

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

08-RIV-010	139.18-154.15	08-1K140	0818000200
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: (Briefly describe project including need, purpose, location, limits, right-of-way requirements, and activities involved in this box. Use Continuation Sheet, if necessary.)

A total of 10 bridges on Route 10 in Blythe and Mesa Verde in Riverside County have been identified for bridge preventive maintenance due to accelerated wear and tear, numerous past millings/repairs, and aging and failing Asphalt Concrete (AC). The work will consist of polyester concrete or AC overlay on bridge decks and replacing or installing approach/departure slabs. All work will be done on the bridge decks. All work will be performed in State Right of Way, entirely on the pavement. All storage and/or staging areas will also be located entirely on the pavement. The project is anticipated to be constructed in 60 working days.

CALTRANS CEQA DETERMINATION (Check one)

- Not Applicable – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency** **Not Applicable – Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report under CEQA**

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the above statements, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
 Categorically Exempt. Class 1. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the following statements are true and exceptions do not apply:

- If this project falls within exempt class 3, 4, 5, 6 or 11, it does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law.
- There will not be a significant cumulative effect by this project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- There is not a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- This project does not damage a scenic resource within an officially designated state scenic highway.
- This project is not located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Govt. Code § 65962.5 ("Cortese List").
- This project does not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

- Common Sense Exemption.** [This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)]

Shawn Oriaz

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Shawn Oriaz
Signature

08/07/2019
Date

Mike Ristic

Print Name: Project Manager

Michael Ristic
Signature

8/7/2019
Date

NEPA COMPLIANCE

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117, and based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that this project:

- does not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment as defined by NEPA, and is excluded from the requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and
- has considered unusual circumstances pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(b).

CALTRANS NEPA DETERMINATION (Check one)

- 23 USC 326:** The State has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act. The State has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Code, Section 326 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 31, 2016, executed between the FHWA and the State. The State has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(26)**
 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()
 Activity ___ listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and the State

- 23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Shawn Oriaz

Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Shawn Oriaz
Signature

08/07/2019
Date

Mike Ristic

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

Michael Ristic
Signature

8/7/2019
Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 7/23/2019 Date of ECR or equivalent : 7/30/2019

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet. Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., CE checklist, additional studies and design conditions).

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Continuation Sheet**

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Work needed for each bridge:

Bridge	AC overlay/patch	Approach slabs & grading	Polyester concrete overlay
56-0015L Isora Ditch PM R139.18	x		
56-0014L Palowalla Ditch PM R142.62	x		
56-0014R Palowalla Ditch PM R142.65	x		
56-0593R Blythe OH PM R152.43	x	x	
56-0595R Broadway UC PM R152.65		x	x
56-0595L Broadway UC PM R152.65		x	x
56-0597L Seventh Ave UC PM R153.16		x	x
56-0597R Seventh Ave UC PM R153.16		x	x
56-0598L Route 10/95 Separation PM R154.15		x	x
56-0598R Route 10/95 Separation PM R154.15		x	x

Land Use

The project extends from the eastern edge of the City of Blythe west into the desert community of Mesa Verde. The Riverside County General Plan (2015 and proposed 2019 updates) and the City of Blythe General Plan 2025 (prepared March 2007) show that both areas are heavily characterized by rural residential. Downtown Blythe is zoned in the General Plan as commercial [max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) 1.0] and residential [max 22 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)]. All work will take place on bridge decks and the paved roadway, and no property acquisitions and/or temporary construction easements are anticipated. The proposed project is to rehabilitate existing deteriorated pavement at the identified bridges and is not anticipated to have any land use impacts.

Coastal Zone

Project is not located within a coastal zone.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no wild or scenic rivers within 1 mile of the project limits.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

Appleby Park, Miller Park, Todd Park, Sungold Park, and the Joe Wine Blythe Recreation Center are the nearest recreational facilities to the project and are located in the heart of Blythe. All the parks are over half a mile from each of the bridges, and all work will occur on the pavement with no need for easements. The project is not anticipated to impact parks and/or recreational facilities.

Farmlands/Timberlands

The proposed project lies in Blythe and Mesa Verde, which are rural communities, with farmland outside of the city limits. There are no timberlands within 1 mile of the project limits. All project work will take place on State Right of Way and will not have any farmland impacts.

Growth

The project involves rehabilitation of the existing pavement and will not add any capacity to Route 10. The project is not anticipated to induce or influence growth.

Community Impacts

The City of Blythe is located on a major corridor (Route 10) next to the California-Arizona border, and is the central retail hub in the Palo Verde Valley. To this end, the City of Blythe General Plan 2025 designates much of the area from the Blythe OH Bridge (56-0593R) to the Route 10/95 for residential/community uses and retail/tourism uses.

The project is proposed to be constructed entirely within existing State right of way. No relocations and/or real property acquisitions are necessary.

