

S/RRT/lc

92 04 064

April 22, 1992

Decision _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the City of Lancaster for an
Order authorizing construction of a
crossing at separated grades between
Avenue "L" and the tracks of the Southern
Pacific Transportation Company, sometimes
referred to as the "Avenue "L" Overhead"
(PUC No. B-408.1-A)

Application 91-06-061
(Filed June 27, 1991)

O P I N I O N

The City of Lancaster (City) requests authority to construct a grade separation of Avenue "L" over the tracks of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) El Paso Main Line, in Lancaster, Los Angeles County.

The overhead structure would connect the existing portions of Avenue "L" east and west of the tracks, allowing construction of a new major peripheral arterial street in the Antelope Valley. The completion of Avenue "L" would redistribute traffic and reduce congestion in the Lancaster central district, and improve access for police, fire and emergency services. The Antelope Valley is experiencing one of the fastest population growth rates in Southern California. It is estimated that the proposed overpass would carry 77,000 vehicles per day in the future.

By Decision (D.) 88-11-041 dated November 28, 1988, in Application (A.) 87-04-036 the Commission denied City authority to construct an at-grade crossing at Avenue "L". The Commission found that the proposed grade crossing would seriously impact rail operations, estimated at 55 trains per day. An overpass, which would also span Sierra Highway, was shown by the evidence presented to be practicable. City is now proposing construction of such an overpass.

City is the lead agency for this project under California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, Public Resources (PR) Code §§ 21000, et seq. Under City's general plan construction of a crossing at Avenue "L" is required before additional development of some districts can receive permits. After preparation and publication of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) City approved the project and on February 25, 1992, filed a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk which found that traffic generated by this additional development "will have some adverse effects on the environment." A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for the Avenue "L" crossing project. The project includes mitigation measures for construction and vehicular noise, including a soundwall.

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 Safety Division Traffic Engineering Section staff. The staff examined the need for and the safety of the proposed overhead in A.87-04-036 and in this proceeding. The staff agrees with the lead agency's determinations regarding this project. Mitigation of avoidable impacts have been included in the project, and the benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse effects. Staff recommends that the new overhead be approved.

The application was found to be in compliance under the Commission's filing requirements, including Rule 38 of Rules of Practice and Procedure which relates to the construction of public highways across railroads. Drawings of the overhead are shown in the appendix.

Findings of Fact

1. Notice of the application was published in the Commission's Daily calendar on July 3, 1991. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. City requests authority under Public Utilities (PU) Code §§ 1201-1205 to construct the Avenue "L" Overhead grade separation over the tracks of SPT's Main Line, in Lancaster, Los Angeles County.

3. The Avenue "L" Overhead grade separation will improve traffic circulation and reduce traffic impacts of increased population in the Antelope Valley.

4. Public convenience, necessity and safety require construction of the proposed grade separation.

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

6. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's EIR and Statement of Overriding Consideration.

7. This project will have some adverse effects on the environment as it will allow increased development and traffic, but mitigation measures will reduce the adverse impact.

8. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for the project.

Conclusion of Law

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

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. City of Lancaster (City), is authorized to construct the Avenue "L" Overhead at separated grades above Sierra Highway and the tracks of Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Main Line in Lancaster, Los Angeles County, at the location and substantially as shown by plans attached to the application and Appendix A of this order, to be identified as Crossing B-408.1-A.

2. Clearances shall be in accordance with General Order (GO) 26-D; except that during the period of construction a clearance of not less than 21'6" above top of rail shall be authorized and SPT shall be authorized to operate with such reduced overhead clearance provided that instructions are issued by the railroad and filed with the Commission's Safety Division forbidding employees to ride on tops of cars beneath the structure.

3. City shall notify the Commission's Safety Division and SPT at least 15, but not more than 30, days in advance of the date when the temporary impaired overhead clearance will be created.

4. Walkways shall conform to GO 118. Walkways adjacent to any trackage subject to rail operations shall be maintained free of obstructions and shall be promptly restored to their original condition in the event of damage during construction.

5. 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 approved by SPT, shall be filed with the Commission's Safety Division staff prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the costs of construction and maintenance by further order.

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

7. 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.

8. The application is granted as set forth above.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated APR 22 1992 at San Francisco, California.

