

S/RRT/rm

Decision 92 04 068 April 22, 1992

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the State of California, Department of Transportation, for an order authorizing the Department to: Widen the Interstate Route 1-110 (Harbor Freeway) and to reconstruct the existing Strawberry Park Underpass on new permanent track alignment 32 feet north of the existing track within the existing right of way of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's Torrance (BBG) Branch line in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California.

Application 91-12-022
(Filed December 2, 1991)

O P I N I O N

As part of the project to widen existing Interstate Route 110 (I-110) Harbor Freeway, to provide for one additional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane, and an additional auxiliary lane in each direction with the provision for a future median HOV lane in each direction, the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requests authority to reconstruct the existing Strawberry Park Underpass carrying the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Torrance Branch Line in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County.

The Strawberry Park Underpass will be reconstructed on new alignment 32'-0" north of the existing track within the existing SPT right-of-way. The reconstructed underpass consists of a two-span simple beam structure of three precast, prestressed concrete box girder cellular units supporting a concrete deck slab and two concrete parapet walls with type 7 chain link railings on top of the walls. The structure's length will be 223'-10 1/2". The structure will be supported on reinforced closed concrete abutments

abutting concrete retaining walls, and reinforced concrete pier, all supported on reinforced concrete footings and concrete piles. Train traffic will be on the present alignment until such time as the new alignment is constructed and placed in service.

Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, Public Resources Code Sections 21000, et seq. After preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), public hearings were held by Caltrans on March 9 and 10, 1983 in Los Angeles and Gardena, respectively, concerning the Interstate 110 Harbor Freeway Corridor Transit Facilities. In addition the DEIR was submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency; the State of California, Governor's Office, Office of Planning and Research; City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works; and approximately 20 other affected transit corridor governmental agencies.

After a formal review period, where many proposals and suggestions by other governmental agencies and the public were considered, Caltrans in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and filed a Notice of Determination on August 8, 1985 with the State Office of Planning and Research which found that, "The project will have significant effect on the environment." A statement of overriding considerations was adopted for the project and mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.

Among the findings made by Caltrans in the FEIS were the following items:

- (1) A transitway located in the Harbor Freeway Corridor would be in compliance with the main goals of the California Urban Strategy. According to the Urban

Strategy, priority should be given to constructing transportation facilities that serve the long term needs of existing urban and suburban areas. The major construction and TSM alternatives would provide one part of a transit system that would serve California's largest and most densely populated urban area. Additionally, these alternatives would reduce dependence on individual automobile use by creating an efficient public transit alternative in the Harbor Freeway Corridor. Reduction of dependence on automobile use is also a goal of the Urban Strategy. Another goal of the Urban Strategy is to provide access to recreational and cultural activities. A transitway would allow the transit dependent easier access to these activities.

- (2) Much of the study area's population is made up of members of the Black and Hispanic minority groups. Therefore, many transit patrons would be members of these groups. The consequences of the project, both positive and negative, would mainly affect them. No significant long term adverse impacts on minorities, special interest groups or communities are expected. In order to assist minority patrons, all informational signing in transit facilities would be in both English and Spanish. Standard international symbols would be used on signs whenever possible.
- (3) Policies and concepts have been developed that would ensure that all transit facilities and vehicles would either be fully accessible to handicapped and elderly patrons or equivalent service would be provided. Parking lots would provide preferential parking for the handicapped. When necessary, elevators allowing

easy access to station sites for elderly and handicapped would be provided. Public service facilities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and telephones, would be accessible to the handicapped.

- (4) Buses would be equipped with lifts. Vehicles would have specific areas reserved for patrons in wheelchairs, and would be equipped with intercoms. If it is determined that it is more cost effective to provide separate specialized service for the handicapped, this service would be provided in lieu of more expensive design features.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's Final Environmental Impact Statement. The Commission's Safety Division - Rail Engineering Safety staff inspected the site of the proposed project. After reviewing the need for and safety of the proposed grade separation, the staff recommends that authority be granted to construct the proposed relocated Strawberry Park Underpass.

The application was found to be in compliance under the Commission's filing requirements including Rule 39 of the Rules of Practice and Procedures, which relates to the widening or relocating of an existing crossing. Detailed drawings of the proposed construction are included in Appendix A attached to this order.

Findings of Fact

1. Notice of the application was published in the Commission Daily Calendar on December 24, 1991. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. Caltrans requests authority under Public Utilities Code §§ 1201-1205 to reconstruct the Strawberry Park Underpass of I-110 on new permanent track alignment 32 feet north of the existing track within the existing railroad right-of-way at separated grades on SPT's Torrance Branch Line in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County.

3. Reconstruction of the underpass at separated grades is an essential element in the widening of the I-110 Freeway.

4. Public convenience, necessity, and safety require the reconstruction of the Strawberry Park Underpass of SPT's Torrance Branch Line.

5. Caltrans 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 Final Environmental Impact Statement.

7. The widening project of I-110 will have a significant effect on the environment, however mitigation measures taken by Caltrans will either eliminate or reduce the severity of the adverse impacts to acceptable levels.

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

9. Transit improvements are an integral part of the Regional Air Quality Management Area.

10. The Project is in conformance with applicable local improvement and regional transportation plans and will thereby provide alternative means of transportation during fuel crises and increased future traffic congestion.

