

O. Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing (Project No. ST-14-05) – Environmental Review Determination

Recommendation:

1. Find that the Project qualifies for a Statutory Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(10) since the project constitutes a modernization of an existing station and parking facility; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to file a Notice of Exemption with the County.



Camarillo City Council

AGENDA REPORT

Date: November 8, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Greg Ramirez, City Manager

Submitted by: Dave Klotzle, Public Works Director

Subject: Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing (Project No. ST-14-05) – Environmental Review Determination

BACKGROUND

The Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing – Project No. ST-14-05 (Project) will construct a new pedestrian tunnel at the Camarillo Train Station owned by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) located as shown on the location map (Attachment 1). The Project will improve accessibility by creating a shorter and more direct route for rail passengers crossing between the west and east rail platforms. The undercrossing will also improve accessibility for the general public, making it easier for all pedestrians to cross the train tracks that separate the Pleasant Valley Fields and Village at the Park/Mission Oaks neighborhoods from Old Town Camarillo. The Project is currently in the Conceptual Design and Environmental Review phase.

On May 26, 2020, the City was awarded a grant for Proposition 1B and Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program funds in the amount of \$6.89 million through Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor (LOSSAN) for the construction phase of the Project. At that time, the City agreed to commit to a minimum of \$910,000 in matching City funds in order to receive the grant.

On March 10, 2021, the City Council approved a Professional Service Agreement with RailPros, Inc. (RailPros) for preliminary engineering design services in the not-to-exceed amount of \$302,026.90.

Consistent with the City Council's direction, staff worked with VCTC to pursue additional state and federal grant funding for the Project. On May 17, 2023, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved an additional \$1.3 million of LOSSAN grant funding for a total of \$8.19 million of LOSSAN grant funding for the project. These grant funds are sufficient to complete final design of the Project.

On May 24, 2023, the Project was presented to City Council to recommend approval of agreements to accelerate the Project's design to meet required grant milestones. The

City Council expressed concerns over Project ownership, maintenance, safety, decreased train ridership, and the total cost of the Project. The agenda item was continued to the next meeting, and on June 14, 2023, VCTC presented the Project to the City Council to address the need and benefits of the proposed pedestrian undercrossing. At that meeting the City Council approved a professional service agreement with RailPros for conceptual design and environmental review services in the not-to-exceed amount of \$750,807.00 and authorized the City Manager to execute the agreements with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink).

The City Council also expressed several expectations including: 1) the Project design process include review and input from the Camarillo Police Department to ensure quick access to and overall safety of the undercrossing; 2) the City execute an agreement with VCTC including liability, indemnification and maintenance responsibilities for the undercrossing and train station property; 3) no additional City funds are spent on the Project; and 4) updating City Council as the project proceeds.

On June 28, 2023, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) awarded a Senate Bill 1 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SB1 SCCP) grant in the amount of \$7.92 million to fund the construction of the Project and the remainder of the estimated total Project cost. As a condition of the SB1 SCCP grant, the environmental review phase of the Project is required to be completed by December 28, 2023.

DISCUSSION

The proposed pedestrian undercrossing project includes demolition of existing hardscape, relocation of existing utilities and drainage infrastructure, a tunnel under the two existing railroad tracks, access stairs, ramps and sidewalks, lighting, and security gates and cameras. The Project will also reconstruct ten accessible parking stalls and install new landscaping on both sides of the tracks.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Determination

The City's design and environmental consultant reviewed the Project, performed an environmental analysis, and the City prepared a Notice of Exemption (Attachment 2) for the Project in accordance with the 2023 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes & Guidelines and the City's CEQA Environmental Guidelines.

Based on the analysis by the environmental consultant, Rincon Consultants, Inc., as detailed in the Statutory Exemption Memorandum (Attachment 3), the Project meets the provisions of both CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(10) statutorily exempt mass transit projects involving "the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines or high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities." Therefore, the Project has been determined to meet all criteria for a Statutory Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(10).

