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3426 Empresa Drive, Suite 100
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Tel 805.543.7095 Fax 805.543.2367
www.swca.com

June 22, 2023

Steve Delsid
City of Fresno, Public Works Department
Engineering Services Division
2600 Fresno Street, Room 4016
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: PW00894 McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project - Supporting Memorandum for Categorical Exemption (Class 1 – Existing Facilities) / SWCA Project No. 73586-002

Dear Mr. Delsid:

This memorandum provides supporting documentation for determining the McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project (project) is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities.

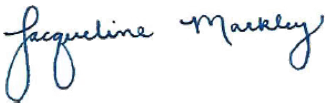
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project would include reconstruction, roadway improvements, and acquisition of right-of-way along approximately 1,000 linear feet of West McKinley Avenue and along approximately 1,700 linear feet of North Blythe Avenue along the frontages of McKinley Elementary School. Improvements would include roadway widening, addition of dedicated turn lanes, addition of bicycle lanes, restriping, and construction of sidewalks and curb ramps. The project also includes installation of a traffic signal at the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection where the intersection is currently a four-way stop-controlled intersection, and installation of curb ramps and additional crosswalks to the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection. The project would require acquisition of a total of 15,757 square feet (0.36 acre) of right-of-way along seven parcels located along the east and west sides of North Blythe Avenue and the southwest corner of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection and would result in negligible and/or minor alterations to existing land uses on those parcels.

APPLICABLE EXEMPTION

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption 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 the existing or former use. An example includes minor alterations to existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities, including but not limited to the installation of bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes. The proposed project includes reconstruction, roadway improvements, and acquisition of right-of-way along existing roadways and would not result in the addition of through vehicle lanes or otherwise change the vehicle capacity of the roadways. Further, the project would result in negligible and/or minor alterations to existing land uses on the parcels proposed for acquisition. The project improvements would not increase capacity and the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts associated with its location, cumulative impacts, scenic resources, hazardous waste sites, historical resources, energy demand, or otherwise have the potential to result in a significant effect.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Markley, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner

Attachment A Notice of Exemption

ATTACHMENT A

Notice of Exemption

Print Form

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
2220 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721-2600

From: (Public Agency): City of Fresno
2600 Fresno Street, 4th Floor
Fresno, CA 93721
(Address)

Project Title: McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project

Project Applicant: City of Fresno Public Works Department

Project Location - Specific:

East McKinley Avenue and North Blythe Avenue in the city of Fresno, California

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

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project (project) would include reconstruction, roadway improvements, and acquisition of right-of-way along approximately 1,000 linear feet of West McKinley Avenue and along approximately 1,700 linear feet of North Blythe Avenue along the frontages of McKinley Elementary School in the city of Fresno, California.
A detailed project description is included in Attachment 1.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Fresno

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Fresno Public Works Department

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:

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption 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 the existing or former use. An example includes minor alterations to existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities, including but not limited to the installation of bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes. The proposed project includes reconstruction, roadway improvements, and acquisition of right-of-way along existing roadways and would not result in the addition of through vehicle lanes or otherwise change the vehicle capacity of the roadways. Further, the project would result in negligible and/or minor alterations to existing land uses on the parcels proposed for acquisition. The project improvements would not increase capacity and the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts associated with its location, cumulative impacts, scenic resources, hazardous waste sites, historical resources, energy demand, or otherwise have the potential to result in a significant effect.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Steve Delsid Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 559-621-8725

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: _____ Title: _____

▪ 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: _____

McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project

Preliminary Project Description

The McKinley Elementary Complete Streets Project (project) would include reconstruction, roadway improvements, and acquisition of right-of-way along approximately 1,000 linear feet of West McKinley Avenue and along approximately 1,700 linear feet of North Blythe Avenue along the frontages of McKinley Elementary School in the city of Fresno, California. Improvements to West McKinley Avenue and North Blythe Avenue would include roadway widening, addition of dedicated turn lanes, addition of bicycle lanes, restriping, and construction of sidewalks and curb ramps. The project also includes installation of a traffic signal at the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection where the intersection is currently a four-way stop-controlled intersection, and installation of curb ramps and additional crosswalks to the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection. The project would require acquisition of a total of 15,757 square feet (0.36 acre) of right-of-way along seven parcels located along the east and west sides of North Blythe Avenue and the southwest corner of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection. Reconstruction and restriping activities would not result in the addition of through vehicle lanes or otherwise change the vehicle capacity of the roadways. The purpose of the project is to reconstruct West McKinley Avenue and North Blythe Avenue along the frontages of McKinley Elementary School to improve overall accessibility, safety, and navigability for all users.

