprint needed for the new facilities and access and construction staging areas is approximately 5.7 acres. Approximately 3.5 acres of the project footprint is composed of oak woodland and the remaining 2.2 acres is disturbed land. The site is located within Liberty Village, a phased development project that includes land designated for residential, commercial and industrial uses. Surrounding existing land uses include: a pond, Madera County Sheriff and Fire stations, a church, retail development, medical offices, and vacant land.

### b. Public Land Use Policy

The Madera County General Plan and Oakhurst Area Plan provide adopted public land use policy for the project site and vicinity. The project site is designated as High Density Residential. Surrounding land use designations include High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Rural Residential, Open Space, Community Commercial, Light Industrial, and Agricultural Exclusive.

### c. Zoning

The Madera County Municipal Code Zoning Ordinance designation for the project site is RUM (Residential, Urban, Multiple Family), the purpose of which is to provide for multiple family dwelling unit development.

The site is surrounded by areas zoned POS (Public Open Space), RRM (Residential, Rural, Multiple Family), RUS (Residential, Urban Single Family, IA (Institution Area), IL (Industrial, Urban or Rural, Light), and ARE-40 (Agricultural, Rural, Exclusive). These zones collectively allow for a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and open space uses.

### d. Streets and Highways

The project site is accessible by Westlake Drive along the eastern side of the site. Westlake Drive

intersects with Liberty Drive (a two-lane local street) approximately 700 feet south of the project site and State Route 49 (a two-lane conventional rural highway) approximately one-quarter mile south of the project site. (Please see Section E, 17, for additional information on streets and highways.)

**e. Public Utilities and Services**

**Water:** Water service within the project area is provided by the Oakhurst-Sierra Lakes system of the California American Water Company (formerly Hillview Water Company), a private community water system. The Oakhurst-Sierra Lakes system meets all state and federal drinking water standards. The location and design of water facilities would be subject to review and approval by California American Water Company.

**Sewer:** The project site is located within Maintenance District 22B, which allows for on-site treatment and disposal of wastewater. However, the SCCCD has opted to participate in Maintenance District 22A, the sewer and wastewater treatment system that serves improved residential and commercial developments in the project area. The location and design of sewer facilities would be subject to review and approval by Madera County MD 22A.

**Stormwater Drainage:** There are no existing storm drainage facilities at the project site, and drainage at the site will need to be designed to meet Madera County standards and requirements (see Sections E. 10, c, and E, 19, for more information.)

**Solid Waste:** The project site is served by Emadco Disposal Service for recycling and solid waste hauling to the Fairmead Landfill. Emadco is privately owned and operates under a franchise agreement with Madera County.

**Emergency Services:** The Madera County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services and the Madera County Fire Department, operated by CalFire, provides fire protection services within the project area. The Madera County Sheriff Oakhurst Substation and Madera County Fire Department Station 12 are located adjacent to the project site. Paramedic ambulance services are provided by Sierra Ambulance Service.

(Please see Section E, 15 and E, 19, for additional information on Public Services and Utilities.)

## 6. Request for Preliminary Comment

State Center Community College District distributed a Request for Preliminary Comment for the proposed project to responsible agencies and other agencies that might have an interest in the project. The Request provided an opportunity for the agencies to comment on the potential environmental effects of the project, including whether an Environmental Impact Report, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Negative Declaration should be prepared for the project. State Center Community College District also sent the Request to residents and property owners in the project vicinity.

Responses from reviewing agencies and property owners in the vicinity have been incorporated into the analysis presented in this Initial Study.

## 7. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

Implementation of the proposed school project would require approvals from the following public agencies in addition to the District:

- The County of Madera must review and approve plans and accept improvements related to the provision of public street access, sewage collection, and drainage for the project.
- The Madera County Department of Public Health is responsible for permitting and inspecting retail

food businesses, reviewing construction plans and inspection of new and remodeled food facilities, investigating complaints regarding violations involving unsanitary conditions, investigates suspected food borne illnesses, etc.

- The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District must review and approve compliance with Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review) and other applicable rules and regulations.
- The California Department of Transportation must review and approve any improvements on or adjacent to State Route 49.

California American Water Company (CAWC) is a not a public agency but is a public utility for the provision of water service to the project site. CAWC will need to review and approve plans related to the provision water service to the site.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is a Trustee Agency that has jurisdiction over biological resources the project may impact.

## B. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Based on the evaluations in Section E, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environmental factors listed in the following table. Those factors that require mitigation to be incorporated into the project to be less than significant are noted with an "X".

**Table B-1**
**Environmental Factors Potentially Affected**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Aesthetics | | Agricultural & Forestry Resources | X | Air Quality |
| X | Biological Resources | X | Cultural Resources | | Energy |
| X | Geology & Soils | | Greenhouse Gas Emissions | | Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| | Hydrology & Water Quality | | Land Use & Planning | | Mineral Resources |
| X | Noise | | Population & Housing | | Public Services |
| | Recreation | | Transportation | X | Tribal Cultural Resources |
| | Utilities & Service Systems | | Wildfire | X | Mandatory Findings of Significance |

## C. Determination

Based on this Initial Study, I find that the Madera Community College at Oakhurst Project could have significant effects on the environment but by incorporating into the project the mitigation measures identified in Section E, the State Center Community College District would avoid or render them less than significant. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended for adoption.

| | |
|---|---|
| Signature Type text here | March 11, 2021<br>Date |
| Christine D. Miktarian<br>Print Name | Vice Chancellor, Operations<br>Title |

# D. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

## 1. State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G: Environmental Checklist Form

Section E in this Initial Study addresses all of the environmental issues that Appendix G in the State CEQA Guidelines suggests an Initial Study should address.

The discussion of each impact in Section E concludes with a determination that the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, less than significant, or does not involve any impact (no impact).

The "potentially significant" determination is applied if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. Under the State CEQA Guidelines, a significant effect, or impact, on the environment means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. (sec. 15382) The District must prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the project if the Initial Study identifies one or more potentially significant impacts.

The "less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated" determination applies when the incorporation by the District of mitigation measures in the project would reduce an impact from potentially significant to less than significant. This Initial Study describes each mitigation measure the District has incorporated in the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

The "less than significant" determination applies when the project would not result in a significant effect on a resource or condition. The less than significant determination is used only in cases where no mitigation measures are required to reduce an impact to a less than significant level.

The "no impact" determination applies when the project would have no impact on a resource or condition, or the resource or condition does not apply to the project or its location.

The discussion of impacts in this Initial Study lists each potential impact as stated in Appendix G, provides an analysis of the impact, describes any mitigation measures required to avoid the impact or reduce it to an insignificant level, and concludes with a determination of the level of significance of the impact. References to documents that would provide background information on an impact are provided where applicable.

This Initial Study incorporates by reference all documents and other sources of information cited in Section E and Section H (Sources Consulted).

## 2. Existing Laws, Regulations and Policies

In some cases, an impact that might appear significant is determined to be less than significant because it is subject to state, regional, or local laws, regulations, or policies, the application of which would reduce the impact to a less than significant level or avoid the impact entirely. In evaluating impacts, this Initial Study considered the applicable laws, regulations, and policies to determine the effect they would have on preventing or reducing potentially significant impacts. The Initial Study, however, does not cite them as mitigation measures because they would apply to the project regardless of the outcome of the Initial Study.

For the proposed project, applicable laws, regulations, and policies include but are not limited to the following:

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District**

https://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm

- *Regulation VIII – Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions*
- *Regulation IX – Mobile and Indirect Sources*

**Madera County Environmental Health Division**

https://www.maderacounty.com/government/community-economic-development-department/divisions/environmental-health-division

The Environmental Health Division is responsible for permitting and inspecting retail food businesses, including school cafeterias, reviewing construction plans and inspection of new and remodeled food facilities, investigating complaints regarding violations involving unsanitary conditions, investigates suspected food borne illnesses, etc.

The Environmental Health Division is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Madera County. The Unified Program functions to protect Californians from hazardous waste and hazardous materials by ensuring consistency throughout the state regarding the implementation of administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and enforcement at the local regulatory level. With oversight from the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), CUPAs apply regulatory standards established by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and CalEPA.

**Madera County**

- Madera County General Plan Policy Document
  https://www.maderacounty.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=2850
- Oakhurst Area Plan
  https://www.maderacounty.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=662
- Madera County Municipal Code of Ordinances
  https://library.municode.com/ca/madera_county/codes/code_of_ordinances
- County of Madera Standard Plans and Specifications
  https://www.maderacounty.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=1562

**State Center Community College District**

The State Center Community College District Facilities Master Plan, most recently updated in 2019, provides a guide for future development at each of the eight campuses within the District. It provides a blueprint for the potential placement of future facilities, removal and/or renovation of existing facilities, and various site improvements throughout the District. The plan includes conceptual drawings and schematic layouts that identify the location and purpose of improvements, with final designs for sites and projects occurring as projects are funded and detailed programming and design occur. The plan is available to view at:

https://www.scccd.edu/_uploaded-files/documents/measure-c/facilities-master-plan/2019_scccd_fmp.pdf

# E. Environmental Checklist

(The questions in Sections E, 1-21 are from the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G: Environmental Checklist Form, Evaluation of Environmental Impacts).

## 1. Aesthetics

| Except as provided in Public Resources Code § 21099, would the project have: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | | | ✓ | |
| c. 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? | | | ✓ | |
| d. Create a new source of light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | | ✓ | | |

**a.-c. Less Than Significant:**

The project site is located in a scenic wooded area on the elevated property with extensive views to the south. Due to existing and planned urban development within the Liberty Village area, and the location of the project, the project would not block any vistas in the area, scenic or otherwise.

The project site is approximately one-quarter mile from California State Route 49 (SR-49) and approximately one mile from State Route 41, which are eligible, but not officially designated as state scenic highways (Caltrans 2019). The project site does contain scenic resources such as trees and rock outcroppings, but development of the site has been planned with emphasis on preservation of scenic resources including compact development, natural building shape and materials, and positioning on the site to minimize topographical disturbance. Given these factors, and being located in located within Liberty Village, an area transitioning from rural to urban, the project will be visually compatible with the surrounding community.

**d. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

The project will be a new source of light and glare in its vicinity. Project buildings and parking areas will be lighted in the evenings and headlights from vehicles arriving and departing during evening hours would be a potential source of glare. Although the Liberty Village area has lighted urban land uses in the vicinity, the

project is at a prominent elevated location at which the lighting could be more noticeable. The following mitigation measures will ensure that project lighting will be designed to reduce light and glare and preserve nearby nighttime sky views.

**Mitigation Measure AE-1:** All parking area lighting shall have full cut-off type fixtures. A full cut-off type fixture is a luminaire or lighting fixture that, by design of the housing, does not allow any light dispersion or direct glare to shine above a 90-degree horizontal plane from the base of the fixture. Full cut-off type fixtures must be installed in a horizontal position as designed.

**Mitigation Measure AE-2:** All external signs and lighting shall be lit from the top and shine downward except where uplighting is required for safety or security purposes. The lighting shall also be, as much as physically possible, contained to the target area.

**Mitigation Measure AE-3:** Project lighting features shall be designed to prevent direct glare and minimize spill over illumination on neighboring non-college properties.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** With implementation of the recommended mitigation measures to address lighting and glare, this impact will be less than significant.

## 2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | | | | ✓ |
| b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | | | | ✓ |
| c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production? | | | | ✓ |
| d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use? | | | | ✓ |
| 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 forestland to non-forest use? | | | | ✓ |

**a.-e. No Impact:**

No impacts to agricultural or forestry resources would result from the project. The Madera County Important Farmland 2016 map designates the project site as grazing land. The project site is located in the Liberty

Village planned development area and is zoned RUM (Residential, Urban, Multiple Family). There is no important farmland, forestland, timberland, or Williamson Act land (Madera 2002) on or near the site.

## 3. Air Quality

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | | ✓ | | |
| b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality? | | | ✓ | |
| c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | | ✓ | | |
| d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | | | ✓ | |

This section is based on the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment completed by Ambient Air Quality & Noise Consulting, which can be found in Appendix A.

(Table E-3-1 provides definitions for the air quality terms used in this section.)

