

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: South Coast Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Projects

MEETING DATE: April 15, 2010

AGENDA ITEM: 6A

STAFF CONTACT: Fred Luna

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Approve (pursuant to CEQA) the following individual ITS Projects:
 - a) Carrillo Street Signal Synchronization Project
 - b) Upper State Street Bus Signal Priority Project
 - c) Regional Traveler Information Site

- 2) Authorize Executive Director to sign and file a Notice of Exemption under CEQA with County Clerk.

SUMMARY:

In March, the SBCAG board approved a contract amendment with the consultant team Kimley Horn & Associates to begin design work for the implementation of three federally funded Intelligent Transportation System projects on the South Coast. The three projects will be entirely funded with federal dollars through earmarks secured by Congresswoman Lois Capps. The projects are therefore subject to both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Caltrans is delegated authority to prepare the NEPA document on these federal-aid projects and has determined that they are categorically excluded from the NEPA requirement to prepare an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. The projects are categorically exempt from CEQA review. SBCAG, as the lead agency, must approve the projects and file a Notice of Exemption.

DISCUSSION:

Project Background

The SBCAG board approved a South Coast ITS Plan in April 2009. This report included a list of projects to be evaluated further and recommended implementation in two specific Tiers (I and II). Tier I projects were identified as the following projects:

- Regional Traveler Information Website
- Signal Synchronization Projects on Regional Arterials
- Transit Signal Priority on Regional Arterials

Following approval of the South Coast ITS Plan by the SBCAG board in April 2009, SBCAG staff and its consultant team worked with local agency staff to further define the three projects above. The consultant team prepared a technical memorandum which evaluated eight regional

corridor segments to determine where signal synchronization and transit signal priority would be most effective. The technical memorandum identified the following two specific projects as top-ranking for signal synchronization and/or transit signal priority.

Signal Synchronization on Carrillo Street: Timing coordination of signals of up to 6 signals on Carrillo Street from Chapala Street to US 101 ramps. To improve peak hour traffic flow to and from US 101 and improve a main route to transit center.

Transit Signal Priority (TSP) on Upper State Street: Equipping up to 20 MTD buses with hardware and providing up to 10 spares for buses to interface with signal priority capabilities on Upper State Street corridor between Calle Laureles and Calle Real/US 101 ramps. To improve transit vehicle reliability during peak hours.

The Regional Traveler Information Website was also a priority project in the South Coast ITS plan. Staff worked closely with the consultant team, conducted stakeholder meetings, and developed a list of near term and ultimate requirements for implementation.

The South Coast subregional committee of the SBCAG board received a report on the projects in February and supported the recommended projects. The projects were brought to the SBCAG board in March to seek approval on a contract amendment with the consultant team (Kimley Horn) to implement the remaining phases of the project. The SBCAG board approved this action.

Next Steps

The projects are subject to both NEPA and CEQA. Caltrans is the lead agency for NEPA due to its delegated authority on federally funded projects. SBCAG, as the implementing agency, is the CEQA lead agency. In order to continue with the implementation SBCAG must take the following discretionary actions under CEQA.

1. Project Approval: This action commits SBCAG to moving forward with detailed design and implementation and procurement on the project which includes the 3 project components included in Table 1.
2. Notice of Exemption: This action consists of filing a document called a "Notice of Exemption" with the County Clerk which indicates that SBCAG has approved the project and has determined that the project is exempt under CEQA.

The Notice of Exemption indicates that SBCAG has studied the potential environmental impacts of the project pursuant to CEQA and its own Local CEQA guidelines and has found the project to be exempt from further analysis. Article 19 of the CEQA guidelines defines those projects that are "categorically exempt" under CEQA and the project meets the exemption criteria. Furthermore, Section 15301 "Existing Facilities" of Article 19 identifies improvements to existing infrastructure that are exempt, of which it is staff's recommendation, based on a preliminary environmental assessment, that the projects fall within exempt Class 1(c). Consequently, staff is recommending that the board authorize the Executive Director to sign and file a Notice of Exemption (attached) with the County clerk's office. The filing of a Notice of Exemption is consistent with Caltrans' finding under NEPA that the projects are categorically exempt because the projects do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment.

**Table 1
Project Scope for Approval**

Project Name	Description
Signal Synchronization on Carrillo Street:	Timing coordination of signals of up to 6 signals on Carrillo Street from Chapala Street to US 101 ramps. To improve peak hour traffic flow to and from US 101 and improve a main route to transit center.
Transit Signal Priority (TSP):	Equipping up to 20 MTD buses with hardware and providing up to 10 spares for buses to interface with signal priority capabilities on Upper State Street corridor between Calle Laureles and Calle Real/US 101 ramps. To improve transit vehicle reliability during peak hours.
Regional Traveler Information Website:	Development of a regional traveler information website that would provide real time, map-based information on road closures, CHP incident reports, and Highway 101 traffic conditions.

