

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk
County of: Marin
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

From: (Public Agency): Novato Unified School District
1015 Seventh Street
Novato, CA 94945
(Address)

Project Title: Novato High School Science Classrooms Repurposing and Portables Removal Project

Project Applicant: Novato Unified School District

Project Location - Specific:
625 Arthur Street, Novato

Project Location - City: Novato Project Location - County: Marin

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project would consist of converting ten existing science classrooms to general purpose classrooms (interior work only) and removing 8 portable buildings at Novato High School. A parking lot also would be re-stripped.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Novato Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Mr. Michael Woolard, Facilities Director

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
[X] Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15301- Existing Facilities
[X] Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Section 15061(b)(3) - Common Sense

Reasons why project is exempt:

Project includes interior alterations on existing school buildings and removal of small structures (153012). Project would clearly have no potential for any significant impacts (Section 15061(3) exemption). See attached Discussion.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Michael Woolard, Facilities Director Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 415 493-4588

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? [X] Yes [ ] No

Signature: M. Woolard Date: 4/21/2021 Title: Facilities Director

[X] Signed by Lead Agency [ ] Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR:

NOVATO HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE CLASSROOMS REPURPOSING AND PORTABLES  
REMOVAL PROJECT  
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION DISCUSSION

## **Project Description**

### Existing Conditions

Novato High School, located at 625 Arthur Street in Novato is owned and operated by the Novato Unified School District. The ten existing science classrooms proposed for the repurposing project are all in the existing classroom buildings on the high school campus. The portables to be removed are on the eastern side of the campus. The school is in a mostly single-family residential neighborhood, with houses directly adjacent to the east, south, and west of the school grounds, and also directly across Washington Street from the school.

### Proposed Project

The classroom repurposing portion of the project would consist of interior renovations to the ten existing classrooms, totaling approximately 10,500 square feet. The interiors of each classroom would be gutted, including removal of science benches, sinks, flooring, piping, gas outlets, and window blinds. New flooring and blinds would be installed.

The project also would remove seven 24x40-foot and one 48x40-foot portable buildings. A parking lot where some of the portables have been located would be re-stripped after the buildings are removed.

The project would be constructed over an eight-week period, in the summer of 2021. No other construction is proposed as part of this project.

## **Categorical Exemption Analysis**

### Class 1 Exemption

The CEQA Class 1 Exemption (Class 1-Existing Facilities [CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301]) applies to operation, repair, and maintenance of existing facilities. The proposed project's interior renovations of the existing school classroom buildings. This exemption also applies to demolition of individual small structures. Therefore, this exemption would apply.

### Analysis of Possible Exceptions to Class 1 Exemption

The exemption is subject to the following exceptions:

- **Cumulative Impact.** This exception would apply if the project were to contribute to significant impacts to a resource in combination with other proposed new development nearby. Construction of the new STEM building and the new the Performing Arts Center is nearly complete and would not overlap this project. In

addition, the repurposing project work would be entirely interior, and the portables removal portion of the project would be small scale and of limited duration, therefore they would not contribute in a cumulatively considerable manner to any cumulative impacts.

The project area is a fully-developed school campus within an established residential neighborhood, and no substantial offsite cumulative development is likely to occur. Therefore, no potentially significant cumulative impacts would occur.

- **Scenic Highways.** This exception would apply if the project were to result in damage to scenic resources within a State-designated Scenic Highway corridor. The project would not be visible or substantially alter any views from off-campus areas. In addition, there are no State Scenic Highways in the project area. The project site is not visible from a designated scenic highway, and is not visible from any roadway, therefore this exception would not apply.
- **Hazardous Waste Sites.** There are no listed hazardous materials/hazardous waste sites listed on or in the vicinity of the project site ([https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?global\\_id=41490049](https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?global_id=41490049), accessed April 14, 2021).
- **Historical Resources.** This exception would apply if the project were to potentially significantly adversely affect an historical resource. The proposed project includes interior changes to the existing school classroom buildings and removal of standard portable classrooms, and therefore would not have the potential to adversely affect any historical resources.
- **Significant Effect.** The exception would apply if the project would have the potential for a significant effect to the environment due to unusual circumstances. Unusual circumstances may include historic structures, hazardous materials contamination, protected species or habitats, and other similar conditions. There are no unusual circumstances on the existing developed site and there is no potential for significant effect, therefore this exception would not apply.

### ***General Rule Exemption***

Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to environmental review. In such cases, the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)). CEQA Categorical Exemption exceptions do not apply to this exemption. As described above, the proposed project does not have any potential to result in a significant impact to the physical environment. Therefore, this exemption would apply.

### *Conclusions*

As discussed above, the project is within the parameters of the Class 1 Exemption and none of the exceptions to that exemption would apply. In addition, as described above, there is no potential for any significant impacts, so the CEQA General Rule Exemption also would apply to the proposed project.