The project is located along the western edge of the city of Fresno. In the immediate vicinity of the project site, parcels located to the west of North Blythe Avenue are within the unincorporated area of Kern County, and land uses east of North Blythe Avenue are within the city of Fresno. The project site is generally surrounded by McKinley Elementary School (herein referred to as McKinley Elementary) and single-family residential land uses to the north; undeveloped parcels, single-family residential uses, and a religious institution to the west; low-density rural residential land uses to the south; and single-family residential uses, neighborhood commercial uses, and a religious institution to the west. The project would be partially funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FWA).

Existing Roadway Conditions

Proposed roadway reconstruction and improvements along West McKinley Avenue would be located from the Cecelia Avenue to 400 linear feet east of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection. At this location, West McKinley Avenue is an east/west Arterial roadway with one vehicle travel lane in each direction, with no turn lanes, sidewalks, or bicycle lanes on either side.

Proposed roadway reconstruction and improvements along North Blythe Avenue would be located from the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection to the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection, which coincides with the eastern frontage of McKinley Elementary. At this location, North Blythe Avenue consists of a north/south minor collector roadway with two southbound vehicle lanes and one northbound vehicle lane. On the northern side of this roadway segment, a lefthand turn lane is provided for northbound traffic at the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection. On the southern side of this roadway segment, the outside southbound vehicle lane turns into a dedicated right-turn-only vehicle turn lane at the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection. There is an existing 4-foot-wide sidewalk located along the western side of North Blythe Avenue.

Areas adjacent to the roadways generally consist of flat topography with exposed ground, ruderal vegetation, and/or landscaped trees and hedges.

Project Components

The proposed project would result in demolition of existing roadway segments along West McKinley Avenue and North Blythe Avenue and reconstruction of these roadways to include various improvements.

Improvements to West McKinley Avenue (along the southern frontage of McKinley Elementary) would include the following:

- Widen the roadway from 43 feet to 53 feet while retaining the same number of through vehicle travel lanes;
- Restripe the roadway to include an eastbound dedicated lefthand turn lane at the western leg of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection;
- Restripe the roadway to include a westbound dedicated lefthand turn lane and shared bicycle lane/dedicated righthand turn lane at the eastern leg of the West/McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection;
- Install new curb and gutter along the roadway;
- Relocate and/or underground existing Pacific Gas & Electric utility lines located along the roadway;
- Construct an 8-foot-wide sidewalk along the northern side of the roadway; and
- Restripe the roadway to include a through bike lane on each side of the roadway.

Improvements to Blythe Avenue would include the following:

- Widen and restripe the roadway to include one northbound vehicle travel lane, one southbound vehicle travel lane, and one two-way turn lane with a bicycle lane on each side;
- Restripe the roadway to include a southbound dedicated lefthand turn lane, a shared bicycle lane, and a dedicated righthand turn lane at the northern leg of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection;
- Restripe roadway to include a dedicated righthand turn lane and a dedicated lefthand turn lane at the southern leg of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection;
- Install new curb and gutter along the roadway;
- Restripe roadway to include a dedicated righthand turn lane and through bicycle lane at the northern leg of the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection;
- Construct an 8-foot-wide sidewalk along the western side of the roadway; and
- Restripe the roadway to include a through bike lane on each side of the roadway.

Improvements to the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection would include the following:

- Install a traffic signal; and
- Construct curb ramps on the north side of the intersection.

Improvements to the North Blythe Avenue/West Weldon Avenue intersection would include the following:

- Install a curb ramp on the southeastern corner of the intersection; and
- Restripe the intersection to include a school crosswalk on the southern and eastern sides of the intersection.

The project would require acquisition of 15,757 square feet (0.36 acre) of right-of-way along seven parcels located along the east and west sides of North Blythe Avenue and the southwest corner of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection, as detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Proposed Right-of-Way Acquisition

Assessor Parcel Number	Street Address (if applicable)	Approximate Area of Right-of - Way Acquisition (sf)
31211131	1975 N. Blythe Avenue	2,129
31218053T	4444 W. McKinley Avenue	7,100
31208121ST	2107 N. Blythe Avenue	150
31208214	4354 W. McKinley Avenue	82
31208202	2186 N. Blythe Avenue	51
31208123ST	4443 W. Weldon Avenue	6,070
31218051ST	N/A	175

Acquisition of right-of-way on these parcels would result in negligible and/or minor alterations to existing land uses on those parcels including removal of one tree located at the southwest corner of the West McKinley Avenue/North Blythe Avenue intersection. The project construction period is anticipated to begin in July 2023 and would take approximately six months to complete.