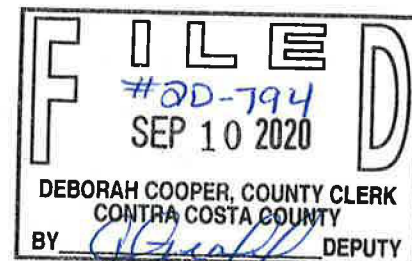


NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

FROM: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Maintenance & Engineering Department
300 Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94607

☒ Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder's Office
555 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553



Project Title: Measure RR Program Traction Power System Improvements Project

Project Location (Specific): Oak Street and Ohlone Greenway intersection
(APN 504-160-xxx)

Project Location (City): El Cerrito

Project Location (County): Contra Costa

Project Description: The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is an electricity-powered commuter transit line. Electrification is provided by "traction power" substations located along the transit line right-of-way. BART proposes improvements to one of its existing traction power facilities, El Cerrito Plaza Traction Power Substation, referred herein as "RCP". RCP is an at-grade, outdoor facility located northwest of the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station (6699 Fairmount Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530) near the intersection of Oak Street and Ohlone Greenway, below the aerial BART trackway. The project site is situated adjacent to the west of the Ohlone Greenway, a 4.5-mile pedestrian and bicycle path in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. The project will require facility upgrades, procurement, and installation of replacement equipment for the existing traction power switching station which currently supplies power for BART rail operations. Please see Attachment A for additional information.

This Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was prepared based on the content contained in BART's Traction Power Facilities Replacements Conceptual Engineering Report (35% level of design) dated June 6, 2016; the Preliminary 50% Geotechnical Report for BART RAS Site dated July 1, 2018; and the engineering drawings contained in BART's Traction Power Facilities Replacement 50% level of design submittal package dated November 8, 2018 and 95% level of design submittal package dated November 1, 2019.

Specific engineering drawings reviewed include:

- Existing Site and Demolition Plan (C028, C1401-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Site Plan (C128, C1403-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Grading and Drainage Plan (C428, C1421-RCP), dated 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Construction Staging Plan (C628, C1402-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Composite Plan of Utility Arrangements (U028-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%)
- Site Layout Plan (TP614-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%)
- Maintenance of Traffic Plans (C1441-RCP), dated: 11/01/2019 (95%)

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Steve Sims, Traction Power Project Manager, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Exempt Status: (check one)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 158268);
- ☐ 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: CEQA Guidelines Article 18, Section 15275(a)

Reasons why project is exempt: The proposed replacement of the traction power substation equipment qualifies for a statutory exemption from CEQA, as the projects fits into the context of the exemption language and no other significant effects on the environment will result due to unusual circumstances. Statutory exemptions from CEQA are granted by legislature. A statutory exemption from CEQA is provided under Section 21080(b)(10) of the California Public Resources Code (also found in the CEQA Guidelines Article 18 Section 15275(a)). This statutory exemption applies to mass transit projects that involve the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines already in use. This project proposes removing aging train control equipment and upgrading to a new system, which will support increased capacity and higher service frequencies. Please see Attachment A for additional information.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Steve Sims

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (510) 464-6417

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption filing.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Signature:



Date: 4/23/2020

Title: Project Manager

- ☒ 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.

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Sep 16 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT
MEASURE RR PROGRAM: TRACTION POWER SYSTEM
IMPROVEMENTS
RCP – EL CERRITO PLAZA TRACTION POWER SUBSTATION
CEQA STATUTORY EXEMPTION**

ATTACHMENT A

MARCH 2020

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Project Title:

Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Measure RR Program Traction Power System Improvements
Project
RCP – El Cerrito Plaza Traction Power Substation

2. Lead Agency Name and Address:

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Maintenance & Engineering Department
300 Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94607

3. Contact Person and Phone Number:

Steve Sims
Traction Power Project Manager
(510) 464-6417

INTRODUCTION

This notice of exemption was prepared based on the content contained in BART's Traction Power Facilities Replacements Conceptual Engineering Report (35% level of design) dated June 6, 2016; the TPF Transformer PCB Level Report prepared by BART dated February 15, 2019; the Preliminary 50% Geotechnical Report for BART RAS Site dated July 1, 2018; and the engineering drawings contained in BART's Traction Power Facilities Replacement 50% level of design submittal package dated November 8, 2018 and 95% level of design submittal package dated November 1, 2019.

