RECORDING REQUESTED BY:

Kings County Association of Governments

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

KCAG
339 W. D St., Ste. B
Lemoore, CA 93245

****This document was electronically submitted to Kings County for recording****

25-198

Kristine Lee
Kings - Assessor/Clerk/Recorder
09/26/2025 09:59 AM

Recorded at the request of:

Titles: 1 Pages: 10

Fees: $
Taxes: $0.00
Total: $0.00

THIS SPACE FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY

TITLE OF DOCUMENT

Notice of Exemption for 2025 Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan

THIS PAGE IS ADDED TO PROVIDE DECLARATION OF GC 27388.1 FEE EXEMPTION

ADDITIONAL PAGE RECORDING FEE APPLIES FOR THIS PAGE

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: Kings
County Clerk-Recorder's Office
1400 W. Lacey Blvd., Hanford CA 93230

From: (Public Agency): Kings County Association of Governments
339 W. D Street, Ste. B
Lemoore, CA 93245
(Address)

Project Title: 2025 Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan

Project Applicant: Kings County Association of Governments

Project Location - Specific:
Kings County, City of Avenal, City of Lemoore, City of Hanford, City of Corcoran

Project Location - City: Countywide Project Location - County: Kings

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
The Kings County Association of Governments has prepared a Regional Active Transportation Plan to provide a comprehensive, countywide framework to expand and improve active transportation infrastructure and programming. The ATP is designed to support the development of safe, accessible and connected networks for walking and bicycling, encompassing both recreational trails and Safe Routes to School initiatives, within urban centers and rural regions located between cities and designated community areas within Kings County.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Kings County Association of Governments

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Kings County Association of Governments

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: 21080.20

Reasons why project is exempt:
This project is exempt pursuant to PRC Section 21080.20(a)(1) as the project is an active transportation plan of associated pedestrian and bikeway networks and projects intended to promote cycling and pedestrian modes having the potential to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Teresa Nickell Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 559-852-2657

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: July 10, 2025 Title: KCAG Executive Director

■ 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: _____

LSA

CARLSBAD
CLOVIS
IRVINE
LOS ANGELES
PALM SPRINGS
POINT RICHMOND
RIVERSIDE
ROSEVILLE
SAN LUIS OBISPO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 29, 2025

TO: Kings County Association of Governments

FROM: Kyle Simpson, Principal, LSA
Lauren Peachey, Environmental Planner, LSA

SUBJECT: 2025 Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan Statutory Exemption Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21-080.20 and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15276

This memorandum prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) describes the 2025 Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan (2025 RATP) in Kings County, California, and identifies how the 2025 RATP meets the provisions of Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21-080.20 and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276 (Transportation Improvement and Congestion Management Programs), which provide statutory exemptions for active transportation plans. The exemption under PRC Section 21-080.20 recognizes that active transportation plans and associated pedestrian and bikeway projects intended to promote cycling and pedestrian modes have the potential to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector and are exempt from CEQA when certain criteria are met. *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276 states that CEQA does not apply to the development or adoption of a regional transportation improvement program. This memorandum accompanies a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the 2025 RATP.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following describes the 2025 RATP. This section includes a description of the 2025 RATP's location, purpose, goals, and objectives. The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is the lead agency for review of the project under CEQA.

Project Location

The 2025 RATP would cover both urban centers, including downtown areas, and rural regions located between cities and designated community areas within Kings County. The planning effort focuses on the following jurisdictions:

- City of Avenal
- City of Corcoran (*Citywide Active Transportation Plan recently completed*)
- City of Hanford (*Citywide Active Transportation Plan recently completed*)
- City of Lemoore
- County of Kings

Context and Purpose

The 2025 RATP would provide a comprehensive, countywide framework to expand and improve active transportation infrastructure and programming. The 2025 RATP is designed to support the development of a safe, accessible, and connected network for walking and bicycling, encompassing both recreational trails and Safe Routes to School initiatives.

The 2025 RATP would promote public health, benefit disadvantaged communities, and guide the region's future development through a Complete Streets policy. The 2025 RATP emphasizes the needs of vulnerable users and prioritizes access for disadvantaged community members to schools, parks, transit facilities, and other key destinations identified in collaboration with stakeholders. The KCAG leads the effort using public engagement and interagency collaboration to identify and prioritize community-specific needs and develop feasible solutions that enhance mobility options and safety for residents throughout the county.

Planning Goals and Objectives

The 2025 RATP would identify infrastructure and programmatic improvements needed to improve access to key destinations, such as schools, workplaces, homes, shopping centers, medical and healthcare services, and civic uses.

Goals

The 2025 RATP aims to contribute to a healthier, more sustainable, and equitable Kings County by achieving the following goals:

- Increase active transportation trips through improved facilities and programming;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging a mode shift from motor vehicles;
- Promote public health through increased physical activity;
- Enhance safety for all users, especially vulnerable groups such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities; and
- Ensure equitable access to transportation infrastructure for disadvantaged communities.