**a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

In accordance with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)-recommended methodology for the assessment of air quality impacts, projects that result in significant air quality impacts at the project level are also considered to have a significant cumulative air quality impact. As noted in E. 3. b., short-term construction and long-term operational emissions would not exceed applicable thresholds. In addition, the proposed project's contribution to localized concentrations of emissions, including emissions of CO, TACs, and odors, are considered less than significant. However, as noted in E. 3. c., the proposed project could result in a significant contribution to localized PM concentrations for which the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) is currently designated non-attainment. For this reason, implementation of the proposed project could conflict with air quality attainment or maintenance planning efforts. This impact would be considered potentially significant.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 (see Section E. 3. c., below), this impact would be considered less than significant.

*(This space intentionally left blank)*

**TABLE E-3-1**
**Air Quality Definitions**

**Carbon Monoxide (CO)**

A colorless, odorless gas resulting from the incomplete combustion of hydrocarbon fuels. CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the body's tissues and results in numerous adverse health effects. Over 80 percent of the CO emitted in urban areas is contributed by motor vehicles. CO is a criteria air pollutant.

**Nitrogen Oxides (Oxides of Nitrogen, $NO_x$)**

A general term pertaining to compounds of nitric oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and other oxides of nitrogen. Nitrogen oxides are typically created during combustion processes and are major contributors to smog formation and acid deposition. NO2 is a criteria air pollutant and may result in numerous adverse health effects.

**Particulate Matter (PM)**

Any material, except pure water, that exists in the solid or liquid state in the atmosphere. The size of particulate matter can vary from coarse, wind-blown dust particles to fine particle combustion products.

**PM2.5**

Includes tiny particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 2.5 microns. This fraction of particulate matter penetrates most deeply into the lungs.

**PM10 (Particulate Matter)**

A criteria air pollutant consisting of small particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 10 microns (about 1/7 the diameter of a single human hair). Their small size allows them to make their way to the air sacs deep within the lungs where they may be deposited and result in adverse health effects. PM10 also causes visibility reduction.

**Reactive Organic Gas (ROG)**

A photochemically reactive chemical gas, composed of non-methane hydrocarbons, that may contribute to the formation of smog. Also sometimes referred to as Non-Methane Organic Gases (NMOGs). (See also Volatile and Hydrocarbons.)

**Sulfur Dioxide ($SO_2$)**

A strong smelling, colorless gas that is formed by the combustion of fossil fuels. Power plants, which may use coal or oil high in sulfur content, can be major sources of $SO_2$ and other sulfur oxides contribute to the problem of acid deposition. $SO_2$ is a criteria air pollutant.

**Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC)**

An air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in deaths or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. Health effects to TACs may occur at extremely low levels and it is typically difficult to identify levels of exposure which do not produce adverse health effects.

Source: California Air Resources Board. *Glossary of Air Pollution Terms* (2015)

**b. Less Than Significant:**

The proposed project is located in the community of Oakhurst in Madera County, which is within the SJVAB. The SJVAB is designated nonattainment for the national 8-hour ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ standards. On September 25, 2008, the U.S. EPA redesignated the San Joaquin Valley to attainment for the $PM_{10}$ National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and approved the $PM_{10}$ Maintenance Plan (SJVAPCD 2019). Potential air quality impacts associated with the proposed project could potentially occur during project construction or

operational phases. Short-term construction and long-term air quality impacts associated with the proposed project are discussed, as follows:

Short-term Construction Emissions

Short-term increases in emissions would occur during the construction process. Construction-generated emissions are of temporary duration, lasting only as long as construction activities occur, but have the potential to represent a significant air quality impact. The construction of the proposed project would result in the temporary generation of emissions associated with site grading and excavation, paving, motor vehicle exhaust associated with construction equipment, and worker trips; as well as, the movement of construction equipment on unpaved surfaces. Short-term construction emissions would result in increased emissions of ozone-precursor pollutants (i.e., ROG and $NO_X$) and emissions of PM. Emissions of ozone-precursors would result from the operation of on-road and off-road motorized vehicles and equipment. Emissions of airborne PM are largely dependent on the amount of ground disturbance associated with site grading and excavation activities and can result in increased concentrations of PM that can adversely affect nearby sensitive land uses.

Estimated annual construction-generated emissions are summarized in Table 4 of Appendix A. As noted in Table 4 of Appendix A, construction of the proposed project would generate maximum annual emissions of approximately 0.34 tons/year of ROG, 2.28 tons/year of $NO_x$, 1.95 tons/year of CO, 0.00 tons/year of $SO_2$, 0.18 tons/year of $PM_{10}$, and 0.13 tons/year of $PM_{2.5}$. Estimated construction-generated emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's significance thresholds of 10 tons/year of ROG, 10 tons/year of $NO_x$, 100 tons/year of CO, 27 tons/year of $SO_x$,15 tons/year $PM_{10}$, or 15 tons/year $PM_{2.5}$.

Estimated average-daily on-site construction emissions are summarized in Table 5 of Appendix A. As noted in Table 5 of Appendix A, construction of the proposed project would generate maximum on-site emissions of approximately 36.57 lbs/day of ROG, 30.59 lbs/day of $NO_x$, 28.52 lbs/day of CO, 0.05 lbs/day of $SO_2$, 1.70 lbs/day of $PM_{10}$, and 1.62 lbs/day of $PM_{2.5}$. Emissions of $SO_2$ would be negligible (e.g., less than 1 pound/day). Average-daily on-site construction emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's recommended localized ambient air quality significance thresholds of 100 lbs/day for each of the criteria air pollutants evaluated.

Short-term construction of the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to regional or local air quality conditions. Furthermore, it is important to note that project construction, including excavation and grading activities, would be required to comply with SJVPACD Regulation VIII (Fugitive $PM_{10}$ Prohibitions). Mandatory compliance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII would further reduce emissions of fugitive dust from the project site. With compliance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII, emissions of PM would be further reduced by approximately 50 percent, or more. Given that project-generated emissions would not exceed applicable SJVAPCD significance thresholds, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Long-term Operational Emissions

Estimated annual operational emissions for the anticipated opening year of the proposed project are summarized in Table 6 of Appendix A. As depicted, the proposed project would result in total operational emissions of approximately 0.26 tons/year of ROG, 1.44 tons/year of $NO_X$, 1.59 tons/year of CO, 0.01 tons/year of $SO_2$, 0.42 tons/year of $PM_{10}$, and 0.12 tons/year of $PM_{2.5}$ during the initial year of operation. Emissions of $SO_2$ would be negligible (i.e., less than 0.1 tons/year). Operational emissions would be projected to decline in future years, with improvements in fuel-consumption emissions standards. Operational emissions would not exceed SJVAPCD's mass-emissions significance thresholds.

Estimated average-daily on-site operational emissions are also summarized in Table 6 of Appendix A. Average-daily on-site emissions would total approximately 1.38 lbs/day of ROG. 0.02 lbs/day of CO, and

less than 0.01 lbs/day of $NO_X$, $SO_2$, $PM_{10}$, and $PM_{2.5}$. Average-daily on-site emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's recommended localized ambient air quality significance thresholds of 100 lbs/day for each of the criteria air pollutants evaluated.

Long-term operation of the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to regional or local air quality conditions. It is important to note that estimated operational emissions are conservatively based on the default vehicle fleet distribution assumptions contained in the model, which include contributions from medium and heavy-duty trucks. Mobile sources associated with the proposed land uses would consist predominantly of light-duty vehicles. As a result, actual mobile source emissions would likely be less than estimated. In addition, it is also important to note that a large majority of the mobile-source emissions identified for the proposed project already occur associated with the estimated 1,030 students that attend the existing facility. The proposed project would provide increased capacity to serve an estimated future student population of approximately 1,582 students. Providing services to serve an increased future student population may help to reduce future trips to colleges located in other nearby communities, thereby resulting in potential overall decreases in regional VMT and associated emissions. For these reasons, this impact is considered less than significant.

**c. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

Sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site consist predominantly of a day care center and residential dwellings. The nearest day care center is located approximately 1,168 feet southwest of the project site. The nearest residential land use is located approximately 965 feet south of the project site. Long-term operational and short-term construction activities and emission sources that could adversely impact these nearest sensitive receptors are discussed, as follows:

Long-Term Operation

*Localized Mobile-Source CO Emissions*

Carbon monoxide is the primary criteria air pollutant of local concern associated with the proposed project. Under specific meteorological and operational conditions, such as near areas of heavily congested vehicle traffic, CO concentrations may reach unhealthy levels. If inhaled, CO can be adsorbed easily by the blood stream and can inhibit oxygen delivery to the body, which can cause significant health effects ranging from slight headaches to death. The most serious effects are felt by individuals susceptible to oxygen deficiencies, including people with anemia and those suffering from chronic lung or heart disease.

Mobile-source emissions of CO are a direct function of traffic volume, speed, and delay. Transport of CO is extremely limited because it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. For this reason, modeling of mobile-source CO concentrations is typically recommended for sensitive land uses located near signalized roadway intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service (i.e., LOS E or F). Localized CO concentrations associated with the proposed project would be considered less-than-significant impact if: (1) traffic generated by the proposed project would not result in deterioration of a signalized intersection to a LOS of E or F; or (2) the project would not contribute additional traffic to a signalized intersection that already operates at LOS of E or F.

Signalized intersections in the project area include the intersections of SR-49/Junction Avenue and SR-49/SR-41. With project implementation, these intersections are projected to operate at LOS C, or better, for existing-plus-project and future cumulative-plus-project conditions (KDA 2020). In comparison to the CO screening criteria, implementation of the proposed project would not result in or contribute to unacceptable levels of service (i.e., LOS E, or worse) at nearby signalized intersections. As a result, the proposed project would not be anticipated to contribute substantially to localized CO concentrations that would exceed applicable standards. For this reason, this impact would be considered less than significant.

*Toxic Air Contaminants*

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the long-term operation of any major onsite stationary sources of TACs, nor would project implementation result in a significant increase in diesel-fueled vehicles traveling along area roadways. No major stationary sources of TACs were identified in the project vicinity that would result in increased exposure of students or staff to TACs. For these reasons, long-term increases in exposure to TACs would be considered less than significant.

To meet fire flow requirements, the project will include a booster pump apparatus to increase water pressure for fire fighting purposes. An emergency diesel generator will be installed to provide power to the booster pump apparatus to ensure that appropriate water pressure can be provided if power is not available. Given that the generator would be very rarely used (emergency fire conditions only) and would not be sized or set up such that it could provide power to the college during a power outage, TACs resulting from generator use would be negligible.

Short-term Construction

*Naturally Occurring Asbestos*

Naturally-occurring asbestos, which was identified by ARB as a TAC in 1986, is located in many parts of California and is commonly associated with ultramafic rock. The project site is not located near any areas that are likely to contain ultramafic rock (DOC 2000). As a result, risk of exposure to asbestos during the construction process would be considered less than significant.

*Toxic Air Contaminants (Diesel-Exhaust Emissions)*

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM) emissions during construction associated with the use of off-road diesel equipment for site grading and excavation, paving and other construction activities. Construction activities would take place approximately 1,168 feet and 965 feet away from the nearest offsite sensitive receptors (i.e. day care center and residential land use). Therefore, given the dispersive properties of diesel PM, concentrations would be minimal at this distance.

A screening-level health risk analysis was conducted using the SJVAPCD's Prioritization Calculator to estimate the maximum prioritization score associated with construction-generated PM2.5 emissions. More than 90% of DPM is less than 1 µm in diameter (about 1/70th the diameter of a human hair), and thus is a subset of PM2.5 (ARB 2020b).

As previously noted, sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site consist of a childcare center and planned future residential land uses. Construction of the proposed facilities would be largely limited to the eastern portion of the project site. However, to be conservative the entire project site was assumed to involve site preparation and grading activities. Distances to the nearest existing and future planned sensitive land uses were, therefore, calculated from the center of the project site. Based on the analysis conducted, the maximum cancer-risk prioritization score at the nearby existing childcare center and the planned future residential land uses would be 24. Non-cancer acute and chronic hazard indices would be less than one. The predicted cancer-risk prioritization score would exceed the SJVAPCD's prioritization score of 10. For this reason, this impact would be considered potentially significant.