Specific engineering drawings reviewed include:

- Existing Topography and Demolition Plan (C028, C1401-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Site Plan (C128, C1403-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Grading and Drainage Plan (C428, C1421-RCP), dated 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Construction Staging Plan (C628, C1402-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%), 11/01/2019 (95%)
- Composite Plan of Utility Arrangements (U028-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%)
- Site Layout Plan (TP614-RCP), dated: 06/06/2018 (35%), 11/08/2018 (50%)
- Maintenance of Traffic Plans (C1441-RCP), dated: 11/01/2019 (95%)

PROJECT LOCATION

The design for the project site will include a new at-grade and outdoor facility northwest of the existing El Cerrito Plaza traction power station, which is located northwest of the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station (6699 Fairmount Avenue) at the intersection of Oak Street and Central Avenue in the City of El Cerrito, CA 94530 (see Figures 1 and 2). The project is located in APN 504-160-xxx.

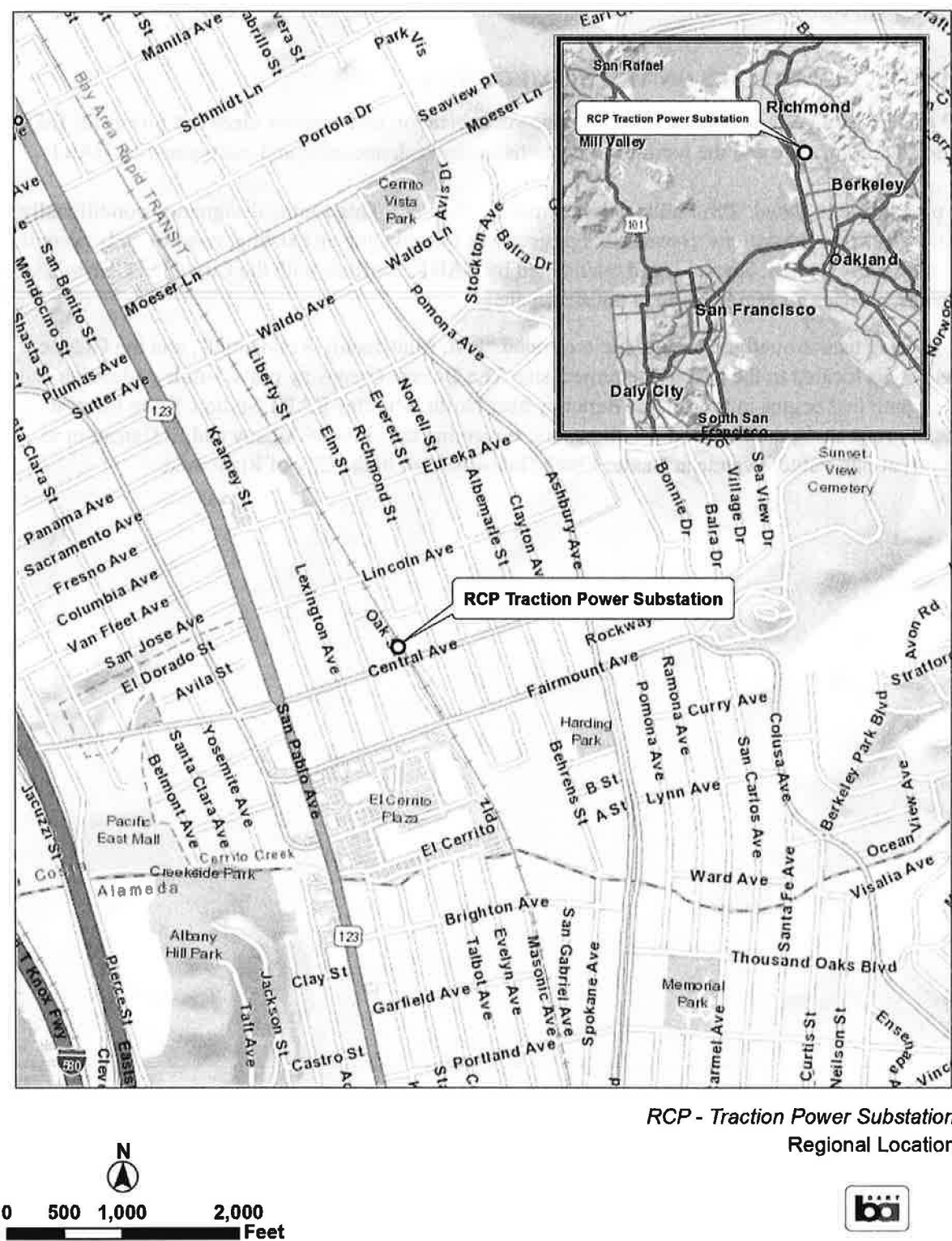
A systemwide map of BART stations and routes is provided in Figure 3 for reference to the regional passenger rail system.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON THE PROJECT SITE

