

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: Fresno

3330 Tulare Street

Fresno, California, 93721

From: (Public Agency): City of Fresno, Capital Project Department
747 R St. 2nd Floor
Fresno, California, 93721

(Address)

Project Title: Blackstone Smart Mobility Project SR180 to Pine Ave

Project Applicant: City of Fresno, Capital Projects Department

Project Location - Specific:

Blackstone Avenue and Abby Street from ST-180 to Pine Avenue

Project Location - City: Fresno Project Location - County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project upgrades the Blackstone Avenue corridor from State Route 180 to Pine Avenue by turning an auto-oriented roadway into a safer, more comfortable space for people walking, biking, and using transit. It carries out the community-driven Southern Blackstone Avenue Smart Mobility Strategy by introducing complete-streets features, a road diet that reduces travel lanes, and Class IV protected bikeways separated from traffic. Improvements such as raised medians, new sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, and enhanced BRT platforms create a human-scale environment that supports safety and mobility. The primary beneficiaries are pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and nearby residents who gain a more accessible, multimodal corridor.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Fresno

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Garine Kendoyan

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: Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The above exemption is related to capacity and the existing use of the roadway. It is anticipated that the project, including construction of Class IV bike lanes and installation of other safety features (curb and gutter, sidewalk, signage, striping, paving, and/or lighting) would not increase the capacity or use of the existing roadway (number of vehicles daily).

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Garine Kendoyan Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 621-8651

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: *gkendoyan* Date: 3/3/2026 Title: Project Manager

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: _____

**CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PW01023
Blackstone Smart Mobility Project**

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE CATEGORICALLY
EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

APPLICANT: Capital Projects Department
City of Fresno
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

PROJECT LOCATION: Blackstone Avenue and Abby Street between Pine Avenue and State Route 180.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Blackstone Smart Mobility Project

The City of Fresno (City) proposes the Blackstone Smart Mobility Project (project), which would construct Class IV bike lanes with raised median islands by implementing a road diet along Blackstone Avenue and Abby Street, between Pine Avenue and State Route 180. The project also would construct sidewalks and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramps; rehabilitate the pavement; and install Fresno Area Express/Bus Rapid Transit bus stop platforms, landscaping, and lighting. Traffic signal modification to existing signalized intersections would be required to incorporate a video detection system. Implementation of the project would add safety features for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians; but it would not increase the capacity of the existing roadway system.

Water Quality and Erosion Control

Construction best management practices (BMPs) would be used to reduce or eliminate the discharge of sediment and other pollutants in stormwater and non-stormwater runoff from the project site. Based on the 100% project design plans, the following construction BMPs shall be implemented by the City's construction contractor:

- Storm drain inlets and adjacent waterways shall be protected at all times from any discharge of sediment, construction debris, or waste.
- Sediment control measures shall be installed (e.g., silt fences and fiber rolls) to prevent silt runoff to public roadways or the stormwater drainage system.
- As necessary, street sweeping shall occur to remove all visible mud or dirt-track-out onto adjacent public roads.
- The contractor shall make provisions for dust and erosion control 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until project completion.
- The project site shall be maintained in a clean, orderly condition free of debris and litter; shall not be unreasonably encumbered with any materials or equipment; and shall be cleaned at the end of each working day.
- All construction vehicles and equipment used onsite shall be well maintained and checked daily for fuel, oil and hydraulic fluid leaks or other problems that could result in spills of toxic materials. A spill prevention plan with appropriate spill control and clean-up materials (e.g., oil absorbent pads) shall be retained on site in case spills or discharges occur.
- The contractor shall install stabilized construction exits at the project site.

- The contractor shall conduct site inspections before and during extended storm events 3 consecutive days of greater than 0.5 inches of rainfall and after each storm event to confirm effectiveness of BMPS.
- The contractor shall identify areas that may contribute to erosion and sediment problems or any other pollutant discharges. If additional control measures are needed, the contractor shall implement them immediately.

