

S/RRT/lc

Decision 92 12 013 DEC 3 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:)
Reconstruct Lincoln Avenue Underpass,)
widen the roadway and upgrade the)
railroad crossing protection. The)
project is located in the City of)
Santa Ana, Orange County, California)

ORIGINAL

Application 92-08-030
(Filed August 24, 1992)

O P I N I O N

As part of the project to widen Interstate Route 5 (I-5) in Orange County, the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requests authority to reconstruct the (I-5) grade separation under The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's (AT&SF) San Diego subdivision main line in Santa Ana, Orange County.

Between Los Angeles and Orange County, I-5 is also known as the Santa Ana Freeway. The existing grade separation structure was built in 1953. It is called the Lincoln Avenue Underpass (Bridge No. 55-672) as Lincoln Avenue parallels the AT&SF main line along its west edge. Lincoln Avenue also spans the freeway, and its overcrossing of I-5 (Bridge No. 55-675) will also be replaced as part of the widening project.

Average traffic on the freeway under the AT&SF main line and Lincoln Avenue is 210,000 vehicles per day. The freeway now has three mixed flow lanes in each direction. After widening, I-5 will have one high-occupancy vehicle and four mixed flow lanes in each direction, plus room to add lanes in the future. The project will improve traffic capacity, flow and safety on I-5.

The AT&SF main line is the route of 16 National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) "San Diegan" intercity passenger trains plus two Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) commuter trains per day. There are also several freight trains

operated by AT&SF and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company each day. Because of the need to maintain these rail services, the project will include construction of a shoofly track. Lincoln Avenue would be closed and its existing bridge over I-5 removed and replaced with a double through steel girder bridge for the shoofly. The grade crossing of Washington Avenue over the AT&SF main line, located south of I-5, would be altered to allow construction of the shoofly. Reconstruction of the Lincoln Avenue Underpass as a widened, triple through steel girder bridge would be followed by removal of the shoofly, restoration of the Washington Avenue, grade crossing, and reconstruction of the Lincoln Avenue bridge over I-5. During construction and removal of track across Washington Avenue the grade crossing will be occasionally closed to traffic.

Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, Public Resources (PR) Code ((21000, et seq. Caltrans, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and filed a Notice of Determination with the State Office of Planning and Research on December 5, 1988. The notice stated that "The project will have a significant effect on the environment". Mitigation measures were made a condition of approval of the project, and a statement of overriding considerations adopted.

The environmental impacts of the railroad underpass project and mitigation measures discussed by Caltrans in the FEIS included:

(1) Traffic:

Vehicular traffic will be prohibited on Lincoln Avenue between 17th Street and Washington Avenue during construction, use, and removal of the shoofly. Lanes on I-5 will be closed during erection of columns and bridges.

Mitigation:

Work area traffic control and detours via local streets and alleys will be indicated by flagmen, lighting and signage. Work will be done at night and weekends and construction will be phased to reduce freeway lane closures.

(2) Noise:

Freeway traffic noise will increase one to four decibels after widening is complete.

Mitigation:

Soundwalls will be constructed along the northbound lanes near the railroad underpass.

(3) Vegetation Removal

Approach slope embankments and existing freeway landscaping into the underpass will be removed.

Mitigation:

The retaining walls of the widened approaches will include architectural surfaces and landscaping will be provided in embankment areas.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed the lead agency's FEIS. The Commission has considered the FEIS's findings, mitigation measures, and statement of overriding considerations. After reviewing the need for the reconstructed underpass and the safety of the altered grade crossing, the staff recommends that the application be approved.

The application was found to be in compliance under the Commission's filing requirements, including Rule 39 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, which relates to the alteration of public

highways across railroads. Location and drawing detail from the application for the Lincoln Avenue Underpass and the Washington Avenue grade crossing are shown in Appendix A.

Findings of Fact

1. Caltrans requests authority under Public Utilities Code §§ 1201 - 1205 to reconstruct the grade separation of I-5 under AT&SF's San Diego subdivision main line, called the Lincoln Avenue Underpass, in Santa Ana, Orange County.