*Localized PM Concentrations*

Fugitive dust emissions would be primarily associated with site preparation and grading, and vehicle travel on unpaved and paved surfaces. On-site off-road equipment and trucks would also result in short-term emissions of diesel-exhaust PM, which could contribute to elevated localized concentration at nearby receptors. Uncontrolled emissions of fugitive dust may also contribute to increased occurrences of Valley Fever and potential increases in nuisance impacts to nearby receptors. For these reasons, localized

uncontrolled concentrations of construction-generated PM would be considered to have a potentially-significant impact.

**Mitigation Measure AQ-1:** The following measures shall be implemented to reduce potential expose of nearby sensitive receptors to localized pollutant concentrations of DPM and fugitive dust associated with project construction:

1. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles:
    a. Shall not idle the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and,
    b. Shall not operate a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation.
2. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall comply with the 5-minute idling restriction identified in Section 2449(d)(2) of the California Air Resources Board's In-Use Off-Road Diesel regulation. The specific requirements and exceptions in the regulations can be reviewed at the following web sites: www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/truck-idling/2485.pdf and ww.arb.ca.gov/regact/2007/ordiesl07/frooal.pdf.
3. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall be fitted with diesel-particulate filters, per manufacturer's recommendations, or shall meet Tier 4 emissions standards.
4. Signs shall be posted at the project site construction entrance to remind drivers and operators of the state's 5-minute idling limit.
5. To the extent available, replace fossil-fueled equipment with alternatively-fueled (e.g., natural gas) or electrically-driven equivalents.
6. Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent feasible, to occur during non-peak hours.
7. The burning of vegetative material shall be prohibited.
8. The proposed project shall comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII for the control of fugitive dust emissions. Regulation VIII can be obtained on the SJVAPCD's website at website URL: https://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm. At a minimum, the following measures shall be implemented:
    a. All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, covered with a tarp or other suitable cover or vegetative ground cover.
    b. All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
    c. All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut & fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking.

d. With the demolition of buildings up to six stories in height, all exterior surfaces of the building shall be wetted during demolition.

e. When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.

f. All operations shall limit or expeditiously remove the accumulation of mud or dirt from adjacent public streets at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions.) (Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)

g. Following the addition of materials to, or the removal of materials from, the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized of fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.

h. On-road vehicle speeds on unpaved surfaces of the project site shall be limited to 15 mph.

i. Sandbags or other erosion control measures shall be installed sufficient to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.

j. Excavation and grading activities shall be suspended when winds exceed 20 mph (Regardless of wind speed, an owner/operator must comply with Regulation VIII's 20 percent opacity limitation).

9. The above measures for the control of construction-generated emissions shall be included on site grading and construction plans.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would include measures to ensure compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. Additional measures have also been included to reduce construction-generated emissions that could contribute to increases in localized pollutant concentrations at nearby sensitive receptors. Such measures include requirements that heavy-duty off-road equipment be fitted with diesel-particulate filters or meet Tier 4 emissions standards. With mitigation, the predicted cancer-risk prioritization score at the nearby existing childcare center and future planned residential land uses would be 5.54, or less. With mitigation, the predicted cancer-risk prioritization score would not exceed the SJVAPCD's prioritization score of 10. Predicted chronic and acute hazard indices at nearby existing and planned sensitive land uses would be less than one. As a result, exposure to construction-generated DPM at nearby sensitive land uses would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds (i.e., incremental increase in cancer risk of 20 in one million or a Hazard Index equal or greater than 1). For these reasons, this impact would be considered less than significant.

**d. Less Than Significant:**

Other emissions potentially associated with the proposed project would be predominantly associated with the generation of odors during project construction. The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depend on numerous factors, including: the nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and the sensitivity of the receptors. While offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they still can be very unpleasant, leading to considerable distress among the public and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and regulatory agencies.

Construction of the proposed project would involve the use of a variety of gasoline or diesel-powered equipment that would emit exhaust fumes. Exhaust fumes, particularly diesel-exhaust, may be considered objectionable by some people. In addition, pavement coatings and architectural coatings used during

project construction would also emit temporary odors. However, construction-generated emissions would occur intermittently throughout the workday and would dissipate rapidly within increasing distance from the source. As a result, short-term construction activities would not expose a substantial number of people to frequent odorous emissions. In addition, no major sources of odors have been identified in the project area. This impact would be considered less than significant.

## 4. Biological Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | | ✓ | | |
| b. Have a substantially adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U. S. Wildlife Service? | | ✓ | | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |
| d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | | | ✓ | |
| e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | | ✓ | | |
| 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? | | | | ✓ |

This section is based on the Biological Resources Assessment completed by Odell Planning & Research, Inc., which can be found in Appendix B-1.

**a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

The direct impact of the proposed project will be disturbance of approximately 5.7 acres, and possible direct mortality for any special status species in the path of construction equipment or disturbed by construction activities. Direct mortality could also occur to common fossorial or slow-moving mammals and reptiles within the Project Area. Table 3 and Figure 5 of Appendix B details the habitat types potentially impacted by the project.

Direct take is also possible for bird eggs and nestlings within the Project Area if vegetation removal or heavy disturbance occur during the nesting season, which in this region generally runs between February 1 through August 31. In addition to Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)-covered bird species, other special status bird species that could nest in the area include oak titmouse, Lawrence's goldfinch (Carduelis lawrencei), wrentit (Chamaea fasciata), yellow warbler (Setophaga petechia), loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus), fox sparrow (Passerella iliaca), and Nuttall's woodpecker (Picoides nuttallii) (Appendix A). Other potential special status species that my use the Project Area and vicinity, and therefore have potential to be impacted by the project are the pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus) and the western pond turtle (Actinemys marmorata).

Indirect impacts to species in the Project Area are those typical of habitat modification. They include temporary/permanent habitat fragmentation, decreased potential for dispersal and increased debris that through ingestion or physical contact can be harmful to wildlife. The increase in human presence, and presence and noise from construction equipment will likely deter some birds, bats and other wildlife species from foraging, resting, or nesting in the Project Area and vicinity during construction. Any new lighting (street/parking lights, etc.), if not directed downward, and shielded on the sides and top, can affect bird and bat migration. This can result in an effective reduction of suitable habitat for these individuals, at least those which did not already avoid the area due human presence and typical traffic. The project is not expected to result in direct take of any special status plant species (Appendix B) with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures. All these impacts are caused by the increase in human disturbance (fences, vehicles, people, and pets). However, impacts to special status species can be minimized to a less than significant impact with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures.

**Mitigation Measure BR-1:**

1. Due to the Project's location within, and proximity to, quality habitats for wildlife, the following typical avoidance and minimization measures for during construction are recommended for the Project. These measures will help ensure that impacts to all habitats, plant, and wildlife species are reduced to a less-than-significant level.

    a. All workers onsite will receive environmental training on the project's sensitive biological resources and species potentially present, the project avoidance and minimization measures, and any permit-specified (if applicable) project requirements.

    b. Before they are filled, all holes or trenches will be thoroughly inspected (to prevent wildlife mortality). All excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches should be covered with plywood or similar materials at the end of each workday to prevent trapping animals. Biologist-approved escape ramps should be established in a hole or trench, if covering it is not possible.

    c. Any pipes greater than 4 inches in diameter that are stored onsite must be sealed on both ends at all times.

    d. Project design, BMPs, and grading and stormwater permits required for project construction are all ways to avoid and minimize sediment influx into the creek and pond.

e. Construct biologist-approved wildlife barriers to keep wildlife out of the construction site and minimize construction-related wildlife mortality. Where practicable, directional fencing should be actively maintained and/or modified during construction to allow any onsite turtles or other wildlife to exit the Project Footprint, and to prevent wildlife from entering the Project Footprint during construction. This directional fencing will be no less than 36 inches high, buried 6 inches deep and backfilled, and made of silt fence or similar material. This fencing shall be installed and maintained under the direction of a qualified biologist. Please note that this fence may be located so that it doubles as the Project's silt fencing, which will likely be required by any grading permits.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** These measures will help ensure that impacts to all habitats, plant, and wildlife species are reduced to a less-than-significant level Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect nesting birds to a less than significant level.

**Special Status Species**

Database queries indicated 27 animals and 25 plant species with special status occur or have historically occurred within the 9-quad search area (Appendices A and B). Many of the species from the generated list either were historic, extirpated occurrences, or were species with very specialized habitat requirements that were not present on the site or within the vicinity. Therefore, the majority of the species were "ruled out". Based on the habitat types present within the study area, 9 special status wildlife species and 15 special status plant species have the potential to occur on the site.

**Special Status Mammals**

The pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) inhabits deserts, grasslands, scrublands, woodlands and open forests. They are most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Bridges, buildings, and exfoliating tree bark or hollows are frequently used by this species for roost sites (H.T. Harvey 2004). Pallid bats will roost alone or in both large and small groups. Breeding occurs from October to February. Pups are born from late April to July and are volant at 4 to 6 weeks of age. Breeding colonies disperse between August and October. Therefore, exfoliating bark and hollows of the trees within and in the vicinity of the Project Area are suitable roosting habitat. The adjacent buildings south of the project footprint, may provide roosting habitat. Open water of the large pond provides a water source and foraging opportunities for bats.

*Impact*

No evidence of bats (bats, sign, etc.) was detected during the project site survey; however, there were large oak trees and a few snags trees (dead standing trees or trees with large cavities) throughout the Project Area, many of which could provide potential roosting habitat. The pallid bat and other common bats may roost and breed in or under the bark of trees, in tree or rock crevices, and in man-made structures (buildings, bridge, etc.) within the Project Area and the adjacent land. If nursery or hibernation sites are present within the Project Area, disturbance caused by project construction may be significant. Direct mortality to bats could occur if an occupied roost site is demolished. Vibration, noise, and light caused by construction equipment and personnel could result in roost abandonment, mortality of juvenile bats, or both. Bats are susceptible to both day and night roost disturbances. These types of threats reduce metabolic economy and can impact species survival (Orr 1954, Zeiner et al. 1990*b*), and should be minimized if any bats roost in the Project Area. However, the incorporation of the following measures could minimize the impacts to less than significant.

**Mitigation Measure BR-2:**

1. Pre-construction Surveys: Prior to the onset of construction activity, a CDFW-approved biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for active roosting, breeding, or hibernacula sites (roosts) in

large trees within the Project Area. Construction will not take place as long as a roost site is occupied. Therefore, depending on when construction begins, bat surveys should be timed to be prior to the change in season (maternity vs. hibernation) so that special status bats can be correctly excluded without take (see seasons below). If no active bat roosts, breeding, or hibernacula sites are detected, no further action is required.

2. Avoidance & Minimization:

    a. If any active bat sites are discovered or if evidence of recent occupation is established, the following measures will be implemented in order to minimize impacts on special status bats:

        i. Construction will be scheduled to minimize impacts upon pallid bats. Type and status of active roosts shall be determined, and bat eviction shall be undertaken in a manner that does not exclude bats during times of inclement weather, or exclude females from young still in a roost.

        ii. Hibernation sites with evidence of prior occupation will be sealed before the hibernation season (November–March), and nursery sites will be sealed before the nursery season (April–August).

        iii. If the site is occupied by the bats, then construction will occur outside the hibernation season (for hibernacula), and after August 15 (for nursery colonies). Construction/building demolition will not take place as long as the roost site is occupied.

        iv. If exclusion devices are used, they will be employed based on current best practices and will be regularly monitored by a qualified biologist.

    b. All new lighting shall be down-cast to reduce disturbance impacts to bat species.

**Special Status Birds**

Seven special status avian species (oak titmouse, Lawrence's goldfinch, wrentit, yellow warbler, loggerhead shrike, fox sparrow, and Nuttall's woodpecker) have the potential to nest and/or forage within the study area. Greater detail regarding life history requirements of these birds is provided in Appendix A. Nuttall's woodpecker, oak titmouse, Lawrence's goldfinch, and yellow warbler could nest in the large trees within and adjacent to the study area and forage throughout the study area. Loggerhead shrike could nest in shrubs or trees within and adjacent to the study area and forage in the open areas. Wrentit and fox sparrow prefer shrubs for their nests and typically forage near shrub patches.

