



Notice of Exemption

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

From: (Lead Agency)
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
2150 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 464-6000

County Clerk, Counties of:

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara

Project Title: A85 Interlocking Renewal Project

Project Applicant: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)

Project Location - Specific: 2000 Bart Way, Fremont, CA 94536

Project Location – County: Alameda

Project Location – Cities: Fremont

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Rail interlockings are a vital, fail-safe system in railway signaling that manage switches and signals to divert rail traffic between tracks to prevent collisions and to safely support maintenance activities. The A85 Interlocking is old and has been scheduled for replacement. It will eventually become unreliable and would result in disruption and/or delays to service. The Project would remove BART’s existing A85 Interlocking on the mainline tracks immediately northwest of Fremont Station and replace it with new components per current BART standards. The Project scope includes replacing components of the track structure, that is the running rails, guard rails, switch points, frogs, plates, ties, and top layer of ballast.

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

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

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: 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities
- Statutory Exemptions: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

None of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, which would prohibit the use of a categorical exemption, apply to the Project. The Project is a replacement and upgrade to existing transit

facilities. The Project modifications would occur exclusively within BART right-of-way. No expansion of current space or current use is proposed. Transit service would be maintained using bus bridges.

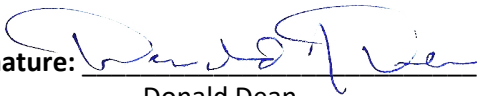
Lead Agency

Contact Person: Donald Dean

Phone/Email: 510-287-4844 / ddean@bart.gov

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:** 4/16/2026 **Title:** Mgr. of Environmental Review
Donald Dean

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110. Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 2112.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

2150 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612

NOTICE OF CEQA EXEMPTION

Project Name: A85 Interlocking Renewal Project
Project Address: 2000 Bart Way, Fremont, 94536
Counties: Alameda
BART Project No.: 15CQ015
BART Contract No.: NA
Project Sponsor: BART Construction Services
Project Contact: Mark Dana, Project Manager Construction
(510) 318-1080, mdana@bart.gov

Date of CE Determination: April 16, 2026

This CE will be filed internally

This CE will be filed with
the State Clearinghouse

This CE will be filed with the County Clerk:

- Alameda
 - Contra Costa
 - San Francisco
 - San Mateo
 - Santa Clara
-

PROPOSED PROJECT

Project Location

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is proposing the A85 Interlocking Renewal Project (Project) on BART’s mainline tracks just northwest of the Fremont BART Station at 2000 Bart Way in Fremont. The project site is adjacent to the station’s North Parking Lot.

Project Background

As funding becomes available, BART is renewing the basic infrastructure that comprises the core of the BART system, including tracks, power infrastructure, tunnels, and mechanical infrastructure. Rail interlockings are a vital, fail-safe system in railway signaling that manage switches and signals to divert rail traffic between tracks to prevent collisions and to safely support maintenance activities. The A85 interlocking is old and has been scheduled for

replacement, as it will eventually become unreliable and would result in disruption and/or delays to service.

Project Description

The Project would remove BART's existing A85 Interlocking on the mainline tracks immediately northwest of Fremont Station and replace it with new components per current BART standards. The Project would replace the existing four turnouts¹ and one diamond assembly² with similar components. The horizontal and vertical track geometry will match the existing track. The scope of the Project includes replacing components of the track structure, that is the running rails, guard rails, switch points, frogs, plates, ties, and top layer of ballast. The Project also includes replacement of traction power and train control components. The physical limits of track replacement include the interlocking's special trackwork and the diamond between the crossovers as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Construction Activities

The Project's construction activities will be conducted from within BART right-of-way and the adjacent staging area in BART's North Parking Lot. Materials would be transported to the project site by truck via Mowry Avenue. The special trackwork (crossovers and diamond) would be assembled in the staging area next to the trackway. The existing diamond and crossovers would be demolished, and along with existing ballast, lifted out by crane. The track assemblies then would be lifted onto the trackway by crane. New ballast would be brought to the staging area by truck, would also be lifted onto the trackway by crane.

The Project would include the following construction activities:

- Staging in the Fremont Station North Parking Lot
- Temporary barriers and safety measures around the construction area
- Demolition and removal of existing trackwork
- Earthwork and grading of trackway
- Installation of track and special trackwork
- Traction power and train control replacement, including new underground ductbanks³
- Hauling and removing of material from work site.
- Equipment to be used will include, but not be limited to:
 - Hi-rail trucks and maintenance equipment
 - rail saw
 - impact wrench
 - ballast tamping machine
 - crane with boom and jib boom

¹ A turnout is a track configuration that enables trains to move from one track to another.

² A diamond is a specialized at-grade intersection where two railroad tracks cross each other, forming a diamond-shaped pattern.