2. Reconstruction of the underpass will allow widening and addition of high-occupancy vehicle and mixed flow lanes on I-5.

3. Public convenience and necessity require reconstruction of the Lincoln Avenue Underpass.

4. Railroad operations require temporary construction of shooftly track westerly of AT&SF's existing operating right-of-way during construction of the permanent railroad bridge structure.

5. Notice of the application was published in the Commission's Daily Calendar on August 26, 1992. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

6. Public safety requires that the altered Washington Avenue grade crossing be protected by two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals (General Order (GO) 75-C).

7. A copy of the signed construction and maintenance agreement between Caltrans and AT&SF was included in the application.

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

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

10. The widening of I-5 and reconstruction of the Lincoln Avenue Underpass will have a significant effect on the environment. Mitigation measures have been taken by Caltrans to reduce noise, traffic, landscape removal and other impacts.

10. The benefits of improved traffic capacity, flow and safety, outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of the project.

Conclusion of Law

1. 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 reconstruct the grade separation of Interstate Route 5 (I-5) under The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's (AT&SF) San Diego subdivision main line, identified as Lincoln Avenue Underpass Crossing 2-174.8-B, in Santa Ana, Orange County, at the location and substantially as shown by plans attached to the application and Appendix A of this order.

2. Caltrans is also authorized to alter the Washington Avenue Crossing 2-174.9 as required during various stages of roadway and railroad construction which includes the construction of a temporary shoofly track westerly of the existing operating tracks.

3. Upon completion of the new railroad bridge structure and restoration of vehicular traffic to the new improved freeway lanes, the temporary shoofly shall be removed.

4. Clearances shall conform to General Order (GO) 26-D. Walkways shall conform to GO 118.

5. Alteration of the grade crossing shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 6 of General Order (GO) 72-B.

6. Maintenance of the grade crossing shall conform to GO 72-B.

7. Protection at the Washington Avenue grade crossing shall be two Standard No. 9 automatic gate-type signals (GO-75-C).

8. Construction costs shall be borne by Caltrans. Maintenance of the underpass shall be as provided for in the Caltrans - AT&SF agreement. Maintenance costs of the grade crossing shall be divided in accordance with Public Utilities Code { 1202.2.

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

10. 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.

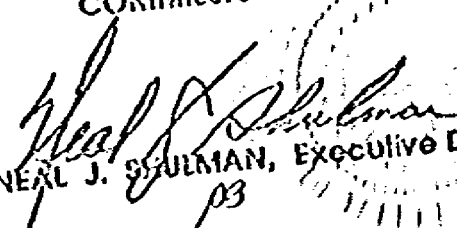
11. The application is granted as set forth above.

