

Middle-Mile Broadband Network Project
NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION/CEQA STATUTORY EXEMPTION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 05/23)

Project Information

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

DIST-CO-RTE: 07-VEN/LA-Various **PM/PM:** Various

EA: 07-388U0 **Proj. ID Number:** 0723000191 **CE#:** 202304015

Project Description

See continuation sheets.

Caltrans NEPA Determination

Caltrans has determined this project meets the conditions set forth below and therefore is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA.

The actions listed in Appendix A, Number 6 (“Actions including, but not limited to, right-of-way use agreements, encroachment permits, and consent letters that are subject to subpart D of 23 CFR 710”) of the 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU between FHWA, California Division and the California Department of Transportation (2022) may be classified as a categorical exclusion, provided the following conditions are met:

- The action is required in order to implement a project that is part of the California Middle-Mile Broadband Network
- The action does not, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts as described in 23 CFR 771.117(a); and
- The action does not involve unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b):
 - Significant environmental impacts;
 - Substantial controversy on environmental grounds;
 - Significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f)¹ requirements or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; or
 - Inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local law, requirement or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action.
- The action can be authorized under a Section 404 Nationwide Permit, or Regional General Permit, including one specific to Middle-Mile Broadband Network activities when issued. Sufficient information to issue a Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding must be included in the CE documentation; and
- The action would not significantly encroach on the base floodplain and no impacts to the natural and beneficial floodplain values are anticipated; and
- The action would not impact the features or attributes of a designated scenic river that make it eligible for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers published by the U.S. Department of Interior/U.S. Department of Agriculture; and
- The action does not require any U.S. Coast Guard construction permits;
- The use of this CE certifies that the project has been evaluated and is designed to prevent unauthorized releases of hazardous materials. Caltrans would maintain compliance with the

¹ Middle-Mile Broadband Network Projects are not considered transportation projects and therefore exempt from the requirements of 23 CFR 774



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Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Soil Management Agreement for Aerially Deposited Lead-Contaminated Soils effective July 1, 2016, and that there are no known Cortese sites within the project footprint based on a record search; and

- The action does not require formal Section 7 Consultation for effects to federally listed or proposed species or critical habitat (likely to adversely affect determination for any species or critical habitat), or can be covered under an existing Programmatic Biological Opinion or the specific Programmatic Biological Opinion for Middle-Mile Broadband Network activities when issued; and
- The action is consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management Plan, if applicable.

The proposed project(s) are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. It is anticipated that no impacts would occur with the construction and implementation of the Middle-Mile Broadband Network.

Categorical Exclusion (CE) issued by Caltrans approving certain actions subject to subpart D of 23 CFR 710 for projects that are a part of the California Middle-Mile Broadband Network.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Susan Tse Koo	<i>Susan Tse Koo</i>	09/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Akm Tareque	<i>A.K. M. Tareque</i>	09/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date

See Attached District Prepared MMBN CE Checklist.

See Attached District Prepared Environmental Commitment Record.



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Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- 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 1(b).** (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

Susan Tse Koo	<i>Susan Tse Koo</i>	09/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Akm Tareque	<i>A.K. M. Tareque</i>	09/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date



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Project Description

This project would include the installation of approximately 10,000-miles of broadband infrastructure throughout California within the State Highway System, including Interstate routes.

Due to the varied topography and locations of the 10,000-mile broadband infrastructure across the State of California, the design would be dependent on project site features. Work would include the installation of subsurface broadband conduit and fiber, the installation of network repeater hubs at approximately 50-mile intervals, as well as the installation of vaults (Pull, Splice, and Buried) at various locations.

All work will take place within 30-feet of highway rights-of-way except where not feasible. The areas of project impact in most areas will be limited to the existing paved surfaces, disturbed shoulders, and maintained Caltrans right-of-way.