DANIEL Wm. FESSLER
President

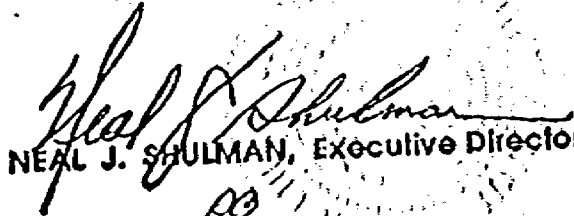
JOHN B. CHANLAN

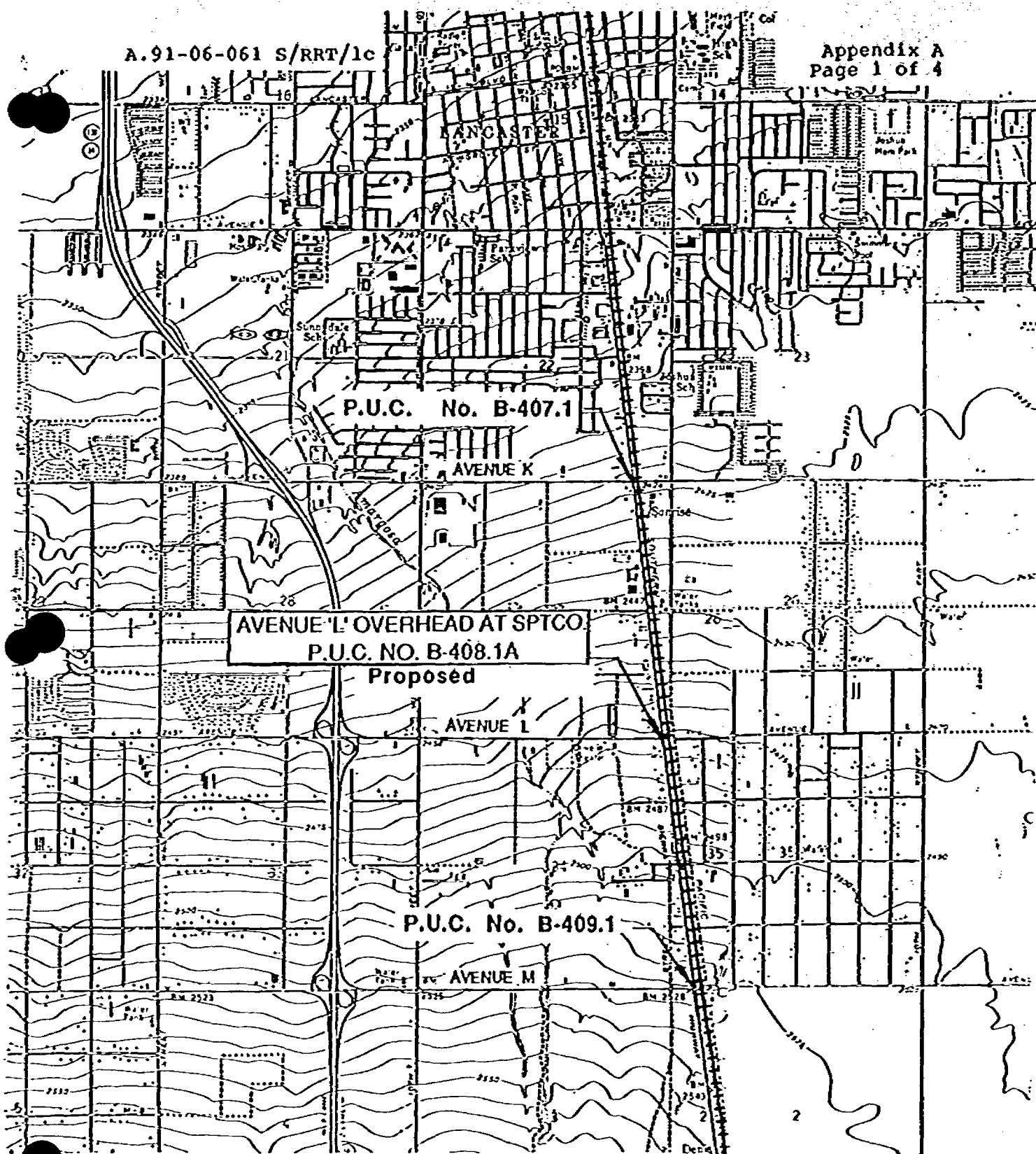
PATRICIA M. ECKERT

NORMAN D. SHUMWAY