Baseline Agreement

The SB1 SCCP grant requires that VCTC and the City execute a Baseline Agreement with Caltrans outlining the grant requirements and deadlines for completion. The Baseline Agreement is tentatively scheduled to be presented at the March 2024 CTC meeting for approval. As part of the Baseline Agreement, the City will need to provide a Project Report with the conceptual design, Project Vicinity Map, proposed schedule with milestones for completion, cost estimate, and the completed Environmental Document prior to the CTC meeting. Staff plans to return to City Council in December 2023 to request authorization for the City Manager to execute the Baseline Agreement and again in late 2024 or early 2025 to provide an update on the preliminary project design and maintenance responsibilities pending development of conceptual designs based on coordination and concurrence from VCTC, UPRR, LOSSAN, Metrolink, and Caltrans/State funding agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action.

CEQA DETERMINATIONS

The Project is not subject to CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(10), which exempts from CEQA review certain mass transit projects. This agenda item meets the criteria for this exemption because the Project is a mass transit project involving the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines or high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

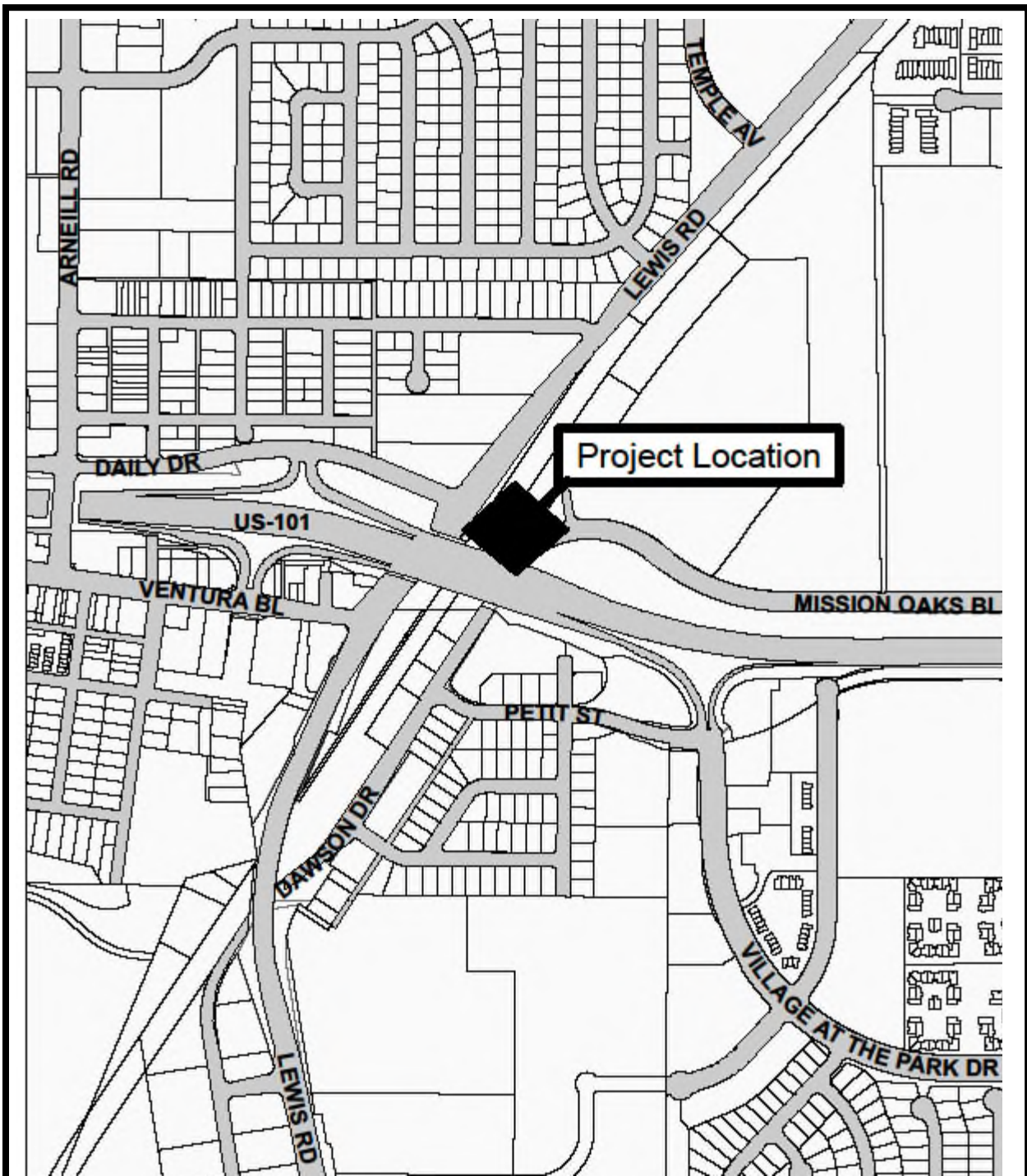
1. Find that the Project qualifies for a Statutory Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(10) since the project constitutes a modernization of an existing station and parking facility; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to file a Notice of Exemption with the County