³ Ductbank, an assembly of buried conduit, support hardware, reinforcing material and ground conductor, that provides a pathway for electrical or telecommunications cabling.

- trucks for delivering new ballast
- backhoe
- skid steer
- front-end loader
- cement mixer
- dump trucks
- trucks/trailers
- generators
- light-plants.⁴
- roller
- telehandler
- Project staging could include but is not limited to the following construction equipment and materials: ballast; track and other materials, including rails, concrete ties, switch machines, precast ductbank sections, fiberglass raceways; demolished material; and construction trailer.

The installation would take place during a series of five, special round-the-clock weekend work periods when local BART train activity would be suspended to allow for replacement of the crossovers on the BART mainline.⁵ An AC Transit-facilitated bus bridge between BART’s Union City and Warm Springs Stations would be provided to maintain transit service during construction weekends.

Permits

No permits required.

References

- San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Project No. 15CQ015, A85 Interlocking Track Replacement, Project Specification, Issued for Construction, August 2023.
- San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, A85 Interlocking Renewal project, IFC Submittal, Volume 2, Project No. 15CQ015, August 2023.

Attachments

Figure 1: Aerial Photo Illustrating Proposed A85 Interlocking Construction and Staging Areas

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The Project is to replace a track interlocking to ensure the long-term safety and operability of BART’s system infrastructure. The A85 Interlocking Renewal Project is a construction maintenance project, and other than the five, special round-the-clock weekend work periods

⁴ A light-plant is a portable light tower used to illuminate the work zone during nighttime operations.

⁵ BART currently plans on shutdowns over five weekends. Changes in scheduling could result in a different sequence of work weekends to complete the Project.

when local BART train activity will be suspended to allow for replacement of the crossovers on the BART mainline, there will be no effect on, or change to, BART operations. Due to the nature and location of the Project, environmental impacts would be temporary and most likely be limited, as discussed below.

The BART trackway runs northwest-southeast through this section of Fremont, and the A85 Interlocking lies just northwest of the Fremont Station (Figure 1). The Interlocking Renewal Project site is in a previously developed area. The trackway itself largely consists of railroad ties, tracks and ballast. The staging area would be in the Fremont Station North Parking Lot, a paved lot adjacent to the trackway. Surrounding land uses include commercial uses south and west of the trackway, including a medical office building, the Kaiser Hospital parking garage, and Kaiser Hospital. The BART parking lot is north of the trackway, with multi-family residential uses along Waterside Circle beyond the parking lot. Mowry Avenue borders the site to the north with multi-family residential units north of Mowry Avenue. To the southeast, and the work area is bounded by more BART parking and a tule pond.

Air quality and emissions are not expected to be an issue. The off-road construction equipment would likely use Tier 4 construction equipment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) implemented “Tier 4 Final” as its engine emissions standard for new off-road heavy equipment using diesel engines. The standard was phased in through 2015. The USEPA’s goal with the new emission standard was to significantly reduce NO_x and PM emissions.⁶ Since the Project would use Tier 4 construction equipment, it would comply with USEPA emission standards and have lower PM emissions than earlier non-Tier 4 equipment.

Though grading would not be extensive, fugitive dust is a possibility during construction due to windblown particles from construction activities and stockpiles. To minimize fugitive dust emissions during construction, the Project could cover or spray water over stockpiled or other loose material.

The construction activity would take place in previously developed areas (trackway and parking lot) and not in any natural areas. The closest natural area is the tule pond adjacent to the parking lot on the south. Trees line both sides of the tracks but would not be affected by the construction. No vegetation would be removed. Using a crane with a long boom, the Project would remove components of the old interlocking and replace them with new components by lifting them over the tops of the trees.

The project site and staging area is largely paved. Although it is unlikely that there would be rain during the current project schedule, if there is a rain event during construction, sediment and other pollutants could enter the surface run-off to the tule pond that borders the construction staging area. Stockpiles of ballast also may be watered to control dust, which could lead to runoff. The Project intends to implement standard stormwater pollution control measures as required by Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, including preparation of a Water

⁶ Nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.

Pollution Control Plan (WPCP), which would protect off-site aquatic resources from receiving surface runoff or water from storm drain inlets in or near the construction area. Best management practices could include covering stockpiled material during rain events and providing sediment control devices around the perimeter of the site.

The project will require a number of two-day, around-the-clock work weekends with construction activities occurring during both day and nighttime hours. The closest noise-sensitive receptors are residences located north of Mowry Avenue, approximately 395 feet north of the track replacement area. There are also residences on Waterside Circle that are approximately 430 to 500 feet east of the trackway construction. Commercial and institutional land uses are located west of the trackway. A medical office building is as close as 70 feet from the track and Kaiser Hospital is approximately 445 feet from the tracks. The staging area is closer to both residential areas to the north and east, and BART will be cognizant of placing materials and resources as close as possible to the actual trackwork to both make construction more efficient and reduce potential issues with surrounding residents.

