

RSAC/RLE

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Decision D. 97-11-006

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the Santa Clara County)
 Transit District (CIS 110.10.4) for an)
 order authorizing construction of an at-)
 grade pedestrian crossing across the) Application 94-12-029
 eastbound LRT and eastbound and westbound) (Filed December 14, 1994)
 JPB tracks at the Downtown Mountain View)
 Station of the Tasman Corridor Project in)
 the City of Mountain View, County of)
 Santa Clara.)

O P I N I O N

As part of the project to construct a 12 mile extension to its Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), formerly known as the Santa Clara County Transit District, requests authority to construct pedestrian crossings of its tracks and the San Francisco Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB) tracks at the downtown Mountain View Station in Mountain View, Santa Clara County.

The extension, known as the Tasman Corridor, was planned as a short headway, double track line constructed for much of its length in the median of existing arterial streets. It was planned to extend from Castro Street in Mountain View to the area in northeast San Jose just past the Hostetter Road intersection with Capitol Avenue, connecting with the existing VTA LRT system on Tasman Drive between Great America Parkway and North First Street.

Funding limitations have necessitated that the extension be split into two phases. Current planning is to construct the western portion of the extension, from Tasman Drive to Castro Street in Mountain View, as Phase I. To save costs, portions of this phase are initially to be single track. Phase II would construct the eastern portion of the extension, from Tasman Drive

to Hostetter Road, and add the second track on the single track portions of Phase I.

The section of the system from Castro Street past the Mountain View Station is to be double track even in Phase I. This section will run parallel to the existing PCJPB commuter rail line (also known as "Caltrain"). The proposed LRT Mountain View Station is to be constructed between Castro Street and the existing Caltrain Mountain View Station. The LRT station design incorporates a center platform, and only the eastbound LRT track is to be crossed by the pedestrian crossing. However, both eastbound and westbound Caltrain tracks are to be crossed at the adjoining PCJPB station, which is to be altered in conjunction with the LRT extension project to incorporate outside boarding platforms.

VTA 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 and review of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), VTA filed a Notice of Determination with the Santa Clara County Clerk on January 12, 1993, which found that "The project will have a significant effect on the environment," and "Mitigation measures were made a condition of approval of the project," and "A statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for the project."

Major impacts include elimination of bicycle lanes and landscape trees on some portions of the route, increased traffic noise, and disturbance of two National Historic Place sites. Mitigation measures include implementation of an alternative route bike path, tree replacement, construction of noise walls, and Historic Properties data recovery.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's FEIS. The application meets the filing requirements of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, including Rule 38, which relates

to the construction of a public street across a railroad track. A sketch of the project vicinity is included as Appendix A.

The site of the proposed project has been inspected by the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division Traffic Engineering staff. The staff examined the need for and safety of the proposed pedestrian crossing, and recommends issuance of an ex parte order authorizing construction as requested.

Due to the large scope of the Tasman Corridor project, VTA requests that the time authorization be extended to four years to facilitate its construction schedule.

Findings of Fact

1. Notice of the application was published in the Commission's Daily Calendar on January 3, 1995. A staff protest was filed on January 23, 1995. The staff protest was rescinded on May 12, 1997. No further protests have been filed.
2. VTA requests authority under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201-1205 to construct pedestrian crossings at grade across its tracks and the tracks of the PCJPB at the downtown Mountain View Station in Mountain View, Santa Clara County.
3. The LRT crossing is required to provide access to the LRT system boarding platform at Mountain View Station.
4. The PCJPB crossing is required to provide access to the westbound PCJPB boarding platform and to the LRT system boarding platform.
5. Public convenience and necessity require construction of the crossings.
6. Public safety requires that the LRT crossing be equipped with two Standard No. 10 flashing light signals, modified to provide pairs of flashing light assemblies similar to those used for Standard No. 8 flashing light signals (General Order (GO) 75-C), and that the PCJPB crossing be equipped with two Standard No. 10 flashing light signals, modified to provide pairs of flashing

light assemblies similar to those used for Standard No. 8 flashing light signals (GO 75-C).

7. Public safety requires that the existing PCJPB crossing at Castro Street (PUC Crossing 105E-35.9) be altered by installation of a Standard No. 8 flashing light signal in the northeast quadrant, between the end of the proposed LRT system platform and the westbound PCJPB main line, to be activated simultaneously with the existing Standard No. 9 gate-type signals.

8. VTA 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 project will have a significant impact on the environment; however, the adopted mitigation measures will reduce the severity of the adverse impacts to acceptable levels.

Conclusions of Law

1. The application is uncontested and a public hearing is not necessary.

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

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), formerly known as the Santa Clara County Transit District, is authorized to construct a pedestrian crossing at grade across its tracks at Mountain View Station in Mountain View (City), Santa Clara County, at the location and substantially as shown by plans attached to the application, to be identified as Crossing 82B-14.0-D.

2. VTA is authorized to construct a pedestrian crossing at grade across the tracks of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB) at Mountain View Station in Mountain View, Santa

Clara County, at the location and substantially as shown by plans attached to the application, to be identified as Crossing 105E-35.96-D.

3. Construction of the crossings shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 1 of General Order (GO) 72-B.

4. Maintenance of the crossings shall conform to GO 72-B.

5. Clearances and walkways shall conform to GOs 26-D, 118, and 143-A.

6. Warning devices at the VTA crossing shall be two Standard No. 10 automatic flashing light signals, modified to provide pairs of flashing light assemblies similar to those used on Standard No. 8 flashing light signals (GO 75-C).

7. Warning devices at the PCJPB crossing shall be two Standard No. 10 automatic flashing light signals, modified to provide pairs of flashing light assemblies similar to those used on Standard No. 8 flashing light signals (GO 75-C).

8. Existing automatic warning devices at the PCJPB crossing of Castro Street (PUC Crossing 105E-35.9) shall be supplemented with one Standard No. 8 flashing light signal (GO 75-C).

9. 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 of the crossing approved by City and PCJPB, shall be filed by VTA with the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the costs of construction and maintenance by further order.

10. Within 30 days after completion of the work under this order, VTA shall advise the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division in writing that the authorized work has been completed.

11. This authorization shall expire if not exercised within four years unless time is extended or if the above conditions are

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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.

13. Application 94-12-029 is closed.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated November 5, 1997, at San Francisco, California.

P. GREGORY CONLON

President

JESSIE J. KNIGHT, JR.

HENRY M. DUQUE

JOSIAH L. NEEPER

RICHARD A. BILAS

Commissioners

