

S&E/RRT/sn

Decision 96-02-018 February 7, 1996

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 the Ventura)
Overhead (Br. No. 52-004, PUC)
No. E-394.8-A, on its existing)
alignment of the Pacific Coast)
Highway (Route 1) over the)
existing Southern Pacific)
Transportation Company, located)
near the City of Ventura,)
in the County of Ventura, State)
of California.)

ORIGINAL

Application 95-08-051
(Filed August 22, 1995)

O P I N I O N

The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requests authority to reconstruct the Ventura Overhead grade separation and construct a new temporary bicycle overhead, approximately 800 feet southeasterly of the existing Ventura Overhead, over Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Coast Line tracks, located near the City of Ventura, in the County of Ventura.

In accordance with Caltrans's seismic retrofit studies and construction strategy, the existing Ventura Overhead Bridge will be replaced with a new structure. The proposed bridge will carry two 12-foot lanes, a 6-foot bike lane, and 8-foot outside shoulders on the same horizontal alignment as the existing structure. The vertical alignment will be raised to comply with railroad vertical clearance requirements.

During construction, Route 1 will be closed to traffic. The on- and off-ramps of the Pacific Coast Highway on Ventura Freeway (Route 101) will also be closed. Access to Emma Wood State

Beach and local residences will be from Seacliff Boulevard ramps on Route 101 approximately 6 miles to the north.

To accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists currently using Ventura Overpass, a new temporary grade separation will be constructed to provide access from Route 1 to Emma Wood State Beach during reconstruction of the Ventura Overhead. This structure will carry an 8-foot wide walkway over SPT tracks and a ramp with a combination of 4-foot wide steps and 2-foot wide bike ramps that will transition to the original ground from railroad right-of-way.

This bicycle overhead will consist of a 70-foot span steel girder, a 33-foot and a 77-foot wooden ramps which will be supported on wooden bents by spread footing. This will be in place before the existing Ventura Overhead is demolished. Railroad traffic will continue to use the existing tracks and will pass through falsework traffic openings. Once Ventura Overpass is built and opened to the public, the temporary bicycle overhead will be closed and vacated.

Caltrans 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. Caltrans has determined that this project, the reconstruction of an existing grade separation, is categorically exempt from the reporting requirements of CEQA under PR Code Section 21080.13.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's exemption determination. The existing grade separation and adjacent areas have been inspected by the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division - Traffic Engineering staff. Staff examined the need for and safety of the proposed project and recommends that the new overhead be approved.

The application was found to be in compliance with the Commission's filing requirements, including Rule 38, which relates to the construction of a public highway across a railroad, and Rule 39 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, which relates to the

reconstruction of existing crossings and separations over railroad track. Detailed drawings of the proposed overhead 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 October 6, 1995. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. Caltrans requests authority under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201-1205 to reconstruct the Ventura Overhead at separated grades over SPT's Coast Line located near the City of Ventura, in the County of Ventura.

3. Caltrans also request authority under Public Utilities Code Section 1201-1205 to construct a new temporary bicycle overhead, approximately 800 feet southeasterly of the existing Ventura Overhead, over SPT's Coast Line located near the City of Ventura, in the County of Ventura.

4. Reconstructing the existing overpass is required in connection with several engineering studies prepared by Caltrans that determined the need to seismically retrofit many grade separation structures to provide additional safety to the motoring public during earthquakes.

5. The temporary bicycle overpass is required to alleviate any inconvenience to pedestrians and bicyclists, while Ventura Overpass is reconstructed.

6. Public convenience, necessity and safety require reconstructing the existing Ventura Overpass and constructing a new temporary bicycle overhead.

7. Public safety also requires that the temporary bicycle overhead be closed and physically removed upon completion of the Ventura Overpass.

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 exemption determination.

Conclusions of Law

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

2. Under Public Resources Code Section 21080.13 the activity is exempted from the requirements set forth in CEQA; therefore the guidelines (14 Cal. Admin. Code - Division 6) concerning the evaluation of projects and the preparation and review of environmental documents do not apply.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is authorized to reconstruct the Ventura Overhead grade separation, identified as Crossing E-394.8-A, and construct a new temporary bicycle overhead, identified as E-395.0-AD, over Southern Pacific Transportation Company's (SPT) Coast Line tracks, located near the City of Ventura, in the County of Ventura, at the location and substantially as shown by plans attached to the Application and Appendix A of this order.

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 feet 6 inches 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 and Enforcement Division forbidding employees to ride on tops of cars beneath the structure.

