

**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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**From:** (Public Agency) Caltrans, Dist. 10  
1976 E. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Blvd.  
Stockton CA 95205

Project Title: SR 49 CORRIDOR OVERSIGHT

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation

Project Location - Specific:  
Tuolumne County -State Route 49 (SR 49),- PM 17.9-18.0,

Project Location - City: Sonora Project Location - County: Tuolumne

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The City of Sonora proposes to construct, on Caltrans' right-of-way, two new transit stops, and shelters; improve pedestrian sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps to meet current American's with Disability Act (ADA) standards; modify existing traffic signals, vehicle lanes, and crosswalk configurations; and construct bulb-outs to protect historic buildings from traffic collisions. The purpose of this project is to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and circulation; and to protect historical buildings on SR 49.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Transportation

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Sonora

**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: Section 15301 Existing Facilities 1(c)  
☐ Statutory Exemption. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason why project is exempt:**

Project is located within State right-of-way on existing facilities. Minimal environmental impacts are expected.

**Lead Agency**

Contact Person: Jonathan Coley Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 209-990-5716

**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: 12/20/19 Title: Associate Environmental Planner

☒ 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 Co

Date Received for filing at OPR \_\_\_\_\_

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**DEC 23 2019**

Revised 2011

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**





# CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

<b>10/TUO/SR49</b>	<b>17.9-18.0</b>	<b>10-1K590</b>	<b>1019000049</b>
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.)

**Project Description:**

The City of Sonora proposes to construct, on Caltrans' Right-of-Way, two new transit stops, and shelters; improve pedestrian sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps to meet current American's with Disability Act (ADA) standards; modify existing traffic signals, vehicle lanes, and crosswalk configurations; and construct bulb-outs to protect historic buildings from traffic collisions. The project is located in Stockton and Washington Streets in downtown Sonora, CA on State Route 49 (SR 49) in Tuolumne County, Post-mile 17.9 - 18.0.

**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:

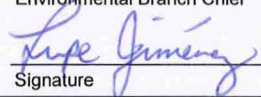
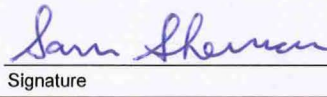
☐ Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class 1(c).** (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].)]

<p><b>Lupe Jimenez</b></p> <p>Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief</p> <p>      12-20-2019</p> <p>Signature      Date</p>	<p><b>Sam Sherman</b></p> <p>Print Name: Project Manager</p> <p>      12-20-19</p> <p>Signature      Date</p>
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**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:

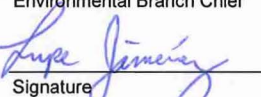
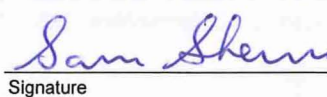
- does not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment as defined by NEPA, and is excluded from the requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and
- has considered unusual circumstances pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(b).

**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)(3)  
☐ 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.

<p><b>Lupe Jimenez</b></p> <p>Print Name: Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief</p> <p>      12-20-2019</p> <p>Signature      Date</p>	<p><b>Sam Sherman</b></p> <p>Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer</p> <p>      12-20-19</p> <p>Signature      Date</p>
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Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 12/20/19      Date of ECR or equivalent: 12/2019

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

**CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Continued from page 1:

**General:**

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project is Categorically Exempt and under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is Categorically Excluded unless:

- 1) The scope of the project changes to include additional activities and areas;
- 2) There is an unforeseen discovery of sensitive cultural resources.

**Purpose and Need:**

The purpose of this project is to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility and circulation; and to protect historical buildings on SR 49.

The project is needed to address the following deficiencies:

- Sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks and signal poles currently do not comply with the requirements of the American with Disability Act (ADA)
- Currently, no Mass Transit stops are located on SR 49 within the downtown area.
- Sonora Inn has suffered numerous vehicle collisions by large trucks and vehicles making right-turns onto Stockton Street (SR 49) from Washington Street.
- Prevent dangerous street crossings by pedestrians crossing Stockton Street.

**Air Quality Conformity:**

The project is exempt from all project-level conformity requirements per Table 2 of 40 CFR 93.16 under the project type "Mass Transit (construction of small passenger shelters and information kiosks)" and "Air Quality (bicycle and pedestrian facilities)". The Transportation Air Quality Conformity Findings Checklist has been completed.

**Air:**

The project would have No Adverse Effect on Air Quality. Short-term impacts will be addressed according to Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications (SS). The contractor will comply with air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations.

- **Air Pollution Control: SS 14-9.02**
- **Dust Control:- SS 10-5**

**Biology:**

The project would have No Effect on all species and critical habitats listed on the USFWS species list, dated 8/26/19.

**Avoidance Measure:**

The vegetated roadway cut slop on the southside of Stockton Street, west of Green Street has the potential to support nesting migratory birds or raptors during the nesting season (February 1<sup>st</sup>- September 30<sup>th</sup>). Implementation of Caltrans 2018 Standard Specification (SS) is required.

- **Bird Protection: SS 14-6.03B**

**Cultural:**

An Archaeological Survey Report (ASR), Historical Properties Survey Report (HPSR), and Finding of Effect (FOE) was prepared for this project. The reports determined the proposed project will not adversely affect any cultural resources within the project area.