Commissioners

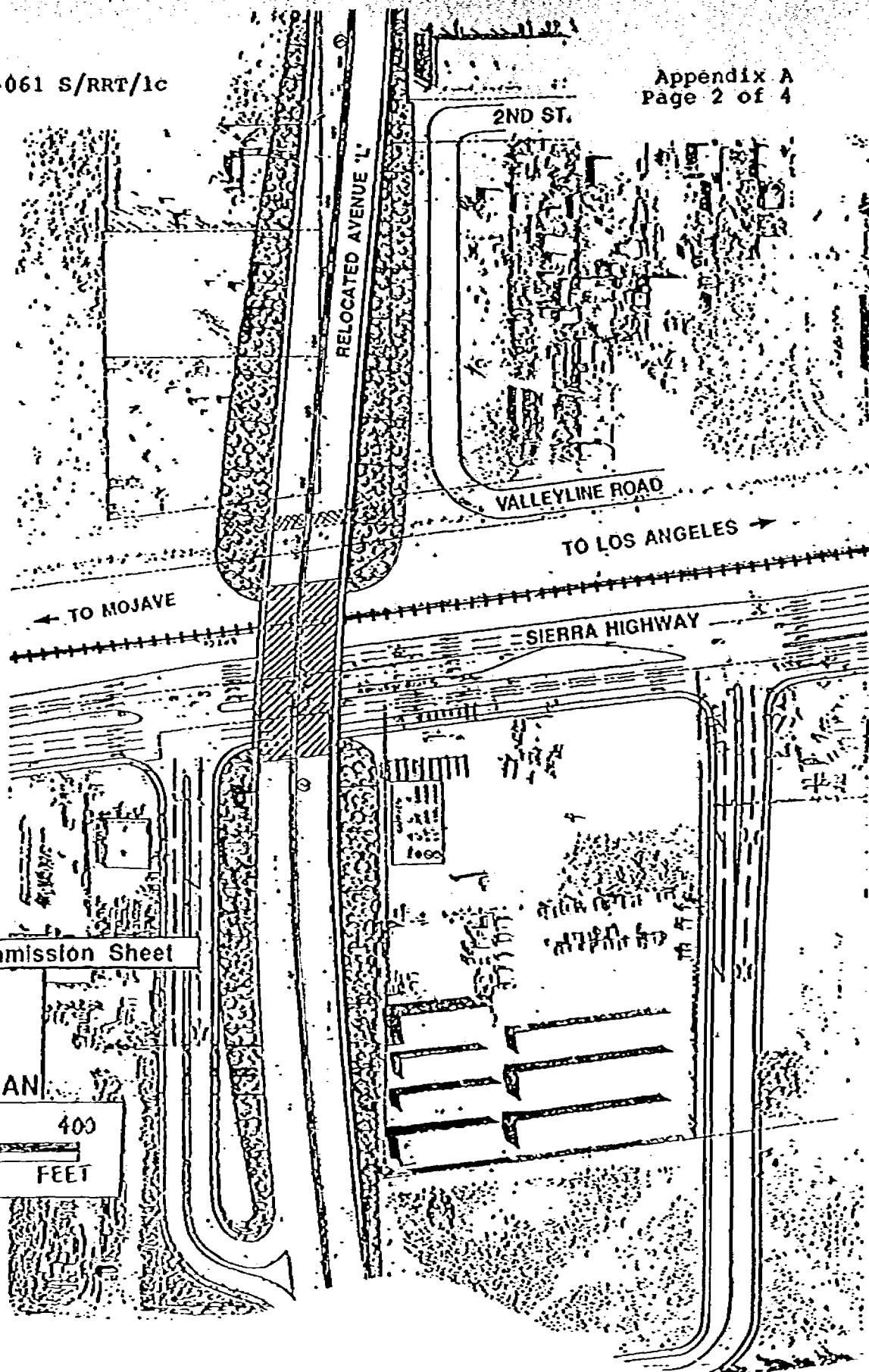
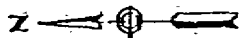
I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE
COMMISSIONERS TODAY


