



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

**Project Information**

**Project Name (if applicable): Pennsylvania Avenue Grade Separation Project**

**DIST-CO-RTE: 08-RIV-10**

**PM/PM: 8.1/8.3**

**EA: 1P300 Federal-Aid Project Number:**

**PN: 0823000158**

**Project Description**

The City of Beaumont (City), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is proposing a grade separation at the existing Pennsylvania Avenue/Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) at-grade crossing through the construction of an underpass (i.e., roadway would be depressed under the existing rail line) (Project). The roadway improvements would extend along Pennsylvania Avenue from 3rd Street to the south, to just north of the I-10 off-ramp to the north. Following construction, the horizontal alignment for the rail line would remain in its current location, while the vertical alignment/elevation would involve slight adjustment (elevation would vary from zero to two feet compared to the existing elevation). The width of the new bridge would be approximately 105 feet. (see Continuation Sheet)

**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 21080.13; 14 CCR 15282(g))
- Categorically Exempt. Class** Enter class. (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**

Gita Tokhmafshan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Project Manager**

Samer Georges

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

[X] 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)(Enter activity number)
[ ] 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
[ ] Activity Enter activity number 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

NA

Print Name

Signature

Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

NA

Print Name

Signature

Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): NA

Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: NA

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:

#### Project Description (continued)

The existing roadway condition on Pennsylvania Avenue consists of two through lanes in each direction (northbound [NB] and southbound [SB]), a center median, and a dedicated left-turn pocket from SB Pennsylvania Avenue to the eastbound (EB) Interstate (I-) 10 on-ramp. In addition, a sidewalk is present along the SB side of Pennsylvania Avenue that extends from East 1st Street to the south to East 6th Street to the north.

Consistent with the existing roadway cross-section, following construction of the Project Pennsylvania Avenue would consist of two through lanes in each direction (NB and SB), a center median, a dedicated left-turn pocket from SB Pennsylvania Avenue to the EB I-10 on-ramp, and a sidewalk in the SB direction. In addition, the following improvements would be included:

- Sidewalk along the NB side of Pennsylvania Avenue
- Reprofilng of existing I-10 EB on-ramp and westbound (WB) off-ramp for a distance of approximately 300 feet and 800 feet, respectively, to match the lowered elevation of Pennsylvania Avenue
- Addition of traffic signals at the Pennsylvania Avenue/I-10 EB on-ramp and Pennsylvania Avenue/I-10 WB off-ramp intersections
- Retaining wall along the NB side of the I-10 EB on-ramp
- Relocation of the existing sewer line that is located along Pennsylvania Avenue to accommodate the lowering of the existing roadway. The sewer line would be rerouted west along East 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Massachusetts Avenue where it would then travel south. A jack and bore approach would be used to install the sewer line under I-10, and the line would tie-into the existing sewer line that exists just south of I-10 and north of the UPRR alignment.

A shoofly (approximately 4,000 feet in length) would be created just south of, and parallel to, the existing UPRR tracks for use during construction to minimize impacts to UPRR.

The portion of the work within Caltrans' right of way includes installing traffic signals, sewer relocation, retaining walls, new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb ramps, sidewalks, and modification to the EB I-10 on-ramp and WB I-10 off-ramp at Pennsylvania Avenue.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this project is to grade separate Pennsylvania Avenue from the UPRR line, thereby eliminating an existing at-grade railroad crossing. This is consistent with **Public Resources Code § 21080.13** which provides a statutory exemption for railroad grade separation projects that eliminate existing at-grade crossings. **The CEQA Guidelines**, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, further affirm this exemption under **§ 15282(g)**.



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The current at-grade crossing experiences approximately 41 trains and 12,000 vehicles per day, according to the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) Grade Separation Priority Update Study (March 2012). These numbers are projected to rise to 100 trains and 20,000 vehicles per day by 2035. Vehicle wait time at this location has become a growing concern—traffic delay at the at-grade crossing was estimated at 18 hours per day in 2010 and is forecasted to reach 165 hours per day by 2035. In June 2022, a single train stoppage resulted in more than eight hours of congestion, severely impacting both local and regional travel.

Taking into account the anticipated increase in rail and vehicle volumes, eliminating the at-grade crossing is essential for enhancing safety, reducing operational delays, and minimizing collision risks. Grade separation at the UPRR crossing on Pennsylvania Avenue will address these needs by eliminating at-grade conflicts, improving congestion, and reducing accident potential.

## Notice of Exemption

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

County Clerk  
County of Riverside  
2724 Gateway Dr.  
Riverside, CA 92507

**From:** Caltrans District 8  
464 W 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Project Title: Pennsylvania Avenue Grade Separation Project (EA 1P300)

Project Applicant: Caltrans District 8

Project Location - Specific: The Union Pacific Railroad crossing at Pennsylvania Avenue (Post Mile 8.1/8.3)

Project Location - City: Beaumont, CA Project Location - County: Riverside

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The City of Beaumont (City), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is proposing a grade separation at the existing Pennsylvania Avenue/Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) at-grade crossing through the construction of an underpass (i.e., roadway would be depressed under the existing rail line) (Project). The roadway improvements would extend along Pennsylvania Avenue from 3rd Street to the south, to just north of the I-10 off-ramp to the north. Following construction, the horizontal alignment for the rail line would remain in its current location, while the vertical alignment/elevation would involve slight adjustment (elevation would vary from zero to two feet compared to the existing elevation). The width of the new bridge would be approximately 105 feet.

The existing roadway condition on Pennsylvania Avenue consists of two through lanes in each direction (northbound [NB] and southbound [SB]), a center median, and a dedicated left-turn pocket from SB Pennsylvania Avenue to the eastbound (EB) Interstate (I-) 10 on-ramp. In addition, a sidewalk is present along the SB side of Pennsylvania Avenue that extends from East 1st Street to the south to East 6th Street to the north.

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a center median, a dedicated left-turn pocket from SB Pennsylvania Avenue to the EB I-10 on-ramp, and a sidewalk in the SB direction. In addition, the following improvements would be included:

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- Retaining wall along the NB side of the I-10 EB on-ramp
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The portion of the work within Caltrans' right of way includes installing traffic signals, sewer relocation, retaining walls, new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb ramps, sidewalks, and modification to the EB I-10 on-ramp and WB I-10 off-ramp at Pennsylvania Avenue.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Caltrans

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Beaumont

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. State type and section number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: CCR Section 15282(g) (PRC 21080.13)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The purpose of this project is to grade separate Pennsylvania Avenue from the UPRR line, thereby eliminating an existing grade crossing. This is consistent with Section 21080.13 of the Public Resources Code (and Section 15282(g) of the CEQA Guidelines).

Lead Agency Contact Person: Gita Tokhmafshan

Phone number: 909-501-5742

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Lead Agency       Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.