RCP is an existing at-grade, outdoor traction power substation that supplies electrical power for BART trains. The project site and the facilities it contains are owned, operated, and maintained by BART.

The project site is zoned “PS, Public and Semipublic District”. This zoning designation conditionally permits electrical substations. Because the project will be replacing an existing, conditionally permitted use on property owned, operated, and maintained by BART, conflicts with the City of El Cerrito’s land use plans, policies, or regulations are not anticipated.

Neighboring uses around the project site are zoned “RM, Multifamily Residential”, and the Ohlone Greenway is located to the east of the project site. The Ohlone Greenway is a 4.5-mile pedestrian and bicycle path that begins in the City of Berkeley near North Berkeley BART Station. From there, it generally runs along the BART track alignment, traversing the cities of Albany and El Cerrito to its terminus at San Pablo Avenue at Baxter Creek Gateway Park in the City of Richmond.



RCP - Traction Power Substation
Regional Location

Figure 1. Regional Location



Project site boundaries depict approximate project area and are not exact.

Figure 2. Project Location (Aerial Photo)

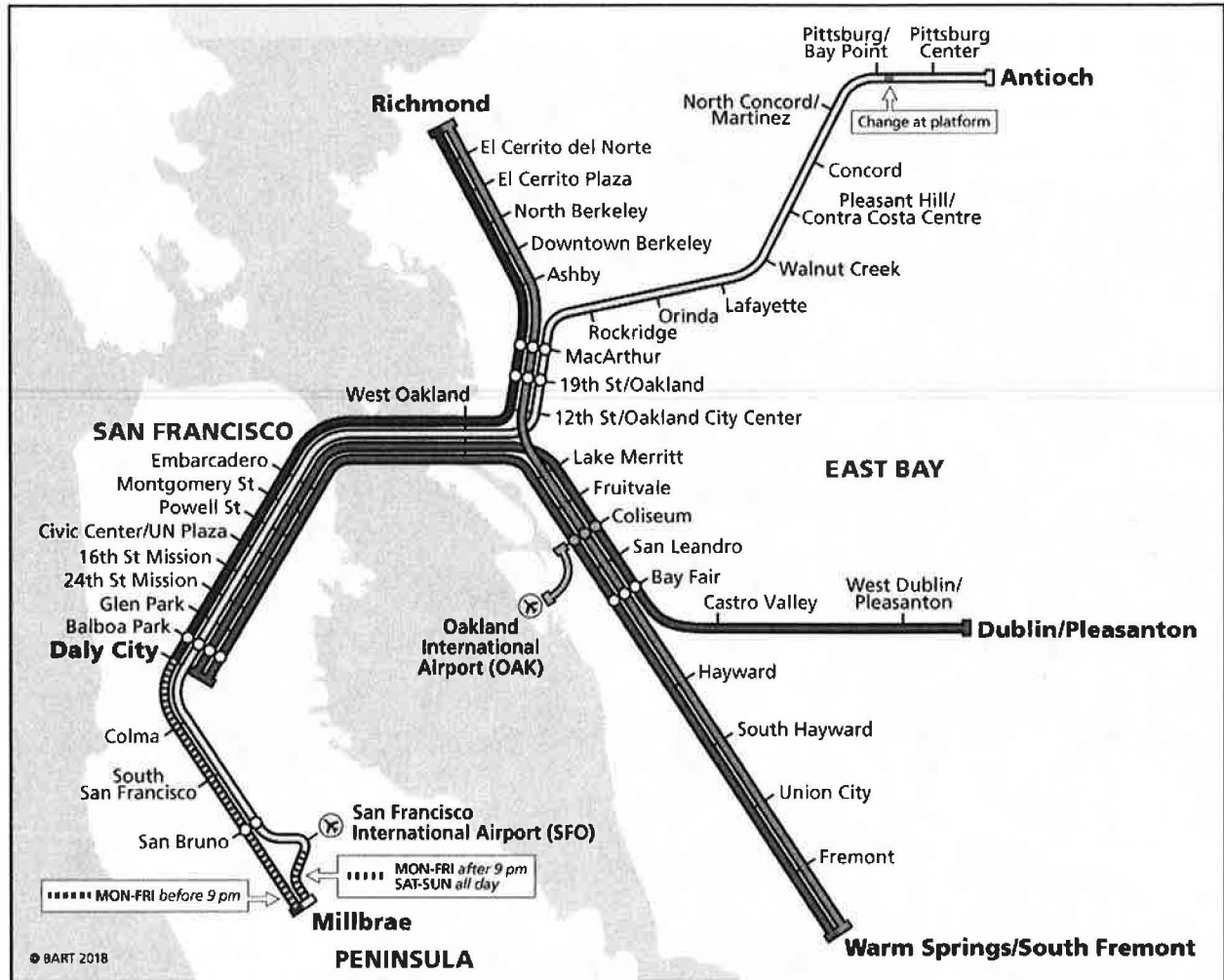


Figure 3. BART Systemwide Map

PROPOSED PROJECT AND CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS

This project includes demolition of the existing traction power substation equipment and construction of a new traction power substation located northwest of the existing substation site on BART owned, operated, and maintained right-of-way. During the design process, it was determined that a building permit and an encroachment permit will be required from the City of El Cerrito to construct the new facility and to provide for a new storm water drain connection. In addition, a sewer service permit will be required from the Stege Sanitary District to discharge stormwater from the project site into the existing sewer system. The construction contractor will be responsible to verify and obtain all the necessary permits for the construction of the project's facilities.

The new traction power substation will continue to help serve the feeding point for the third rail. The associated equipment upgrades are necessary to continue the conversion of electricity to be utilized by the BART trains for propulsion and auxiliary power supply need.