3. Caltrans shall notify the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division and SPT at least 15, but not more than 30, days in advance of the date when the temporary impaired overhead 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. Upon the opening of the Ventura Overpass, the temporary bicycle overhead (Crossing No. E-395.0-AD) shall be permanently closed and vacated.

6. 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 and Enforcement 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. The application is granted as set forth above.
This order becomes effective 30 days from today.
Dated FEB 7, 1996, at San Francisco, California.

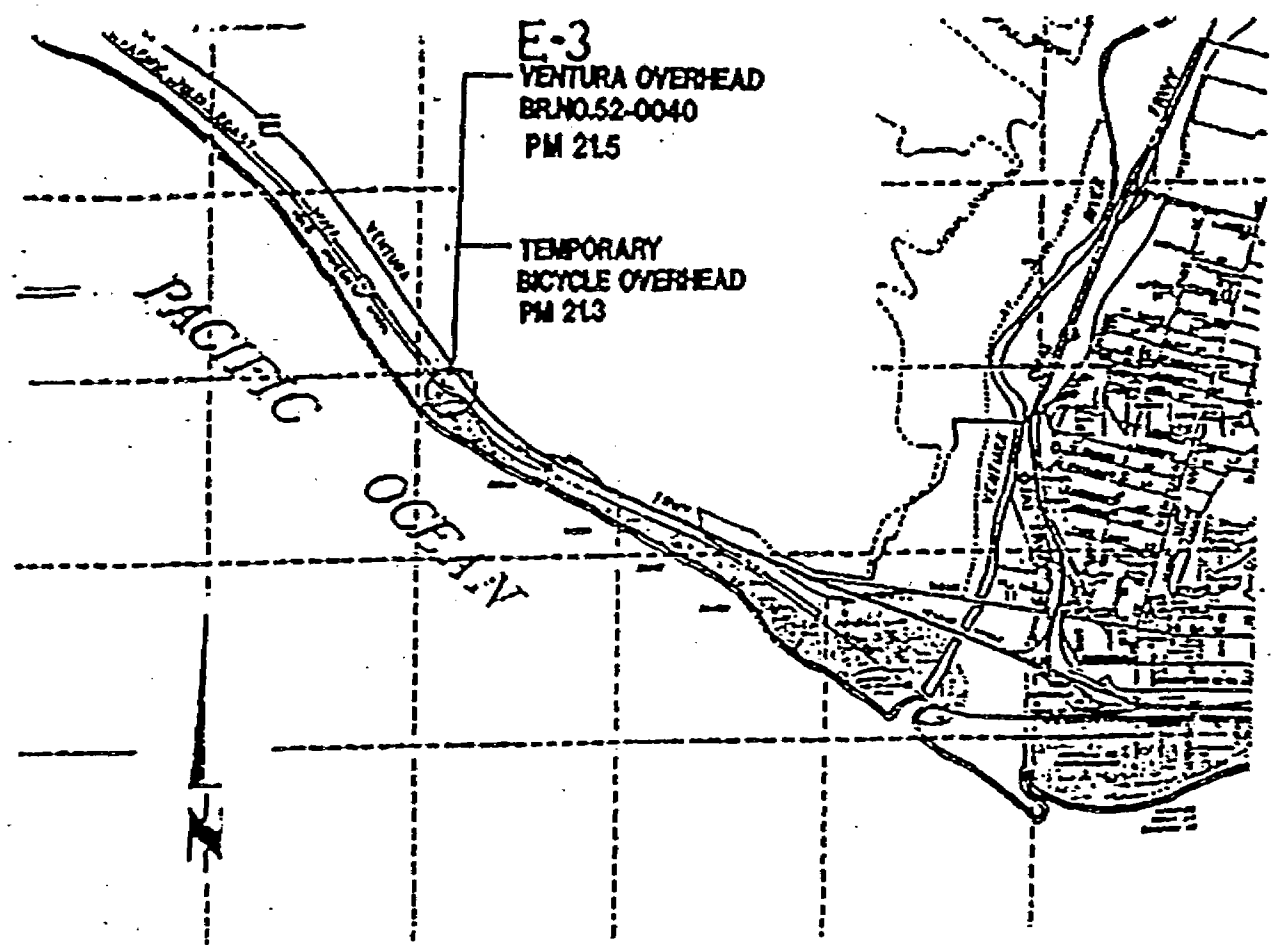
DANIEL Wm. FESSLER
President

P. GREGORY CONLON

JESSIE J. KNIGHT, JR.

HENRY M. DUQUE

JOSIAH L. NEEPER
Commissioners



VICINITY MAP

