

2020060550

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: Alameda County
Contra Costa County

From: (Public Agency): AC Transit
1600 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94612

(Address)

Project Title: Rapid Corridors San Pablo

Project Applicant: AC Transit

Project Location - Specific:

Grand Ave. corridor between Maritime Street and Northgate Avenue, Oakland &
San Pablo Ave. corridor from 20th St (Oakland) to North of El Portal Drive (San Pablo City limit)

Project Location - City: Various, see attached Project Location - County: Alameda and Contra Costa County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

See attached project description

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: AC Transit

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Mika Miyasato

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: 15301 Existing Facilities; 15304 Minor Alts to Land
Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:

This work is not anticipated to induce growth and would improve existing transit operations through minor upgrades and installation of traffic signal priority equipment, upgrade traffic signal communications and detection, and adaptive traffic control systems.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Mika Miyasato Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 510-891-7138

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: Title:

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date Received for filing at OPR:
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUN 24 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

# **Attachment A**

## **AC Transit Rapid Corridors – San Pablo Project**

### **Alameda and Contra Costa Counties**

#### **Project Location**

The proposed project is located within the limits of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, and San Pablo in the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa. The project corridor is generally linear, centering along San Pablo Avenue from Grand Avenue in the south to between El Portal and Hilltop Drive in the north. The Grand Avenue portion of the project extends west-east from Maritime Street to Lake Park Avenue, with the exception of the intersection at Telegraph Avenue. The project extends between San Pablo Avenue and I-80 along the I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) connector routes of Ashby Avenue, University Avenue, Gilman Street, Buchanan Street, Central Avenue, Potrero Avenue, Cutting Boulevard, and Barrett Avenue, McBryde Avenue, San Pablo Dam Road, and El Portal Drive. Additionally, the project includes intersections at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street & Hollis Street, Powell Street & Hollis Street, Powell Street & I-80, and Carlson Boulevard & I-80. Figure 1 shows the project vicinity and project location.

The project limits are as follows:

- San Pablo Avenue Corridor (11.9 Miles)
  - Broadway/20th Street to Rumrill Blvd; 70 signalized intersections
- Grand Avenue Corridor (3.2 Miles)
  - Maritime Street to Northgate Avenue; 10 signalized intersections
  - Broadway to Lake Park Avenue; 12 signalized intersections
- I-80 ICM crossing arterials (including 3 freeway on/off ramps), between San Pablo Avenue and Interstate 80
  - Powell Street, Ashby Avenue, University Avenue, Gilman Street, Buchanan Street, Carlson Boulevard, Central Avenue, Potrero Avenue, Cutting Boulevard, McBryde Avenue, San Pablo Dam Road, El Portal Drive
  - 26 signalized intersections total

#### **Project Purpose and Need**

San Pablo Avenue is a vital backbone arterial serving cities and communities from downtown Oakland to the Carquinez Bridge. The San Pablo Avenue corridor spans two counties and is AC Transit's third highest ridership corridor. In 2003, AC Transit introduced the 72-Rapid line to reduce travel time and increase reliability. Travel time on the 72-Rapid is about 23 percent faster than other routes on the same corridor, but on-time performance for the corridor is below AC Transit's goal. As such, San Pablo Avenue has been the focus of many improvement projects and studies throughout the years. One of the past projects on the corridor was the RAPID bus project which established transit signal priority (TSP) along San Pablo Avenue to improve the Line 72R operations. While the existing TSP equipment has provided long-term benefits to AC Transit and the local agencies, it is legacy equipment that does not provide efficient operational functionality.

In compliance with AC Transit's Major Corridors Study (2016), this project will implement quickly deployable tools that aim to improve the reliability of transit operations along San Pablo Avenue, I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) crossing arterials, and along Grand/W. Grand Avenue from Maritime Street to Lake Park Avenue, with the exception of Telegraph Avenue. The GPS-based transit signal priority (TSP) technology will allow the AC Transit to take full advantage of the advanced detection abilities afforded by GPS and the fine-tuned TSP parameters in current traffic signal controllers. The TSP upgrades proposed for the Rapid Corridors - San Pablo project will serve to increase route performance for transit vehicles and update traffic signal coordination to improve overall traffic congestion/delay.

#### **Project Description**

AC Transit in partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), proposes to upgrade 130 signalized intersections across 8 jurisdictions with GPS-based transit signal priority (TSP) technology to take full advantage of the advanced detection abilities afforded by GPS and the fine-tune TSP parameters in current traffic signal controllers. This proposed project would upgrade existing TSP equipment along San Pablo Avenue to improve Line 72R operations.