Given the scope of the project, key environmental considerations pertaining to construction and operation of the project is provided below.

PROPERTY NEEDS

Site visits conducted by BART during the design stage determined that constructing the RCP traction power substation is most feasible northwest of the existing traction power substation, below the aerial track guideway within BART right-of-way. The project will not require new property acquisitions or easements on property that is not owned, operated, or maintained by BART.

Based on the current level of design, the proposed construction laydown and staging area is located northwest of the project site below the aerial BART guideway on BART right-of-way. Construction access will occur entirely within the BART right-of-way and construction activities on the adjacent Ohlone Greenway will not be required. Therefore, traffic maintenance and detours are not anticipated during construction.

A non-designated, recreational play area is currently located within the project site boundaries on BART owned, operated, and maintained right-of-way. This recreational playground area can be described as a small, fenced sandpit with a sitting bench and trash receptacle. BART is coordinating with the City of El Cerrito to relocate this recreational use to another nearby location near Central Avenue. Through coordination with the City, the City understands that this play area will not be built until the old traction power substation is decommissioned which could take up to several years. BART will provide funding for the hardscape (poured concrete) of the play area and the City will fund any additional improvements.

AESTHETICS

Given that this project will construct new traction power facilities at-grade in a currently vacant area, potential impacts with aesthetics and visual quality were considered. The project is located in an urbanized, developed location within the City of El Cerrito. Existing views surrounding the project and nearby areas are generally urban and defined by commercial and residential buildings. No scenic vistas are within the project area and the project site is not within or adjacent to a state scenic highway. The project is not designated or identified as a scenic resource and it does not contain a scenic resource.