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. The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is authorized to widen Interstate Route 110 (I-110) Harbor Freeway and to reconstruct the Strawberry Park Underpass on the tracks of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Torrance Branch Line in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, identified as Crossing BBG-495.55-B. The proposed grade separation project is at the location and substantially as shown by the plans attached to the application and Appendix A of this order.

2. Clearances shall be in accordance with General Order (GO) 26-D.

3. 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.

4. Construction and maintenance costs shall be borne in accordance with an agreement which has been entered into between the parties. A copy of the agreement, together with plans of the crossing approved by SPT, shall be filed with the Commission prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the costs of construction and maintenance by further order.

5. Within 30 days after completion of the work under this order, Caltrans shall notify the Commission in writing that the authorized work has been completed.

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6. 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.

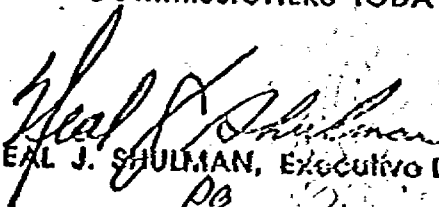
7. The application is granted as set forth above.

This order is effective 30 days from today.

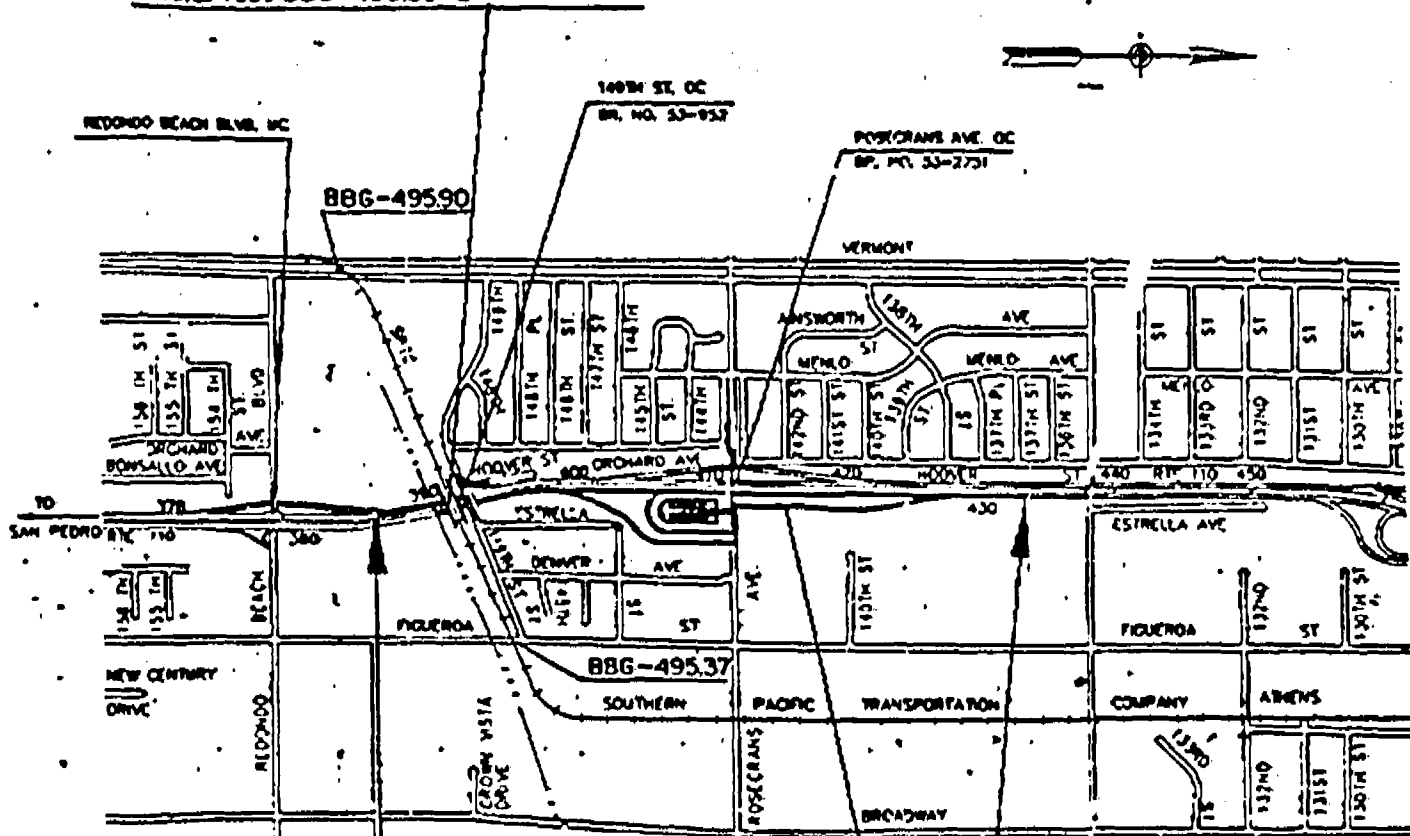
Dated APR 22 1992, at San Francisco, California.

DANIEL W. 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

STRAWBERRY PARK UNDERPASS
P.U.C. NO. BBG-495.55-B



BEGIN WORK AND CONSTRUCTION

STA 385 + 60
PM 11.4

END CONSTRUCTION

STA 433 + 50.89
PM 12.3

VICINITY MAP