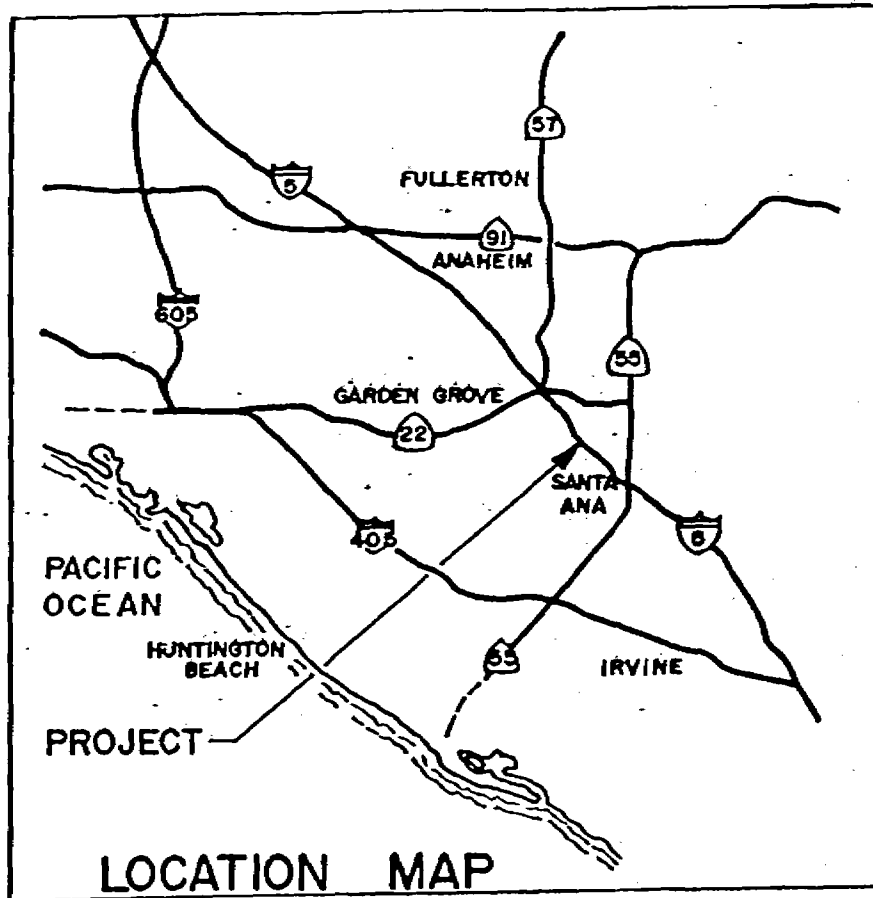
This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated DEC 3 1992 at San Francisco, California.