Purpose: This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project will install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System (SHS) 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 providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Caltrans District 7 proposes to install broadband infrastructure on various routes throughout Los Angeles County and Ventura County by conducting the scope of work summarized below:

- Installation of one (1) two (2)-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) conduits with one (1) 288-strand fiber optic cable along edge of shoulder, disturbed path, or paved roads by method of trenching, trench-in-pavement, and horizontal directional drilling method;
- Installation of one (1) two (2)-inch conduits with one (1) 288-strand fiber optic cable by strapping method at bridge locations; Conduits will be mounted on all structures going through waterways to avoid the bed, bank, and channel of streambeds.
- Installation of pull vaults (30" W x 48" L x 36" D) and splice vaults (48" W x 48" L x 48" D) along the length of the project;
- Installation of predetermined hub locations.

All work will be conducted within state right-of-way. The following post-miles and hubs were evaluated as a part of the SE/CE. The various routes are part of ten Child-EAs (388UA, 388UD, 388UH, 388UB, 388UC, 388UG, 388UF, 388UI, 388UJ, 388UK) that are under the umbrella Parent-EA (388U0):



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Routes & Post-miles:

Work Order No.	Project EA	County	Route	PM Start	PM End
1	388UA	VEN	118	R32.428	R32.600
1	388UA	LA	118	R0.0	R12.403
1	388UA	LA	605	21.068	25.775
1	388UA	LA	210	R24.971	R36.46
2	388UD	LA	101	17.15L	38.19
2	388UD	VEN	101	0	13.84
2	388UD	LA	405	31.55	39.43
3	388UH	LA	101	0	0.127
3	388UH	LA	10	S0.0	S0.105
3	388UH	LA	101	1.082	1.577
3	388UH	LA	110	22.67	23.719
3	388UH	VEN	33	0	R4.477
3	388UH	VEN	101	30.021	30.905
4	388UB	LA	118	R12.399	R14.08
4	388UB	LA	210	R0	R24.971
4	388UB	LA	134	R5.933	R13.341
5	388UC	LA	710	23.248	24.966
5	388UC	LA	10	S0.105	S0.649
5	388UC	LA	05	16.474	18.552
5	388UC	LA	60	R0.493	R3.267
5	388UC	LA	605	R8.296	R19.461
5	388UC	LA	05	6.853	13.779
5	388UC	LA	72	0	3.101
6	388UG	LA	710	6.878	9.053
6	388UG	LA	405	17.6	19.226
6	388UG	LA	01	7.331	16.011
6	388UG	LA	107	0	4.801
7	388UF	VEN	33	R4.477	11.2
7	388UF	VEN	33	11.21	12.302
7	388UF	VEN	150	R14.409	16.579
8	388UI	LA	18	0	4.5
8	388UI	LA	138	69.3	75.0
9	388UJ	VEN	23	R13.3	24.2
10	388UK	LA	27	0	12.43



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Hub Locations:

Work Order No.	Project EA	Hub Loc. No.	County	Route	PM
3	388UH	62	LA	405	32.92
3	388UH	63	LA	57	6.368
3	388UH	65	LA	605	R8.438
3	388UH	67	LA	10	18.455
3	388UH	115	LA	405	8.05
3	388UH	158	LA	14	R59.935
3	388UH	198	LA	118	R12.33
3	388UH	201	LA	210	R35.35
10	388UK	157	LA	101	25.391

Environmental Commitments

Due to the varied topography and locations of the 10,000-mile broadband infrastructure across the State of California, the design and construction methods would be dependent on project site features. For each project, environmental resources would be evaluated within the project areas and measures would be identified in the supporting technical documents. These measures would be implemented prior to and during construction (see District Project file for supporting documentation). In addition, Caltrans would continue to work closely with resource agency partners to develop programmatic agreements to streamline the environmental process and address potential impacts. Please refer to the following agreements for associated environmental requirements:

- Section 7 Programmatic Biological Opinion(s)
- Section 404 USACE Nationwide or Regional General Permit
- Section 106 Programmatic Agreement