



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)**

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): MEN-20 Middle Mile Broadband Network

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-MEN-20

PM/PM: 33.2/44.1

EA: 01-0L903

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to install broadband infrastructure on State Route (SR) 20 between post mile (PM) 34.1 to PM 44.1 in Mendocino County. The portion from PM 33.2 to PM 34.1 will be constructed as part of an existing bridge replacement project (EA 01-0E090).

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Caltrans CEQA Determination

Not Applicable – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency

Not Applicable – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

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

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

Categorically Exempt. Class. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.

Covered by the 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].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Kristina Crawford (acting)

7-18-2023

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Brian Finck

July 19, 2023

Print Name

Signature

Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination

Not Applicable

Caltrans 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). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(Enter activity number)
23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
Activity 6 listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans 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 May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

N/A

Print Name

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable):
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent:



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Continuation sheet:

Project Description (cont.)

Purpose:

This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project will install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System and Interstate System necessary to connect to a third-party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which will bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Need:

In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring equitable high-speed broadband service to all Californians.

The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's unserved and underserved communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support these communities in providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Scope of Work

This project proposes to place one fiber optic line consisting of three conduits, and 38 vaults, primarily on the eastbound side of SR 20. The portion from PM 33.2 to PM 34.1 will be constructed as part of an existing bridge replacement project.

There are three different installation methods that would be used: trenching, trench in pavement, and horizontal directional drilling (HDD). Conduit and fiber optic would be placed outside of edge of pavement (EP) and within the embankment wherever feasible. Trench in pavement is proposed only at limited areas where other installation methods are not feasible.

This project would include the following MMBN components:

- Underground installation of three two-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) conduits.
- Installation of pull vaults (30 inches wide x 48 inches long x 36 inches deep) every 2,400 feet along the fiber optic conduit path and at each side of structures.
- Installation of splice vaults (48 inches wide x 48 inches long x 48 inches deep) every 12,000 feet along the fiber optic conduit path.
- Installation of broadband conduit across five structures by attaching to bridge railing and/or the superstructure. Conduit would cross two large box culverts either within the shoulder above the culverts or directionally drilled under them.
- Installation of metallic disk markers every 500 feet along conduit path for paved areas, and flexible post delineators for unpaved areas at every 500 feet where



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vaults are greater than 500 feet apart, and for horizontal curves in the beginning of the curve, middle of the curve, and end of the curve.

Right of Way/Staging

All work and staging would occur within the Caltrans right of way.

Disposal/Borrow

All excess material would be relinquished to the contractor for disposal at an approved location. No borrow is expected.

Consultation/Coordination

Native American consultation was conducted with the following Native American Tribes and Groups: Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Scotts Valley Rancheria, Potter Valley Tribe, and Redwood Valley-Little River Band of Pomo Indians.

Permits/Approvals

No environmental permits or approvals are required.