

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/14/2020

Staff Report No. 20-382

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Rapid Corridors Project

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider adoption of Resolution No. 20-051 authorizing the filing of three Notices of Exemption for the Rapid Corridors Project.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The proposed project is intended to improve service reliability and reduce travel time by upgrading the transit signal priority system, improving signal coordination and bus stop optimization.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Filing of the three Notices of Exemption will require the payment of a filing fee, estimated to be \$50 each for a total of \$150.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The District is completing designs and preparing to enter the construction phase of the AC Transit Rapid Corridors Project. The Project concerns improvements to AC Transit Rapid Corridors routes on Telegraph Avenue, San Pablo Avenue and Grand/West Grand Avenue. The Project is being funded by various federal, state and local funding, including the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and Caltrans.

Public and private California construction projects are subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) if they meet certain criteria. As part of the initial CEQA process, the District must determine whether the Project is exempt from CEQA requirements. If it is exempt, it can avoid the considerable costs and time associated with an alternative CEQA compliance process. Based on an analysis performed by the District's consultants, DKS Associates/WRECO and Kimley Horn and Associates, the Project will not have a significant impact on the environment.

The Project falls under the exemption for existing facilities under Title 14, California Code of Regulations,

section 15301, which provides: “[The Existing Facilities Exemption] ... consists of operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alternation of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency’s determination.” Subpart (c) of section 15301 provides for a categorical exemption for “existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trains, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety).” As the work in question involves changes to existing curbs and roadways but no new construction, this categorical exemption for existing facilities applies to the Project.

The Project involves the implementation of a number of physical and operational improvements on Telegraph, San Pablo and Grand/West Grand Avenues that are intended to reduce transit passenger travel times, increase service reliability, reduce overall delays along the corridor, and improve regional air quality by encouraging transit use and reducing traffic. The proposed improvements do not include service frequency improvements. Specific improvements include removal/relocation of existing bus stops, implementation of Transit Signal Priority (TSP) systems, and coordination of traffic signal timing. All of these improvements are to be constructed within the existing right-of-way.

If the Board of Directors approves the issuance of Notices of Exemption, they will be filed with the Alameda County Clerk/Recorder’s office and Contra Costa County Clerk/Recorder’s office. Proper filing of the Notices of Exemption will create a 35-day window of time to challenge the exemption determination, after which time such challenges are barred.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Approving and filing Notices of Exemption for the Project will preclude the District from having to undergo a lengthy, complex and expensive CEQA compliance process. There is no disadvantage to filing the Notices of Exemption.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

None.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 18-138a - Rapid Corridors Project Design and Construction Management Services Staff Report 19-360 - Rapid Corridors Project Update

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 20-051 with Related Exhibits

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