In order to implement the project, installation of TSP equipment is necessary at many of the intersections on the existing traffic signal poles or within existing cabinets. Equipment may include signal controller, new signal controller firmware, 2" HDPE conduit, GPS cable conductor, GPS/Radio antennas, Phase Selector, and Auxiliary panels. Different equipment will be installed at each intersection depending on what was inventoried during the preliminary field investigations. Table 1 below displays what equipment is needed by jurisdiction. A total of approximately 320 linear feet of HDPE conduit will be installed at seven intersections (San Pablo Avenue at 20<sup>th</sup>/Thomas L Berkeley, 36<sup>th</sup>, MLK Jr., Barrett, Garvin, Church, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Central). It is anticipated that excavation would not be below the road base, approximately two to three feet below the surface.

This project would occur within Caltrans and public right of way (ROW), and city-owned property. No ROW acquisitions would be required for the proposed project.

During construction, construction equipment will be staged outside of the vehicle roadways, while maintaining access to pedestrian and bicycle pathways and adjacent properties. The TSP equipment will be stored off-site at warehouse prior to installation. The construction period for the entire project corridor is estimated at 90 working days with up to five days at each intersection depending on the work that needs to be completed.

Any lane closures necessary to install equipment would adhere to the local agency permit requirements, and closures would be anticipated during daytime business hours (outside of AM and PM peak periods). Full closures are not anticipated; as such, detours routes would not be necessary.

**Table 1 – Improvements by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction	Furnish & Install Controller	Furnish & Install GPS/Radio Antenna	Furnish & Install Phase Selector	Furnish & Install Auxiliary Panel	Furnish & Install Traffic Signal Firmware
Caltrans	0	46	45	46	2
Oakland	0	13	12	12	17
Emeryville	2	2	2	2	0
Berkeley	0	0	0	1	0
Albany	0	0	0	1	2
El Cerrito	4	3	3	3	0
Richmond	0	9	9	9	0
San Pablo	17	8	9	10	0

**Reasons Why Project is Exempt**

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1).

- Section 15301, Class 1, is a categorical exemption which consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.
- Section 15304, Class 4, is a categorical exemption which permits the minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

The proposed project, through the minor upgrades of TPS equipment, will serve to increase route performance for transit vehicles and update traffic signal coordination to improve overall traffic congestion/delay. The proposed project would not expand the existing use of the project roadways or include removal of scenic trees or resources.

Based on review of available information, the proposed project does not meet exceptions to exemptions listed in CEQA Section 15300.2 per the following:

- (a) *Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may be in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*

A review of California State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) GeoTracker database was conducted to determine the potential presence of pollution in the project area. It was determined that cleanup sites do exist within the project corridor. As the project maximum excavation is 18 inches into the road subbase, the project would not impact hazardous sites or facilities.

- (b) *Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*

The project would not have an impact on surrounding areas, adjoining the site, or result in a cumulative impact over time. The will provide an overall benefit to improve traffic operations through implementation of TPS tools. The project is supported by regulatory agencies, such as MTC, Caltrans and partner agencies.

- (c) *Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

The project would not have a significant effect on the environment as there is no suitable habitat for federal or state listed species, the project would have minimal excavation depths within an existing roadbed, and the project can avoid known cultural resources. The project area is considered to have low biological sensitivity because there are no areas that are suitable to support native habitat within the project area.

- (d) *Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*

The project does not include work on an officially-designated state scenic highway. The nearest officially-designated state scenic highway occurs from Route 24 to Route 580 in Alameda County, CA. Thus, the proposed project does not have the potential to affect a scenic highway or resource.

- (e) *Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*

See response to (a) above.

- (f) *Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

The project would have low potential to affect any historic-era archaeological resources because ground disturbing activities would be within existing ROW and no work would involve structures or work on known historic structures or resources. Project excavation would not occur beyond 24 to 36 inches into the road subbase.

### **Conclusion**

The TSP upgrades proposed for the Rapid Corridors - San Pablo project will serve to increase route performance for transit vehicles and update traffic signal coordination to improve overall traffic congestion/delay.

The proposed project and its elements meet the criteria for Class 1 categorical exemption under CEQA. These exemptions are defined in Article 19 Sections 15301. After review of available information, the project does not appear to have exceptions to the Categorical Exemptions under CEQA.