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location Map
2. Notice of Exemption
3. Exemption Memorandum

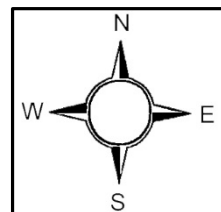
REFERENCE MATERIALS – AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT CITY HALL

None



CITY OF CAMARILLO

**Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing
Project No. ST-14-05
Location Map**



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

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

County Clerk

County of: Ventura

800 S. Victoria Avenue

Ventura, California 93009

From: (Public Agency): City of Camarillo
601 Carmen Drive
Camarillo, California 93010

(Address)

Project Title: Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing Project

Project Applicant: City of Camarillo

Project Location - Specific:

Camarillo Train Station (30 S. Lewis Road) adjacent to Dawson Dr, SR-34, & U.S. 101

Project Location - City: Camarillo Project Location - County: Ventura

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project proposes to construct a new undercrossing beneath two existing Union Pacific Railroad tracks, providing additional pedestrian access to the Camarillo Train Station and associated parking areas. Overall, the project is intended to make a more direct, convenient, and accessible path to access the platforms on either side of the tracks from both the eastern and western parking lot.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Camarillo

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Camarillo, Department of Public Works

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: PRC Section 21080(b)(10) and 15275(a)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project has been determined to qualify for a Statutory Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) [PRC Section 21080(b)(10)] since the project constitutes a modernization of an existing station and parking facility.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Thang Tran Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (805) 388-5345

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

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____



Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing Project

Statutory Exemption Memorandum

prepared by

City of Camarillo

601 Carmen Drive

Camarillo, California 93010

Contact: Thang Tran

prepared with the assistance of

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

180 N Ashwood Avenue

Ventura, California 93003

August 2023

rincon

RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC.

Environmental Scientists | Planners | Engineers
rinconconsultants.com

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1. Introduction

This memorandum serves as the documentation of analysis performed by Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) on behalf of the City of Camarillo for the Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing Project (project). The intent of the analysis is to identify how the project meets the provisions of Public Resources Code (PRC) 21080(b)(10) and CEQA Guidelines 15275(a), both of which provide a Statutory Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This memorandum will accompany a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the project.

2. Project Overview

Project Location

The project site is located at the Camarillo Train Station (30 S. Lewis Road, Camarillo, California 93010) and is adjacent to Dawson Drive to the east, State Route (SR-34 Lewis Road) to the west, and the U.S. 101 (Ventura Freeway) overpass and existing Caltrans pedestrian overcrossing to the south (Figure 1). The project site extends from the Camarillo Train Station's eastern parking lot to the Camarillo Train Station's western parking lot. The project site generally consists of previously disturbed areas, including an existing rail line and two parking lots. The area surrounding the project site has been previously developed and is considered urban due to adjacent high density residential uses and commercial industrial uses to the west, and industrial uses north, south, and east.