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Continuation Sheet

The 2010 Census shows that the City of Blythe is 59.5% white, 53.2% Hispanic or Latino, 15.0% Black or African American, 1.2 American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.5% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 3.2% multiracial, and 19.4% other races. The 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates conducted by the US Census Bureau indicate that 26.2% of individuals in the City of Blythe are below the poverty threshold. No minority or low-income populations would be adversely affected by the proposed project. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898. Within one mile of the project area, there are three public schools (Margaret White Elementary School, Twin Palms Continuation School, and Felix J. Appleby Elementary School) and one private school (Escuela De La Raza Unida). The project is also within one mile of several religious facilities, parks, and the Blythe Government Center. There are no anticipated impacts to the schools, religious facilities, the government center, or parks.

Utilities/Emergency Services

No utility relocations are anticipated for the project. One detour is proposed for the eastbound Route 10 on-ramp at Lovekin Boulevard. Within 1 mile of the project limits, there are 3 fire stations, 4 police stations, and 5 hospitals/ambulance stations. One lane on one bridge deck will be closed at a time in either direction, moving from one end of the project limits to the other. There will be a full closure of the on-ramp at Lovekin Boulevard. A public information campaign will be implemented to inform the local community of the work being done and to advise them to use alternate routes.

Emergency services within 1 mile of project limits

•Fire Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Riverside County Fire Station 43 •Riverside County Fire Station 45 •Blythe Fire Department
•Police Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Blythe Border Patrol Station •Blythe Police Department •California Highway Patrol •Riverside County Colorado River Sheriff's Station and County Jail
•Hospitals and Ambulance Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Palo Verde Hospital •Desert View Medical Center •Blythe Pediatrics •Blythe Ambulance Services •Desert Air Ambulance

Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Bicycles are permitted on certain stretches of I-10 within the project limits between PM139.18-145.10. Pedestrians are not permitted at any point within the project limits. The proposed project may interrupt bicycle access during construction.

The project is anticipated to be constructed in 60 working days. Work will be done with closures on one lane at a time, from one end of the project limits to the other. At least one lane will always be open to traffic on Route 10. Lane closures and detours will be indicated with a combination of traffic cones, portable temporary traffic control signs, construction area signs, portable vehicle speed feedback signs, and portable changeable message signs. A public information campaign will be implemented to inform the local community of the work being done. The full ramp closure at the eastbound on-ramp at Lovekin Boulevard will have a detour which will redirect traffic away from the eastbound on-ramp to the westbound on-ramp at Lovekin. Traffic would then enter I-10 west towards the diamond interchange at Neighbors Boulevard 3 miles away. Traffic would then be directed to use the interchange ramps to turn around and continue east on I-10. This will cause a 6-mile total detour for general traffic.

Visual/Aesthetics

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Questionnaire was completed August 1, 2019 which determined that no noticeable visual changes to the environment are proposed and no further analysis is required.

Cultural Resources

A Cultural Resources Compliance Memorandum was approved on June 14, 2019. The analysis for this undertaking was carried out in a manner consistent with Caltrans' regulatory responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800) and pursuant to the January 2014 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act* (Section 106). The project, as currently proposed, has no potential to affect historic properties eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. No Historic Properties Affected. The provisions of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, Executed January 1, 2014, Attachment 2 have been applied to this

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Continuation Sheet

project. This project falls under: Class 1 "Pavement reconstruction, resurfacing, shoulder backing, or placement of seal coats," Class 14 "Installation, removal or replacement of roadway markings, such as painted stripes, raised pavement markers, thermoplastic tape, or raised bas, or installation of sensors in existing pavements," Class 18 "Restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety," and Class 19 "Any work on Category 5 bridges, including rehabilitation or reconstruction." The project is exempt from further review, no additional archaeological or built environment studies are required at this time and the Section 106 compliance process, CEQA cultural resources component, and PRC 5024 compliance are complete.

CR-1: If buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.

CR-2: In the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Andrew Walters, DEBC: (909)383-2647 and Gary Jones, DNAC: (909)383-7505. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

Hydrology and Floodplain

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defined flood plains:

- FIRM 06065C3230G designated Zone D area of undetermined flood hazard (Bridges 1-3)
- FIRM 06065C3200G designated Zone D area of undetermined flood hazard (Bridges 4-10)
- The Colorado River is defined as a Zone AE (subject to inundation in the one-hundred-year flood with base flood elevations determined)

The project will not increase the area of impermeable surfaces. There are no 100-year floodplains within 1 mile of the project limits. The closest floodplain is the Colorado River which is approximately 2 miles away from the project limits. The project is not located within a 100-year base floodplain and will not result in a significant encroachment in the 100-year floodplain

Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

The project is located within the Palo Verde Hydrologic Area of the Colorado Hydrologic Unit, and the 738 Palo Verde Valley Basin, as designated by the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Isora Ditch Bridge (56-0015L) is above the Isora Ditch wash. All project work will take place on the roadway and no impermeable surface is being added. Therefore, the project will not disturb the drainage pattern of the project area or discharge waste into waterways. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater control and treatment will be followed during construction.

Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography

The area within 1 mile of the project is shown on USGS maps as containing mostly Quaternary surficial deposits, namely alluvium, Pleistocene marine and marine terrace deposits, dune sand, and pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rocks. The closest active faults are the San Andreas Fault, the Blue Cut Fault, and the Pinto Mountain fault, all roughly 30-50 miles away from the project area. All work will take place on bridge decks with no ground disturbance. There are no anticipated geology/soils/seismic/topography impacts.

Hazardous Waste

An Initial Site Assessment (ISA) Checklist was completed July 11, 2019 and determined non-hazardous levels of Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) are present in the project area. The project is considered "Minimal Risk" for hazardous waste. No hazardous waste impacts are anticipated.

Air Quality

A Transportation Air Quality Conformity Findings checklist was completed July 31, 2019 and determined that the project is exempt from all project-level conformity requirements under Table 1 of the Carbon Monoxide (CO) Protocol (Table 2 of 40 CFR 93.126) under the project type "Safety: pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation." An Air Quality Report is not required.

Noise

The project is a Type III project under 23 CFR 772.7 and does not require a noise impact analysis.

Biology

A Natural Environmental Study- No Effect Memo was approved July 23, 2019. The project is located outside of any

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jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. and Waters of the State. No jurisdictional waterway impacts are anticipated. Suitable habitat for bat species, migratory bird species, riparian species, and raptors was found in the project area. Probability of impacts to burrowing owls are considered very low. The project is not likely to adversely affect desert tortoise because although the project area contains creosote bush, which is considered an appropriate habitat primary constituent element, there is no critical habitat within the project area. The project will implement appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures and adhere to Caltrans Standard Best Management Practices and 2018 Standard Specification.

BIO-1: Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP): A Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) will be developed and presented by a Caltrans Stewardship Biologist to all on-site personnel who will be in the project limits for longer than 30 minutes prior to the onset of ground-disturbing activities. At a minimum, the program will include the following topics: distribution, general behavior, and ecology of the desert tortoise, notification procedures by workers or contractors if a tortoise is found in a construction area, sensitivity of the species to human activities, legal protection afforded to migratory birds, bats, and other species, penalties for violations of Federal and State laws, and project features designed to reduce the impacts to these species and promote continued successful occupation of the Project area. The program will consist of a tailgate meeting by a Caltrans Stewardship Biologist prior to the start of work. Handout materials will be distributed for workers with important information about the regulated species for future reference and as a reminder of the program's content. Following the education program, the handouts will be posted at all construction field offices and on all information boards, where they will remain throughout the duration of the Project. If at any time a desert tortoise is observed in the Project area, the Resident Engineer will cease operations immediately and will contact the Caltrans Environmental Stewardship & Monitoring Unit.

BIO-2: Desert Tortoise Exclusion Fencing: Desert tortoise exclusion fencing will be installed outlining the perimeter of any construction staging, storage or batch plant areas to prevent entry by desert tortoises into the work site. Exclusion fencing will be installed following Service guidelines (2005) or more current protocol. The Caltrans Biologist will ensure that desert tortoises cannot pass under, over, or around the fence. The Caltrans Biologist must regularly check the fenced area and notify the Engineer should it become damaged and require repair.

BIO-3: Desert Tortoise Sweep and Presence: A Caltrans Stewardship Biologist shall perform a pre-construction sweep and periodically check the work area for desert tortoise during Project construction. If a desert tortoise is found, then it shall be allowed to leave on its own accord unless in imminent danger, in which case the Caltrans Stewardship Authorized biologist will move the tortoise out of harm's way. If a tortoise is found underneath a vehicle, then the worker will notify the Caltrans Authorized biologist. Workers will not be allowed to capture, handle, or relocate tortoises. The Caltrans Biologist will inform USFWS and CDFW of any injured or dead tortoises found on-site (verbal notification within 24 hours and written notification within 5 days).

BIO-4: Pre-Construction Clearance and Monitoring for Migratory Birds: If project activities cannot be avoided during the nesting period from February 1 through September 30, a Caltrans biologist will perform a nesting bird pre-construction survey (i.e. swallows) within the immediate work area prior to commencement of construction. The surveys will be conducted by the Caltrans Biologist at the appropriate time(s) of day, no more than three days prior to commencement of project activities. If an active nest of a resident, migratory bird, or BLM sensitive species is found. The Caltrans Stewardship Biologist will assess if impacts to nesting birds will occur. If impacts would occur, then a Caltrans Stewardship Biologist will contact the appropriate wildlife agencies for further direction; a 100-foot no construction buffer (500-foot buffer for raptors) may be put into place until nesting has ceased or the young have fledged.

BIO-5: Pre-Construction Survey and Monitoring by a Qualified Bat Biologist: Prior to the start of construction, a Caltrans Stewardship Biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey to determine if bats are roosting on any of the bridges. If work on bridges that support bat roosting during the bat maternity season (April 1–August 31), then a Caltrans Stewardship Biologist will contact the appropriate wildlife agencies for further direction.

BIO-6: Bat Presence Work Restrictions: If bats are confirmed to be present, then artificial lighting shall be focused only on the area of direct work, airspace access to and from the roost features of the structure shall not be obstructed, and light spillover into the adjacent foraging areas shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible.