COMMITTEE REVIEW:

In February 2010, The South Coast Subregional Committee endorsed the three projects.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: County Clerk
County of Santa Barbara

From: Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

Based on a preliminary review of the project the following activity is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in both the State and SBCAG Guidelines (dated May 1991) for the implementation of CEQA.

Project Location: Santa Barbara County

Project Limits: 1) On Carrillo Street in the City of Santa Barbara from Chapala Street to US 101 SB ramps; 2) On State Street in the City of Santa Barbara from Calle Laureles to US 101;

Type of Work: Regional ITS Projects

Project Description:

1.	Carrillo St Signal Synchronization: Project consists of providing improved communication and coordination (without ground disturbance) between signals on Carrillo St from Chapala St to Highway 101.
2.	Upper State St Transit Signal Priority: Project consists of providing upgrades to existing infrastructure (without ground disturbance) and buses to communicate and provide peak hour priority for transit vehicles on State Street between Calle Laureles and US 101.
3.	Regional Traveler Information Website: Project consists of developing a regional traveler information website that would provide real time, map-based information on road closures, CHP incident reports, and Highway 101 traffic conditions.

Exempt Status: (Check One)

- Ministerial
- Statutory
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- No Possibility of Significant Effect [Sec. 15061 (b,3)].

CEQA Guideline Section: 15301

Reasons to support exemption findings (attach additional material, if necessary):

1. Project falls within the exempt Class 1 under Article 19, Section 15301 of the CEQA guidelines
2. A Preliminary Environmental Study (Assessment) was prepared which indicated no potential effects to either the physical environment or the social and economic environment.

Jim Kemp, Executive Director

Date

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/ CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

05-SB-0-SBCG

Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)

P.M/P.M.

05-4A9668

E.A. (State project)

DEMO-05L-6090 (047)

Federal-Aid Project No. (Local project)/ Proj. No.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

(Briefly describe project, purpose, location, limits, right-of-way requirements, and activities involved.)

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), with funding from the Federal Highway Administration, proposes a project to (1) implement traffic signal synchronization along two road segments, on Los Carneros Road from US 101 to El Colegio Road, and Carrillo Street from Chapala Street to US 101; and, (2) implement a transit signal priority system along Upper State Street, from Calle Real to Calle Laureles. The work does not include any ground disturbing activities or construction. The project activities consist primarily of changes to existing traffic signal timing plans, and development of a traveler information website. The project has been reviewed to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

CEQA COMPLIANCE (for State Projects only)

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the following statements (See 14 CCR 15300 et seq.):

- If this project falls within exempt class 3, 4, 5, 6 or 11, it does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law.
- There will not be a significant cumulative effect by this project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- There is not a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- This project does not damage a scenic resource within an officially designated state scenic highway.
- This project is not located on a site included on a list compiled pursuant to Govt. Code § 65962.5 ("Cortese List").
- This project does not cause a substantial adverse effect on the significance of a historical resource.

N/A

CALTRANS CEQA DETERMINATION

Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the above statements, the project is:

- Categorically Exempt. Class** _____. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
- Categorically Exempt. General Rule 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 (CCR 15061[b][3])]

Print Name: Environmental Branch Chief

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

NEPA COMPLIANCE

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117, and based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that this project:

- does not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment as defined by NEPA and is excluded from the requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and
- has considered unusual circumstances pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(b) (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/23cfr771.htm> - sec.771.117).

In non-attainment or maintenance areas for Federal air quality standards, the project is either exempt from all conformity requirements, or conformity analysis has been completed pursuant to 42 USC 7506(c) and 40 CFR 93.

CALTRANS NEPA DETERMINATION

- Section 6004:** The State has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out, the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Code, Section 326 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated June 7, 2007, executed between the FHWA and the State. The State has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:
 - 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(1)
 - 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()
 - Activity listed in the MOU between FHWA and the State

Section 6005: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that the project is a CE under Section 6005 of 23 U.S.C. 327.

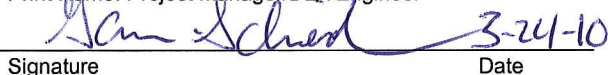
Gary Ruggeroni

Garin Schneider

Print Name: Environmental Branch Chief

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

 3/24/10

 3-24-10

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet. Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., air quality studies, documentation of conformity exemption, FHWA conformity determination if Section 6005 project; §106 commitments; §4(f); §7 results; Wetlands Finding; Floodplain Finding; additional studies; and design conditions). **Revised September 15, 2008**