*Impact*

Noise and human disturbance during project activities could directly impact nesting bird species. Since CDFW/USFWS usually requires a various sized "no disturbance" buffers around nesting sites for these species, construction-related disturbance could be considered take of protected avian species under CESA and MBTA. In addition, other migratory birds will likely be nesting in the study area and vicinity, most of which are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (USCA 1918). Construction-related disturbance within the Project Area could result in nest abandonment or direct mortality of eggs, chicks, and/or fledglings. This type of impact to migratory birds, including special status bird species, would be considered take under the MBTA and CESA, and therefore, is a potentially significant impact. In order to avoid impacts to avian species, nests and nesting habitat should not be disturbed or destroyed. The following measures will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation Measure BR-3:**

1. Avoidance. If feasible, any vegetation removal or ground disturbance will take place between September 1 and February 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds in compliance with the Migratory

Bird Treaty Act. If vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, project construction is at risk of being delayed due to actively nesting birds and their required protective buffers.

2. Pre-construction Surveys.

    a. If vegetation removal or ground disturbance will commence between February 1 and August 31, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within 14 days prior to the initiation of disturbance activities. This survey will cover:

        i. Potential nest sites in trees, bushes, or grass within species-specific buffers of the Project Area (raptor species such as red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, etc. – 500 ft, non-raptor species (loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, etc.) – 250 ft).

    b. If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction survey, then no further action is required. If an active nest is detected, then the following minimization measures will be implemented.

3. Minimization/Establish Buffers.

    a. Special status bird species and MBTA-protected species: If any active nests are discovered (and if construction will occur during bird breeding season), the USFWS and/or CDFW will be contacted to determine protective measures required to avoid take. These measures could include fencing off an area where a nest occurs, or shifting construction work temporally or spatially away from the nesting birds. Biologists are required on site to monitor construction while protected migratory birds are nesting in the Project Area to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. If an active nest is found after the completion of the pre-construction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities will stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected the appropriate buffer around the nest.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect nesting birds to a less than significant level.

**Special Status Reptiles**

The western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), a California Species of Special Concern, has the potential to breed, forage and/or move within the Project Area. This species has a high likelihood of inhabiting the large pond to the east of the project footprint and is locally abundant in in the region, usually in stock ponds and other man-made ponds nearby. It is a diurnal, aquatic turtle that inhabits ponds, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams, and irrigation ditches that typically have rocky or muddy bottom and aquatic vegetation. In streams and rivers, this turtle prefers pools and shallower areas. Basking areas such as logs, rocks, or exposed banks are an important habitat element. This species nests in uplands associated with wetland habitat. Upland habitat is used by this species for dispersal, basking, nest building, aestivation, and other purposes (Holland 1994). When associated with ephemeral water sources, this species general stays within 187 meters of the drying aquatic habitat (Zaragoza et al. 2015). However, when water is perennial, there is not such a need to seek out refuge at such great distances. They will often nest along the margins of the stream or pond. The nesting season is typically from April – August. This species will hibernate underwater, in the muddy bottom of a pool, but they can still be active during warm periods in the winter months (November – February) (Nafis 2019).

*Impact*

Due to the small size of the direct impact area, temporary loss of the any upland habitat within the Project Footprint (Figure 5 of Appendix B) would not substantially reduce regionally available habitat for the species.

However, direct mortality of individuals may occur during construction through the digging, grading, and movement of fill on the site. Indirect impacts from the Project may include increased exposure to humans (construction crews, students and staff), possibly rendering the area in and around the Project as unsuitable for occasional upland habitat/dispersal.

The following measures will reduce potential impacts to turtles to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure BR-4:**

1. Avoidance. Any western pond turtle discovered at the site immediately prior to or during Project activities shall be allowed to move out of the area on their own volition. If this is not feasible, they shall be captured by a qualified biologist who holds a CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit for the species, and relocated out of harm's way to the nearest suitable habitat from the Project Area.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measure would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect western pond turtles to a less than significant level.

**Special Status Plants**

Of the 25 potentially occurring special status plant species, none were found within the Project Area during reconnaissance-level surveys. Although the surveys were not conducted at the peak blooming period for some potentially occurring special status plants, several plants could be ruled out because their elevation range, required habitat, and/or soil type differed from the site conditions. However, 15 special status plants were determined to have the potential to occur on site (Table 4 of Appendix B). Since the site survey was not conducted at the typical blooming period for these species, it could not be determined at the time of the reconnaissance-level surveys if they are present.

*Impact*

If any special status plant species populations are present, the project construction may result in direct mortality of individual plants, loss of portions of the population, and reduction of the seed bank. In addition, ground disturbance can facilitate non-native plant species invasions, giving them a competitive advantage over native species on the site. In order to avoid impacts to special status plant species, plants should not be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, special status plant species have the potential to be significantly impacted by the project, without the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures. The following measures will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Subsequent to the reconnaissance level surveys performed in June and December of 2018, focused surveys during the blooming period for the 15 potential species was performed in May 2020. No evidence of the species presence was found (LOA 2020, Appendix B-2 to this Initial Study). Therefore, the potential impact of the project on special status plant species is less than significant.

**b. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

**Other Sensitive Natural Communities: Riparian Habitat and Cismontane Woodland**

There are no riparian habitats within the Project Footprint. Within the Project Area there are approximately 0.07 acres of Valley Foothill Riparian Habitat, specifically the area associated with an unnamed stream which enters at the north end of the Open Water (0.005 ac) habitat also within the Project Area. However, due to the current configuration of the Project Footprint, and with the incorporation of the avoidance measures below, impacts are expected to be less than significant. However, if the project configuration were to change or if any work, impact of actions was to take place across the existing paved road, Mitigation Measure BR-6 1.b.i and 1.b.ii., detailed below would apply to the Project.

The Project Footprint will impact 3.5 acres of Cismontane Woodland (oak woodland) (Table 3; Figure 5 of Appendix B). Oak woodlands are extremely important habitat for over 300 species of wildlife in California.

Oak trees are slow-growing and often have a difficult time surviving in developed areas or yards due to their unique water requirements and sensitive root systems. Therefore, impacts from construction are expected to be compaction of root systems of adjacent trees, altered hydrology for the existing oaks, and removal of oak trees themselves. Therefore, the project would be considered an impact on a sensitive natural community, as oak woodlands are identified by Madera County in several instances as habitats in need of preservation. In fact, according to Madera County Policy 5.F.6., new development must preserve natural woodlands to the maximum extent possible and shall ensure that landmark trees are preserved and protected (Policy 5.F.4). At the time of this report, exact project plans were not available. Therefore, it is unknown which oak trees, if any, will need to be removed for the construction of the project and which trees' root systems may be impacted by construction. A "Legacy" oak tree is any tree at or above 24 inches diameter at breast height (dbh), whereas other oaks are considered to be a "tree" (as opposed to a sapling, etc.) when it has reached 4 inches dbh. These different sized trees, if required to be impacted by the project, will require different mitigation ratios. Therefore, the avoidance and minimization measures below were incorporated to ensure that the project does not significantly impact oak woodland.

**Mitigation Measure BR-5:**

1. Valley Foothill Riparian Habitat
    a. To ensure impacts to Valley Foothill Riparian habitat is minimized,
        i. The District's grading plans shall ensure that the buffer around riparian habitats is widened to encompass the entire riparian corridor and provides a 50-foot buffer from the canopy edge as per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.4.
        ii. During construction activities within 100 feet of riparian habitats, such as the construction of road crossings, valley foothill riparian habitat that is not proposed for removal shall be protectively fenced in the areas where construction activity will directly impact the habitat. This fence shall be maintained until all construction activities are completed.
    b. If the Project configuration were to change and encompass any area to the east of the existing paved road:
        i. Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a Wetland Delineation would be required and a Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFW, pursuant to Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, for any stream impacts and any other activities affecting the bed, bank, or associated riparian vegetation of the stream or existing pond.
        ii. Any riparian vegetation removed as part of construction activities shall be replaced at a 3:1 (3 new acres per one lost acre) mitigation ratio, per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.6.
2. Cismontane Woodland (oak woodland) Habitat
    a. To ensure impacts to Cismontane Woodland habitat, specifically oak trees, is minimized,
        i. Prior to the onset of construction activities, the District shall contract with an Arborist to complete a tree survey in the Project Footprint focused on landmark/legacy trees, but documenting any oak trees (Tree is >4 inch dbh; Landmark/Legacy tree is >/= 24 inches dbh). Upon completion of the survey, the Arborist will submit a tree survey map of trees that may be disturbed during development.
        ii. Disturbance to all native oak trees and their canopy drip lines (branches and soils beneath) shall be avoided to the largest extent feasible during construction. This includes installing a fence 20 ft from the dripline of any trees to be retained within the Project Footprint to avoid any unplanned, accidental, or construction related impacts.

iii. If oak trees are found during the tree survey that must be removed during construction activities, then an oak tree mitigation and monitoring plan shall be prepared by an Arborist or Biologist. Typical mitigation ratios recently accepted by CDFW, for example are:

- oak trees between 4 inches and 24 inches dbh - 3:1 replacement ratio;
- landmark/legacy oak trees (>24 inches dbh) - 10:1 replacement ratio.

3. If avoidance and minimization of special habitats is not feasible, a qualified biologist will develop appropriate mitigations that will reduce project impacts to sensitive biological resources to a less than significant level. The type and amount of mitigation will depend on the resources impacted, the extent of the impacts, and the quality of habitats to be impacted. Mitigations may include but are not limited to: 1) Compensation for lost habitat in the form of preservation or creation of in-kind habitat protected by conservation easement; 2) Purchase of appropriate credits from an approved mitigation bank or land trust servicing the Madera County Area; 3) Payment of in-lieu fees.

**Mitigation Measure BR-6:**

1. In addition to the measures listed for avoidance and minimization of Sensitive Natural Communities (above), the project shall, where feasible, follow the Voluntary Oak Woodland Management Guidelines (Coarsegold Resource Conservation District 1995), specifically those designed for "Building within Oak Woodland." These include, but are not limited to:

   a. Cluster improvements to preserve wildlife corridors.

   b. Protect existing oaks during construction, replace trees with seedlings if removal is unavoidable.

   c. Avoid root compaction by limiting heavy equipment in the root zone.

   d. Minimize root cutting during road construction, building foundations or septic systems.

   e. Avoid grade changes in dripline zones of trees.

   f. Avoid landscaping which requires or allows irrigation within the dripline of a crown of a tree.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect Riparian Habitat and Cismontane (Oak) Woodland to a less than significant level.

**c. Less Than Significant:**

There are no federally protected wetlands within the Project Footprint. Although there is an existing man-made pond and an unnamed stream adjacent to the project, implementation of typical ground disturbance and erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) and compliance with grading permits will ensure that there is no impact to these wetlands. If proposed plans were to change, then impacts would need to be reassessed. No wetland delineation was conducted due to the proposed plans encompassing only the west side of the existing paved road, thus avoiding any wetland impacts. BMPs will include actions such as:

- Installing silt fence downslope of all ground disturbance for the life of the construction period.
- No work shall occur during heavy rain events.
- Protect spoils piles and slopes with straw waddles and erosion control devices during rain events.
- Revegetation of slopes and installation of erosion control devices after earth work is complete.
- Vehicle staging shall occur within the Project Footprint and existing disturbed roads.
- Chemicals, lubricants, and petroleum products must be closely monitored, and precautions would be used. If any spills occur, cleanup would take place immediately.

**d. Less Than Significant:**

The Project Footprint does not appear to constitute a "movement corridor" for native wildlife (USFWS 1998) that would attract wildlife to move through the site any more than the surrounding developed and agricultural (grazing) lands. The Project Area is bordered by residential, government, and commercial development, and in the vicinity of SR-49, which restricts access for wildlife. The majority of the Project Area consists of open cismontane woodland and disturbed habitats, which are not particularly attractive as a migration corridor over other similar lands in the vicinity. However, the valley foothill riparian habitat associated with the stream and open water features adjacent to the Project Area likely functions as a common wildlife movement corridor. The pond will draw wildlife for a food and water source and the valley foothill riparian is attractive for cover and food sources. Yet, all valley foothill riparian habitat is at least 100 feet from the Project Footprint, which is the double the distance of the 50-foot setback required by Madera County (Policy 5.D.4 Riparian Protection Zone). Wildlife expected to use these habitats in the Project Area for movement within their home range includes bobcat, coyote, raccoon, and various small mammals. Given the setback from the riparian area and the avoidance and minimization measures required to protect sensitive habitats and waterways already listed, the project will have a less than significant effect on regional wildlife movements.

