

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Orange County Transportation Authority (Public Agency)
550 Main Street, P.O. Box 14184
Orange, CA 92863-1584

County Clerk
County of Orange
601 N. Ross Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Project Title: Amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (Costa Mesa)

Project Location – Specific: The action taken by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to conditionally amend the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) within the City of Costa Mesa. The proposed amendment will become final, contingent upon OCTA receiving documentation confirming that the City of Costa Mesa has amended their general plan accordingly. OCTA will amend the MPAH as follows:

- 1) Reclassify Merrimac Way from a primary (four-lane, divided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial between Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road.

The map attached as Attachment A shows the location of the amendment to the MPAH.

Project Location – City: Costa Mesa

Project Location – County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The MPAH depicts a countywide roadway network that is cooperatively planned by OCTA, the County of Orange, and Orange County cities in order to accommodate future travel demand throughout the County. The MPAH includes regional arterial highways and illustrates freeways and transportation corridors for reference. The City of Costa Mesa requested that OCTA amend the MPAH as described in the "Project Location – Specific" section above.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: OCTA

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: OCTA

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial
 Declared Emergency
 Emergency Project
 Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15262, 15061(b)(3)

Reasons why project is exempt: The MPAH is a long-range planning document that describes existing infrastructure and conceptual future transportation facilities within Orange County. OCTA does not commit itself or any other public agency to approve, adopt, or fund any MPAH related projects by including those facilities on the MPAH. In order for projects on the MPAH to move forward, they must be approved by the appropriate lead agency based on detailed project applications and environmental review. Similarly, deletion of a facility from the MPAH does not preclude a local jurisdiction from implementing the facility. As a result, amendments to the MPAH

do not have any reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences or commit OCTA, or any other public agency, to a definite course of action.

Amendments to the MPAH, therefore, are not "projects" subject to CEQA, and approval of an amendment to the MPAH does not constitute project "approval" for CEQA purposes. (Public Resources Code § 21065; CEQA Guidelines § 15378(a); CEQA Guidelines § 15352(a)). If anything, the MPAH is a government funding mechanism expressly excluded from the definition of "project." (CEQA Guidelines § 15378(b)(4).) Among other things, voluntary consistency with the minimum capacity reflected on the MPAH establishes eligibility for Measure M2 funding.

If amendments to the MPAH were to be considered "projects", the amendments would qualify for at least two exemptions from CEQA review. First, the MPAH is a planning and feasibility study. As explained above, neither the MPAH nor amendments to the MPAH have a legally binding effect. Therefore, amendments to the MPAH fall within CEQA's statutory exemption for planning and feasibility studies (CEQA Guidelines § 15262.) Second, for all of the foregoing reasons, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that amendments to the MPAH may have a significant effect on the environment. Amendments to the MPAH therefore fall within CEQA's "common sense" exemption (CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3)).


Lead Agency

Contact Person: Rose Casey

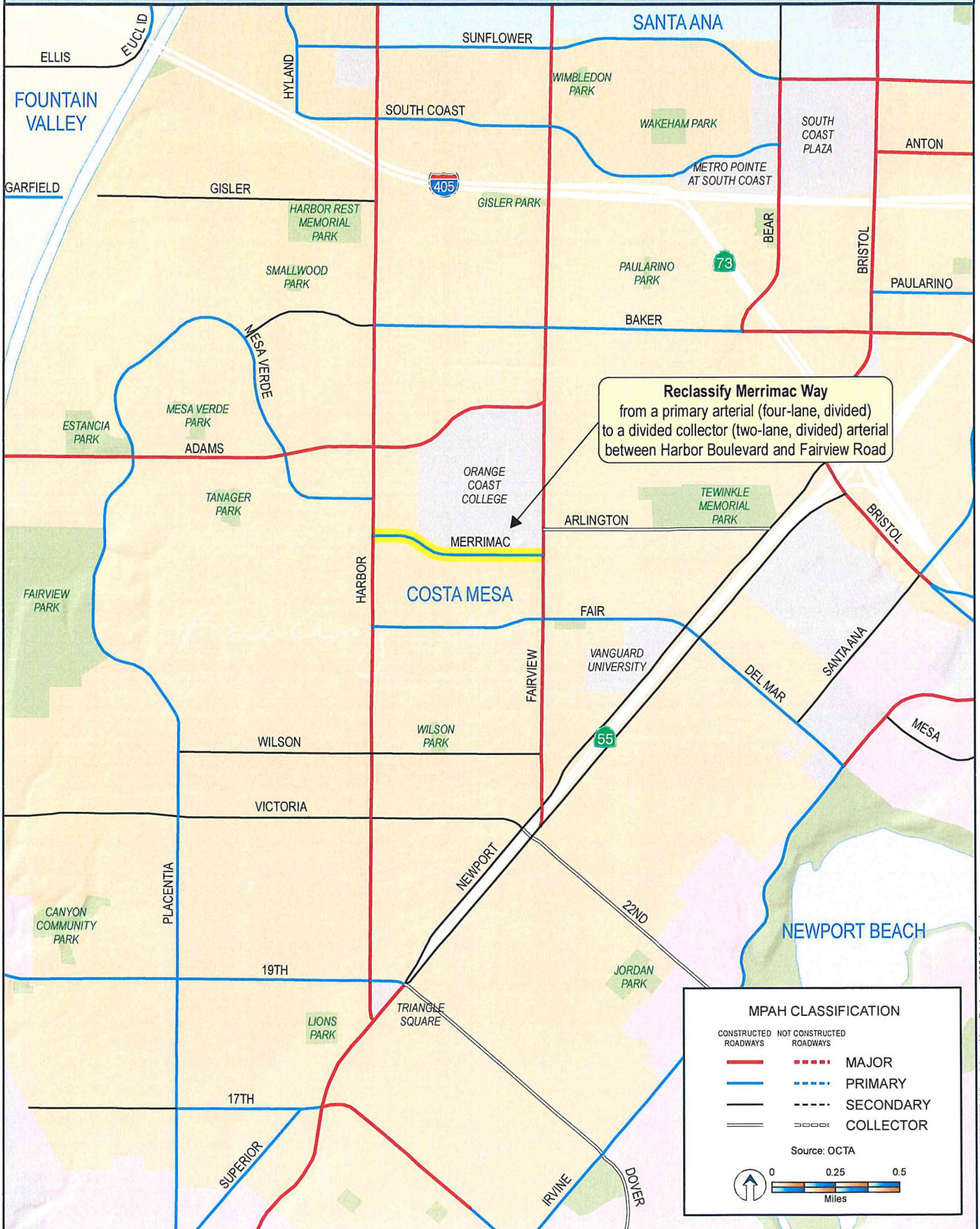
Area Code/Telephone: (714) 560-5729

If filed by applicant:

1. Attached certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?
 Yes No

Signature:  Date: 4/15/25 Title: Executive Director, Planning

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR:
 Signed by Applicant



MPAH CLASSIFICATION

CONSTRUCTED ROADWAYS	NOT CONSTRUCTED ROADWAYS	
		MAJOR
		PRIMARY
		SECONDARY
		COLLECTOR

Source: OCTA

0 0.25 0.5
Miles