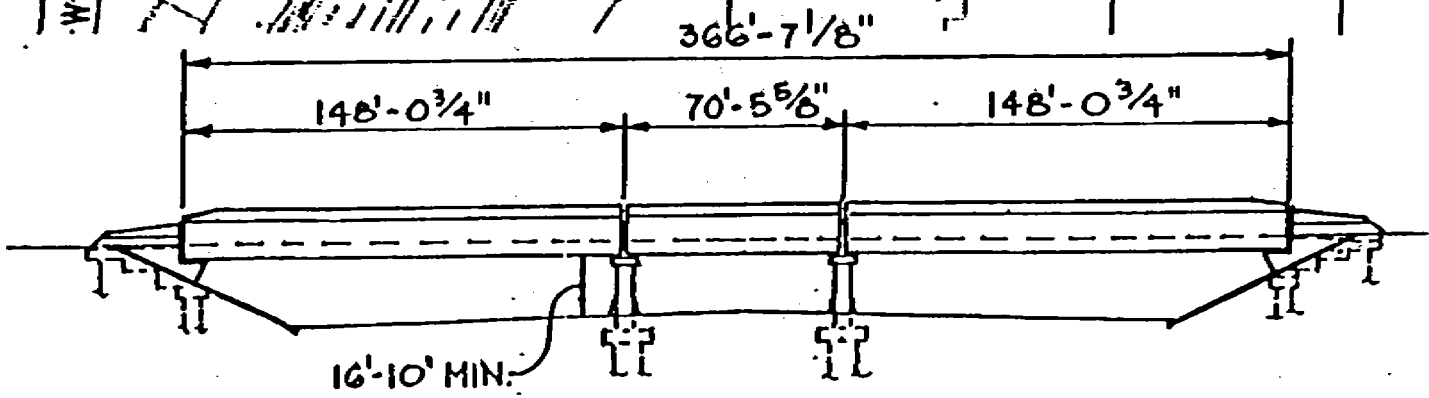
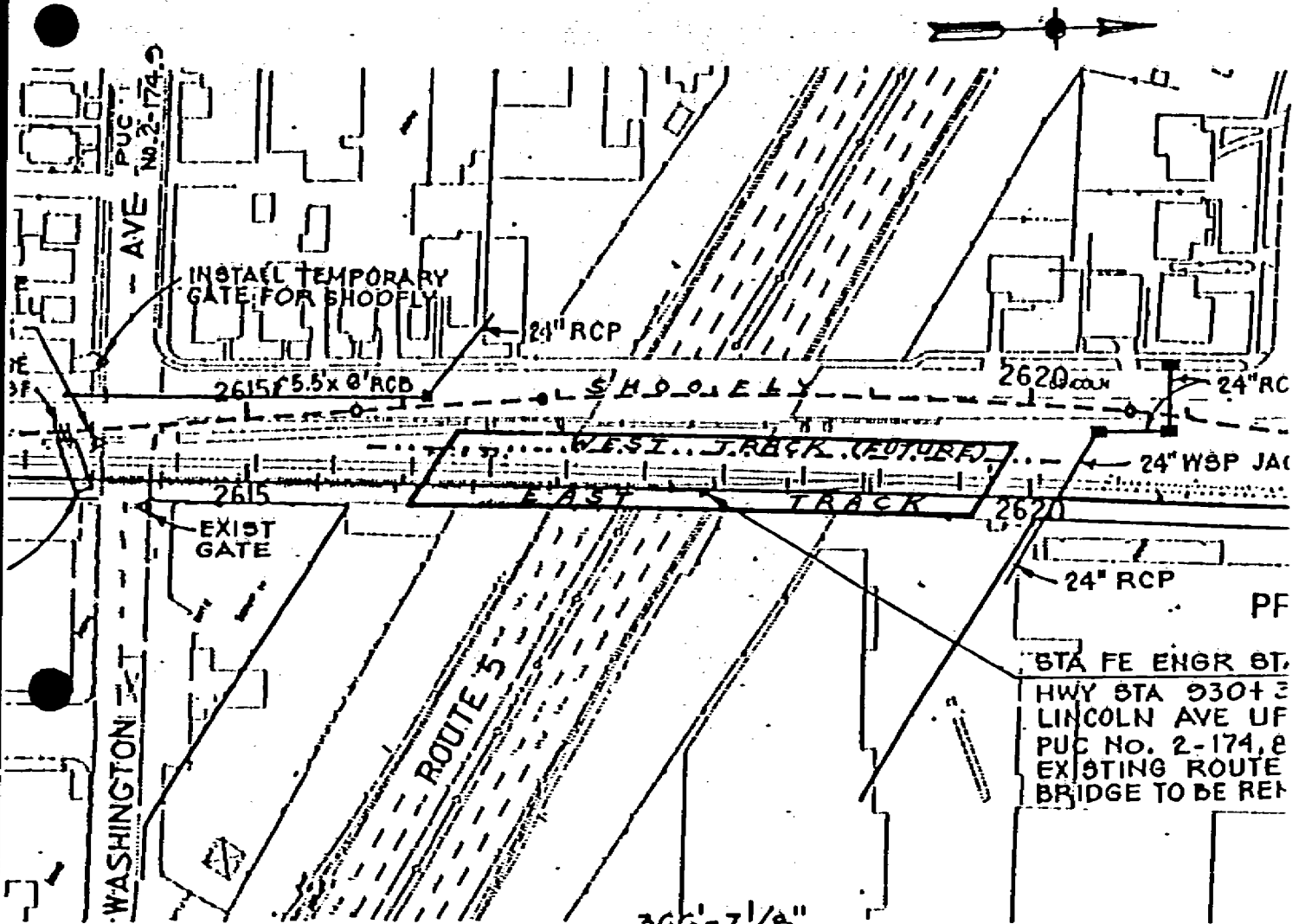
DANIEL Wm. FESSLER
President
JOHN B. OHANIAN
PATRICIA M. ECKERT
NORMAN D. SHUMWAY
Commissioners

