

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is proposing to expand its existing Countywide Bike Share network (proposed project). Phase 1 of Metro's bike share program began with the approval of up to 80 bike share stations and 1,000 bikes in downtown Los Angeles. Phase 2 of the program added approval of up to 60 new stations in Port of Los Angeles, Venice, and Pasadena. The proposed project consists of implementation of Phases 3, 4 and 5 of the expansion program and would add up to 4,409 bikes throughout Los Angeles County (not including the San Gabriel Valley). Within San Gabriel Valley, the proposed project would add up to 840 bikes.

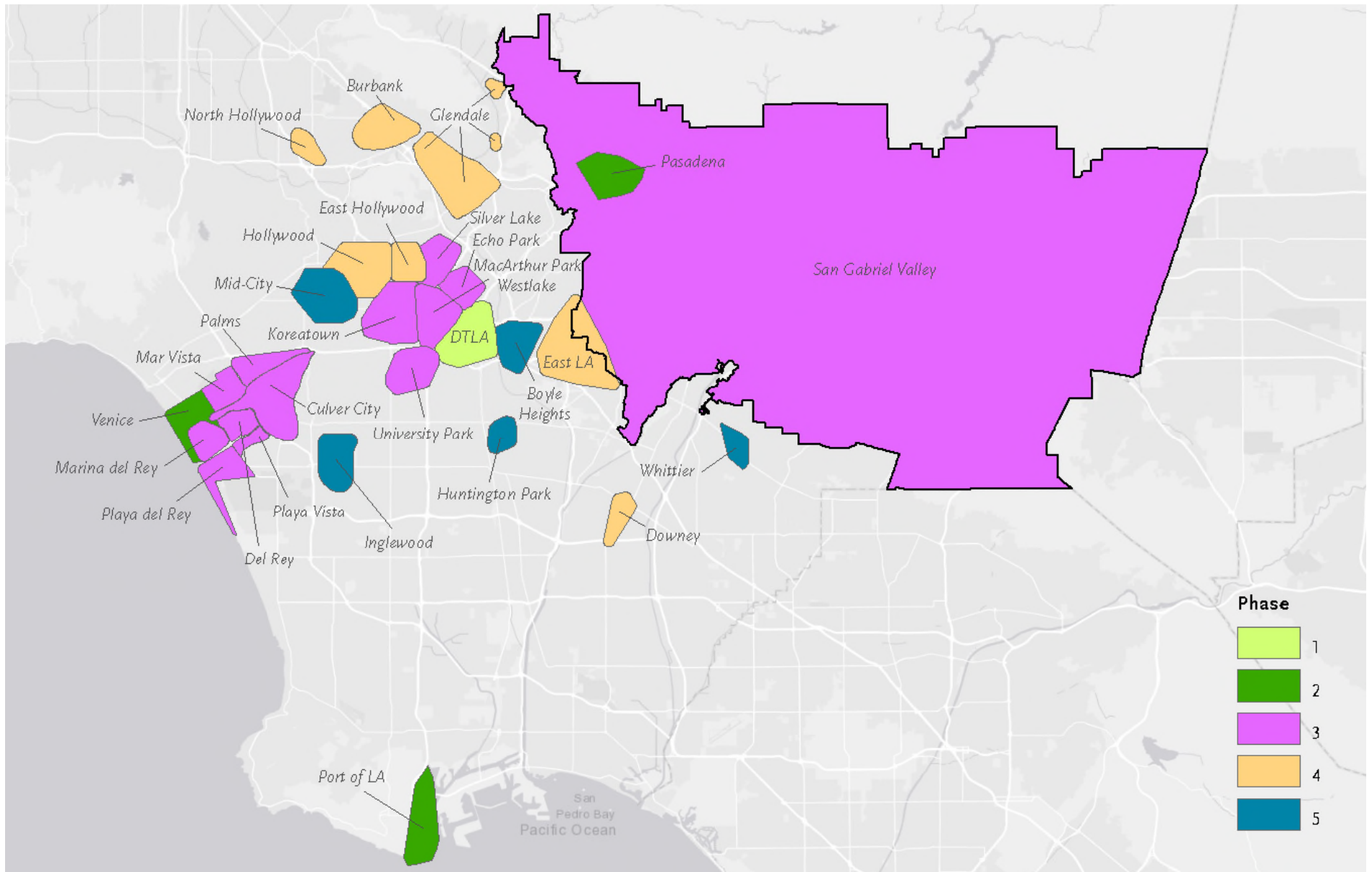
Final bike share station locations have not been identified at this time; however, the stations would typically be surrounded by commercial sites with high foot traffic and served by public transit. Final site selection for bike share stations would be determined during the construction phase, and specific locations like intersection corners, nearby intersections, or mid-block locations, would be determined based on key factors like visibility and safety. Collaboration between Metro and the various cities to identify the locations of bike share stations is ongoing. Metro is serving as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the proposed project and would have final approval of all project plans and environmental documents.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed bike share equipment and technology would include Third and Fourth Generation type equipment with the option to upgrade equipment and technology as needed. For a Third-Generation configuration, the bike share docking stations are wired together with plates or a top bar and a cell/satellite connection is placed at each station kiosk. The bikes would be locked at each dock station and solar power would be connected on top of the kiosk to enable bike share operations. Fourth Generation stations may have a kiosk with a cell/satellite connection and the docks are simple bike racks with no wiring; however the addition of electric bikes may result in power being wired to these docks. While most kiosks would be solar powered, some locations would include hard wiring for power. There are different configurations of the bike share stations, and the exact type would be determined during construction to best accommodate space and accessibility requirements. Metro would own, operate and maintain the system's equipment and docking stations.