Noise Control

The contractor shall comply with the City of Fresno Municipal Code, Chapter 8.40, Noise Control. The Noise Ordinance limits the hours of construction activities to between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

Traffic Control

To minimize construction-related effects on local traffic, the contractor shall implement traffic control measures throughout project implementation that include:

- Retaining accessibility of the roadways throughout the project area throughout project implementation to the greatest extent feasible;
- Installing work barricades, signs, lights and flashers, as necessary, to direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
- Providing parking for the construction crew on-site or along adjacent roadways;
- Coordinating with local safety personnel to maintain effective emergency service access throughout the duration of the Project; and
- Prior to the start of construction activities, installing signage that includes the dates for construction and contact information for the City of Fresno to answer project specific questions for the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Categorical Exemption

This project is exempt under Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1), of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

City staff performed a preliminary environmental review of this project and determined that it falls within the Categorical Exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1), which exempts existing facilities under certain conditions. Staff found that the conditions are met, as described below.

Class 1 consists of “the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.” The type of “existing structures and facilities” exemplified below is the key consideration that applies to:

- (c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such transit improvements and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes.

The above exemption is related to capacity and the existing use of the roadway. It is anticipated that the project, including construction of Class IV bike lanes and installation of other safety features (curb and gutter, sidewalk, signage, striping, paving, and/or lighting) would not increase the capacity or use of the existing roadway (number of vehicles daily).

The exceptions to using a categorical exemption do not apply to the project.

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2, Exceptions, identifies the following exceptions to using a categorical exemption. Based on an examination of the project and supporting information, the project would not result in any impacts to the environment that would cause an exception to applying the Class 1, Existing Facilities, categorical exemption, to the project, as described below.

- (a) Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant.

Exception (a) does not apply because the project falls within the Class 1, Existing Facilities, exemption.

- (b) Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Exception (b) does not apply. The City has no plans to reconstruct the street or travel lanes or construct other projects or introduce other land uses at this site in the future. Therefore, the project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

- (c) Significance Effects.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for any activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Exception (c) does not apply. There is not a reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Project impacts would be typical construction-related effects (e.g., dust, traffic, noise) and would be temporary in nature. As described above, the project would include implementation of BMPs to avoid and minimize environmental impacts throughout construction activities. These include measures related to fugitive dust control, noise and traffic control, reducing erosion and sedimentation, and protecting water quality. Once constructed, the project would not result in significant impacts from operation.

- (d) Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

Exception (d) does not apply. The project terminus is adjacent to State Route 180. Portions of State Route 180 are designated as a scenic highway. However, the designated portions are located near Kings Canyon National Park and start over 18 miles from project site. Therefore, the implementation of the project would not affect any scenic highways or damage any scenic resources (Caltrans 2024).

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

Exception (e) does not apply. The GeoTracker and EnviroStor databases were checked on July 15, 2024, and there are no hazardous waste sites located within 1,000 feet of the project site. In addition, the project site is not on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (SWRCB 2023; DTSC 2023). Refer to Attachment 1, GeoTracker Database Search, and Attachment 2, EnviroStor Database Search.

- (f) Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Exception (f) does not apply. The project site does not include any historic resources (Historic Fresno 2024). Further, project implementation would be entirely within the existing road right-of-way and would not affect

any structures or other areas. The project involves grinding and excavation of the existing pavement to no more than a depth of 0.5 feet. The project would not disturb any undisturbed soils and therefore there is a de minimis chance of adverse changes to potential cultural resources. Therefore, the project would not cause substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource.

The project constitutes a single and complete project. For the reasons stated previously, the project is categorically exempt from CEQA in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1), and Section 15300.2, Exceptions.

REFERENCES:

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2024. California State Scenic Highway System Map. Accessed July 2024. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=aaa6a5dcf4d349ac8fd7b8e58e88f974>

City of Fresno. 2014. Fresno General Plan, Historic and Cultural Resources Element. Accessed December 2023. <https://www.fresno.gov/darm/general-plan-development-code/>.

