

ATTACHMENT 2-ENV AMENDMENT BY BLODGETT ASSOCIATES



CEQA EXEMPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

WASHINGTON BOULEVARD/I-5 BRIDGE PAINTING COMMERCE, CALIFORNIA 90040



LEAD AGENCY:

**CITY OF COMMERCE
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
2535 COMMERCE WAY
COMMERCE, CALIFORNIA 90040**

REPORT PREPARED BY:

**BLODGETT BAYLOSIS ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
16388 EAST COLIMA ROAD, SUITE 206J
HACIENDA HEIGHTS, CALIFORNIA 91745**

SEPTEMBER 27, 2016

COMM 013



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Introduction	5
2. Project Description.....	5
3. Applicable CEQA Exemption (Class 1 Exemption and General Rule Exemption)	8
4. Findings Supporting the Applicable CEQA Exemption	11
5. Discussion of Lead Agency’s Findings	14



THIS PAGE WILL BE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.



1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption (NOE) may be filed if the City of Commerce, in its capacity as the Lead Agency, determines that a proposed action or project is exempt from CEQA. According to the CEQA Guidelines, a NOE must contain the following information:

- A description of the proposed action or project;
- A finding that the proposed action or project is exempt, including a citation of the State CEQA Guidelines section or statute under which the project is found to be exempt; and,
- A brief statement in support of the finding.¹

This NOE provides a description of the proposed bridge painting project located at Washington Boulevard and Interstate 5 and indicates the applicable sections of CEQA that support the findings for the CEQA exemption, and discusses the Lead Agency's findings that are applicable to the proposed project. This NOE also includes a discussion of the environmental impacts that support the NOE's findings for no impacts. This NOE and the supporting Environmental Assessment represents the City's independent judgment and position of the City of Commerce, acting as the Lead Agency. The project is being advanced by the City of Commerce.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located along a segment of Washington Boulevard that extends underneath Interstate 5. This area is located in the eastern portion of the City of Commerce. The City of Commerce is located approximately six miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles and is bounded by Montebello on the east; unincorporated East Los Angeles on the north; the cities of Vernon, Bell, and Maywood on the west; and the City of Bell Gardens on the south.² The project area's location in the City is shown in Exhibit 1. An aerial photograph of the project area is provided in Exhibit 2.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project will involve the painting of the Washington Boulevard underpass located directly below the I-5 freeway. Commercial uses located along the southwest abut the project area to the north.

¹ CEQA Guidelines California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Article 19. Categorical Exemptions. (Section 15300).

² United States Geological Survey. *Los Angeles 7 1/2 Minute Quadrangle*.