The scope of work for RCP includes tree removal. BART and the construction contractor will comply with local tree preservation policies and ordinances and obtain the necessary tree removal permits/approvals from the City of El Cerrito prior to construction.

The project will alter the visual landscape of the study area by adding traction power substation equipment at-grade approximately 10-15 feet above grade. However, the height of the traction power equipment will generally be screened by a new 10-foot concrete perimeter wall, resulting in a less than significant impact for viewers in the project area.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This project will require tree removal east of the project site along the Ohlone Greenway. Tree removal will be avoided from February 1 through August 31, the bird nesting period, to the extent feasible. If no tree removal is proposed during the nesting period, no further mitigation measures are required.

If any project construction activities occur during the active nesting period, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within the immediate project footprint will be conducted by a qualified biologist hired by the construction contractor. Nesting bird surveys will be conducted within one week before initiation of construction activities. If no active nests are found, no further surveys and no further mitigation will be required.

If two weeks lapse during construction within the active nesting period (i.e., if no work takes place on site for two continuous weeks during the bird nesting period), then the survey will be repeated to ensure that

any nests have not been occupied or created during the work stoppage. The survey is required each year prior to any project construction activities occurring during the active nesting period. The survey will not be required if construction does not occur during the active nesting period. With implementation of this mitigation, potential effects to biological resources associated with tree removal activities will be less than significant.

UTILITIES

A new sewer line connection will be required to discharge stormwater from the project site. BART will work with the City of El Cerrito and the Stege Sanitary District to obtain the necessary permits/approvals prior to the start of construction.

GRADING, DEMOLITION, AND TREE REMOVAL

In addition to tree removal, activities that will occur prior to construction include demolition of the existing RCP traction power substation equipment, site clearing, and grading of the project site within BART owned, operated, and maintained right-of-way. BART will work with the City of El Cerrito to obtain the necessary permits/approvals prior to the start of these pre-construction activities, as needed.

GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Geological hazards consist of fault rupturing, landslide, subsidence, flooding, scouring, liquefaction, lateral spreading, and inundation. The project site does not intersect with the Hayward Fault, it's fault zone or any other known faultline; the Hayward Fault is located 1.1 miles east of the project site. Therefore, there is no fault rupture hazard associated with the project site. The California Geological Survey does not map this site within a landslide-prone region.

According to the Draft Geotechnical Report prepared for this project, the site is designated as Soil Type D by the Unified Soil Classification System. Some acceleration of seismic waves should be expected at this site and can cause strong ground shaking during the life of the project. RCP will be built in compliance with BART facility standards based on its seismic zone and the class level of the project site.

There is a low likelihood that the project site will experience a significant flood event as it is located within the Federal Management Agency (FEMA's) Area of Minimal Flood Hazard and outside of the California Geologic Survey Tsunami Inundation Zones. The proposed traction power substation is not located directly at a river, stream or creek crossing and therefore susceptibility to scour is low. The project site is classified as moderate susceptibility to liquefaction and therefore, may be subject to lateral spreading.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Recent tests have confirmed that existing traction power substation transformers may contain elevated levels of carbon monoxide, methane, ethylene, and ethane gases or a PCB level (ppm) ≥ 50 , which are considered hazardous. For RCP, elevated levels of hazardous materials were not detected in the existing transformer according to the TPF Transformer PCB Level Report prepared by BART dated February 15, 2019.

According to the Preliminary 50% Geotechnical Report prepared for BART RCP Site, the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) reports that this site has undergone remediation for diesel from a leaky underground storage tank and contaminants may be present in subsurface material. The project will comply with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations governing the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction.