DTSC (Department of Toxic Substance Control). 2023. EnviroStor Database Search, Walnut Avenue and Church Avenue, Fresno, California. Accessed July 2024. <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/>.

Historic Fresno. 2023. Local Register or Historic Resources. Accessed July 2024. <http://historicfresno.org/lrhr/index.htm>.

SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2024. GeoTracker Database Search. Accessed July 2024. <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.

Date: October 22, 2024

Prepared By: *Esther Daigneault*
Esther Daigneault, Project Manager
Harris & Associates

Submitted by: *G. Kendoyan*
Garine Kendoyan, Engineer
City of Fresno
Public Works Department
(559) 621-8651

Attachment 1, GeoTracker Database Search



PENNYWISE - 2ND CASE (T0601900719) - (MAP)

[SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS](#)

1536 BELMONT AVE E
 FRESNO, CA 93701
 FRESNO COUNTY

[LUST CLEANUP SITE \(INFO\)](#)

[COMPLETED - CASE CLOSED AS OF 12/14/2001 - DEFINITION](#)

[PRINTABLE CASE SUMMARY / CSM REPORT](#)

CLEANUP OVERSIGHT AGENCIES

CENTRAL VALLEY RWQCB (REGION 5F) (LEAD) - CASE #: 5710000740
 FRESNO COUNTY - CASE #: FA0169125

CASE MANAGER: [FRESNO COUNTY DPH, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIV](#)

[Summary](#) [Cleanup Action Report](#) [Regulatory Activities](#) [Environmental Data \(ESI\)](#) [Site Maps / Documents](#) [Community Involvement](#) [Related Cases](#)

Regulatory Profile

[PRINTABLE CASE SUMMARY](#)

CLEANUP STATUS - DEFINITIONS

[COMPLETED - CASE CLOSED AS OF 12/14/2001](#) - [CLEANUP STATUS HISTORY](#)

POTENTIAL CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN

GASOLINE

FILE LOCATION

DWR GROUNDWATER SUB-BASIN NAME

San Joaquin Valley - Kings (5-022.08)