- **ASR**—No prehistoric and/or historic archaeological sites potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historic Resources were identified within the Archaeological Survey Area during the identification effort.
- **HPSR**—has determined that there are historic properties within the APE that may be affected by the undertaking. So, in accordance with Section 106 PA Stipulation X and if applicable PRC 5024 MOU Stipulation X, Caltrans made a determination of "No Adverse Effects without Standard Conditions". SHPO concurred with Caltrans determination, letter dated 12/18/19.

**CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Continued from page 2:

- **FOE**—A No Adverse Effect determination was made for six eligible historic resources, within the City of Sonora Historic District, located within the project area. SHPO has concurred with the No Adverse Effect determination, letter dated 12/18/19.

The following recommendations should be followed:

- If previous unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction, it is Caltrans' policy that work be halted in the area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. Additional archaeological survey will be needed if the project limits are extended beyond the present survey limits.

**Community Impact Analysis:**

A Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Community Impact Assessment Checklist has been prepared. Based on a review of the documentation, it was determined that the project would have no significant impacts on the community; therefore, a separate Community Impact Assessment will not be required.

**Environmental Justice:**

No minority or low-income populations that would be adversely affected by the proposed project have been identified as determined above. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898.

**Floodplain:**

The project is not located within a 100-year base floodplain.

**Hazardous Waste:**

There are no open Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) cases with the potential to affect this project. Yellow and white paint striping is found within the project area. Removal of yellow and white paint striping will need to follow Caltrans Standard Special Provisions (SSP):

**Traffic Stripe and Pavement Markings:**

- **Yellow Paint Striping: SSP 14-11.12**
- **White Paint: SSP 84.9**

**Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL):** Aerially deposited lead (ADL) is known to occur in the unpaved areas adjacent to highways. Historical aerial photographs appear to show the entire project area has been paved since at least 1945. Therefore, the potential to encounter ADL impacted soil during project construction is considered minimal. It is recommended a Lead Compliance Plan be in place prior to construction.

**Asbestos Containing Material (ACM):** Bases on the information provided in the environmental request, there will be no structures involved with the project. Therefore, the potential to encounter asbestos-containing material is considered minimal. Should the scope of the work change to impact structures, additional studies may be required.

- It is recommended that any soil removed from the project site during construction be tested for petroleum hydrocarbons and Title 22 contaminants.

**Noise:**

The project would have No Adverse Effect on Noise Quality. Short-term impacts will be addressed according to Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications (SS).

- **Noise Control: SS 14-8.02**
  - ❖ Noise levels generated during construction should not exceed 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site from 9 pm to 6 am.
  - ❖ Control and monitor noise from the construction area.
  - ❖ All equipment will have sound-control devices that are no less effective than those provided by original equipment. No equipment will have an unmuffled exhaust.

**Section 4(f):**

One Section 4(f) resource, the City of Sonora Historic District with six contributing resources, within the project area has been determined to have a "*de minimus*" impact. The agency with jurisdiction, the SHPO in this case, has concurred with the *de minimus* finding through the Section 106 process, dated 12/18/19.



# CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

## Continuation Sheet

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Continued from page 3:

### Visual Landscape:

Under the direction of a licensed landscape architect, it has been determined that the qualifying scenic resources, as defined in the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference (Chapter 27) as defined in the enactment of Section 15300.2(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act Implementation Guidelines, may be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. The following recommendations for materials selection should be followed to minimize any negative visual impacts:

- The construction of new architectural elements should reflect the existing architectural style of the area.
- The use of materials and colors that tie into the surrounding building is highly recommended.
- Materials such as brick, wood, wrought iron, metal roofing are recommended.
- Colors that match the Sonora Inn would assist in tying the new construction in with the surrounding buildings.
- Other material elements to note in the immediate area are extensive use of vertically oriented metal railings along with a brick and horizontal wood siding.
- Common design elements along Washington Street are the sloped metal roofing that could be incorporated into the bus station roofing.
- One specific idea would be the use of vertical wrought iron fencing on the top of the small retaining wall in place of tubular steel at the bus station along Washington Street. Use a brick veneer on the small wall will aid in material connection to Washington Street.
- Landscape Architecture supports the use of non-yellow material such as weathered cast iron material for detectable warning surfaces for the curb ramps.

It is recommended that Caltrans review the final proposal and plans to verify the aesthetic elements are cohesive with the existing character of the site. If the project description or scope changes, Landscape Architecture must be notified immediately.

### Water Quality:

The project would have No Adverse Effect on Water Quality. Short-term impacts will be addressed according to Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications (SS) and Best Management Practices as follows:

- **Water Pollution: SS 13-1.**
  - ❖ Before project initiation, Caltrans' Stormwater Unit should be consulted to identify the appropriate best management practices for stormwater concerns.
- **If project disturbs one (1) acre or more of topsoil, the following is required:**
  - ❖ A Notification of Intention (NOI) is to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.
  - ❖ A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the Resident Engineer.
  - ❖ A Notice of Termination (NOT) shall be submitted to the Regional Board upon completion of construction and site stabilization. A project will be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.
- **If the project disturbs less than one acre of soil:** A Water Pollution Control Program needs to be prepared by the contractor in accordance with **Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 13-1: Water Pollution.**