The BART Facilities Standards⁷ (BFS) establish procedures for monitoring noise, measuring noise, and identifies maximum allowable noise levels according to the affected land uses (residential, commercial, or industrial). BART will review BFS requirements and will attempt to comply where possible to limit noise impacts. BART will monitor noise levels and try to limit noisy work late at night.

Truck and construction access will primarily be from Mowry Avenue. A traffic handling plan would be prepared showing the principal route for construction vehicles to the site and how they would enter and exit the staging area. Depending on the volume and frequency of the trucks, the Project would consider providing a flagger. The Project would maintain contact with the City of Fremont regarding maintaining and controlling traffic, as needed.

Light plants would be used to illuminate the work area during nighttime construction. Light fixtures would be fitted with lenses, hoods, and reflectors to minimize the spillover of light and glare on nearby residences. These measures would reduce light and glare during construction by focusing illumination downward and/or restricting light from extending beyond the construction area boundaries. Based on this, no construction-related impacts to adjacent residents are anticipated from light or glare.

BART's Department of Government and Community Relations (GCR) would provide outreach and Project information to the surrounding community. Typically, GCR would use mailers, email, and/or social media to alert the community to the Project's construction, its schedule, and identify a Project representative to answer any questions. These communications are

⁷ BART Facilities Standards provide guidance and minimum standards for BART facilities and practices and for safeguarding patrons, the general public, and employees, as well as safeguarding property and on-going operations. The Standards regulate and control the design, construction, quality of materials, equipment and installation of facilities within the jurisdiction of the BART system.

usually sent 1 to 2 weeks in advance of construction, so neighbors are aware of the upcoming activity.

Elements of the original BART system are more than 50 years old and therefore are eligible to be considered for their historical significance under CEQA. The BART system has historical significance related to its history as one of the first large-scale postwar transit systems in the United States and its role inducing new development in urban and suburban settings throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. It is also an outstanding example of post-World War II Modernist architectural design and innovative transit engineering principles. Based on the role BART has played in the Bay Area, the original 33-station “core” BART system is eligible to be considered a historic district. That notwithstanding, the A85 interlocking replacement project affects only the rails, ties, and special trackwork of the mainline track. Following project completion, there would be no apparent change to the tracks and no obvious visual changes. The interlocking is only one operating element of BART’s infrastructure; it is not considered a “character-defining feature” of the system, and no historic structures or resources would be affected.

Summary

The Project is essentially maintenance work to replace an interlocking to ensure the long-term safety and operability of BART’s system infrastructure. The BART facilities would not be expanded; no expansion of existing use would occur. Except for the short-term interruption of BART service to allow construction during selected weekends, as supported by bus bridges between operating stations, no change to BART operations or service would take place. All construction and staging would take place within the BART right-of-way. The construction methods used to replace the A85 Interlocking would be consistent with other BART projects of a similar nature, using the same sequence of weekend shutdowns. Though the construction impacts may be inconvenient for some members of the local community, the potential environmental impacts would be temporary, and none would rise above the level of less-than-significant.

Possible Exceptions to CE

If a project is ordinarily exempt under any of the potential categorical exemptions, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 provides specific instances where exceptions to otherwise applicable exemptions apply. In these cases, the CEQA exemption would not apply to a project.

Yes	No	Would the project be precluded from a Categorical Exemption due to the following exception per Guidelines Section 15300.2?
	X	(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. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

	X	(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.
	X	(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
	X	(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. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.
	X	(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.
	X	(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.

Relevant Exemptions

The project would meet the criteria of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301-Existing Facilities, a Class 1 exemption.

	Statutory Exemption:
	Ministerial Exemption
X	Categorical Exemption: 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities
	Emergency Exemption
	Other Exemption

15301. Existing Facilities

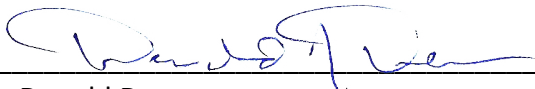
Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

Based on the foregoing evaluation, the project is determined to meet the qualifications for a Categorical Exemption for the following reasons among others:

1. None of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, which would prohibit the use of a categorical exemption, apply to the project.
2. The program is a replacement and upgrade to existing transit facilities.
3. The program modifications would occur exclusively within BART right-of-way.
4. No expansion of current space or current use is proposed.
5. Transit service would be maintained using bus bridges.

DETERMINATION

No further environmental review is required. The project is categorically exempt under CEQA. An exemption from environmental review pursuant to the provisions of CEQA has been considered and approved:



By Donald Dean
BART Manager of Environmental Review

4/16/2026
Date

Figure 1
Aerial Photo Illustrating Proposed Interlocking Construction (green) and Staging Areas (yellow)



Source: BART, March 2026