



Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Lead Agency)
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
2150 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 464-6000

County Clerk, Counties of:

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara

Project Title: Station Access Signage and Wayfinding Upgrade Program

Project Applicant: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)

Project Location - Specific: Multiple BART Stations within the BART System

Project Location – Counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara

Project Location – Cities: Berkeley, Dublin, Fremont, Hayward, Oakland, Pleasanton, San Leandro, Union City; Antioch, Concord, El Cerrito, Lafayette, Orinda, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Walnut Creek; San Francisco; Colma, Daly City, Millbrae, San Bruno, South San Francisco; Berryessa/North San Jose, Milpitas

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project would replace and upgrade access and wayfinding signage at all 50 stations throughout the five-county BART District. In the years since BART’s station access signage was last updated, management of station access facilities has evolved substantially, and existing signage no longer adequately reflects the needs of users or facility management. This access signage includes pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation; bike and vehicle parking; and bus areas and various loading zones. The new signs will be compliant with ADA requirements and utilize universal design elements and international icons. Signs would be located primarily between the station’s roll-down gates and the station’s property line. Installation of new signs around the BART District would be phased over time as funding becomes available or installed as part of larger station improvement projects.

Name of Public Agency Approving the Project: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Same

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: 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities
- Statutory Exemptions: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

None of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, which would prohibit the use of a categorical exemption, apply to the project. The program is a replacement and upgrade to existing facilities. The replacement program would predominately occur on BART property within the developed station area. No expansion of current space or current use is proposed. No disruption of existing transit service would take place.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Donald Dean

Phone/Email: 510-287-4844 / ddean@bart.gov

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: 1/9/2024

Title: Mgr. of Environmental Review

Donald Dean

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 2112.1, Public Resources Code.



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

2150 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612

NOTICE OF CEQA EXEMPTION

Project Name: Station Access Signage and Wayfinding Upgrade Program
 Project Address: Multiple locations-BART System
 Counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco
 San Mateo, Santa Clara
 Project Sponsor: BART Customer Access
 Project Contact: Jumana Nabti
 (510) 912-8118, jnabti@bart.gov
 Date of CE Determination: January 9, 2024

This CE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse

This CE will be filed with the County Clerk:

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara

PROPOSED PROJECT

Project Location

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) operates rail transit service between 50 stations in five counties. Figure 1 illustrates the extent of the system and station locations. Program improvements would take place at, or in close proximity, to each station.

Project Background

BART began rail transit service in 1972, and the system has expanded incrementally over the past 50 years to serve 50 stations in five counties. In the years since BART’s station access signage was last updated, management of station access facilities, including pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation, bike and vehicle parking, and bus areas and various loading zones, has evolved substantially and no longer adequately reflects the needs of users or facility management. Patrons have expressed concerns that the existing signage is confusing and does not encourage transit use. Additionally, the Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project (RMWP), led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, is currently updating standards that transit operators will be required to implement once adopted.

Project Description

Planned improvements for station signage are principally in four areas: access facility identification signs, wayfinding signs, instructional signs, and station identification pylon signs. The RMWP may also be recommending tactile pathways for blind/low vision users.

- Identifying signs are signs identifying specific uses, such as loading zones, bus zones, parking areas, etc. New metal signs generally will replace existing metal signs. Tactile (braille/raised letter) signage will be added for some signage types.
- Wayfinding signs will be new signs specific to each station and location. They could be on an existing pole or a new pole. The purpose is to guide patrons to BART access points and through the station. Most wayfinding signs will be on BART property, but some could be off-site. For off-site signs, a permit or approval of the local jurisdiction would be necessary before installation.
- Instructional signage provides information, instructions, or requirements for use of the facility. Examples of informational signage include taxi information/rules, bike rack/bike station instructions, bike stair channel instructions, parking garage directories, signs for Electrical Vehicle Charging, and potential use of QR codes for improved access to real-time and more detailed information.
- Tactile pathways are tactile tiles or other paving that provide detectable wayfinding for blind and low vision users. The tiles are typically bolted or inlaid into concrete.
- Pylons are vertical, backlighted signposts identifying each BART station at ground level. Existing pylons would be replaced, and new pylons installed according to the new RMWP standards.