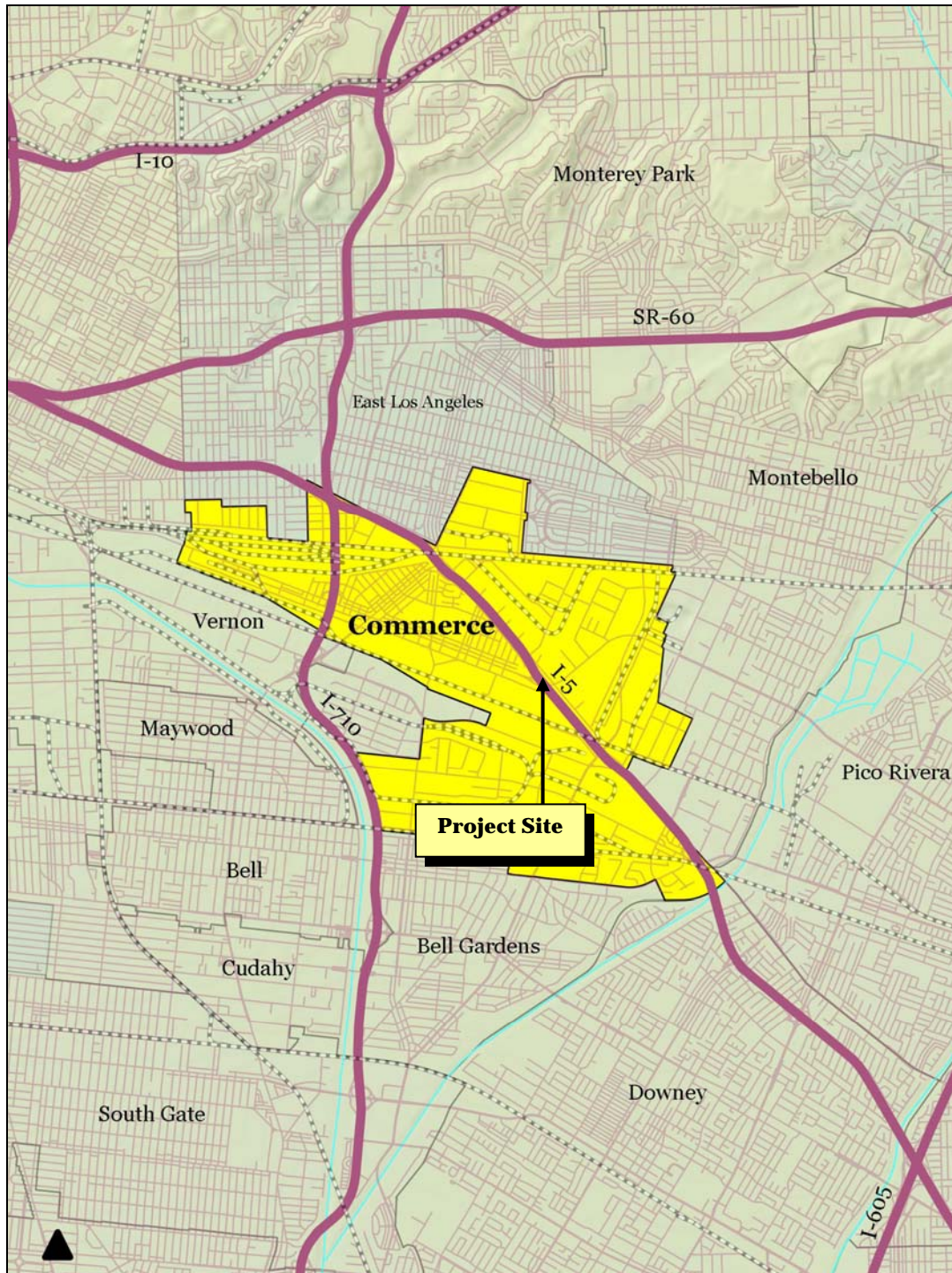


EXHIBIT 1
PROJECT LOCATION IN THE CITY
Source: Quantum GIS

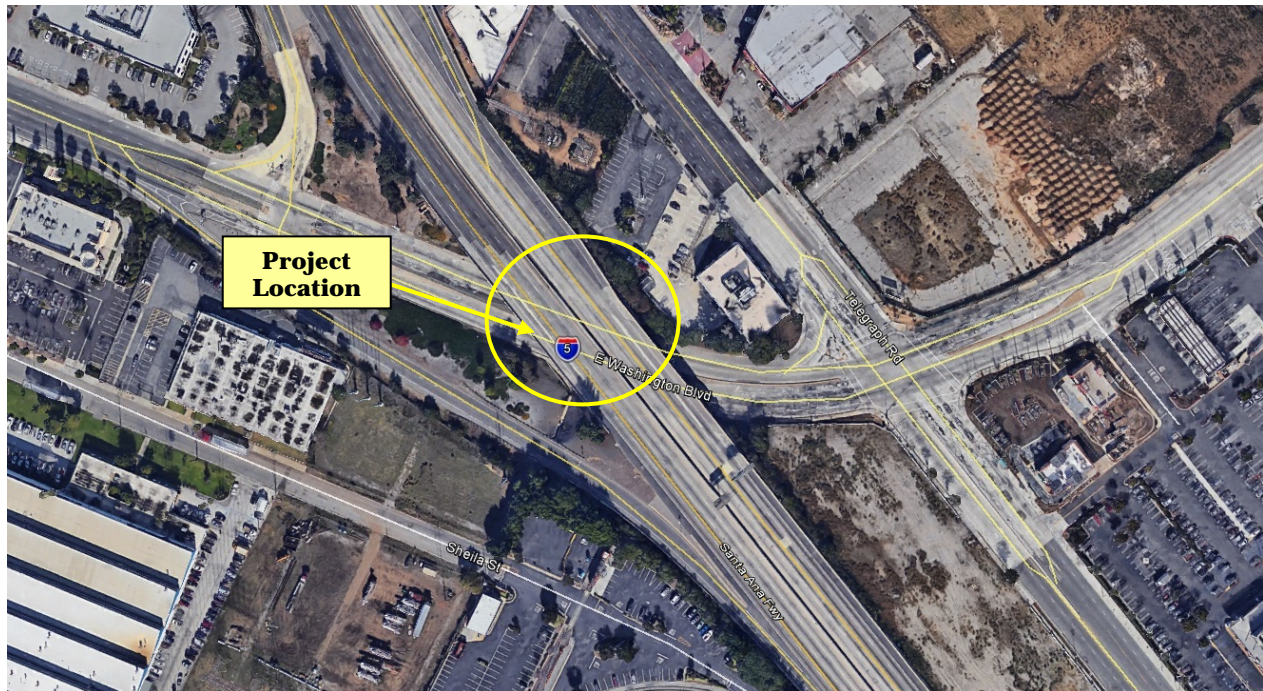


EXHIBIT 2
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
Source: Google Maps



Sheila Street is located south of the project site. A BNSF rail yard is located at the Sheila Street terminus. Washington Boulevard extends in an east-west orientation. This street is located to the west and east of the project area.³ Photographs of the project area are shown in Exhibit 3.

2.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City has received grants and significant funding from Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) as well as a TCIP grant from California Traffic Commission to fund capacity improvements along this movement of goods corridor. The City received these grants due to the regional significance of the Washington Boulevard corridor.

As part of the on-going beautification program, City retained the services of David Volz Landscape Firm to develop a painting scheme for the bridge at Washington Boulevard and I-5 Freeway. In the past five months, several painting schemes have been developed and presented to City's Beautification Committee. The Beautification Committee approved the final draft of the painting scheme (shown in Exhibit 4), and asked staff to present it to the City Council. The draft painting scheme, upon approval of the City Council will be finalized with the input received. It is anticipated that minor adjustments will be made based on the final input from Beautification Committee, City Graphics Department Staff, and will be presented to City Council with the final costs as indicated previously.⁴ The project will involve the painting of the entire underpass.

3. APPLICABLE CEQA EXEMPTIONS

The City of Commerce has determined that the proposed project qualifies for an Exemption. The two exemptions that are applicable to the project include a Class I exemption and a General Rule Exemption. These two exemptions are discussed in further detail below and on the following pages.

3.1 CLASS 1 EXEMPTION (EXISTING FACILITIES)

Class 1 exemptions refer to those improvements related to 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the Lead Agency's determination. The project will involve the painting of the segment of Washington Boulevard that extends underneath the I-5 freeway.

³ Google Earth. Site accessed September 27, 2016.

⁴ Email communication with Mr. Ali Cayir. Email dated September 26, 2016.



View of the inside of the underpass facing west.



View of the inside of the underpass facing southwest.

