

'AUG 17 1992

Decision 92-08-035 August 11, 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: Construct on State Route 118 on new alignment southwesterly of its existing Los Angeles Avenue alignment and to construct a new public crossing of realigned State Route 118 at grade across the Santa Paula Branch (BE) Line track of Southern Pacific Transportation Company in Ventura County, State of California.

ORIGINAL

Application 92-03-029 (Filed March 16, 1992)

O P I N I O N

As part of the project to widen and realign existing State Route (SR) 118, a two-lane conventional highway, to four lanes from SR 126-Santa Paula Freeway to SR-232-Vineyard Avenue through the community of Saticoy, the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requests authority to construct a new public crossing at grade for realigned SR-118 across the tracks of Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Santa Paula Branch Line in Ventura County. The existing crossing of Los Angeles Avenue will remain in place to provide access to the Business District of the Community of Saticoy.

The project will improve 1.74 miles of the highway and will include the replacement of the Santa Clara River bridge and widening the SR-118/126 bridge. The purpose of the project is to eliminate the severe congestion during peak hours. The proposed project will accommodate the projected traffic volumes and provide a smooth connection to the four lane section north of SR-126.

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 May 20, 1987 in the Community of Saticoy, concerning the proposed SR-118 widening and realignment. In addition the DEIR was submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency; the State of California, Governor's Office, Resources Agency; Ventura County Association of Governments and Public Works Agency; and several other affected 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 January 25, 1989 with the State Office of Planning and Research which found that, "The project will have significant effect on the environment." Mitigation measures were made a condition of approval of the project.

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

(1) Noise:

Traffic noise levels are expected to increase up to a maximum of 75 dBA at some locations by the year 2010.

Mitigation:

Soundwalls will be constructed where feasible.

(2) Socioeconomic:

Realignment will affect 23 businesses with 41 employees.

Mitigation:

Caltrans will purchase property at fair market value and pay for moving expenses of employees.

(3) Neighborhood:

Realignment will remove five homes on SR 118 (an estimated 18 persons would be displaced).

Mitigation:

Caltrans will provide relocation assistance for businesses and residences.

(4) Wetlands/Biology:

The long term impact of replacing the existing Santa Clara River Bridge will be a 0.5 acre loss of wetland under the new Santa Clara River Bridge.

Mitigation:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game have approved a mitigation plan which includes enhancement of 1.0 acre of degraded wetland, 0.5 mile north of the project area.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed the lead agency's FEIS. The Commission has considered FEIS's findings, and mitigation measures. The Commission's Safety Division - Rail Engineering Safety staff has inspected the site of the proposed project. After reviewing the project needs and taking into account safety considerations of the proposed new at grade crossing, the staff recommends that authority be granted to construct the relocated State Route 118 at grade crossing in the community of Saticoy.

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. Caltrans requests authority under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201-1205 to realign SR-118 and in connection therewith, construct a new at grade crossing of SR-118 across the tracks of SPT's Santa Paula Branch Line in the Community of Saticoy, Ventura County.
2. Construction of the new SR-118 crossing, 0.08 miles southwest of the existing Los Angeles Avenue Crossing is required to improve highway geometrics and enhance vehicular traffic circulation between SR-126-Santa Paula Freeway and SR-232-Vineyard Avenue.
3. Notice of the application was published in the Commission Daily Calendar on March 18, 1992. No protest have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.
4. Public convenience and necessity requires the construction of the new SR-118 crossing to divert heavy volumes of through vehicular traffic from the Business District of the Community of Saticoy.
5. Public convenience and necessity also requires that the existing Los Angeles Avenue Crossing remain open to provide vehicular access to local traffic desiring to use the services or goods provided by the Saticoy Business District.
6. Public Safety requires that protection at the new SR-118 crossing be four Standard No. 9-A automatic gate-type signals with cantilevers (General Order (GO) 75-C), two mounted on raised highway median traffic islands.
7. Public Safety also requires that protection at the existing Los Angeles Avenue shall remain two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals (GO 75-C).
8. The new realigned SR-118 grade crossing will be within 200 feet of the intersection of Nardo Avenue and SR-118; therefore, the traffic control signals at the intersection should be preempted upon the approach of trains.

9. Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under CEQA, as amended.

10. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed the lead agency's FEIS.

11. The widening and relocation project of SR-118 will have a significant effect on the environment, however mitigation measures taken by Caltrans in the following areas; noise, land use, traffic circulation and wetlands/biology will either eliminate or reduce the severity of the adverse impacts to acceptable levels.

12. The benefits to community of Saticoy by rerouting heavy volumes of through vehicular away from its small but vital business district far outweigh any unavoidable temporary impacts caused during construction of the relocation 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. The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is authorized to construct new State Route (SR) 118 crossing at grade across the tracks of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Santa Paula Branch Line in the Community of Saticoy, Ventura County, to be identified as Crossing BE-407.42. The proposed crossing project is at the location and substantially as shown by the plans attached to the application and Appendix A of this order.
2. Construction of the crossing shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 6 of General Order (GO) 72-B. Maintenance of the crossings shall conform to GO 72-B.
3. Clearances shall be in accordance with GO 26-D. Walkways shall conform to GO 118.

4. Protection at the new SR-118 crossing shall be four Standard No. 9-A automatic gate-type signals with cantilevers (GO-75-C), two mounted on median traffic islands. Protection at the existing Los Angeles Avenue Crossing shall remain two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals (GO-75-C).

5. Traffic control signals at the adjacent intersection of SR-118 and Nardo Avenue shall be preempted upon the approach of trains.

6. Construction costs of realigning SR-118 and construction of the new crossing shall be borne by Caltrans.

7. Maintenance costs of the automatic protection shall be borne by Caltrans under PU Code Section 1202.2

8. Construction plans of the crossing, approved by SPT, together with a copy of the agreement entered into between the parties, shall be filed with the Commission's Safety Division prior to commencing construction.

9. The existing Los Angeles Avenue Crossing, identified as BE-407.50 shall remain open to serve the Community of Saticoy's Business District.

10. 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.

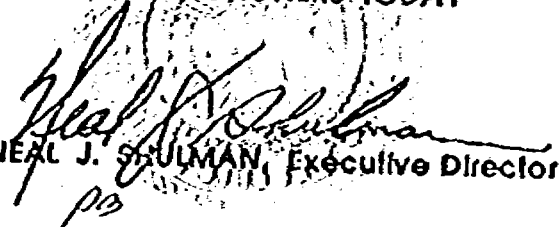
11. This authorization shall expire if not exercised within two years unless time is extended or if the above conditions are not complied with. Authorization may be revoked or modified if public convenience, necessity, or safety so require.

12. The application is granted as set forth above.
This order is effective 30 days from today.
Dated AUG 11 1992, at San Francisco, California.

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

Commissioner John B. Ohanian,
being necessarily absent, did
not participate.