**e. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

With the incorporation of the measures previously listed, particularly those listed in the Riparian and Other Sensitive Natural Communities section and the Federally Protected Wetlands section, the project appears to be consistent with relevant biological resources policies of the County of Madera (in particular see Regulatory Authority section), and would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (Madera County 1995). These local ordinances and policies encourage tree management and conservation of other natural vegetation. The District will also enforce grading regulations and Best Management Practices to control and minimize impact of vegetation removal, terrain alterations, and resultant erosion/sedimentation.

**f. No Impact:**

There are no Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) or Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) that cover the Project Area location within Madera County, so the project would not conflict any provisions of any local, regional or state habitat conservation plan (MO, USFWS 1998, 2005). All existing HCPs in Madera County are project-specific HCPs and not overarching for the County (USFWS 2018b).

## 5. Cultural Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5? | | ✓ | | |
| b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5? | | ✓ | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | | ✓ | | |

This section is based on the Cultural Resources Assessment completed by Sierra Valley Cultural Planning, which can be found in Appendix C.

**a.-c. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

On March 8, 2018, Sierra Valley Cultural Resources archaeologist Douglas S. McIntosh, under the direction of Project Manager C. Kristina Roper, conducted a systematic archaeological pedestrian survey of the 30-acre parcel. This survey was conducted to assess the potential effects on cultural resources of the proposed new Madera Community College at Oakhurst project. The survey sought to identify any archaeological sites, features, and artifacts which might be present on the ground surface. Items such as chipped stone tools, grinding implements, hearths, and midden deposits are indicators of prehistoric activities. All exposed bedrock outcrops were inspected for any grinding features or rock art. In addition, the survey also sought to identify any historic structures, features, and artifacts over fifty years old. This pedestrian survey entailed walking systematic north to south transects across the entire project area. These transects were spaced approximately 15 meters apart. A Panasonic DMC-TS20 digital camera was used to photo-document the project setting and any cultural resources. All photo information was recorded in the field on a photo-log. A handheld Magellan GPS unit was used to record UTM points.

The subject parcel is located in the community of Oakhurst, north of State Route 49, along Westlake Drive, and just west of the Madera County Sheriff's sub-station. To the north and west of the site are undeveloped acreage, which are covered by oaks and chaparral. To the east of the parcel is a manmade reservoir/pond. Along the southern boundary is a church and day school, mechanically graded parcels, and sheriff's sub-station. Westlake Drive which trends north/south, bisects the eastern edge of the 30-acre parcel. The northern and western edges of the parcel are bounded by a barbed wire fence line. The southern and eastern boundaries have recently been staked by a survey crew. At the center of the parcel is a newly installed land survey control hub/point.

A majority of the project site is situated on a rolling hillside landform. Oaks and moderate to dense chaparral are present across much of the property. At the southwest, central and southeast portions of the parcel there are visible signs of large-scale mechanical earthmoving activities. At these locations, there are leveled pads, cut slopes and stockpiled soils. Along the eastern edge of Westlake Drive there appears to be an east-facing engineered slope, which includes a drainage culvert and erosion control wattles.

Ground surface visibility across a majority of the 30-acre parcel was poor, less than 10 percent. Both native and non-native spring grasses and vegetation 8 inches to 3 ½ feet tall greatly limited a full inspection of the ground surface area. Within the mechanically impacted portions of the site, all of the topsoil had been removed. Project soils are a fine- to coarse-grained sandy loam with granitic gravels. Inspected soils have a Munsell color range of 10yr 4/3 to 10yr 4/4, brown to dark yellowish brown (wet). Soils within the study area are strongly developed alfisols classified as Ahwahnee and Auberry coarse sandy loams. These soils formed during the pre-Quaternary period on mountain slopes. There is a low sensitivity for buried cultural deposits within these soil components (Meyer et al. 2010).

No significant or important archaeological or other cultural resources were identified as a result of this study. Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposed action will have an effect on important archaeological, historical, or other cultural resources. No further cultural resources investigation is therefore recommended. In the unlikely event that subsurface resources are discovered during construction, the following mitigation measures shall apply:

**Mitigation Measure CR-1:** If cultural resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified cultural resources specialist shall be consulted to determine the significance of the resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. If potentially significant, the qualified cultural resources specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2

**Mitigation Measure CR-2:** If human remains are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the County Coroner notified in accordance with Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(e). If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the procedures and requirements set forth in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) and (e) and Public Resources Code §5097.98 shall be implemented.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect cultural resources to a less than significant level.

## 6. Energy Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | | | ✓ | |

**a.-b. Less Than Significant:**

The project would use energy for construction and operation. The State Center Community College District 2019-2030 Districtwide Facilities Master Plan outlines the District's Sustainability Policy and Sustainability and Energy efficiency goals. The District will integrate all feasible concepts into the project. The District has incorporated energy-saving features into the project such as high-efficiency LED exterior lighting, low flow toilets and water fixtures, water-efficient irrigation, low water use/indigenous plant material, and locally sourced concrete block. The building will have a dedicated area on the roof for a future solar photovoltaic system, and the parking lot will also be a future location for solar power. The thermal envelope will meet or exceed the requirements of Title 24 of the 2019 California Building Code.

The plans for all public school and college projects in California must be submitted to the Division of the State Architect (DSA) for plan review and must comply with DSA and California Energy Commission (CEC) requirements. These requirements ensure that schools and colleges, including the proposed project by SCCCD, would not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy.

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## 7. Geology and Soils

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | | | ✓ | |
| (ii) strong seismic ground shaking? | | | ✓ | |
| (iii) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | | | ✓ | |
| (iv) landslides? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |
| d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-a-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |
| f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | | ✓ | | |

**a., c., & d. Less Than Significant:**

The Geotechnical Engineering Investigation with Geologic Hazards Evaluation conducted for the project by Salem Engineering Group, Inc. (Appendix D) concluded the following:

Active Faulting and surface Fault Rupture

Based on mapping and historical seismicity, the seismicity of the Oakhurst Area has been generally considered low by the scientific community. The site is not within a currently established State of California Earthquake Fault Zone for surface fault rupture hazards nor within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault (Special Studies) Zone; therefore, a site-specific fault study investigation by an Engineering Geologist is not required. No active faults with the potential for surface fault rupture are known to pass directly beneath the site. Therefore, the potential for surface rupture due to faulting occurring beneath the site during the design life of the proposed development is considered low.

The nearest faults to the project site are associated with the Hartley Springs Fault system located approximately 42 miles from the site. There are no known active fault traces in the immediate project vicinity.

A map depicting the major active faults in the vicinity of the site is included on Figure 4 of Appendix D. Considering the distance to the nearest known active fault, the potential for surface fault rupture at the site due to a known active fault is considered low.

Landslides

The site vicinity is gradually sloping and based on our field investigation exhibits dense to very dense conditions from the surface to the maximum depth of exploration of 36.5 feet BSG where refusal due to bedrock was encountered. There are no known landslides at the site, nor is the site in the path of any known or potential landslides. We do not consider the potential for a landslide to be a hazard to this project.

Lateral Spreading

Lateral spreading is a phenomenon in which soils move laterally during seismic shaking and is often associated with liquefaction. The amount of movement depends on the soil strength, duration and intensity of seismic shaking, topography, and free face geometry. Due to the lack of groundwater near the surface and relatively flat nature of the site, we judge the likelihood of lateral spreading to be low.

Liquefaction and Seismic Settlement

Soil liquefaction is a state of soil particles suspension caused by a complete loss of strength when the effective stress drops to zero. Liquefaction normally occurs under saturated conditions in soils such as sand in which the strength is purely frictional. Primary factors that trigger liquefaction are: moderate to strong ground shaking (seismic source), relatively clean, loose granular soils (primarily poorly graded sands and silty sands), and saturated soil conditions (shallow groundwater). Due to the increasing overburden pressure with depth, liquefaction of granular soils is generally limited to the upper 50 feet of a soil profile. However, liquefaction has occurred in soils other than clean sand.

In general, the soils encountered in the test borings drilled consisted of silty sand, poorly-graded sand with silt, well-graded sand with silt, and poorly graded sand throughout the maximum depth explored of 36.5 feet BSG where refusal was encountered due to bedrock. Based on the relative density and appearance, the upper soils encountered appeared consistent with weathered granitic rock. It should be noted that areas of surficial soils with thicknesses less than 5 feet were noted over the weathered rock material.

The test boring locations were checked for the presence of groundwater during and after the drilling operations. Free Groundwater was not encountered within the depth of exploration, 36.5 feet below site grade (BSG). Based on review of the Department of Water Resources Water Data Library website (http://www.water.ca.gov/), no available groundwater data was noted within 15 miles of the project site

A seismic hazard, which could cause damage to the proposed development during seismic shaking, is the post-liquefaction settlement of the liquefied sands. According to the State of California, Seismic Hazard Zonation Program, the site is NOT located within the potential liquefaction zone. Furthermore, the site is mapped in an area of Tonalite (Early Cretaceous) [Kbl]. Based on the relatively shallow depth to weathered igneous bedrock (Tonalite) liquefaction and/or seismic settlement is not a concern for the subject site.

Hydrocollapse and Subsidence

Collapsible soils typically consist of loose, dry, low-density soils that, when wetted, will experience settlement/consolidation. Based on the results of testing performed on a relatively undisturbed near surface soil sample, when wetted under a load of 2 kips per square foot these soils exhibited less than 2 percent collapse. Thus, laboratory testing indicates there is a "slight" potential for hydrocollapse of native soils. Based on the results of the testing performed, provided the recommendations to support foundations on a uniform layer of engineered fill are followed, the potential for hydrocollapse is not a concern for the proposed construction.

Based on our review of an online map published by California Water Science Center (USGS 2013), the site is not located in an area of recorded subsidence.

Expansive Soils

One of the potential geotechnical hazards evaluated at this site is the expansion potential of the near surface soils. Expansive soils experience shrink and swell due to moisture content fluctuations throughout the dry and wet season. If not addressed, the potential for shrinkage and heave would have an impact on foundations and lightly loaded slabs. The potential for damage to slabs-on-grade and foundations supported on expansive soils can be reduced by placing non-expansive fill below the slabs-on-grade.

Based on the granular nature of the near surface soils encountered and our experience in the near site vicinity, the near surface soils are considered to have very low expansion potential (EI=10). Thus, the potential to damage due to heave of expansive soils is not a concern for the site.

**b. Less Than Significant:**

The potential for water-or wind-borne erosion and loss of topsoil would be low during the construction phase of the proposed project because the project will implement Best Management Practices and conform to Madera County requirements. Once construction is completed, the potential for erosion would be minimal because the ground would be covered by buildings, hard surfaces, and landscaping.

**e. No Impact:**

The project site will connect to Maintenance District 22A for sewer collection. The proposed project would not involve the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

**f. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

No paleontological resources or unique geological features are evident on the surface of the land. A Scientific Zone (SZ), as designated by the State Geologist, is an area containing unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals, or fossils that are outstanding scientific significance. The project site is not located within an SZ (Madera 1995(a)). Nevertheless, subsurface paleontological resources could be present, and the following mitigation measure addresses the potential discovery of subsurface resources.

> **Mitigation Measure GEO-1:** If paleontological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified paleontologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resources require further study. If the resources are determined to be potentially significant, the qualified paleontologist shall make recommendations to the District on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited

to, excavation and evaluation of the find, as well as providing the resources to an appropriate institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential to adversely affect paleontological resources to a less than significant level.

## 8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | | | ✓ | |

This section is based on the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis completed by Ambient Air Quality & Noise Consulting, which can be found in Appendix A.