Operation of the project will involve the occasional use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials that could include limited quantities of battery acid, vehicle fuels, oils, transmission fluids, paints, solvents, cleaners, and pesticides. No industrial uses or activities are proposed that will result in the use or discharge of unregulated hazardous materials and/or substances, or create a public hazard through transport, use, or disposal, and the project will not generate large amounts of hazardous materials that will require routine transport, use, or disposal. Use and transport of hazardous materials will be regulated by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, local fire codes, and all other federal, state, and local regulations. All hazardous materials will be required to be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The project will incorporate design features to address water quality impacts. Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces will be routed through one bioretention basin on-site. Bioretention is characterized by a depressed planted area designed to collect stormwater runoff from a contributing area, while utilizing the physical and chemical processes of plants, soils, and microbes to slow, store and/or convey, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff. The bioretention basin constructed as part of RCP will filter stormwater runoff from the project site prior to discharge into the stormwater drainage system. The project may result in an increase in impervious surface but this increase will be minor (less than 1 acre in size). The project will not rise to the level of causing or contributing runoff water which will exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PARKING

Construction of this project will not result in disruptions to the adjacent Ohlone Greenway. However, detours will be required east of the project site along Oak Street during construction. On Oak Street, a temporary closure of the western sidewalk, between Central Avenue and Willow Street, will be required. In addition, temporary no-parking restrictions will be required on the eastern side of Oak Street.

PUBLIC TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS

During construction, disruptions to BART operations will not occur because the existing traction power substation will be kept energized until the new traction power substation is commissioned. There are no bus or rail stops within the immediate vicinity of the project site; therefore, potential impacts to outside transit providers are not anticipated. After construction, the rehabilitated switching station equipment will support increased capacity and higher service frequencies on the BART system.

SPECIAL DISTRICT PARAMETERS

BART was formed as a county-based special district in 1957 by the California State Legislature. The special district formation was made in response to identifying the transit needs in the San Francisco Bay Area Region. Special districts are defined as local government agencies that provide public infrastructure and other essential services, including transportation, water, and recreation and parks. Special districts operate within a defined boundary that can include areas as small as neighborhoods to areas as large as multi-county regions, depending on the demand of services being provided.

California Government Code Section 53090 states that local agencies that provide governmental or proprietary function within limited boundaries, such as rapid transit districts like BART, are exempt from complying with local land use plans, policies, zoning ordinances and building ordinances (including building permits).

Although BART's transportation facilities may be exempt from some local regulations, the District will comply with the overall intent of the local regulations to the extent feasible and will work closely with the local jurisdictions to ensure that they are included in the overall project development process.

STATUTORY EXEMPTION APPLICABILITY

Article 18 of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15260 to 15285), includes a list of classes of projects that have been determined by the California Legislature to be statutorily exempt from environmental review under CEQA. Due to the nature of the proposed project, the proposed replacement of the traction power substation equipment qualifies for a statutory exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Article 18 Section 15275(a) - Specified Mass Transit Projects.

CEQA Guidelines Article 18 Section 15275(a) states that CEQA does not apply to mass transit projects that involve 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 facilities¹.

The analysis contained in this document provides substantial evidence that the proposed project qualifies for an exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15275(a) as a Specified Mass Transit project as it will involve the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines already in use. Modernizing BART's 45+ year old train control is an important component in addressing critical capacity, reliability and safety needs as BART places 775 new train cars into service. This project entails removing aging train control equipment from the BART system and upgrading to a new system.

¹ Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code; Reference: Section 21080(b)(11), (12), and (13), Public Resources Code.



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
2020 ENVIRONMENTAL FILING FEE CASH RECEIPT
DFW 753.5a (REV. 12/01/19) Previously DFG 753.5a

StartOver

Print

RECEIPT NUMBER:

07 — 9/10/2020 — 237

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (If applicable)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

LEAD AGENCY EMAIL

DATE

9/10/2020

COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING

Contra Costa

DOCUMENT NUMBER

2020-794

PROJECT TITLE

Measure RR Program Traction Power System Improvements Project

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL

PHONE NUMBER

(510) 464-6417

PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS

300 Lakeside Dr

CITY

Oakland

STATE

CA

ZIP CODE

94607

PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)

☒ Local Public Agency

☐ School District

☐ Other Special District

☐ State Agency

☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	\$3,343.25	\$	0.00
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	\$2,406.75	\$	0.00
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	\$1,136.50	\$	0.00

☒ Exempt from fee

☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)

☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	\$850.00	\$	0.00
☒ County documentary handling fee		\$	50.00
☐ Other		\$	

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☒ Check ☐ Other chk# 365

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 50.00

SIGNATURE

X

AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

J. Graff Deputy Clerk

County Receipt Number 3876184

