

S/MEA

Decision 92 01 029 JAN 10 1992

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the City of San Carlos
for an order authorizing construction of
5,500 feet of Earthfill embankment and
two railroad grade separation structures:
One to carry Brittan Avenue traffic under
the tracks of the Southern Pacific
Transportation Company. (PUC No. E-23.9)
One to carry Howard Avenue traffic under
the tracks of the Southern Pacific
Transportation Company. (PUC No. E-24.1)
This project is sometimes referred to as
the "Brittan/Howard Avenues Grade
Separation Project".

ORIGINAL
Application 91-03-033
(Filed March 15, 1991,
amended September 16,
1991)

O P I N I O N

The City of San Carlos (City) requests authority to construct Brittan Avenue and Howard Avenue at separated grades under the tracks of Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) main line in San Carlos, San Mateo County. Train service on this line includes frequent passenger schedules ("Caltrain"), plus some freight service. City also requests authority to construct two temporary crossings at grade across shoofly tracks for use during construction of the underpasses.

The proposed grade separations will improve traffic circulation, reduce travel time, and enhance safety of motorists. The construction will be accomplished by raising the tracks on an embankment for a distance of approximately one mile. San Carlos is located approximately midway between San Jose and San Francisco; Brittan and Howard Avenues run east-west and will provide improved "cross-town" access between the predominately residential westside and the commercial/industrial eastern part of the city, if the requested grade separation authority is granted. Access today is limited to at-grade crossings in this vicinity.

City is the lead agency for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, Public Resources (PR) Code Sections 21000, et seq. After preparation and review of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), city approved the project. On October 11, 1990, a Notice of Determination was filed with the San Mateo County Clerk which found that "The project will have a significant effect on the environment."

Major impacts include displacement of approximately 16 businesses and the removal of 19 structures, changes in local traffic patterns, increase in noise levels, and visual impacts. Mitigation measures will include relocation assistance, limiting temporary road closures to off-peak hours, considering installation of residential acoustic insulation, and landscaping.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's EIR. The site of the proposed project has been inspected by the Commission's Safety Division Traffic Engineering staff. The staff examined the need for and safety of the proposed construction, and recommends issuance of an ex parte order authorizing construction of the proposed grade separations and temporary grade crossings, subject to the installation of automatic gate-type signals as protection.

Application 91-03-033 meets the filing requirements of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, including Rule 38, which relates to the construction of a public highway across a railroad. A sketch of the proposed crossing area is included as Appendix A.

Findings of Fact

1. Notices of the application and amendment were published in the Commission's Daily Calendar on March 19 and September 24, 1991, respectively. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. City requests authority under Public Utilities (PU) Code Sections 1201-1205 to construct Brittan Avenue and Howard Avenue underpasses under the tracks of SPT's main line in San Carlos, San Mateo County.

3. Construction of the underpasses requires that temporary grade crossings of Brittan Avenue and Howard Avenue be constructed across a shoofly track, which will be required during construction.

4. The underpasses are required to improve traffic circulation and safety of motorists.

5. Public safety requires that protection at each of the temporary grade crossings be two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals (General Order (GO) 75-C).

6. Public convenience, necessity, and safety require construction of the proposed underpasses.

7. City is the lead agency for this project under CEQA, as amended.

8. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's EIR.

9. The project will have a significant impact on the environment; however, the adopted mitigation measures will reduce the severity of the adverse impacts to acceptable levels.

Conclusions of Law

1. The application is uncontested, and a public hearing is not necessary.

2. The application should be granted as set forth in the following order.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The City of San Carlos (City) is authorized to construct Brittan Avenue and Howard Avenue at separated grades under the tracks of Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) main line

in San Carlos, San Mateo County, at the locations and substantially as shown by plans attached to the application, to be identified as Crossings E-23.9-B and E24.1-B, respectively.

2. City is also authorized to construct temporary grade crossings of Brittan and Howard Avenues across SPT's shoofly tracks, which will be required during the period of construction.

3. Protection at the temporary grade crossings shall be two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals GO 75-C.

4. Upon completion of the Brittan Avenue Grade Separation, vehicular traffic will be detoured from the existing Howard Avenue at grade railroad crossing to the new railroad underpass at Brittan Avenue.

5. Construction of the temporary shoofly grade crossings shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 1 of GO 72-B.

6. Clearances shall be in accordance with GO 26-D. Walkways shall conform to GO 118.

7. Construction and maintenance costs shall be borne in accordance with an agreement to be entered into between the parties. A copy of the agreement, together with plans of the crossings approved by SPT shall be filed with the Commission's Safety Division prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the costs of construction and maintenance by further order.

8. Within 30 days after completion of the work under this order, City shall advise the Commission's Safety Division in writing that the authorized work has been completed.

9. This authorization shall expire if not exercised within three years unless time is extended or if the above conditions are not complied with. Authorization may be revoked or modified if public convenience, necessity, or safety so require.

10. The application is granted as set forth above.
This order becomes effective 30 days from today.
Dated JAN 10 1992, at San Francisco, California.

DANIEL Wm. FESSLER
President
JOHN B. OHANIAN
PATRICIA M. ECKERT
NORMAN D. SHUMWAY
Commissioners

I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE
COMMISSIONERS TODAY


NEAL J. SHULMAN, Executive Director

