

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: Tulare

221 South Mooney Boulevard, Courthouse Room 105

Visalia, CA 93291

Lead Agency & Applicant

From: (Public Agency): _____

Porterville Unified School District

600 W. Grand Ave., Porterville, CA 93257

559-793-2450 (Address)

FILED
TULARE COUNTY

MAY 03 2022

Project Title: West Putnam Elementary School Classroom Addition Project

ASSESSOR/CLERK RECORDER
BY:

Project Applicant: Porterville Unified School District

Project Location - Specific:

1345 W. Putnam Avenue, Porterville, CA 93257

Project Location - City: Porterville

Project Location - County: Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project would modify the West Putnam Elementary School campus by adding 19 permanent classrooms, removing 8 portable classrooms, and adding a small parking and drop-off area. Please see attachment for additional information.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Porterville Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Porterville Unified School District

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));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 32. In-Fill Development Projects
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

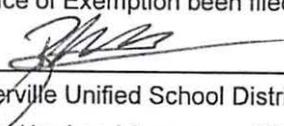
Please see attachment.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Omar Flores, Facilities Project Manager Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 782-7280

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? Yes No

Signature:  Date: 04/28/2022 Title: Assistant Superintendent Business

Porterville Unified School District

▪ 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: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption for the West Putnam Elementary School Classroom Addition Project

Project Description:

Porterville Unified School District is proposing to construct the West Putnam Elementary School Classroom Addition Project at the West Putnam Elementary School campus, located at 1345 W. Putnam Avenue (the south side of W. Putnam Avenue between N. Mankins Circle and N. Waukesha Street) in the City of Porterville. The project would add two buildings containing 19 permanent classrooms to the school, remove 8 portable classrooms, and construct a small parking and drop-off area with 24 parking spaces. The proposed classroom buildings include one two-story building measuring 13,438 square feet with 12 classrooms and one single-story building measuring 7,312 square feet with 7 classrooms. The proposed parking area would be located at the southeast portion of the campus, with access provided via a new driveway on Tomah Avenue. The new parking area would also include concrete sidewalk areas, and a new fire lane will be added inside the campus to connect the lot to an existing lot at the northwest corner of the campus. The capacity added by the project would accommodate up to 300 additional students. (A copy of the Project's overall site plan is included on page 4 of this attachment.)

The Project is planned to be developed in two phases: Phase 1, which includes construction of the two-story classroom building and the parking and drop-off area; and Phase 2, which includes removal of the portable classrooms and construction of the single-story classroom building. The District anticipates that construction of Phase 1 will commence in July 2022 and be completed in 12 months (July 2023). Phase 2 would begin upon completion of Phase 1 and is estimated to be under construction for about 8-10 months, resulting in an estimated completion date for Phase 2 in May 2024.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt:

The project can be found exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. This section exempts projects which are characterized as in-fill development by meeting the five criteria listed below:

- (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- (c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
- (d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
- (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Based on the following information, the project meets the criteria of the Class 32 exemption:

(a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The project site, an existing elementary school campus, has been designated and zoned by the City of Porterville for use as a public school. The project would construct additional public school

facilities at the site, thus it is consistent with the applicable land use and zoning designations and regulations.

(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

The project site's total footprint measures approximately 1.5 acres, which is below the five-acre size threshold for the Class 32 exemption. Additionally, the elementary school campus is surrounded by other urban uses in a largely built-out area within the City of Porterville. This includes residential uses to the north, east, and west of the campus, and a mixture of residential and commercial uses to the south of the campus.

(c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The project site is an existing elementary school campus in a long-established urbanized area, which does not have appreciable value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.

(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. As mentioned above, the project is located at an existing elementary school campus that is situated in a long-established urbanized area within the City of Porterville. The types of facilities to be constructed as part of the project (i.e., classroom buildings, asphalt-paved parking area, and concrete sidewalks) already exist at the project site, and the operational characteristics of the elementary school site would remain substantially the same following construction of the project.

Regarding traffic, the Tulare County VMT Guidelines include screening criteria used for identifying projects that are presumed to have a less than significant transportation impacts. Among these projects are local-serving public facilities, which includes public elementary schools. As such, the project meets the screening criteria set forth in the VMT Guidelines and its transportation-related impacts are considered less than significant. Additionally, development of the new parking area driveway access point will comply with all applicable roadway standards and specifications.

Regarding noise, based on the existing conditions in the project site vicinity and the characteristics of potential noise associated with the project (e.g., short-term noise from construction activities, and long-term noise associated with operational school activities and vehicles arriving at and departing from the new parking area), the project will not result in significant noise-related effects. The project would add classrooms and a small parking area to an existing school in a developed urban area and would have the same operational characteristics, playground space, and site boundaries as currently exist. The only aspect of the project that might result in an appreciable difference with respect to operational noise generation is the proposed small parking and drop-off area in the southeast portion of the campus. This campus improvement, however, is not considered a substantial increase to the operational noise environment as it is auxiliary to the existing main access, parking and drop-off area located on the north side of the campus. This area would only be used for drop-off of pre-kindergarten students and additional staff parking,

and use would be infrequent during the day with activity occurring mainly during the short periods when school starts in the morning and ends in the afternoon.

Construction noise is a temporary impact that is not expected to be significant since the project will include a Construction Noise Control Plan, which will include the following items:

- Locating construction equipment as far as feasible from noise sensitive uses
- Prohibiting gasoline or diesel engines from having unmuffled exhaust systems
- Prohibiting the idling of construction equipment for more than 5 minutes
- Using temporary noise control barriers adjacent to noise sensitive land uses

It is noted that noise sources associated with construction activities are exempt from the City of Porterville's Noise Ordinance provided such activities do not take place before six o'clock (6:00) A.M. or after nine o'clock (9:00) P.M. on any day except Saturday or Sunday, or before seven o'clock (7:00) A.M. or after five o'clock (5:00) P.M. on Saturday or Sunday. (Porterville City Code 18-90.6). Project construction would be subject to these restrictions.

Regarding air quality, based on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Small Project Analysis Levels (SPAL) screening criteria for educational projects¹, it is reasonable to conclude based on the project's size, number of additional students, and number of additional vehicle trips that the project would not exceed applicable thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants.

The project will include the development of an on-site storm drainage pipeline system that will drain to a series of four dry wells to be installed in the northern portion of the playground area. The drainage facilities for the new parking area will incorporate oil and sediment catch basin filtration to prevent contaminants from entering the dry wells. This will prevent any significant impacts to ground water quality due to stormwater drainage.

(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The elementary school campus is in a developed urban area and is currently served by utilities and public services provided by the City of Porterville. The project will be subject to applicable standards, specifications, and other requirements concerning additions and modifications to utilities systems. Upon development of the project, the elementary campus would continue to operate in substantially the same manner as it currently does, and it would not result in conditions that exceed the service capacities of any utilities or service providers. As such, there would be no issues concerning the provision of adequate utilities and/or public services at the campus.

Further, the project does not meet any of the exemption exceptions specified in Section 15300.2 in that there is no appreciable cumulative impact associated with the project; the project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; the project will not result in damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway; the project is not located on a hazardous waste site; and the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

¹ The SPAL thresholds for an elementary school project are 1,880 students, 156,000 square feet of size, 1,000 average daily one-way vehicle trips (except HHDT), and 15 average daily one-way for HHDT Trips only (50-mile trip length). (Source: <https://www.valleyair.org/transportation/CEQA%20Rules/GAMAQI-SPAL.PDF>)