Signs would be provided in a variety of shapes and sizes, but dimensions would be as standard as possible, ranging from approximately 9 X 18 inches to the largest at 74 X 60 inches. Most sign types are planned to be aluminum panel traffic signs with pre-printed graphics and anti-graffiti coating mounted on metal poles. Tactile signs would be cast aluminum. Station identification pylon signs would be more structural with electrical connections. All signage would follow BART's recently updated *Station Access Signage & Wayfinding Guidelines* in the short term until the RMWP standards are available in Fall 2024. The new signs will be compliant with ADA requirements and utilize universal design elements and international icons. Each station may require replacement or installation of between 10 and 400 signs per station, depending on the site's needs. Signage plans will be developed to refine these numbers. Signs would be located primarily between the station's roll-down gates and the station's property line. Examples of different sign types are illustrated in Figure 2.

Sign installation would require only minor construction activity. New vertical pylons may need minor electrical connections as well as some minor foundation work. No disturbance to patrons or transit activity is anticipated. Installation of new signs around the BART District will be phased over time as funding becomes available or installed as part of larger station improvement projects.

Attachments

Figure 1: BART System Map

Figure 2: Examples of Typical Sign Replacement

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Although some new signs may be added to improve identification, wayfinding, or information for patrons, most of the Signage and Wayfinding Upgrade Program involves the replacement of existing signs. Few, if any, of the existing signs to be replaced are original to the historic assets of the BART system. Most are earlier replacements to old, faded, or damaged signs, which themselves may not have been original.

Due to the minor nature of the sign replacement/installation, and because the sign replacements largely would occur within the developed area of a BART station, no impacts to the natural environment (for ex., soils, water, air quality) are anticipated. The new signs will not be substantially different in size or station placement from existing signs. New standardized signs will replace old, faded, non-standardized signs displaying out-of-date information. Therefore, any visual changes related to the sign program would be minimal at best. Signage has always been an integral part of station access experience and the replacement signs are not expected to change the basic station aesthetic or patron experience.

Possible Exceptions to CE

If a project is ordinarily exempt under any of the potential categorical exemptions, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 provides specific instances where exceptions to otherwise applicable exemptions apply. In these cases, the CEQA exemption would not apply to a project.

Yes	No	Would the project be precluded from a Categorical Exemption due to the following exception per Guidelines Section 15300.2?
	X	(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 in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply 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.
	X	(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.
	X	(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.

X	(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.
X	(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.
X	(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.

Relevant Exemptions

The project would meet the criteria of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301-Existing Facilities, a Class 1 exemption.

	Statutory Exemption
	Ministerial Exemption
X	Categorical Exemption: 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities
	Emergency Exemption
	Other Exemption

15301. Existing Facilities

“Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.”

In addition, Section 15301(g) also applies to program:

“New copy on existing on and off-premise signs”

The project is determined to meet the qualifications for a Categorical Exemption for the following reasons among others:

1. None of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, which would prohibit the use of a categorical exemption, apply to the project.
2. The program is a replacement and upgrade to existing facilities.
3. The replacement program would predominately occur on BART property within the developed station area.
4. No expansion of current space or current use is proposed.
5. No disruption of existing transit service would take place.

DETERMINATION

No further environmental review is required. The project is categorically exempt under CEQA. An exemption from environmental review pursuant to the provisions of CEQA has been considered and approved:



By Donald Dean
BART Manager of Environmental Review

1/9/2024
Date

Figure 1
BART System Map



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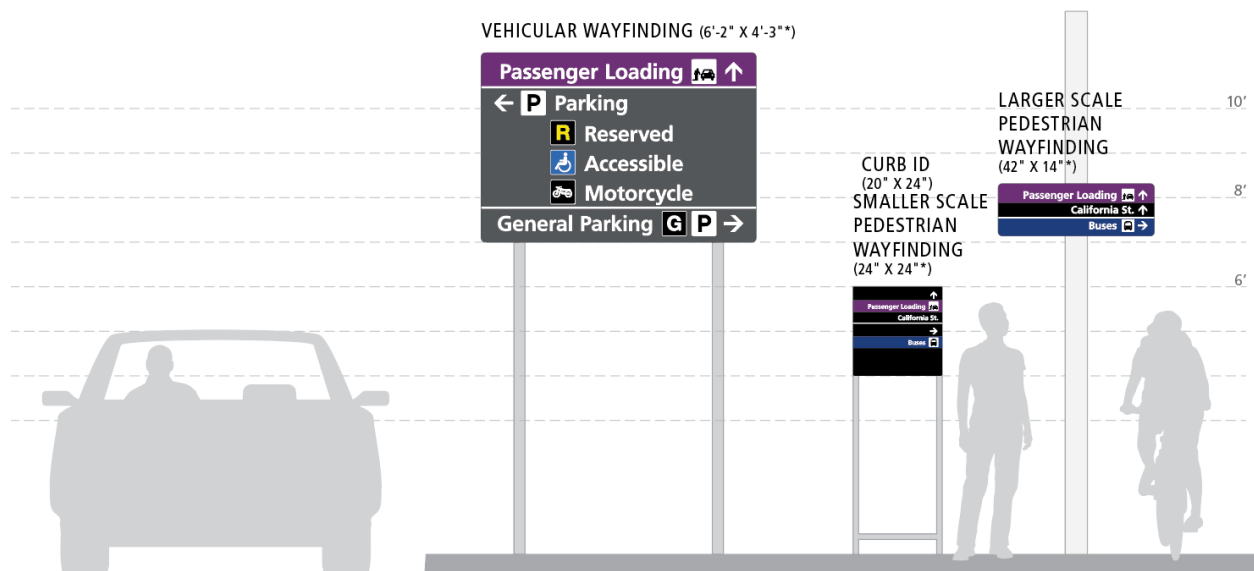
Source: BART, 2023

Figure 2
Examples of Typical Sign Replacement

Identification signage

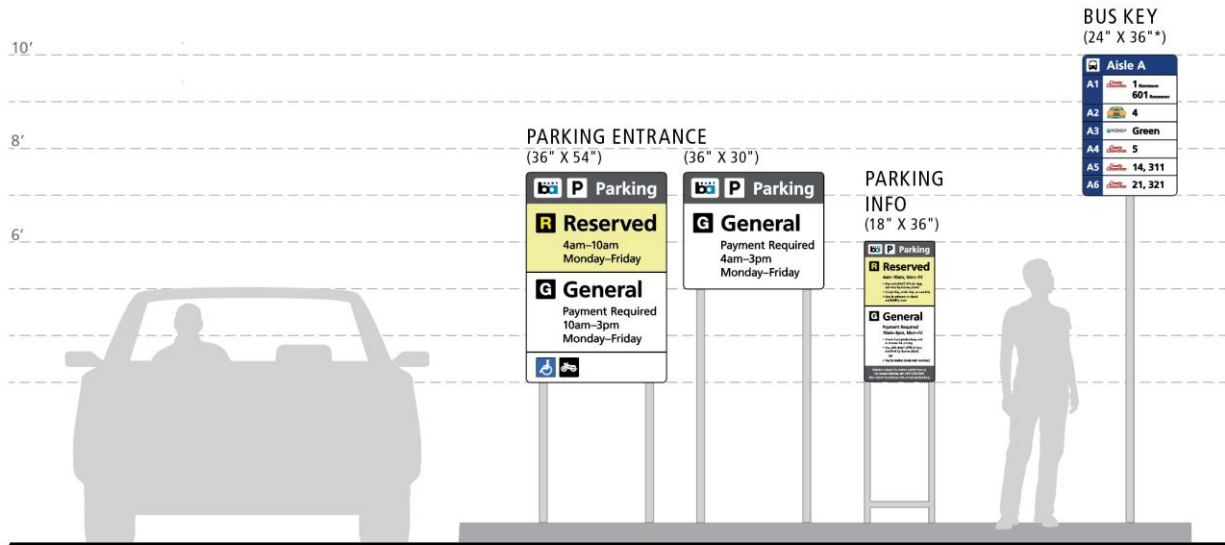


Wayfinding Signage



* TYP. (HEIGHT VARIES)

Informational Signage



Source: BART, 2023