

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department of Public Works/Transportation Division
(Lead Department/Division)

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 (Pub. Res. Code Section 21000 et seq.), as defined in the State CEQA Guidelines and County Revised CEQA Guidelines.

APN(s) N/A **Project No.** 740533

LOCATION: Countywide; covers the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County.

PROJECT TITLE: County of Santa Barbara Active Transportation Plan; All Supervisorial Districts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Request for the Board to consider and adopt the County of Santa Barbara Active Transportation Plan (ATP). The ATP is the County’s first plan to evaluate walking and biking infrastructure throughout the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County. The ATP assesses existing conditions and user needs, incorporates public and stakeholder input, and identifies projects that help promote a more comfortable and convenient active transportation network that will connect more people to jobs, goods, services, and transit.

The ATP is an informational planning document. The project ideas identified in the plan are conceptual in nature and do not constitute engineering level analyses. Rather, the project ideas in the ATP reflect the long-term vision for priority corridors in the unincorporated areas. Implementation of the ATP will occur over many years as the Board of Supervisors directs project funding and prioritization. Project-specific CEQA analyses may be required depending on the location and scale of each project as they are implemented.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Santa Barbara

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Public Works Transportation Division

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption (PRC § 21080.20; CEQA Guidelines § 15262)
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section: SB 922 (Chapter 987, Statutes of 2022) amended PRC Sections 21080.20 and 21080.25. Section 21080.20 establishes a statutory exemption for bicycle and transit plans. SB 922 expanded this exemption to include active transportation plans and pedestrian plans.

Additionally, in accordance with Article 18 (Statutory Exemptions) of the State Guidelines of the Implementation of CEQA, adoption of the ATP is not a legally binding activity and is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies).

Reasons to support exemption findings: PRC § 21080.20 statutorily exempts active transportation plans, pedestrian plans, and bicycle transportation plans from the provisions of CEQA. PRC § 21080.20 defines active transportation plans as “a plan developed by a local jurisdiction that promotes and encourages people to choose walking, bicycling, or rolling through the creation of safe, comfortable, connected, and accessible walking, bicycling, or rolling networks, and encourages alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips.” The ATP meets this definition and included extensive public outreach and opportunities to provide input, including publication in local newspapers.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 18 (Statutory Exemptions) of the CEQA Guidelines, adoption of the ATP is not a legally binding activity and is, therefore, exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies), which states:

A project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require the consideration of environmental factors. This section does not apply to the adoption of a plan that will have a legally binding effect on later activities.

Consistent with this exemption, the ATP is a local-level feasibility and planning study, which provides a broad range of improvements within public rights-of-way that will be developed further when project-specific funding and prioritization occurs. Adoption of the ATP will not result in any physical changes to the environment. If any of the project ideas identified in the ATP are implemented, separate environmental analysis may be required. Therefore, the ATP will not have a legally binding effect on later activities as it is only a planning study and does not contain any mandatory measures or amendments to the County’s Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Codes.

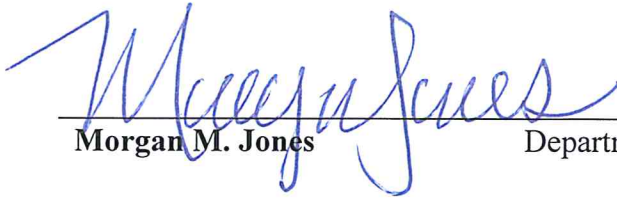
There is no substantial evidence that there are any unusual circumstances (including future activities) resulting in (or which might reasonably result in) significant impacts which threaten the environment. Therefore, the ATP satisfies all criteria of PRC § 21080.20 and CEQA Guidelines § 15262.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Chris Sneddon, Deputy Director, Public Works-Transportation Division, Phone: (805) 568-3064

Department/Division Representative: Morgan M. Jones, Engineering Environmental Project Team Leader.

Acceptance Date: **May 2, 2023**

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff for posting



Morgan M. Jones

Department Representative

March 15, 2023

Date

NOTE: A copy of this document must be posted with the County Clerk of the Board after project approval to begin a 35 day statute of limitations on legal challenges.

Distribution: Date Filed by County Clerk: _____.