



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

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Ridgewood Grade Safety

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-MEN-101

PM/PM: 39.8/40.4

EA: 01-0L380

Federal-Aid Project Number:

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes this safety project located between PM 39.8 and PM 40.4 on US Highway 101 in Mendocino County. This project is approximately 6 miles south of the City of Willits. This project will increase inside and outside shoulder widths on both sides of the 4-lane divided expressway. The project will also provide paved Maintenance Vehicle Pullout (MVP) areas, median barrier replacement, new shoulder rumble strip application, and new High Friction Surface Treatment (HFST) on curves. Work will include roadway excavation, construction of new roadway structural section, drainage system improvements, pavement delineation, and reconstruction/relocation of existing Midwest Guardrail System (MGS).

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(c).** (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

Julie McFall

Print Name

Signature

6/27/24

Date

Project Manager

Brian Finck

Print Name

Signature

June 27, 2024

Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

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)(26)
23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()
Activity 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

Julie McFall
Print Name
Signature
Date: 6/27/24

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Brian Finck
Print Name
Signature
Date: June 27, 2024

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 06/26/2024
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 06/27/2024

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).



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Continuation sheet:

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to reduce the frequency and severity of collisions along this segment of the state highway while allowing maintenance and emergency vehicles adequate space to steer clear of ongoing traffic.

Need

This project was initiated by District 1 Traffic Safety in response to a collision analysis. The analysis indicates a concentration of collisions along the sides of the median concrete barrier which runs along the centerline of reversing curves on a six percent grade.

Scope of Work

- Realign roadway with existing curve radii perpetuated.
- Excavation of fill.
- Construction of new roadway structural sections.
- Widen median shoulder widths from 3-foot to 6-foot and outside shoulder widths from a variable 2- to 6-foot, to 8-foot on both sides of the roadway.
- Pave four (4) MVP areas distributed through the project limits, with two on each side of the roadway.
- Extend culvert -
 - 39.72
 - 39.77
 - 39.84
 - 39.89
 - 40.11
 - 40.21
 - 40.25
- Remove and replace culvert -
 - 39.86
 - 39.97
- Relocation and/or replace inlets and down-drains.
- Place rock slope protection (RSP).
- Update and/or relocate Transportation Management System (TMS) elements.
- Removal, relocation, and reconstruction of MGS with standard galvanized rails.
- Existing median barrier would be removed and new barrier constructed on the new centerline.
 - Barrier elements would include passageway opening/gaps to allow small-medium animals to cross through.
- Placement/replacement of concrete weed barrier.
- Replace four (4) traffic count loop detectors at PM 40.28.
- Pave using hot-mix asphalt type A (HMA-A).
- Placement of HFST on curves.
- Apply inside and outside shoulder rumble strip beyond the edge of travel-way (ETW) striping.



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- Replacement of pavement delineation.
- Relocation and/or replacement of roadway signs with quick-change base mounts metal posts with be used for new or relocated signs.

The implementation of Caltrans' Standard Measures and Best Management Practices into the project scope would minimize any potential impacts to the environment.

Anticipated Permits

Caltrans anticipates applying for:

- CDFW 1602 permit
- NCRWQCB 401 certification
- US Army Corps 404 Nationwide Permit.

Climate Change Assessment

The Environmental Division has evaluated this non-capacity increasing project for GHG emissions and other climate change impacts. It has determined that the project would not cause a significant impact on GHG emissions because this project would not increase roadway capacity, would not change travel demands or traffic patterns when compared to the no-build alternative, thus is will not induce new vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

In addition, this project includes construction greenhouse gas reduction measures; the project design includes adaptation or climate resilience features; the project is not located in a floodplain or other location at risk of riverine flooding; and the project is not in the Coastal Zone, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, or a location at risk of future sea level rise impacts. While the project location is in "very high" and "high" fire hazard severity zones, it would not increase wildfire conditions, and by nature of this project's road widening and other safety improvements it would decrease fire risk and improve accessibility.

Hazardous Waste

- NOA was identified within the project limits and was reported to contain chrysotile asbestos at less than the laboratory reporting limit (RL) of 0.25%.
 - Native earthen material generated within the project limits can be reused or disposed of without restrictions regarding NOA.
 - It is recommended that the contractor performing soil disturbance activities implement standard asbestos worker protection measures during construction/maintenance activities to minimize potential releases of NOA to air (dust control) and surface waters (stormwater discharge).
- A Lead Compliance Plan will be required as a contract item for soil, thermoplastic and paint disturbance/removal.
- For soil disturbance/removal activities and striping delineation removal activities Standard Special Provisions (SSPs) and one Non-Standard Special Provision (NSSP) will be included in the construction contract.

Right of Way



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There will be one (1) acquisition required for this project. A Permit to Enter (PTE) was obtained, and the project footprint within the parcel was subject to environmental survey(s) and subsequent clearance.

Consultation/Coordination

Caltrans performed an evaluation of resources which included a records and databases search, consultation with agencies and tribes, and coordination with applicable agencies and individuals.

Water Quality

General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit [CGP]) Order 2022-0057-DWQ (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2022a) and post-construction treatment BMPs in accordance with the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Storm Water Permits (Caltrans NPDES Permit) Order 2022-0033-DWQ (SWRCB 2022b) will be required.