**a. & b. Less Than Significant:**

**Short-term Construction GHG Emissions**

Short-term annual GHG emissions are summarized in Table 9 of Appendix A. Based on the modeling conducted, annual emissions of GHGs associated with construction of the proposed project would total approximately 325 $MTCO_2e$. There would also be a small amount of GHG emissions from waste generated during construction; however, this amount is speculative. Actual emissions would vary, depending on various factors including construction schedules, equipment required, and activities conducted. Assuming an average project life of 30 years, amortized construction-generated GHG emissions would total approximately 11 $MTCO_2e$/yr. Amortized construction-generated GHG emissions were included in the operational GHG emissions inventory for the evaluation of project-generated GHG emissions (refer to Table 10 of Appendix A).

**Long-term Operational GHG Emissions**

Estimated long-term increases in GHG emissions associated with the proposed project are summarized in Table 10 of Appendix A. As shown in Table 10 of Appendix A, operational GHG emissions associated with the proposed project would be predominantly associated with mobile sources. It is important to note that mobile-source emissions were conservatively calculated, based on the default fleet-distribution assumptions contained in the model, which includes medium and heavy-duty vehicles. Mobile sources associated with the proposed project would consist largely of to light-duty vehicles. As a result, actual mobile-source emissions would be less. Nonetheless, because the GHG efficiency for the proposed project would not exceed the efficiency threshold of 4.2 $MTCO_2e$/SP/yr in 2022, 2.5 $MTCO_2e$/SP/yr in 2030, and 1.6 $MTCO_2e$/SP/yr in 2040. As a result, implementation of the proposed project would not result in an increase in GHG emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment or conflict with the State's future GHG-reduction goals. This impact would be considered less than significant.

**Plan Conflicts**

As noted previously, the proposed project would not result in increased GHG emissions that would conflict with the State's GHG-reduction target goals. The proposed project would be designed to meet current building energy-efficiency standards, which includes measures to reduce overall energy use, water use, and waste generation. In comparison to existing operations, these improvements would help to further reduce the project's operational GHG emissions and would also help to reduce community-wide GHG emissions. It is also important to note that a large majority of the mobile-source emissions identified for the proposed project already occur associated with the estimated 1,030 students that attend the existing facility. The proposed project would provide increased capacity to serve an estimated future student population of approximately 1,582 students. Providing services to serve an increased future student population may help to reduce future trips to colleges located in other nearby communities, thereby resulting in potential decreases in regional VMT and associated emissions. For these reasons, the proposed project would not conflict with local, regional, or state GHG-reduction planning efforts. This impact would be considered less than significant.

## 9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |
| c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | | ✓ |
| 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 for people residing or working in the project area? | | | | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | | | | ✓ |
| g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires? | | | ✓ | |

**a.-c. Less Than Significant:**

Construction of the project would involve the transport and use of fuels, lubricants, greases, solvents, and architectural coatings including paints. Operation of the project would involve hazardous materials used for cleaning and maintenance of campus facilities and maintenance equipment; this includes (but is not limited to) cleansers, solvents, paints, pesticides, and fertilizers.

During both construction and operational activities, the project would be subject to federal, state, and local regulations governing the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and the release of hazardous materials into the environment. For instance, the project would be required to prepare a spill prevention and treatment plan for safe and effective clean-up and disposal of any spills or releases that may occur during construction at the project site. As required under state and federal law, notification and evacuation procedures for site workers and local residents would be included as part of the plan in the event of a hazardous materials release during on-site construction. SWRCB Construction General Permit (2009-0009 DWQ) additionally requires spill prevention and containment plans to avoid spills and releases of hazardous materials and wastes into the environment. Additionally, the use and storage of hazardous materials plus disposal of hazardous wastes are subject to numerous laws and regulations at all levels of government; these regulations function to provide safe accommodations and prevent accidental release to the environment. Operations at the existing campus are already subject to such requirements and would continue to be so during operation of the proposed project.

**d. No Impact:**

A review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor web site did not result in the identification of any hazardous materials sites within the vicinity of the project site.

**e. No Impact:**

The project site is not within an airport land use plan or within two nautical miles of a public airport.

**f. No Impact:**

The project does not have any design or operational characteristics that could impair implementation of or physically interfere with the Madera County Emergency Operations Plan or the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

**g. Less Than Significant:**

The project site is located on the periphery of the community in the wildland-urban interface. The project site is adjacent to Madera County Fire Station 12, which will ensure prompt response times. The District will meet Madera County fire flow requirements through the use of an on-site booster pump and a generator that would be used during a power outage.

## 10. Hydrology and Water Quality

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | | | ✓ | |
| c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would: | | | | |
| (i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; | | | ✓ | |
| (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site? | | | ✓ | |
| (iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional resources of polluted runoff; or | | | ✓ | |
| d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | | | | ✓ |
| e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | | | | ✓ |

**a.-c. Less Than Significant:**

The California American Water Company and Madera County Maintenance District 22A wastewater treatment system are the public utilities that would serve the proposed project. The project site is within the Oakhurst-Sierra Lakes portion of the California American Water Company system which consists of eight active wells. Most water used in the Oakhurst area comes from hardrock wells tapping fractures in the granitic rocks. While there is limited space in the hardrock for groundwater, water levels respond relatively quickly to recharge sources, especially in winter. According to the 2012 Oakhurst Municipal Services Review (QK 2012), California American Water Company has the capacity to serve new development within its service area.

California American Water Company completed major upgrades to its system in 2019, including 25,000 feet of new water lines, a state-of-the-art treatment plant that removes water contaminants; eight new wells, and six new water tanks holding over 1 million gallons of finished water (CA State Water Resources Control Board, 2019).There is an existing water main in Westlake Drive at the project site. The water supply system complies with applicable water quality standards.

The project site is located within the planned Liberty Village area for which future water use from the project site was anticipated in utility planning. The proposed project would use water on a temporary basis for construction purposes and operationally result in a minor increase in consumption for domestic and landscape irrigation purposes overall after considering the offset from the current site (see Section E. 19. b.).

The Madera County Maintenance District 22A sewer and wastewater treatment system serves the project area and much of the developed portion of Oakhurst. The system provides sewer service to 16,030 commercial and 5,178 residential improved equivalent dwelling units (EDU) and 4,140 standby EDUs. The collection system is made up of over seven miles of sewer mains and eight sewer pumping stations. The plant consists of headworks with a mechanical screen, a 0.55 mgd oxidation ditch, two 40-foot secondary clarifiers, chlorine disinfection facilities, 0.25mg of aerobic digesters, a belt filter press, septage receiving, and effluent pumps. There are 149 acre-feet of effluent storage, 84 acres of spray fields, and four runoff pumping stations. There is a radio telemetry, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system that monitors the lift stations levels in the plant, ponds, irrigation pumps, and runoff stations. The system has recently expanded its spray field. The wastewater discharge system complies with applicable waste discharge requirements.

No streams or rivers exist on or near the project site, although there is a pond downslope and east of the project site. The project site consists of rolling hills covered with natural vegetation. The portion of the site that will not be developed (approximately 81 percent) will be left in its natural state which will not result in an increase in runoff, erosion, or impede groundwater recharge. The developed portion of the site will be covered with buildings, hardscape, and landscaping (approximately 7 percent), which will not result in erosion, but will result in an increase in stormwater runoff . The District will comply with any applicable Best Management Practices and standards of Madera County for the prevention of pollution from construction-related or operational runoff including compliance with all applicable National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The District must comply with County requirements for the design, construction, and operation of stormwater improvements necessary to serve the project (see Section E, 19, a.)

**d. No Impact:**

The following analysis is based on the Geotechnical Engineering Investigation with Geologic Hazards Evaluation prepared for the project and included as Appendix D.

Based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06039C0483E dated September 26, 2008, the subject site area is labeled other flood areas Zone X, which designates an area determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain (Figure 6 of Appendix D).

The site is not located within a coastal area. Therefore, tsunamis (seismic sea waves) are not considered a significant hazard at the site. Seiches are large waves generated in enclosed bodies of water in response to ground shaking. No major water-retaining structures are located immediately up gradient from the project site. Flooding from a seismically-induced seiche is considered unlikely.

**e. No Impact:**

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA) requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that are responsible for developing Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The project site is not located within a Groundwater Sustainability Agency's jurisdiction. Research for this Initial Study did not identify any water quality control plans or sustainable groundwater management plans that the project could conflict with or obstruct.

## 11. Land Use and Planning

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Physically divide an established community? | | | | ✓ |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |

**a. No Impact:**

The project would not physically divide an established community because project site is located on the periphery of the community in a newly developing area.

**a. Less Than Significant Impact:**

The site's planned land use of High Density Residential (HDR) allows for public uses including schools; however, the site's zoning designation of Residential Urban Multifamily (RUM) does not allow for schools.[2] The surrounding land use and zoning designations are appropriate for a community college and the project is not in conflict with any plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

## 12. Mineral Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | | | | ✓ |
| b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site | | | | ✓ |

[2] Note: Government Code Section 53094 allows the District to render the County zoning ordinance inapplicable to the project.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan? | | | | |

**a.-b. No Impact:**

The project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site because no known resources exist (Madera 1995(a)) on or near the project site. The project site is not located in or near a State Geologist Mineral Resource Zone (DOC 2020).

## 13. Noise

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | | ✓ | | |
| b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | | | ✓ | |
| c. For a project located within a private airstrip or 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? | | | ✓ | |

This section is based on the Noise & Groundborne Vibration Impact Analysis completed by Ambient Air Quality & Noise Consulting, which can be found in Appendix E.

**a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

The Noise Impact Study (Appendix E) indicated that noise generated by the proposed project would occur during short-term construction and long-term operation. Noise-related impacts associated with short-term construction and long-term operations of the proposed project are discussed separately, as follows:

### *Short-term Construction Noise*

Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending upon the nature or phase of construction (e.g., demolition/land clearing, grading and excavation, erection). Noise generated by construction equipment, including earth movers, material handlers, and portable generators, can reach high levels. Although noise ranges were found to be similar for all construction phases, the initial site preparation phases, including demolition and grading/excavation activities, tend to involve the most equipment and result in the highest average-hourly noise levels.

Noise levels commonly associated with construction equipment are summarized in Table 5 of Appendix E. As noted in Table 5 of Appendix E, instantaneous noise levels (in dBA $L_{max}$) generated by individual pieces

of construction equipment typically range from approximately 80 dBA to 85 dBA $L_{max}$ at 50 feet (FTA 2006). Typical operating cycles may involve 2 minutes of full power, followed by 3 or 4 minutes at lower settings. Average-hourly noise levels for individual equipment generally range from approximately 73 to 82 dBA $L_{eq}$. Based on typical off-road equipment usage rates and assuming multiple pieces of equipment operating simultaneously within a localized area, such as soil excavation activities, average-hourly noise levels could reach levels of approximately 80 dBA $L_{eq}$ at roughly 100 feet.

The County has not adopted noise standards that apply to short-term construction activities. However, based on screening noise criteria commonly recommended by federal agencies, construction activities would generally be considered to have a potentially significant impact if average-hourly daytime noise levels would exceed 80 dBA $L_{eq}$ at noise-sensitive land uses, such as residential land uses (FTA 2006). Depending on the location and types of activities conducted (e.g., building demolition, soil excavation, grading), predicted noise levels at nearby existing or future planned residential land uses could potentially exceed 80 dBA $L_{eq}$. Furthermore, with regard to residential land uses, activities occurring during the more noise-sensitive evening and nighttime hours could result in increased levels of annoyance and potential sleep disruption. For these reasons, noise-generating construction activities would be considered to have a potentially significant short-term noise impact.

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would limit construction activities to the less noise-sensitive daytime hours, which would reduce potential increases in levels of annoyance and sleep disruption to occupants of nearby residential dwellings. Additional measures, such as use of equipment exhaust mufflers, would further reduce potential noise impacts to nearby land uses. With mitigation and given that construction-related activities would be short-term, this impact is considered less than significant.