The bike share station components are further described in **Table 1**. The service areas where the bike share stations would be located and expansion phases are shown in **Figure 1**.

TABLE 1: METRO BIKE SHARE STATION COMPONENTS	
Component	Description
Construction of Docking Station	Docking stations would be dropped into place. Docking stations would be held down with a weighted base and/or bolted to the ground requiring minimal ground disturbance. Most stations are solar powered; however, some locations would include hard wiring for power.
Construction Equipment	Lift gate, pallet jack, trucks.
Construction Duration	Installation of docking stations would take approximately four hours.
Project Operation	Docking stations would be operated by users with a pass card or a single-use permit. Bikes would be used and exchanged between stations. Solar stations would power most docking and payment stations, however some locations would include hard wiring for power.
SOURCE: Metro, 2018.	



Each bike share station would be sized based on ridership expectations as outlined in the Regional Bike Share Implementation and Feasibility Plans. Station location considerations, outlined in the Regional Bike Share Implementation Plan, include space, safety, access, visibility, property ownership, solar access, route planning, bike share network, and street design and guidelines. Bike share stations would be installed in accordance with local regulations regarding fire hydrants, crosswalks, driveways, standpipes, doorways, sidewalk widths, and effective widths. The bike share stations would not be located on sites identified as containing natural habitat or hazardous materials. Most of the bike share station installations would not require digging or ground disturbance, as the stations would have a weighted base and/or be bolted to the ground typically on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. Some locations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place docking station.

A. EXEMPT STATUS

The proposed project qualifies for a CEQA Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3).

B. REASON WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Article 19 (Categorical Exemptions) of the CEQA Guidelines lists classes of projects that are exempt from the requirements of CEQA. This section analyzes why the proposed project meets the conditions for a Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures exemption and includes the reasons why none of the possible exceptions to Categorical Exemptions, found in Section 15300.2, Exceptions, apply to the proposed project. The statutory language of each condition and possible exception is printed in bold italics below, followed by the project-related analysis for each condition and exception.

Categorical Exemption Analysis

15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location or limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures...

The proposed project meets this condition. The proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review under CEQA because it involves the installation of a limited number of new small structures throughout Los Angeles County. Specifically, the proposed project would install stations for and deployment of up to 4,409 bikes within, but not limited to, the following cities and unincorporated portions of the County of Los Angeles:

- Burbank
- Culver City
- Downey
- East Los Angeles
- Glendale
- Huntington Park
- Inglewood
- Los Angeles – Boyle Heights
- Los Angeles – Del Rey
- Los Angeles - Echo Park
- Los Angeles - Hollywood / East Hollywood
- Los Angeles - Koreatown
- Los Angeles - MacArthur Park / Westlake
- Los Angeles - Mar Vista
- Los Angeles - Mid-City
- Los Angeles - North Hollywood
- Los Angeles - Palms
- Los Angeles - Playa del Rey
- Los Angeles - Playa Vista
- Los Angeles - Silver Lake
- Los Angeles - University Park / Exposition Park / USC
- Marina del Rey
- Whittier

Stations for and deployment of up to 840 additional bikes would be installed in the San Gabriel Valley within, but not limited to, the following cities and unincorporated portions of the County of Los Angeles:

- Baldwin Park
- Claremont
- Covina
- Duarte
- El Monte
- Glendora
- La Verne
- La Canada Flintridge
- Monrovia
- Monterey Park
- Pomona
- San Dimas
- South El Monte
- South Pasadena
- West Covina

As discussed above, most of bike share station installations would not require digging or ground disturbance, as the stations would have a weighted base and/or would be bolted to the ground, typically on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. However, some locations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station. Nonetheless, ground disturbance would be minimal, and as analyzed below, would not impact environmental resources.

Conclusion

The proposed project qualifies for the Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3), exemption category under CEQA.