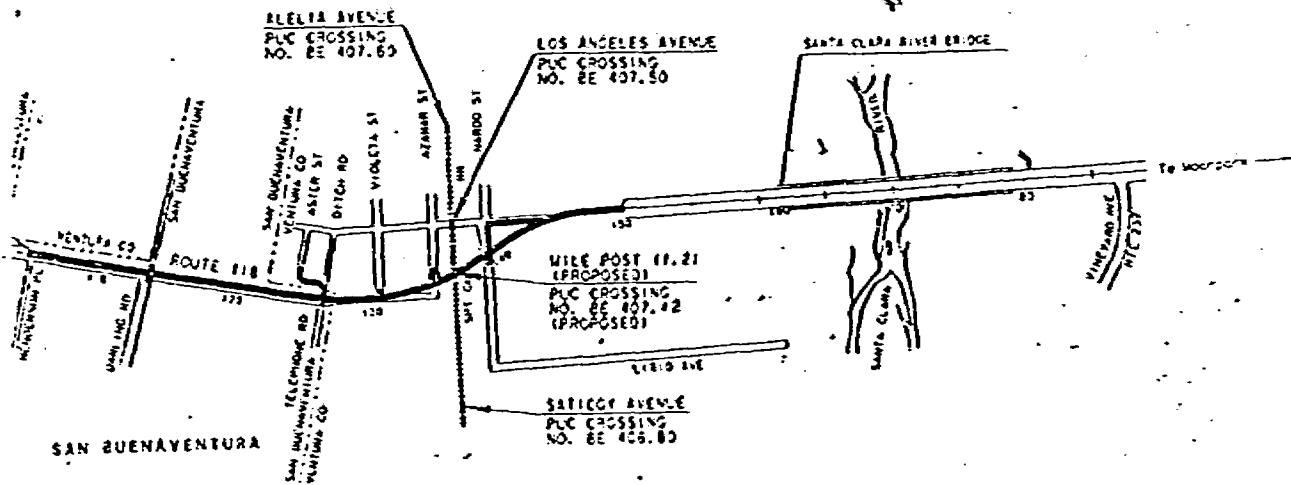
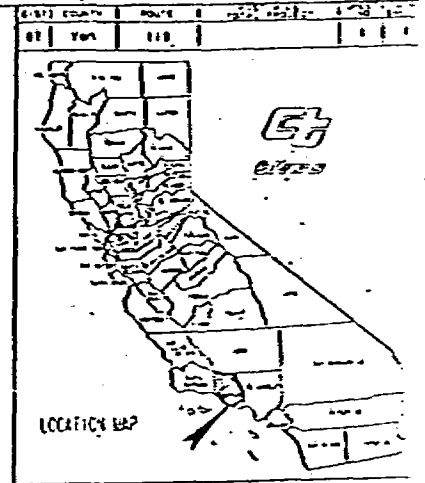
I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE
COMMISSIONERS TODAY


NEAL J. SHULMAN, Executive Director

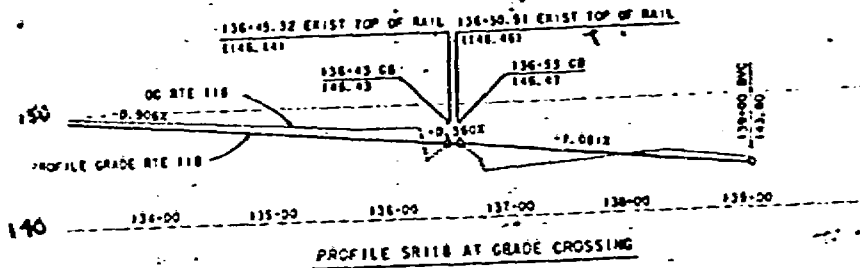
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PROJECT PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION ON
STATE HIGHWAY