> **Mitigation Measure N-1**: Construction activities (excluding activities that would result in a safety concern to the public or construction workers) shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and prohibited on Sundays and legal holidays.
> **Mitigation Measure N-2**: Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent feasible, to occur during non-peak hours and truck haul routes shall be selected to minimize impacts to the nearby childcare center.
> **Mitigation Measure N-3**: Construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with noise-reduction intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Equipment engine shrouds shall be closed during equipment operation.
> **Mitigation Measure N-4**: Stationary construction equipment (e.g., portable power generators) should be located at the furthest distance possible from the nearby childcare center.
> **Mitigation Measure N-5**: When not in use, all equipment shall be turned off and shall not be allowed to idle. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential impact related to construction noise to a less than significant level.

### *Long-term Operational Noise*

Potential long-term increases in noise associated with the proposed project would be primarily associated with the operation of building mechanical equipment, such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units, and vehicle use within onsite parking areas and along area roadways.

Building Maintenance & Mechanical Equipment

Proposed structures would be anticipated to include the use of building mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning units and exhaust fans. The specific building mechanical equipment to be installed and the locations of such equipment have not yet been identified. Building mechanical equipment (e.g., air

conditioning units, exhaust fans) would typically be located within the structures, enclosed, or placed on rooftop areas away from direct public exposure. Exterior air conditioning units and exhaust fans can generate noise levels up to approximately 65 dBA $L_{eq}$ at 10 feet. Depending on type and location of onsite equipment, predicted operational noise levels at the nearby childcare center would be approximately 27 27 dBA $L_{eq}$, or less. Predicted noise levels at the planned residential development would be approximately 28 dBA $L_{eq}$, or less. Predicted operational noise levels associated with building mechanical equipment would not exceed the County's exterior daytime and nighttime noise standards of 50 and 45 dBA $L_{eq}$, respectively. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Vehicle Parking Lot

The proposed project includes the construction of an approximate 187-space parking lot.[3] Based on a conservative assumption that all parking spaces would to be accessed over a one-hour period, predicted noise levels at the southern property line of the project site would be approximately 41 dBA $L_{eq}$. Predicted noise levels at the nearby childcare center and planned residential development would be less than 10 dBA. Predicted operational noise levels would be largely masked by ambient noise levels, which generally range from the upper 40s to mid-50s (in dBA $L_{eq}$) and are predominantly influenced by vehicle traffic noise on area roadways. Predicted noise levels associated with on-site parking lot activities would not exceed the County's exterior daytime and nighttime noise standards of 50 and 45 dBA $L_{eq}$, respectively As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Roadway Traffic

Predicted existing traffic noise levels, with and without implementation of proposed project, are summarized in Table 6 of Appendix E. In comparison to existing traffic noise levels, the proposed project would result in a predicted increase in traffic noise levels of 0.7 dBA CNEL along Westlake Drive, north of SR-49.

Predicted future cumulative traffic noise levels, with and without implementation of proposed project, are summarized in Table 7 of Appendix E. Under future cumulative conditions, the proposed project would result in predicted increases in traffic noise levels of 0.8 dBA CNEL, or less, along primarily affected roadways.

As noted earlier in this report, changes in ambient noise levels of approximately 3 dBA, or less, are typically not discernible to the human ear and would not be considered to result in a significant impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant increase (i.e., 3 dBA, or greater) in existing and projected future traffic noise levels along primarily affected roadways. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Land Use Compatibility

In accordance with Madera County General Plan policies, noise-sensitive land uses exposed to transportation noise sources are limited to 60 dB $L_{dn}$ in outdoor activity areas and 45 dB $L_{dn}$ in interior spaces. The proposed project does not include outdoor activity areas (e.g., recreational uses). Based on the noise modeling noted above, predicted future cumulative exterior traffic noise levels at the boundary of the project site would be approximately 59 dBA CNEL, or less. Based on this predicted noise level and assuming an average exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 25 dBA, which is typical for newer building construction, predicted onsite interior noise levels would be approximately 34 dBA CNEL, or less. Predicted interior noise

[3] At the time the noise study was prepared, the parking lot was planned for 187 spaces. The current proposal is 159 spaces. Since the current proposal is for a lesser number of spaces, the less than significant conclusion of the noise study for parking lot noise would be valid for the currently planned number of spaces.

levels would not exceed the County's noise standard of 45 dBA CNEL. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

**b. Less Than Significant:**

Long-term operational activities associated with the proposed project would not involve the use of any equipment or processes that would result in potentially significant levels of ground vibration. Increases in groundborne vibration levels attributable to the proposed project would be primarily associated with short-term construction-related activities. Construction activities associated with the proposed improvements would likely require the use of various off-road equipment, such as tractors, concrete mixers, and haul trucks. The use of major groundborne vibration-generating construction equipment, such as pile drivers, would not be required for this project.

Groundborne vibration levels associated with representative construction equipment are summarized in Table 8 of Appendix E. As depicted, ground vibration generated by construction equipment would be approximately 0.089 in/sec ppv, or less, at 25 feet. Predicted vibration levels at the nearest existing structures would not be anticipated to exceed commonly applied criteria for structural damage or human annoyance (i.e., 0.5 and 0.2 in/sec ppv, respectively). In addition, no fragile or historic structures have been identified in the project area. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

**c. Less Than Significant:**

The nearest airport in the project vicinity is the Mariposa-Yosemite Airport, approximately 24 miles northwest of the project site. The proposed project is not located within the projected 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn noise contours of this airport (Mariposa County 1995). No private airstrips were identified within two miles of the project site. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to aircraft noise levels nor would the proposed project affect airport operations. This impact is considered less than significant.

## 14. Population and Housing

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth either in an area, directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | | | ✓ | |

**a. Less Than Significant Impact:**

The project is located within a planned development area (Liberty Village), which currently includes a sheriff's substation, fire station, church, commercial development (True Value and Tractor Supply), and medical offices (Kaiser and Veterans Administration clinic). Additional commercial development is planned, as well as residential and light industrial uses. The project will not induce unplanned growth but may act as a catalyst for the planned development to occur sooner than may otherwise have happened.

**b. Less Than Significant Impact:**

The project site is vacant and will not displace any housing or people. It is noted that the project site is designated and zoned for multiple family residential development and construction of the college center would preclude such development (unless the college at some point wished to provide some student housing on site given that the college as currently planned would leave a substantial portion of the site undeveloped.) In any event, there are several other parcels in the immediate vicinity designated for multiple-family and single-family units, which have been vacant for many years and are available for residential development.

## 15. Public Services

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or need for new or physically altered government 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: | | | | |
| (i) Fire Protection? | | | | ✓ |
| (ii) Police Protection? | | | | ✓ |
| (iii) Schools? | | | | ✓ |
| (iv) Parks? | | | | ✓ |
| (v) Other public facilities? | | | | ✓ |

**a. No Impact:**

The existing community college center site is already served by adequate fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public facilities, and would require no new or physically altered government facilities. The relocation of the community college center to the proposed site will have no impact on government facilities. In fact, the proposed site is located closer to the Madera County Sheriff's Department Oakhurst Substation and Madera County Fire Station 12, located on Liberty Drive, adjacent to the project site, which will reduce response times. It is noted that the District has its own police force for servicing its facilities.

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## 16. Recreation

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | | | | ✓ |
| b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | | | | ✓ |

**a. & b. No Impact:**

The existing community college center site is already adequately served by parks and recreational facilities. The existing community college center uses the Oakhurst Park for physical education classes and because the project does not include physical education or athletic venues or spaces, the new center will continue to use the park with approximately the same impact after relocation to the new site. The relocation of the community college center to the proposed site will not increase the use of nearby parks and recreational facilities and will not require construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

## 17. Transportation

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? | | | ✓ | |
| c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | | | | ✓ |
| d. Result in inadequate emergency access? | | | | ✓ |

The discussion of transportation and traffic impacts in this section primarily reflects information in the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) prepared for the project by KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. (Appendix F).

**a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

As of July 1, 2020, in accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 743 (Steinberg 2013), agencies considering the transportation impacts of new projects must analyze vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of Level of Service (LOS), which measures the level of congestion at intersections and roadways[4]. Automobile delay, as described solely by LOS or similar measure of traffic congestion, is no longer considered a significant impact under CEQA. VMT measures how much actual auto travel (additional miles driven) a proposed project would create on area roadways. The intent of SB 743 is to align CEQA transportation study methodology to promote the state's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic-related air pollution, promoting the development of a multimodal transportation system, and providing clean, efficient access to destinations. Section 17, b, below discusses the project as it relates to VMT.

Since the CEQA analysis for this project was started in 2019, and it was initially thought that it would be completed or at least distributed for review before the July 1, 2020 deadline for VMT implementation, a Level of Service-based traffic impact study was prepared for the project by KD Anderson & Associates (Initial Study Appendix F). Although the congestion-based potential impacts and recommended intersection improvements of the traffic analysis are no longer required for CEQA purposes, the District wishes to work with the County and Caltrans to provide for transportation improvements that will be of mutual benefit to all parties.

**Existing Plus Project Impacts**

**Traffic Volumes.** Figure 5 of Appendix F presents the sum of current traffic and peak hour trips associated with operation of the new campus on the proposed site at full enrollment. Because the existing center on Civic Circle will no longer be in operation, its trips, which are included in the background traffic counts, have been subtracted.

**Intersection Levels of Service.** Table 6 of Appendix F identifies Levels of Service expected with operation of the SCCCD Oakhurst Center on its new site. As shown, most of the study intersections will continue to provide adequate Levels of Service that satisfy Madera County's minimums standards. However, the addition of project trips will exacerbate the LOS F conditions on the southbound approach to the SR-49 / Westlake Drive intersection in the p.m. peak hour. LOS F exceeds the minimum LOS D standard.

Measures to address this impact and deliver adequate Level of Service have been considered in the past during discussions regarding other development in the area, and other development projects have allocated funds towards intersection improvements as the overall Liberty Village area has proceeded.

**Impact T-1**. The project will exacerbate p.m. peak hour traffic conditions at the SR-49 / Westlake Drive intersection which already exceed the LOS D threshold and where peak hour traffic signal warrants are already satisfied. The following measures will mitigate the LOS impact and are not required under CEQA.

> **Mitigation Measure T-1A.** The project shall fund an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether a traffic signal roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location.
>
> **Mitigation Measure T-1B.** The project shall install the traffic signal or roundabout recommended by the ICE report. Because this improvement is already needed and will benefit the balance of Liberty Village, the project shall be responsible for its fair share of the cost of the improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Appendix F. (However, there are

[4] Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative index of the performance of an element of the transportation system. LOS is a rating scale running from "A" to "F", with "A" indicating no congestion of any kind and "F" indicating unacceptable congestion and delays. Historically, both Merced County and Caltrans have utilized LOS as part of their respective transportation planning.

a number of developed properties in the area that have previously agreed to contribute to traffic improvements either through CC&Rs or separate agreements. Any mechanism to fund future improvements should include the participation of these developed properties.)

**Cumulative Impacts**

**Traffic Volumes.** Figure 8 of Appendix F presents the sum of net project trips and background cumulative traffic at each study location.

**Peak Hour Intersection Levels of Service.** Table 9 of Appendix F identified peak hour Level of Service with the project again assuming no improvements are made to the study area circulation system. As indicated, three intersections will continue to operate with Levels of Service that exceed the minimum LOS D standard.

The southbound approach at the SR-49 / Westlake Drive intersection will operate at LOS F in the a.m. and p.m. peak hour.

The southbound approach at the SR-49 / Village Drive intersection will operate at LOS F in the a.m. and p.m. peak hour.

The southbound approach at the SR-49 / Meadow Vista Drive intersection will operate at LOS F in the a.m. peak hour, and both the northbound and southbound approaches will operate at LOS F in the p.m. peak hour.

**Peak Hour Traffic Signal Warrants.** Table 10 of Appendix F reviews the status of peak hour traffic signal warrants at study intersections under cumulative conditions. As shown, the same three intersections on SR-49 (i.e., Westlake Drive, Village Drive and Meadow Vista Drive) will carry volumes that satisfy peak hour volume warrants.

**Impact T-2**. The project will exacerbate cumulative p.m. peak hour traffic conditions at the SR-49 / Westlake Drive intersection which are expected to exceed the LOS D threshold and where peak hour traffic signal warrants are already satisfied.