EXHIBIT 3

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PROJECT AREA

Source: Blodgett Baylosis Environmental Planning

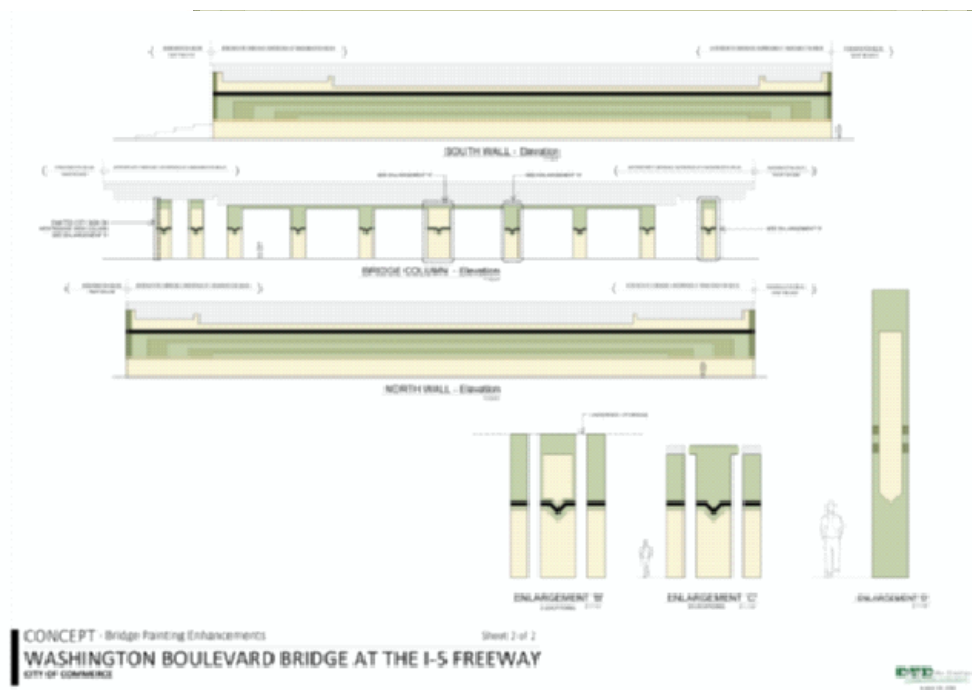
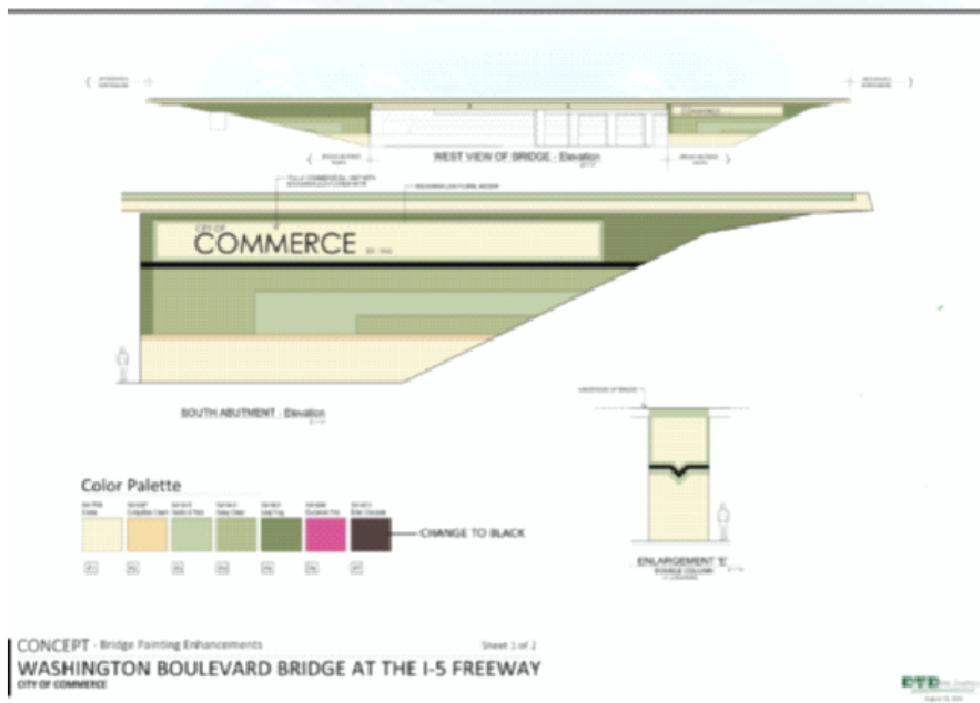


EXHIBIT 4

RENDERINGS OF THE PAINTINGS

Source: David Volz Design



3.2 CEQA GENERAL RULE EXEMPTION

The City of Commerce has reviewed the proposed project and has determined that it is exempt according to the “General Rule” clause located under Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Guidelines §15061(b)(3):

“An activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.”

The project will involve the painting of the Washington Boulevard Bridge located at the I-5 freeway (refer to Exhibit 4). This project will not involve any grading activities, expansion, or construction of new floor area. Once complete, the project will not generate any noise, traffic, or air quality emissions. Furthermore, no growth inducing impacts will result.⁵

4. FINDINGS SUPPORTING THE APPLICABLE CEQA EXEMPTION

The City of Commerce, determined following a preliminary evaluation of the proposed project, that the proposed project would not result in any significant effects on the environment. This determination is based on the following:

4.1 LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

The proposed project site is located within a segment of Washington Boulevard that extends underneath of the I-5. The proposed actions will not involve any new development or a change in land use.

4.2 PROJECT SITE SIZE

The bridge painting area is located within the City on a project site of less than five acres that is substantially surrounded by urban uses.

4.3 HABITAT VALUE

The project area is located underneath the I-5 freeway. The improvement area’s small size and its isolation from other open space areas limit its utility as a habitat or an animal migration corridor. The project site and surrounding areas are not conducive for the survival of any special status species due to the lack of suitable riparian habitat. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the site falls under the category of “urban development.” As a result, no impacts will result from the implementation of the proposed project.

⁵ CEQA Guidelines California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Article 5. Preliminary Review of Projects and Conduct of Initial Study. [Section 15061(3)].