C. EXCEPTIONS TO CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION ANALYSIS

15300.2 Exceptions

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. The final bike share station locations have not been identified at this time; however, the stations would typically be surrounded by commercial sites with high foot traffic and served by public transit. The stations have a weighted base and/or would be bolted to the ground, typically on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. The final locations would be determined during the construction phase, and specific locations like intersection corners, nearby intersections, or mid-block locations, would be determined based on key factors like visibility and safety.

Natural Habitat and Endangered Species

Most of the bike share stations would be located on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. The docking stations would be placed on previously disturbed paved areas via lift gate or pallet jack, and would be held down by a weighted base and/or bolted to the ground. Some of the bike share stations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station; however, the bike share stations would be located in developed urban areas. The locations selected for the bike share stations would not contain important farmland, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, floodplains, or critical habitat. No natural habitat or endangered species would be impacted, as the bike share station locations would be surrounded by commercial sites with high foot traffic and served by public transit. Any existing vegetation impacted by the proposed project would be ornamental. Collaboration between Metro and the various cities to identify the final bike share station locations is ongoing; however, the proposed project would not impact would not impact natural habitats and endangered or threatened species.

Historic Resources

Los Angeles County contains numerous historic buildings and historical districts, and therefore, it is likely that some of the bike share stations would be located near historic places and structures. Nonetheless, due to their location in urban areas and their small size, the bike share stations would not damage historic resources' integrity or create new visual barriers that would change the historic character of an area or break up the continuity of a historic district. The bike share stations would be visually congruent with any historic structures and the existing urban setting. The stations would be located on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations and would not constitute a substantial visual change in the character of an area or contribute to a decline in a historic resource's importance. Installation of some bike share stations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station; however, the station locations would be situated in previously disturbed urban areas. As such, the proposed project would not impact any archaeological or paleontological resources. Collaboration between Metro and the various cities to identify the final bike share station locations is ongoing; however, the proposed project would not impact historic resources.

Hazardous Waste Site

The final bike share station locations have not been identified at this time; however, the bike share stations would be located in urban areas surrounded by commercial sites. Therefore, it is likely that some of the stations may be located near hazardous sites that are included on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5. Nonetheless, most of the bike share stations would be located on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations, and the stations would be placed on previously disturbed paved areas via lift gate or pallet jack, and would be held down by a weighted base and/or bolted to the ground. As such, any hazardous sites would not be impacted by proposed project. In addition, similar to how key factors like visibility and safety would determine final site selection, a search of the GeoTracker and EnviroStor environmental databases would be conducted to determine if the final bike share stations locations are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Collaboration between Metro and the various cities to identify the final bike share station locations is ongoing; however, the stations would not be located on sites included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. The proposed project would install new small structures throughout Los Angeles County. Most of the bike share station installations would not require digging or ground disturbance, as the stations would have a weighted base and/or be bolted to the ground, typically on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. Some locations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station. However, because ground disturbance would be minimal, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts and would not contribute to any cumulative biological or cultural resources impacts. Therefore, this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. Although the final bike share station locations have not been identified at this time, there are no unusual circumstances or planned project operations that would create a reasonable possibility of significant effects to the environment. Bike share stations would be installed in accordance with local regulations regarding fire hydrants, crosswalks, driveways, standpipes, doorways, sidewalk widths, and effective widths. The bike share stations have a weighted base and/or would

be bolted to the ground, typically on existing hard surfaces including sidewalks, plazas and on street locations. Some locations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station. Nonetheless, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on any biological or cultural resources, and the proposed project would be compatible with the existing urban setting of the services. Land uses in the vicinity of the bike share stations would not change their functions. Therefore, there would be no potential for significant effects, and this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. While there are designated scenic highways in Los Angeles County, the proposed project would not impact any scenic resources within an officially designated state scenic highway due to and the size of the bike share stations and their location in urban areas. Therefore, this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. As discussed above, the final bike share station locations have not been identified at this time. Nonetheless, a search of the GeoTracker and EnviroStor environmental databases would be conducted to determine if the locations of the bike share stations are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Therefore, this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

(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.

This exception does not apply to the proposed project. As discussed above, it is likely that some of the bike share stations would be located near historic places and structures. Nonetheless, due to their location in urban areas and their size, the bike share stations would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. The bike share stations would be visually congruent with any historic structures and the existing urban setting. Installation of some bike share stations may require minimal ground disturbance for installation of a concrete pad to place a docking station; however, the station locations would be situated in developed urban areas that have been previously disturbed. As such, proposed project would not impact any historical resources. Therefore, this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

Conclusion

There are no wetlands, endangered species, wildlife habitats, and cultural, historical, and archaeological resources that would be impacted by the proposed project and the bike share stations would not be located on a hazardous site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Therefore, these exceptions would not apply to the proposed project.