Project Description

The City proposes to construct a new pedestrian undercrossing beneath two existing railroad tracks, providing additional pedestrian access to the Camarillo Train Station and associated parking areas. The project would require the partial demolition of existing parking areas, the relocation of existing water lines, electric lines, and fiber optic lines, the removal of existing drainage infrastructure, and the addition of paved sidewalks. The project would reconstruct six handicap parking spaces in the eastern parking lot, and four handicap parking spaces in the western parking lot. The project also includes new landscaping on both sides of the tracks.

The existing railroad tracks are owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and are utilized by the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink, and Amtrak. The station parking lot is owned by Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and is separated by the train tracks into an eastern and western side. Access to trains on the western track is provided by the western parking lot, and access to trains on the eastern track is provided by the eastern parking lot. The undercrossing would be constructed adjacent to Dawson Drive, SR-34, the U.S. 101 (Ventura Freeway) overpass, and an existing Caltrans pedestrian overcrossing. The existing Caltrans pedestrian overpass was originally constructed to support pedestrian usage from the adjacent roadways and was not intended to support the station parking lot or train access. Both sides of the proposed undercrossing would be accessible by stairs and by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant switchback ramps. Platforms would be added on each side to support entry and exit from the undercrossing to both sides of the parking lot. Overall, the project is intended to make a more direct, convenient, and accessible path to access the platforms on either side of the tracks from both the eastern and western parking lot.

Figure 1 Project Location



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2023.

22-13995 EPS
Fig 2 Project Location

Project Construction

Construction is estimated to take place over approximately 18 months and would be separated into two phases, with only one track out of service at a time and the other track remaining open to support continued rail usage. Track closures would be temporary and would last for a single construction phase. Construction staging, worker parking, and site access would be provided within the existing Camarillo Train Station parking lot on either side of the tracks. The project would utilize a cut and cover construction method. The undercrossing would be constructed with pre-cast boxes and case-in-place walls. The opening of the undercrossing would be approximately 14 feet wide from wall to wall, 9 feet high from floor to soffit, and 44 feet long from end to end of the tunnel. The project would require approximately 1,975 cubic yards of excavation at a maximum anticipated depth of up to 14 feet below ground surface. Overall, the project would result in a total disturbance area of approximately 11,750 square feet (0.27 acre).

3. Statutory Exemption Applicability Analysis

PRC Section 21080(b)(10) statutorily exempts “a project for the institution or increase of passenger or commuter services on rail or highway rights-of-way already in use, including modernization of existing stations and parking facilities. For purposes of this paragraph, ‘highway’ shall have the same meaning as defined in Section 360 of the Vehicle Code.”

Similarly, CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) statutorily exempts mass transit projects involving “the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines or high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities.”

The following analysis assesses how the project meets PRC Section 21080(b)(10) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) stipulations.

(1) The project is a mass transit project.

The project involves the construction of a new pedestrian undercrossing beneath two existing railroad tracks, which would enhance pedestrian access to the Camarillo Train Station and associated parking areas. Camarillo Train Station consists of two platforms with two tracks that are utilized by the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink, and Amtrak. Because the project would be supporting the Camarillo Train Station, the project meets this requirement.

(2) The project involves the institution or increase of passenger or commuter services on rail lines already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities.

The project proposes to construct a new pedestrian undercrossing beneath two railroad tracks at an existing train station. Both sides of the proposed undercrossing would be accessible by stairs and by ADA-compliant switchback ramps. Platforms would be added on each side of the undercrossing to support entry and exit between the undercrossing and both sides of the existing parking lot. The project also includes reconstruction of parking spaces in the eastern and western parking lots and installation of new landscaping on both sides of the tracks. The new pedestrian undercrossing would provide a more direct, efficient, and safer path to access the platforms on either side of the tracks from both the eastern and western parking lots. The proposed improvements would constitute a modernization of an existing train station and existing parking facilities. Therefore, the project meets this requirement.



4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented herein, the proposed Camarillo Train Station Undercrossing Project meets all criteria for a Statutory Exemption from CEQA. Therefore, it is concluded that the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to PRC Section 21080(b)(10) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a).