4.4 TRAFFIC, NOISE, AIR QUALITY, AND WATER QUALITY

The approval of the proposed project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. These issue areas are discussed below:

4.4.1 Traffic

The proposed project will involve the painting of the Washington Boulevard underpass located directly below the I-5 freeway. The project's trip generation will be minor and any additional traffic produced by the project will occur during the painting phase. These trips will subside once the bridge painting is complete.

4.4.2 Noise

The project site is located within an urbanized setting and the ambient noise characteristics reflect the surrounding urban environment. The predominant source of noise in the area is related to traffic on the I-5 Freeway and Washington Boulevard. Noise sensitive receptors in the immediate area include the residences located 0.22 miles to the northwest along the south side of Jillson Street. Adherence to the City's noise control regulations will mitigate any potential construction noise-related impacts.

4.4.3 Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with the proposed project's implementation include short-term (implementation-related) emissions. No long-term operational emissions will occur. The painters will be required to adhere to the regulations set forth in AQMD Rule 1113 – Architectural Coatings. Strict adherence to Rule 1113 will reduce potential impacts to levels that are less than significant.

4.4.4 Water Quality

The project will involve the painting of the Washington Boulevard Bridge at the I-5. The project will not change the amount of pervious and impervious surfaces located within the project area. In addition, adherence to remediation activities will be required to meet all discharge requirements in accordance with the Clean Water Act. As a result, no impacts are anticipated.

4.5 PUBLIC SERVICES

The proposed project site is located along a segment of Washington Boulevard that extends below the I-5 freeway. The painting project will not result in any adverse impacts to the Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, educational services, or other governmental services. The City of Commerce Parks and Recreation Department operates nine parks. The proposed project will not affect any of the nine parks.



4.6 UTILITIES

The proposed project site is located along a segment of Washington Boulevard that extends below the I-5 freeway. The proposed actions will involve the painting of the Washington Boulevard Bridge at the I-5 freeway. The painting project will not result in any adverse utility impacts.

4.7 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Furthermore, the City of Commerce makes the following additional findings in support of a CEQA exemption for the proposed project:

- No dislocation of on-site or off-site structural improvements will be required to accommodate the proposed project.
- The project site does not contain any sensitive environmental resources. The surrounding areas have been disturbed as part of the previous development
- The project site is located within an urbanized area of the City of Commerce. No scenic resources or scenic corridor will be affected by the proposed project (refer to the previous discussion).
- The project site is not located within an area, nor does it include a site listed on the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) or the Secretary for Environmental Protection as identified as being affected by hazardous wastes (refer to the previous discussion).
- The proposed project will not result in any adverse impacts on historic resources.
- The proposed project will not require any review by a State trustee or responsible agency.

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines (Exceptions) provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. As described in the section below, none of the exceptions apply to the project.

- The project site is surrounded by urban development. The project site has not been designated as a sensitive or biological site and no sensitive or biological resources have been identified on the lot that will be impacted by the project. The project site does not contain any designated, previously mapped, or officially adopted hazardous or critical concern. Therefore, the project will not have the potential to adversely impact sensitive or biological resources.
- *Cumulative Impact.* No new development will occur as part of the painting project. In addition, the project would entail temporary and limited painting activities within a limited area. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will be expected to result from the proposed project.



- *Significant Effect.* There are no known unusual circumstances associated with the project. Additionally, the project has been designed and will be implemented in compliance with all relevant regulations and policies that govern vehicular undercrossings in order to avoid potentially significant impacts to environmental resources. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- The project area is fully developed does not contain any scenic rock outcroppings. Lastly, the project site does not contain any buildings listed in the State or National registrar.
- The project is located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- The project area does not contain any known historic resources. In addition, the project's implementation will not require any grading or earth moving activities.

Based on the analysis provided in this Notice of Exemption, the project meets and complies with the conditions and requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 153300 (Class I and General Rule Exemption) and will not have any significant environmental impacts.

5. DISCUSSION OF LEAD AGENCY'S FINDINGS

The City of Commerce may make the following findings with regard to the proposed project's exemption from the environmental review requirements outlined in CEQA:

- The proposed project will be confined to the project area and no dislocation of off-site uses will occur.
- The proposed project does not have a possibility of creating any significant environmental effects. The basis for this determination was discussed in the preceding section.
- The proposed project will not result in any impacts to sensitive resources.
- The proposed project will not result in any cumulative impacts; have the potential for damaging scenic resources; involve the placement of a project over a site the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Secretary for Environmental Protection has identified as being affected by hazardous waste; or result in any impacts on historic resources.⁶

City of Commerce

Date

⁶ Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 5. § 15061(b)(3).