IN VENTURA COUNTY
IN AND NEAR SAN BUENAVENTURA FROM 0.1 MILE EAST OF
STATE ROUTE 126 TO 0.7 MILE WEST OF STATE ROUTE 232

To be supplemented by Standard Plans dated January, 1953

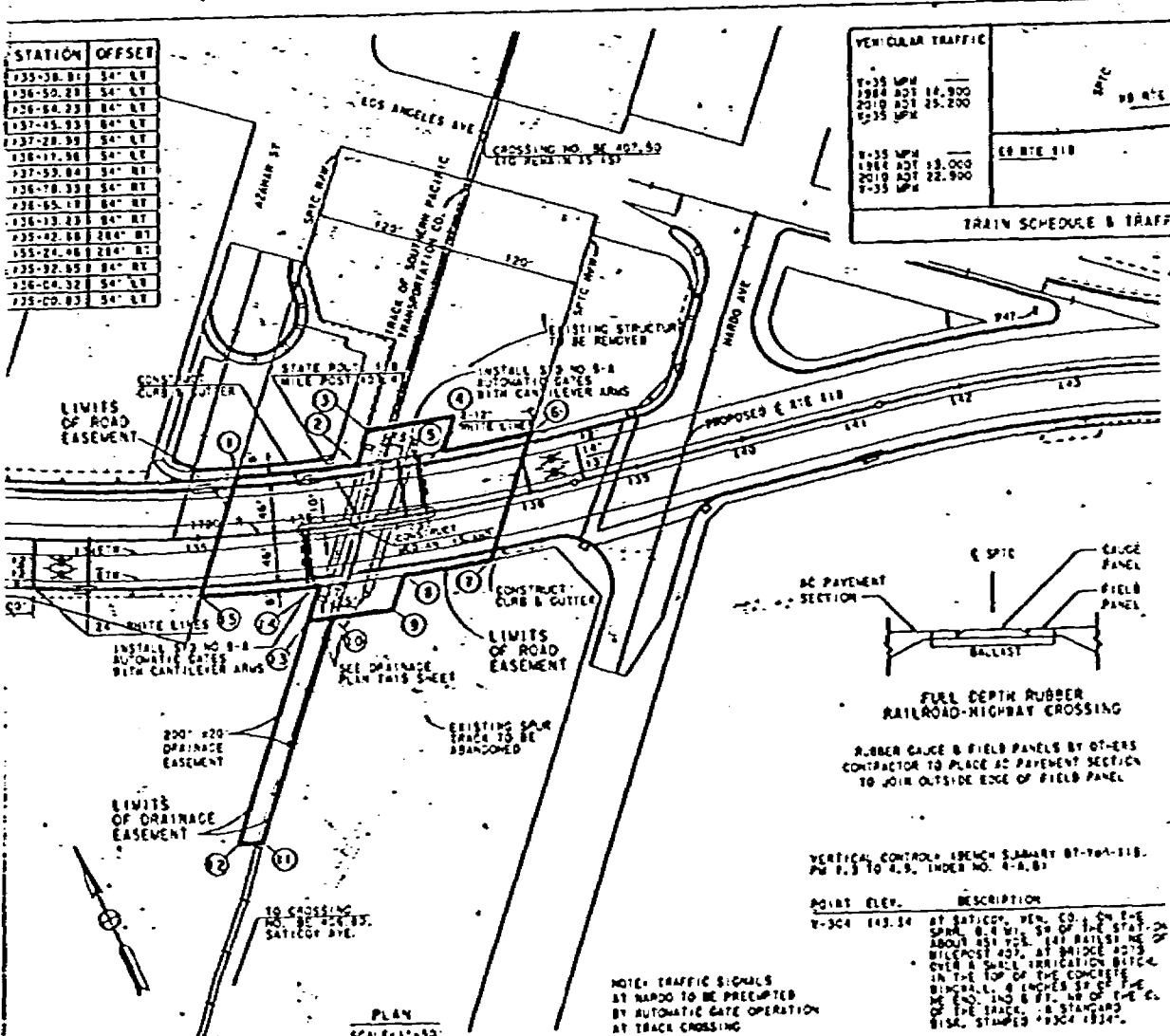


VICINITY MAP
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
EXHIBIT 8



STATION	OFFSET
135-38.81	34' RT
136-50.28	34' RT
136-64.23	34' RT
137-45.93	34' RT
137-28.38	34' RT
138-17.36	34' RT
137-59.84	34' RT
138-78.33	34' RT
138-65.17	34' RT
138-13.23	34' RT
135-42.58	264' RT
135-24.48	264' RT
135-32.85	34' RT
136-00.32	34' RT
135-00.83	34' RT

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC	
7-35 MPH	1964 ADT 14,900
2010 ADT	25,200
7-35 MPH	1964 ADT 18,000
2010 ADT	22,900



VERTICAL CONTROL (BENCH SURVEY BY 704-118, PG 1, 3 TO 4, 5, UNDER NO. 4-A-8)

POINT	ELEV.	DESCRIPTION
7-304	148.34	AT BATICOP, VEN. CO. ON THE SPUR, 8' W. W. SO OF THE STATION ABOUT 451 YDS. 141 BARS NE WILEPOST RD., AT BRIDGE ACROSS OVER A SHALLOW IRRIGATION DITCH IN THE TOP OF THE CONCRETE BENCH MARK 8 INCHES ST. OF THE W. END, 142 8 FT. W. OF THE E. OF THE TRACK, 8" STANDARD BARS, STAMPED 7-304 18147.

NOTE: TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT HARDSO TO BE PRECRIPTED BY AUTOMATIC GATE OPERATION AT TRACK CROSSING

DESIGNED BY	T. PHILLIPS	CHECKED BY	C. JESSUP	PREPARED FOR THE	STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DRAWN BY		DATE		DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	C. JESSUP