POTENTIAL MEDIA OF CONCERN

SOIL

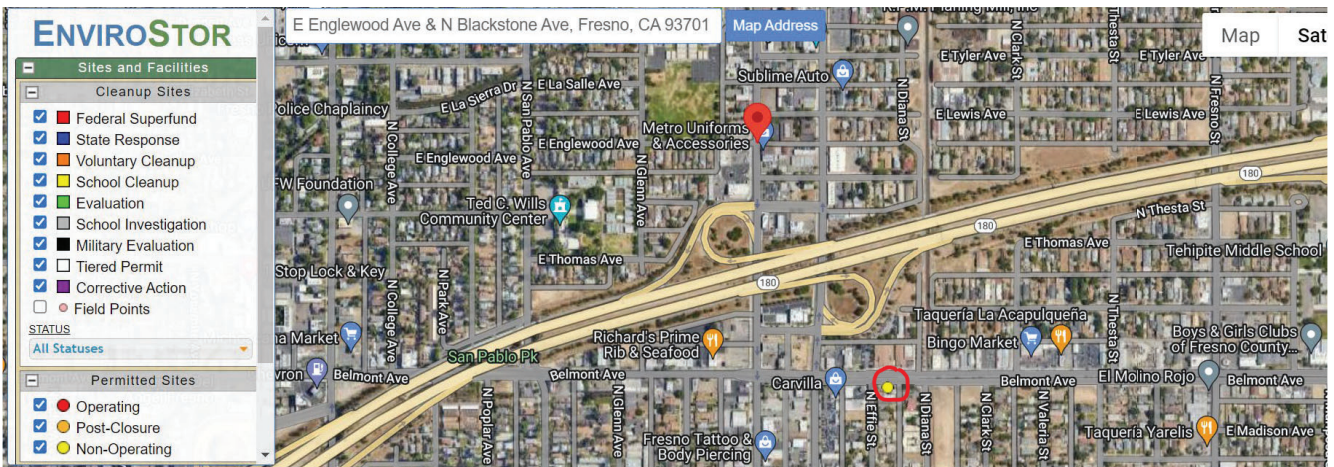
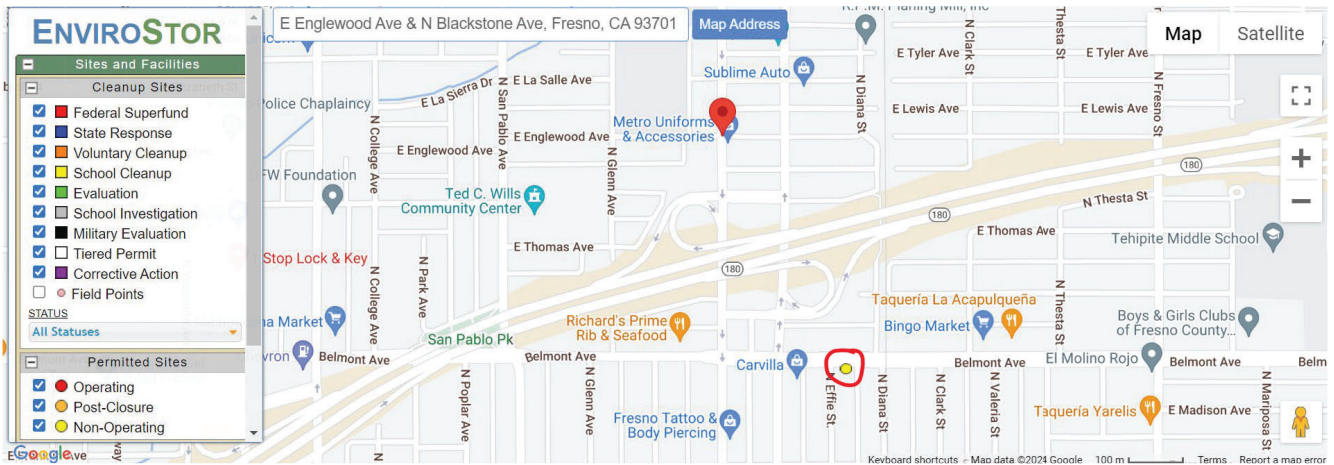
DESIGNATED GROUNDWATER BENEFICIAL USE(S) - DEFINITIONS

MUN, AGR, IND, PROC, REC_1, REC_2

CALWATER WATERSHED NAME

South Valley Floor - Fresno (551.30)

Attachment 2, EnviroStor Database Search



SAN JOAQUIN FILTER RECYCLING (CAL000188148)

[SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS](#)

1922 E BELMONT AVE
FRESNO, CA 937012059
FRESNO COUNTY

CENSUS TRACT: 6019000600
CALENVIROSCREEN PERCENTILE SCORE: 95-100% (highest scores)

FACILITY TYPE: CLOSED
PROGRAM TYPE: HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

[Permitting](#) [Activities](#) [Site/Facility Docs](#) [Map](#) [Related Sites](#) [CalEnviroScreen](#)

Site Information

ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
31

SENATE DISTRICT
14

Facility History

05/07/2018-Review of Clovis files (only region containing facility information) indicates that the facility located at 1922 E Belmont Avenue was never permitted. See Inspection report dated 01/31/1996, which states that this facility consists of the following two parts: A transporter under EPA ID CAL000188148 and a transfer facility under ID CAL000102751. The final permit dated 12/23/1997 is issued to the transfer facility trucks under the CAL000102751 ID, which continue to be an operating facility. The transfer trucks under this EPA ID (CAL000188148) were never permitted and only regulated as a transporter. Therefore, this facility is being administrative closed due to never being regulated as a TSDF.