Key Objectives

The 2025 RATP is designed to fulfill the following strategic objectives:

- Update the 2019 Regional Active Transportation Plan and build upon existing local agency bicycle plans, pedestrian plans, and Safe Routes to School plans;
- Support regional planning goals identified in the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS), helping to advance a more balanced and multimodal transportation system; and

- Position Kings County jurisdictions for competitive funding by identifying grant-ready projects aligned with State, federal, and regional active transportation goals.

SENATE BILL 922

Senate Bill (SB) 922, signed into law in 2022, amends PRC Sections 21080.20 and 21080.25 to exempt specific transportation plans and projects from full environmental review under CEQA. SB 922 facilitates projects that broaden California's development of sustainable transportation facilities, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, through the streamlining of CEQA review requirements. As such, SB 922 statutorily exempts many sustainable transportation projects, including improvements for walking, biking, public transit efficiency and wayfinding, rail stations, zero-emission transit refueling facilities, and carpooling, from in-depth CEQA review. This exemption expires at the end of 2029. Lead agencies must file an NOE and hold a public hearing when implementing an exemption under SB 922.

STATE CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15276

Article 18, Statutory Exemptions, of the *State CEQA Guidelines* includes, as required by PRC Section 21083, a list of classes of projects that were determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and, as a result, are exempt from review under CEQA. *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276 (Transportation Improvement and Congestion Management Programs) states the following:

> a. *CEQA does not apply to the development or adoption of a regional transportation improvement program or the state transportation improvement program. Individual projects developed pursuant to these programs shall remain subject to CEQA.*
>
> b. *CEQA does not apply to preparation and adoption of a congestion management program by a county congestion management agency pursuant to Government Code Section 65089, et seq.*

CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

The analysis below identifies how the 2025 RATP qualifies for an exemption under SB 922 and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276 (Transportation Improvement and Congestion Management Programs) and, as a result, would not have a significant effect on the environment.

Senate Bill 922

SB 922 specifically exempts active transportation plans under PRC Section 21080.20(a)(1), which states:

> *This division does not apply to an active transportation plan, a pedestrian plan, or a bicycle transportation plan for the restriping of streets and highways, bicycle parking and storage, signal timing to improve street and highway intersection operations, and the related signage for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles.*

The 2025 RATP qualifies for a Statutory Exemption under SB 922 as an active transportation plan because it is a plan developed by a local jurisdiction (KCAG) that provides a comprehensive, countywide framework to expand and improve active transportation infrastructure and programming.

A proposed plan exempt from CEQA under PRC Section 21080.20 must be in conformance with the requirement articulated in PRC Section 21080.20(b), which states that:

> *The lead agency shall hold noticed public hearings in areas affected by the project to hear and respond to public comments. Publication of the notice shall be no fewer times than required by Section 6061 of the Government Code by the public agency in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the proposed project. If more than one area will be affected, the notice shall be published in the newspaper of largest circulation from among the newspapers of general circulation in those areas.*

Section 6061 of the Government Code requires publication of the notice once. Given that specific projects proposed as part of the 2025 RATP would occur in more than one area, it is required that the notice is published "in the newspaper of largest circulation."

While the 2025 RATP itself is exempt from CEQA, individual projects that are identified in the 2025 RATP remain subject to CEQA unless another exemption applies (PRC Section 21080.20(a)(3)). Some projects within the 2025 RATP would also be exempt under SB 922 pursuant to PRC Section 21080.25(b)(1), which exempts "pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve safety, access, or mobility, including new facilities, within the public right-of-way." A pedestrian or bikeway project included in the 2025 RATP is exempt from CEQA only if it is in the public right-of-way and in conformance with the additional requirements articulated in PRC Section 21080.25(c). The analysis below demonstrates how the pedestrian or bikeway projects in the 2025 RATP meet each of the SB 922 stipulations.

1. *A local agency is carrying out the project and is the lead agency for the project. (Section 21080.25(c)(1)).*

All projects under the 2025 RATP would be implemented by the KCAG and its member jurisdictions. Therefore, projects under the 2025 RATP meet this requirement.

2. *The project does not induce single-occupancy vehicle trips, add additional highway lanes, widen highways, add physical infrastructure or striping to highways, or include the addition of any auxiliary lanes. (Section 21080.25(c)(2))*

Projects under the 2025 RATP would not add any vehicle capacity to the transportation system, Instead, projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP would add to or improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The projects may include some vehicle infrastructure; however, such infrastructure would not induce single-occupancy vehicle trips. As the projects would improve pedestrian and bicycle

infrastructure, the project may reduce overall automobile usage throughout the county. Therefore, projects under the 2025 RATP would not induce single-occupancy vehicle trips, add highway lanes, widen highways, add physical infrastructure or striping to highways, or add auxiliary lanes, and meet this requirement.

3. *Construction of the project does not require the demolition of affordable housing units. (Section 21080.25(c)(3))*

Projects under the 2025 RATP would traverse residential neighborhoods. However, it is unlikely that any projects would require the demolition of affordable or market-rate housing. Design plans are not yet available for projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP, but the KCAG would ensure that projects would be designed to avoid demolition of housing. Therefore, the projects under the plan would meet this requirement.