NEAL J. SHULMAN, Executive Director



Public Utilities Commission Sheet

LOCATION MAP

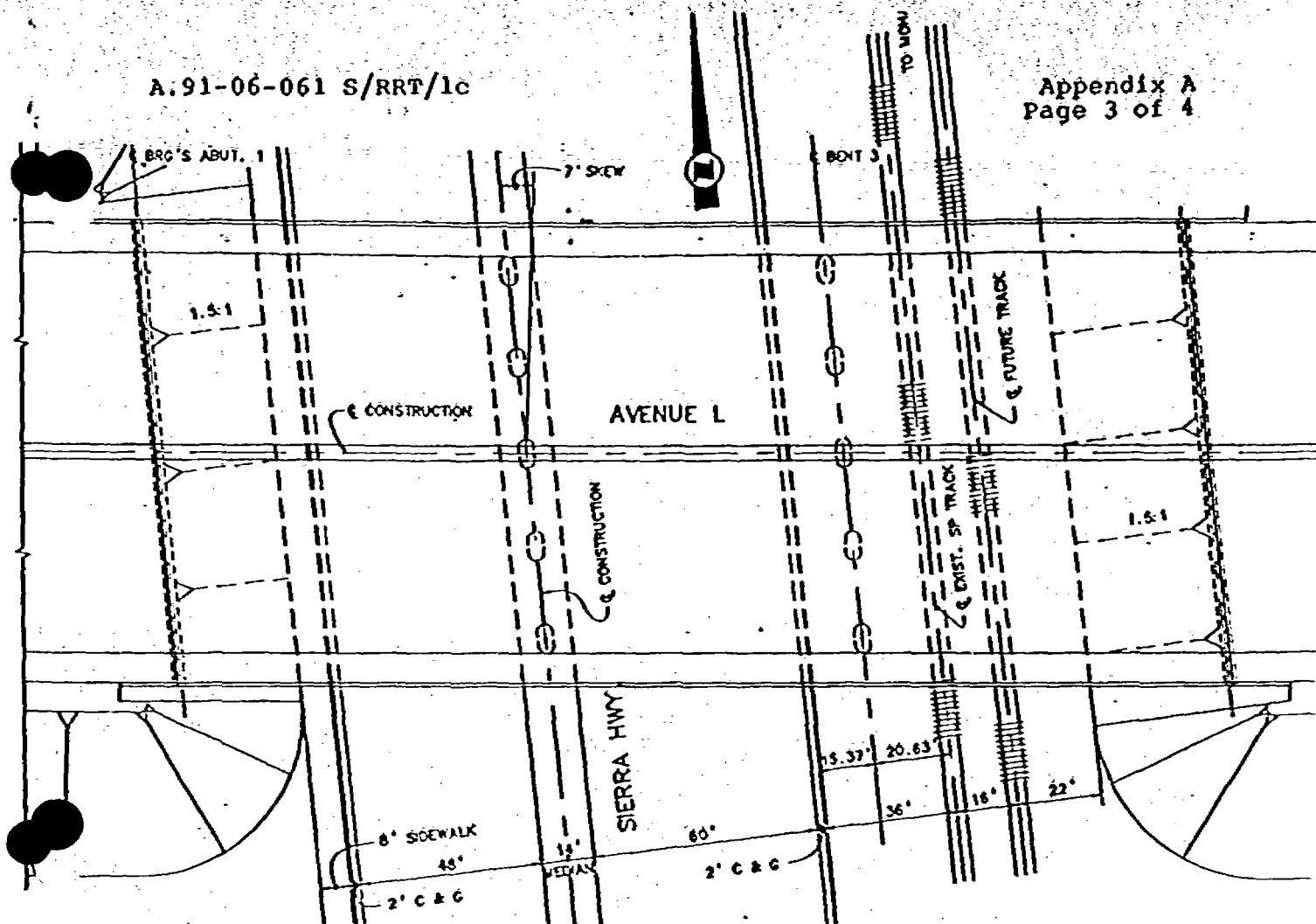


Public Utilities Commission Sheet

City Of Lancaster
Avenue 'L' Overhead

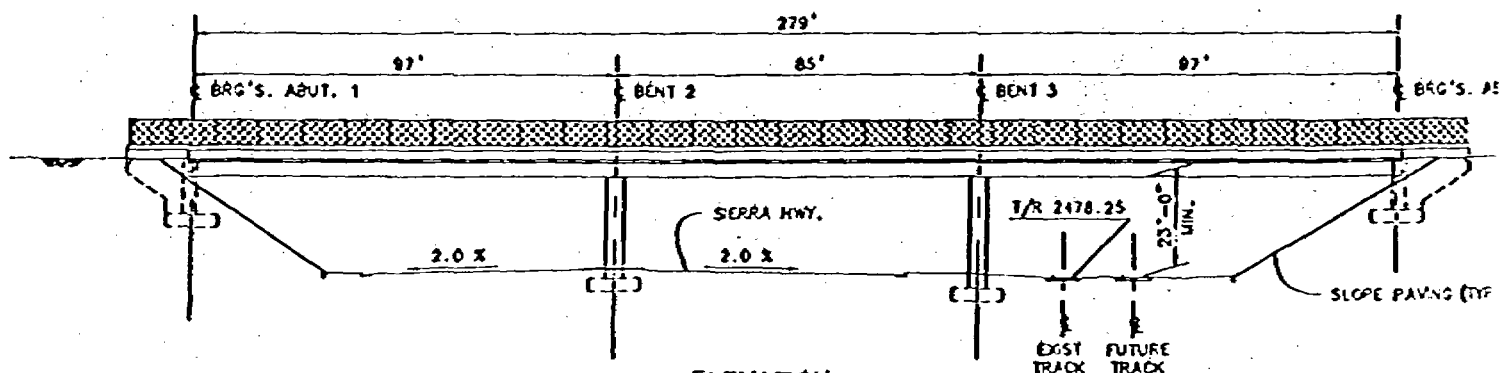
PRELIMINARY PLAN

0 100 200 400
SCALE FEET



PLAN

1" = 20'-0"



ELEVATION

1" = 20'-0"

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION SHEET

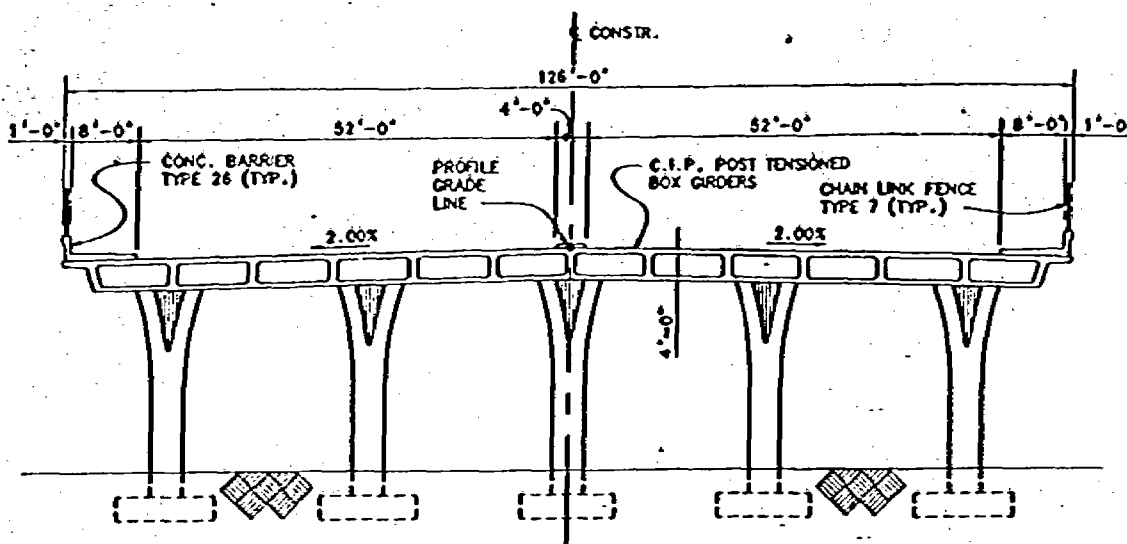
CITY OF LANCASTER

AVENUE "L" OVERHEAD

AT S.P.T.Co. P.U.C. No. B-408.1A

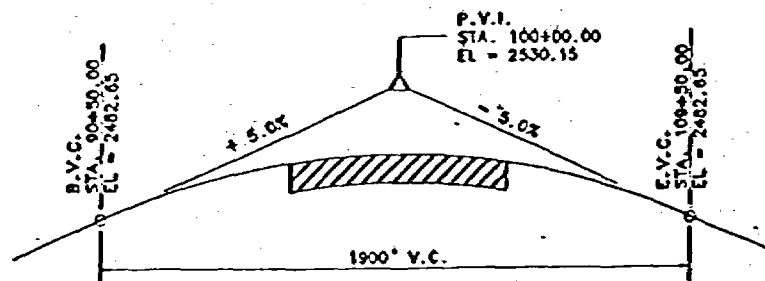
DELEUW
CATHY

De Leuw, Cather & Company
Engineers and Planners
San Francisco, California



TYPICAL SECTION

3/32" = 1'-0"



PROFILE GRADE LINE

AVE. L OVERHEAD

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION SHEET
EXHIBIT "B" SHEET NO. 3

CITY OF LANCASTER

AVENUE 'L' OVERHEAD
AT SPTCo. MP B-408.1

GENERAL PLAN & ELEVATION

DeLEUW
CATHERBy Engr. Carter & Company
Engineers and Planners, San Francisco, California

DESIGN: W.W.

CHECKED: W.W.

DRAWN: B.P.

APPROVED: W.W.

SCALE

AS SHOWN

DATE

6-91

SHEET NO.

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