**Mitigation Measures T-1A and T-1B** address this issue and no further mitigation is needed.

**Impact T-3**. The project will exacerbate cumulative a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic conditions at the SR-49 / Village Drive intersection, which are expected to exceed the LOS D threshold and where peak hour traffic signal warrants are expected to be satisfied. The following measures will mitigate this cumulative LOS impact and are not required under CEQA.

**Mitigation Measure T-3A.** The project shall contribute its fair share to the cost of an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether a traffic signal roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location.

**Mitigation Measure T-3B.** The project shall contribute its fair share of the cost of the identified improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Initial Study Appendix F.

**Impact T-4**. The project will exacerbate cumulative a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic conditions at the SR-49 / Meadow Vista Drive which are expected to exceed the LOS D threshold and where peak hour traffic signal warrants are expected to be satisfied. The following measures will mitigate this cumulative LOS impact and are not required under CEQA.

**Mitigation Measure T-4A.** The project shall contribute its fair share to the cost of an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report to be completed to the satisfaction of Caltrans District 6 to determine whether left turn prohibition, a traffic signal or roundabout is the preferred improvement at this location.

**Mitigation Measure T-4B** The project shall contribute its fair share of the cost of the identified improvement. An applicable fair share calculation under Caltrans guidelines is noted in Table 12 of Initial Study Appendix F.

**Alternative Transportation Modes**

**Public Transportation.** The community of Oakhurst has direct connectivity to Madera, Coarsegold, Bass Lake, and North Fork via the Madera County Connection with connections available to Madera Community College, Valley Children's Hospital, and Chowchilla. The system currently includes a stop at the existing Oakhurst center site, as well as north on SR-49 as far as Junction Drive. Once the new college site is developed, the bus route would likely be extended further on SR-49 to Westlake Drive to serve the new site.

**Pedestrians.** Dedicated facilities for pedestrians exist in the developed area of Oakhurst but are limited in the area of the project. Sidewalks exist adjoining SR 41 but not along SR 49 or along the local streets within the Liberty Village area.

**Bicycles.** There are no dedicated facilities for bicycles in the immediate area of the project. While paved shoulders of varying width are available along state highways, no roadways are marked as Class II bike lanes. However, the Madera County Transportation Commission's Active Transportation Plan (MTCT 2018) indicates that a Class II B bicycle facility (buffered bike lanes) is planned for SR-49 between SR-41 and Westlake Drive. The campus project will be providing bicycle parking facilities to accommodate students bicycling to the campus.

**b. Less Than Significant Impact:**

The existing and proposed college sites are only 1.2 miles apart with good access to state highways. Thus, the VMT for initial development, which will simply serve existing students, would not be substantially different at face value. However, the new larger site would include facilities for additional programs, which will allow more students in the Oakhurst area to take more courses in Oakhurst instead of having to travel to Madera Community College (44 miles) or Clovis Community College (40 miles). (Note: the existing campus is on a 2.7 acre site consisting of portable classrooms.) In addition, the existing campus would not be able to accommodate anticipated growth, and future students who would not have been able to be accommodated on the existing small campus would likely have needed to travel to other campuses to fulfill their educational needs. Based on the above, the new campus will provide for a substantial reduction in VMT compared to the existing campus.

**c. & d. No Impact:**

The project does not have any geometric design features or incompatible uses that would present transportation-related hazards. The project will have emergency access from Westlake Drive from two access points on the east side of the site. Road improvements and access points and will comply with Madera County development standards.

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## 18. Tribal Cultural Resources

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in the Public Resource 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 the Public Resources Code § 5020.1(k)? | | | | ✓ |
| (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 Resources Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe? | | ✓ | | |

### a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation

According to the Cultural Resources Assessment conducted for the project (see Section E, 5 and Appendix C), no significant or important archaeological or other cultural resources were identified. A Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) search was conducted and returned a negative result. (NAHC 2018). Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposed action will have an effect on important cultural resources.

A Request for Preliminary Comment was sent in September 2019 to the six Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as having a connection to the project area. No responses were received. The tribes will be notified again to allow for comment on this Initial study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Although no comments were received from the tribes initially contacted on the project, prior Initial Studies and Mitigated Negative Declarations prepared by the County of Madera for the subject property in 2008 and for the nearby Tractor Supply property in 2019, required a tribal monitor to be present for all ground-disturbing activities. Therefore, a mitigation measure has been added to this project requiring the District to allow for tribal monitoring should a tribe notified of this project request it.

**Mitigation Measure TC-1.** If requested by a Native American tribe notified of the project, a tribal monitor or observer shall be present at the project site during-ground disturbing construction and pre-construction activities. The tribal monitor or observer shall be identified and approved by the requesting tribe.

In the event that subsurface resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, the following mitigation measure shall apply:

**Mitigation Measure TC-2.** If tribal cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified professional with expertise in tribal cultural resources shall be consulted to recommend an appropriate course of action with the input of potentially affected tribes. If it is determined that the project may cause a substantial adverse change to a tribal cultural resource, mitigation measures to be considered should include those identified in Public Resources Code Section 21084.3.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation:** Compliance with the recommended mitigation measures would reduce the project's potential impacts related to tribal cultural resources to a less than significant level.

## 19. Utilities and Service Systems

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years? | | | ✓ | |
| c. Result in 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? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |
| e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | | | ✓ | |

**a. Less Than Significant:**

The project site is within a development that has already installed infrastructure for water, wastewater, electric, and telecommunications facilities. Water, electric conduit, and fiberoptic lines exist along Westlake Drive to the project site. Wastewater infrastructure will need to be extended approximately 900 feet to the project site, the impact of which has been evaluated as part of the project in this Initial Study.

The District will comply with Madera County storm drainage requirement and prepare and submit a grading and drainage plan identifying onsite detention and controlled release for any increase in storm water runoff generated by the proposed development. For the detention basin design, the County requires that the 100-year post development peak runoff rate must be reduced to a flow rate not greater than the 100-year predevelopment peak runoff rate using the Modified Rational Method or TR-55 method. The detention basin must be sized to maintain the predevelopment runoff rate.

**b.-e Less Than Significant:**

California American Water Company (CAWC) provides water service to the project area. The project site is within the Oakhurst-Sierra Lakes portion of the system which consists of eight active wells. Most water used in the Oakhurst area comes from hardrock wells tapping fractures in the granitic rocks. While there is limited space in the hardrock for groundwater, water levels respond relatively quickly to recharge sources, especially in winter. According to the 2012 Oakhurst Municipal Services Review (QK 2012), CAWC has the capacity to serve new development within its service area. CAWC completed major upgrades to its system in 2019, including 25,000 feet of new water lines, a state-of-the-art treatment plant that removes water contaminants; eight new wells, and six new water tanks holding over 1 million gallons of finished water (CA State Water Resources Control Board, 2019).

The Madera County Maintenance District 22A sewer and wastewater treatment system serves the project area and much of the developed portion of Oakhurst. The system provides sewer service to 16,030 commercial and 5,178 residential improved equivalent dwelling units (EDU) and 4,140 standby EDUs. The collection system is made up of over seven miles of sewer mains and eight sewer pumping stations. The plant consists of headworks with a mechanical screen, a 0.55 mgd oxidation ditch, two 40-foot secondary clarifiers, chlorine disinfection facilities, 0.25mg of aerobic digesters, a belt filter press, septage receiving, and effluent pumps. There are 149 acre-feet of effluent storage, 84 acres of spray fields, and four runoff pumping stations. There is a radio telemetry, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system that monitors the lift stations levels in the plant, ponds, irrigation pumps, and runoff stations. The system has recently expanded its spray field.

The project site is served by Emadco Disposal Service for recycling and solid waste hauling to the Fairmead Landfill. Emadco is privately owned and operates under a franchise agreement with Madera County. Fairmead Landfill is owned by Madera County and operated by Red Rock Environmental Group. The landfill has a permitted throughput of 1,100 tons per day, a total capacity of 9,400,000 cubic yards, a remaining capacity of 552,894 cubic yards. The estimated closure year is 2048.

The project site is located in the Liberty Village subdivision, which has been planned for connections with utilities and service systems serving the Oakhurst area. As such, demand for services at the project site was anticipated in planning for the area. Because the project entails relocating the existing Oakhurst campus from another site in the Oakhurst area, the majority of the water demand, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation at the new site is offset by the reduction at the existing site. The project is anticipated to incrementally increase enrollment over the next 20 years to eventually accommodate up to approximately 500 additional students, which would incrementally increase future demand for domestic water, wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal. The California American Water Company and Madera County Public

Works were provided with a Request for Preliminary Comment for this project and did not express any concerns related to services.

## 20. Wildfire

| If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | | | ✓ | |
| b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire? | | | ✓ | |
| 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 the temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? | | | ✓ | |
| 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? | | | ✓ | |

**a.-d. Less Than Significant:**

The project site is located in a State Responsibility Area and is classified as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Calfire 2007). The project site is located on the periphery of the community in the wildland-urban interface. The community of Oakhurst, excluding outlying rural residential land, is less than two square miles. Any location in town, including in the existing site, has similar risk from wildfire.

The Madera County Community Wildfire Protection Plan addresses emergency response and evacuation for Eastern Madera County. There are no characteristics of the project that would impair the plan.

No infrastructure associated with the project has the potential to exacerbate fire risk. Power lines to the project are underground.

Post-fire debris flows are most frequently produced from steep (>20°), tightly confined drainage basins with abundant stored material (USGS 2005). The predominant soil type in the project area is Ahwahnee and Auberry coarse sandy loams, 15 to 30 percent slopes (8°-17°) (USDA). Slopes within the project area are generally less than 20° and tightly confined drainage basins generally don't exist among the project areas' gently rolling hills. Additionally, the relatively shallow depth to bedrock (Salem 2020) would not result in deep seated landslides. Therefore, susceptibility to post-fire debris flows is generally low, with increased risk in isolated areas with steep slopes.

## 21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

| Does the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Have the potential to 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? | | ✓ | | |
| b. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means 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) | | | ✓ | |
| c. Have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | | ✓ | | |

**a. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

Based on the information in Sections E, 1 – E, 20, the potential for the proposed project to have any of the impacts described in this subsection 21, a, would be less than significant with the mitigation measures incorporated into the project (see Section E, 4, Biological Resources, and Section E, 5, Cultural Resources).

**b. Less Than Significant:**

Based on the information in Sections E, 1 – E, 20, the proposed project would not have impacts that would be individually limited but cumulatively considerable.

**c. Less Than Significant with Mitigation:**

Based on the information in Sections E, 1 – E, 20, the proposed project would have less than significant impacts that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly with the mitigation measures incorporated into the project (see Section E, 2, Air Quality and Section E, 13, Noise).

# F. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

## 1. Purpose

State Center Community College District has prepared this Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to comply with Section 15097 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose for the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is to ensure implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study.

## 2. Lead Agency

State Center Community College District will undertake the project and is the Lead Agency for the project. The District is responsible for the implementation of all mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study.

## 3. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Coordinator

The Vice Chancellor, Operations, or the Vice Chancellor's designee shall act as the Project Mitigation Reporting Coordinator ("Coordinator").

## 4. Monitoring and Reporting Procedures for Design-, Site Clearing-, and Construction Mitigation Measures

a. The Coordinator shall provide a copy of all project design-, site clearing-, and construction-related mitigation measures to the project engineer and contractor for incorporation in the project plans, construction specifications, permits, and contracts, as appropriate.

b. Prior to award of bid, the Coordinator shall determine that all project design-, site clearing-, and construction-related mitigation measures have been incorporated in the project plans, construction specifications, permits, and contracts, as appropriate.

c. During construction, the Coordinator, through the construction management team, shall inspect the project area regularly to ensure all work complies with the mitigation measures. If a discrepancy is not resolved within a reasonable time, the Coordinator may order work to cease until the discrepancy is resolved.

d. Prior to the District accepting the project improvements, the Coordinator shall certify that the project incorporates all project design and construction-related mitigation measures.

## 5. Monitoring and Reporting Procedures for Operational- and Maintenance-Related Mitigation Measures

There are no operations-related mitigation measures.

# G. Names of Persons Who Prepared or Participated in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist

## 1. Lead Agency

*State Center Community College District*
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