4. *The lead agency shall certify that the project will be completed by a skilled and trained workforce. (Section 21080.25(f)(1)(A))*

Given that projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP do not yet have design plans, KCAG is unable to confirm that construction of pedestrian and bikeway projects would be completed by a skilled and trained workforce. Therefore, projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP would require further analysis to determine consistency with this requirement and the applicability of SB 922.

PRC Sections 21080.25(d) and (e) include additional requirements for projects exceeding $100 million in costs and $50 million in costs, respectively. While it is likely that most projects included in the 2025 RATP would cost substantially less than the $100 million and $50 million thresholds, without design plans, costs are unknown at this stage. Therefore, projects under the 2025 RATP may be required to comply with the additional requirements under PRC Sections 21080.25(d) and (e), and would require further analysis to determine consistency with this requirement and the applicability of SB 922.

As presented above, projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP would be in compliance with Section 21080.25(c)(1) and Section 21080.25(c)(2). However, without project design plans, the applicability of individual projects with the remaining requirements under SB 922 is unknown. It is likely that most projects under the 2025 RATP that are within the public right-of-way would meet the remaining stipulations, and KCAG could file a separate NOE under SB 922 and PRC Section 21-080.20. However, individual projects that are either outside of the public right-of-way or do not meet one of the stipulations may require preparation of an Initial Study/(Mitigated) Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report.

***State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276**

As provided above, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276 (Transportation Improvement and Congestion Management Programs) states that projects may be exempt from CEQA if they meet one of the following criteria:

a. *CEQA does not apply to the development or adoption of a regional transportation improvement program or the state transportation improvement program. Individual projects developed pursuant to these programs shall remain subject to CEQA.*

b. *CEQA does not apply to preparation and adoption of a congestion management program by a county congestion management agency pursuant to Government Code Section 65089, et seq.*

As a regional transportation improvement program, the 2025 RATP meets Criterion 15276(a) and is therefore exempt from further CEQA review requirements. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276(a), individual projects developed pursuant to these programs shall remain subject to CEQA and would require review to determine if additional CEQA review is required.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis provided above, the 2025 RATP meets the criteria for a Statutory Exemption from CEQA. Therefore, it is concluded that the plan is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to PRC Section 21080.20, as amended and enacted by SB 922, and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15276. Future pedestrian and bikeway projects facilitated by the 2025 RATP may be eligible for a similar Statutory Exemption but may also require additional environmental review.

GOVERNMENT CODE
SECTIONS 6103 and 27383

6103 Neither the state nor any county, city, district, or other political subdivision, nor any public officer or body, acting in his or her official capacity on behalf of the state, or any county, city, district, or other political subdivision, shall pay or deposit any fee for the filing of any document or paper, for the performance of any official service, or for the filing of any stipulation or agreement that may constitute an appearance in any court by any other party to the stipulation or agreement. This section does not apply to civil jury fees or civil jury deposits. This section does not apply to the State Compensation Insurance Fund or where a public officer is acting with reference to private assets or obligations that have come under that officer's jurisdiction by virtue of his or her office, or where it is specifically provided otherwise. No fee shall be charged for the filing of a confession of judgment in favor of any of the public agencies named in this section.

No fee shall be charged any of the public agencies named in this section to defray the costs of reporting services by court reporters. Such fees shall be recoverable as costs as provided in Section 6103.5. *(Amended by Stats. 2008, Ch. 218, Sec. 2. Effective January 1, 2009.)*

27383 No fee shall be charged by the recorder for services rendered to the State, to any municipality, county in the State or other political subdivision thereof, except for making a copy of a paper or record. *(Added by Stats. 1955, Ch. 488.)*

State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife

2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE

CASH RECEIPT

DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER: 25-198

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER *(If applicable)*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
KINGS COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF		09/26/2025

COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING	DOCUMENT NUMBER
KINGS	

PROJECT TITLE

2025 KINGS COUNTY REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
KINGS COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS		((559) 852-2657

PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
339 W. D STREET, STE. B	LEMOORE	CA	93245

PROJECT APPLICANT *(Check appropriate box)*

☒ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	$4,123.50	$
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	$2,968.75	$
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	$1,401.75	$

☒ 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	$
☐ County documentary handling fee		$
☐ Other		$

PAYMENT METHOD:

☒ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other **TOTAL RECEIVED** $ $0.00

SIGNATURE	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
x Desiree Cuevas	Desiree Cuevas, Deputy County Clerk/Recorder

ORIGINAL - PROJECT APPLICANT | COPY - CDFW/ASB | COPY - LEAD AGENCY | COPY - COUNTY CLERK | DFW 753.5a (Rev. 01012025)

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT IF IMPRESSED WITH THE SEAL OF KINGS COUNTY RECORDER, THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE PERMANENT RECORD FILED OR RECORDED IN THIS OFFICE
Kristine Lee, County Clerk & Recorder, Kings County, State of California
Dated SEP 26 2025 Fee $ 8.00 By [signature] Deputy