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


NEAL J. SAULMAN, Executive Director
PB

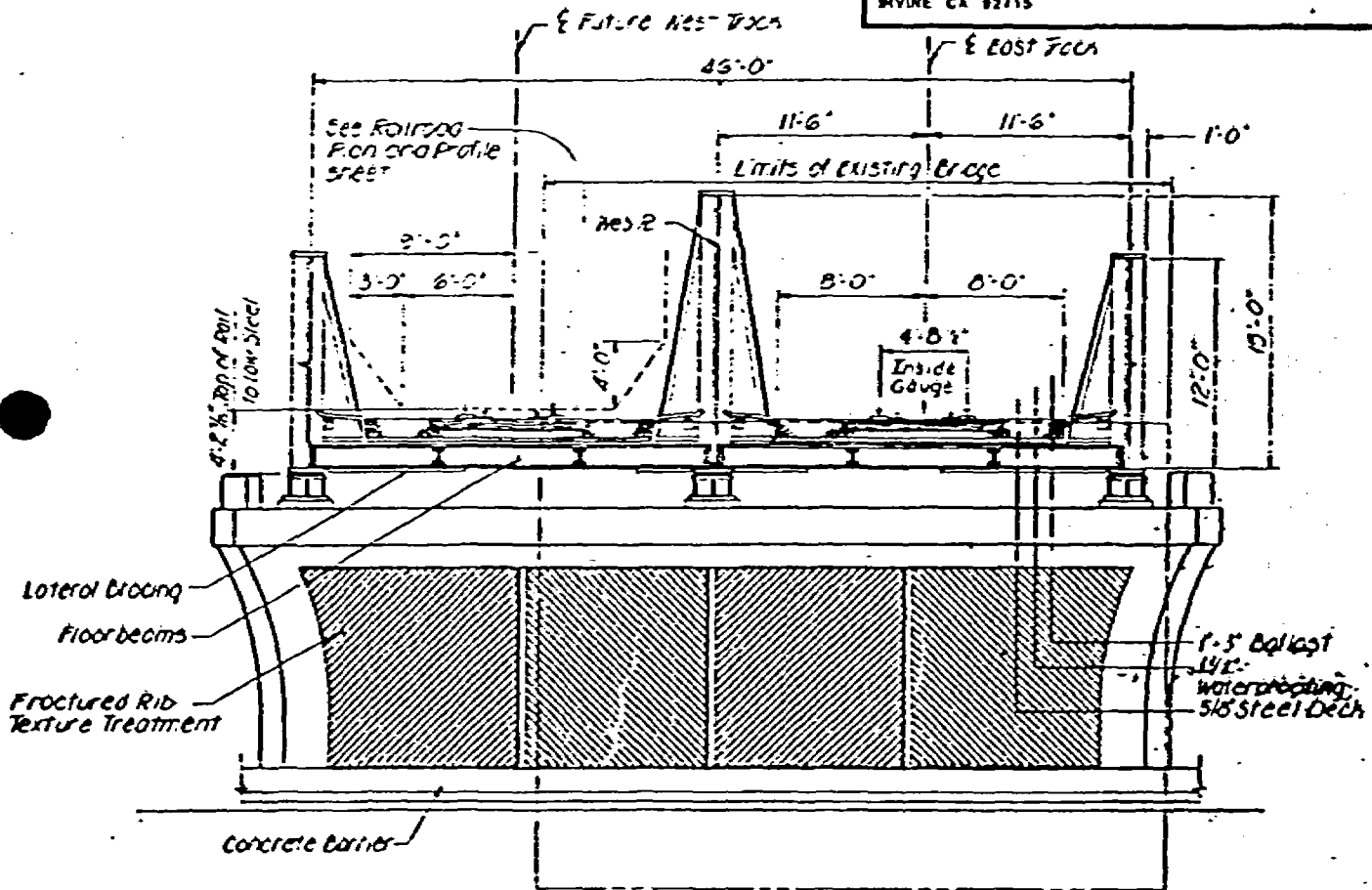





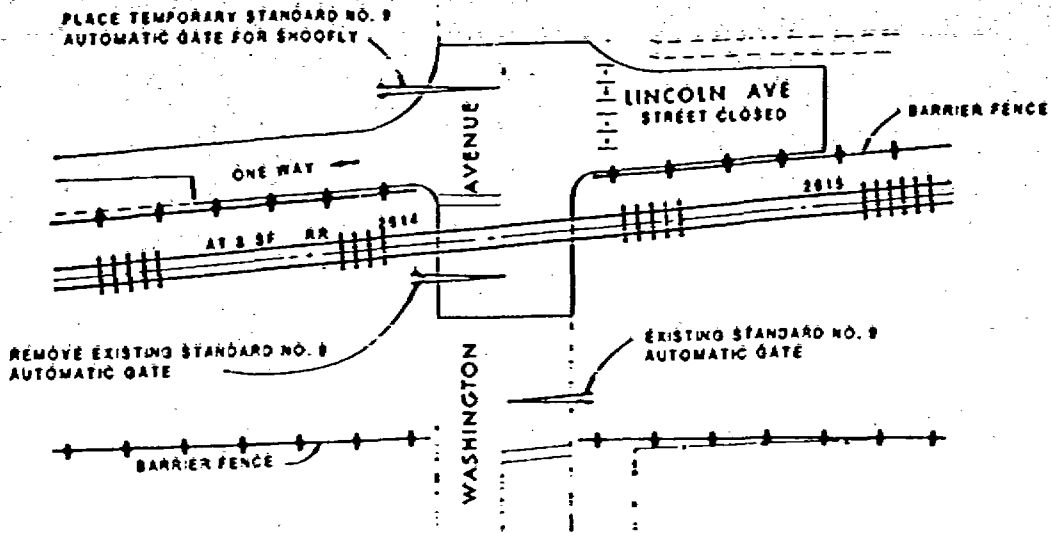


ELEVATION

William R. Howard
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER
PLANS APPROVAL DATE _____
2151 MICHELSON DRIVE
IRVINE CA 92715

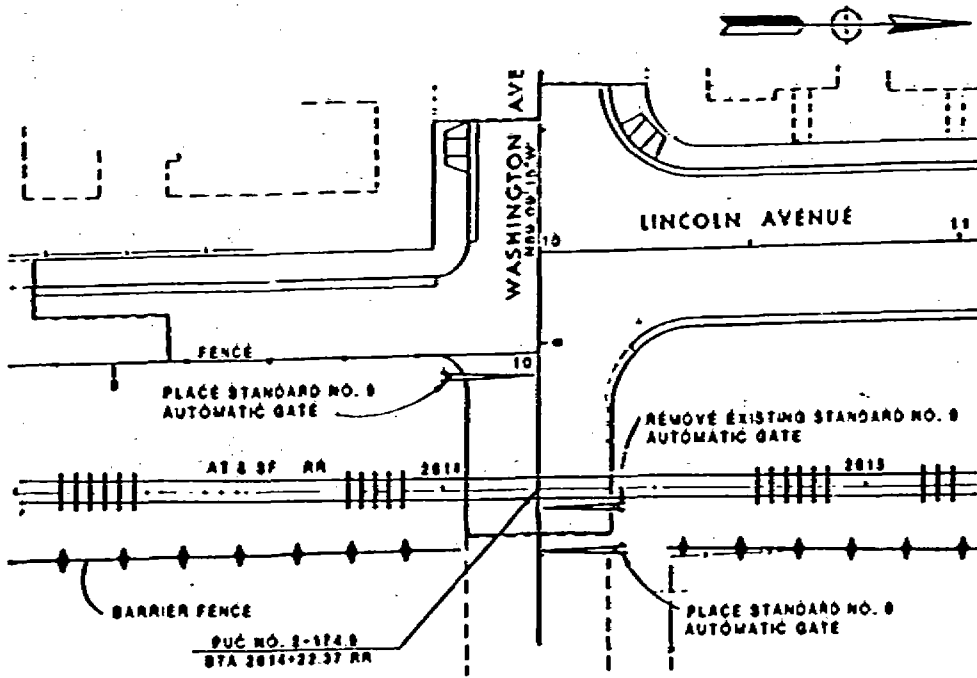


TYPICAL SECTION



PLAN

WASHINGTON AVENUE
TEMPORARY SHOOFLY GRADE CROSSING



PLAN

WASHINGTON AVENUE
GRADE CROSSING