

Mailed: 3/22/99

Decision 99-03-051 March 18, 1999

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 a portion of State Route 180, and in conjunction therewith proposes to widen the existing at grade crossing known as "Floyd Avenue" (PUC No. B-279.60A) located in Fresno County, State of California.

Application 98-09-026
(Filed September 17, 1998)

OPINION

As part of the State Route (SR) 180 Rehabilitation Project, the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requests authority to widen SR 180 (also known as Whites Bridge Road) where it crosses at-grade with a branch line track operated by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVR), and owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (UP). The subject crossing is located in an unincorporated area of Fresno County.

Within the project area, SR 180 runs east-west, while the track is on a southwest-northeast alignment. The purpose of widening SR 180 is to accommodate one bus/truck turnout lane in the east- and west-bound directions, through the crossing. A vicinity map is set forth as Appendix A.

At present, the crossing consists of a two-lane, bi-directional, 24' wide roadway across a single-track branch line at a 40 degree angle. Users are warned of on-coming trains by two Standard No. 8 flashing light type signals, per General Order (GO) 75-C.

As proposed, the crossing would be widened to 48' and provide for one turnout lane in each direction. The widened section will taper down to 40', at approximately 115' west of the crossing and 100' east of the crossing. Two Standard No. 9-A automatic gate-type signals with

cantilevered arm would be installed per GO 75-C. A schematic of the proposed design is set forth as Appendix B.

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. Caltrans has determined that this project meets the requirements of a Class 1 Exemption under CEQA, and is therefore exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's Categorical Exemption/Exclusion Determination.

The site of the proposed project has been inspected by the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division (RSAC), Traffic Engineering Section staff. The staff examined the need for and safety of the proposed modifications and recommends that the sought authority be granted.

Application 98-09-026 meets the filing requirements of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, including Rule 39 which relates to the modification of an existing crossing by widening or relocation. By letter dated January 25, 1999, Caltrans has requested that the authority granting modification of the SR 180 crossing be effective for the three (3) years, due to the extensive scope of the SR 180 Rehabilitation Project.

In Resolution ALJ 176-3001 dated October 8, 1998, the Commission preliminarily categorized this application as ratesetting, and preliminarily determined that hearings were not necessary. No protests have been received. The Commission's RSAC recommends that this application be granted. Given these developments, a public hearing is not necessary, and it is not necessary to disturb the preliminary determinations made in Resolution ALJ 176-3001.

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the relief requested. Accordingly, pursuant to PU Code Section 311 (g)(2), the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment is being waived.

Findings of Fact

1. Notice of the application was published in the Commission's Daily Calendar on September 22, 1998. No protests have been filed.

2. Caltrans requests authority, under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201 - 1205, to widen SR 180 where it crosses at-grade with a branch line track operated by SJVR, and owned by UP, in Fresno County.

3. Public convenience and necessity require widening of the SR 180 crossing.
4. Public safety requires that the modified crossing be equipped with two Standard No. 9-A automatic gate-type signals with cantilever, in accordance with GO 75-C.
5. Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under CEQA, as amended.
6. Caltrans has determined that this project meets the requirements of a Class 1 Exemption under CEQA, as amended.
7. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's Categorical Exemption/Exclusion Determination.

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.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is authorized to widen State Route (SR) 180 (also known as Whites Bridge Road) where it crosses at-grade with a branch line track operated by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVR), and owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (UP), at the location and substantially as shown on the plans attached to the application, identified as Crossing 109A-196.80 (formerly 001BA-196.80).
2. The crossings shall be fitted with two Standard No. 9-A automatic gate-type signals with cantilever, as specified in General Order (GO) 75-C.
3. Clearances shall be in accordance GO 26-D.
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. Construction and maintenance costs shall be borne in accordance with an agreement to be entered into between the parties. A copy of the agreement shall be filed by Caltrans with the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division (RSAC), prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the costs of construction and maintenance by further order.

6. Final construction plans, approved by SJVR and UP, shall be filed by Caltrans with the Commission's Traffic Engineering Section (TES) prior to commencing construction.

7. Within thirty (30) days after completion of the work under this order, Caltrans shall advise the TES in writing that the authorized work has been completed.

8. This authorization shall expire if not exercised within three (3) 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. This application is granted as set forth above.

10. Application 98-09-026 is closed.

This order becomes effective thirty (30) days from today.

Dated March 18, 1999, at San Francisco, California.

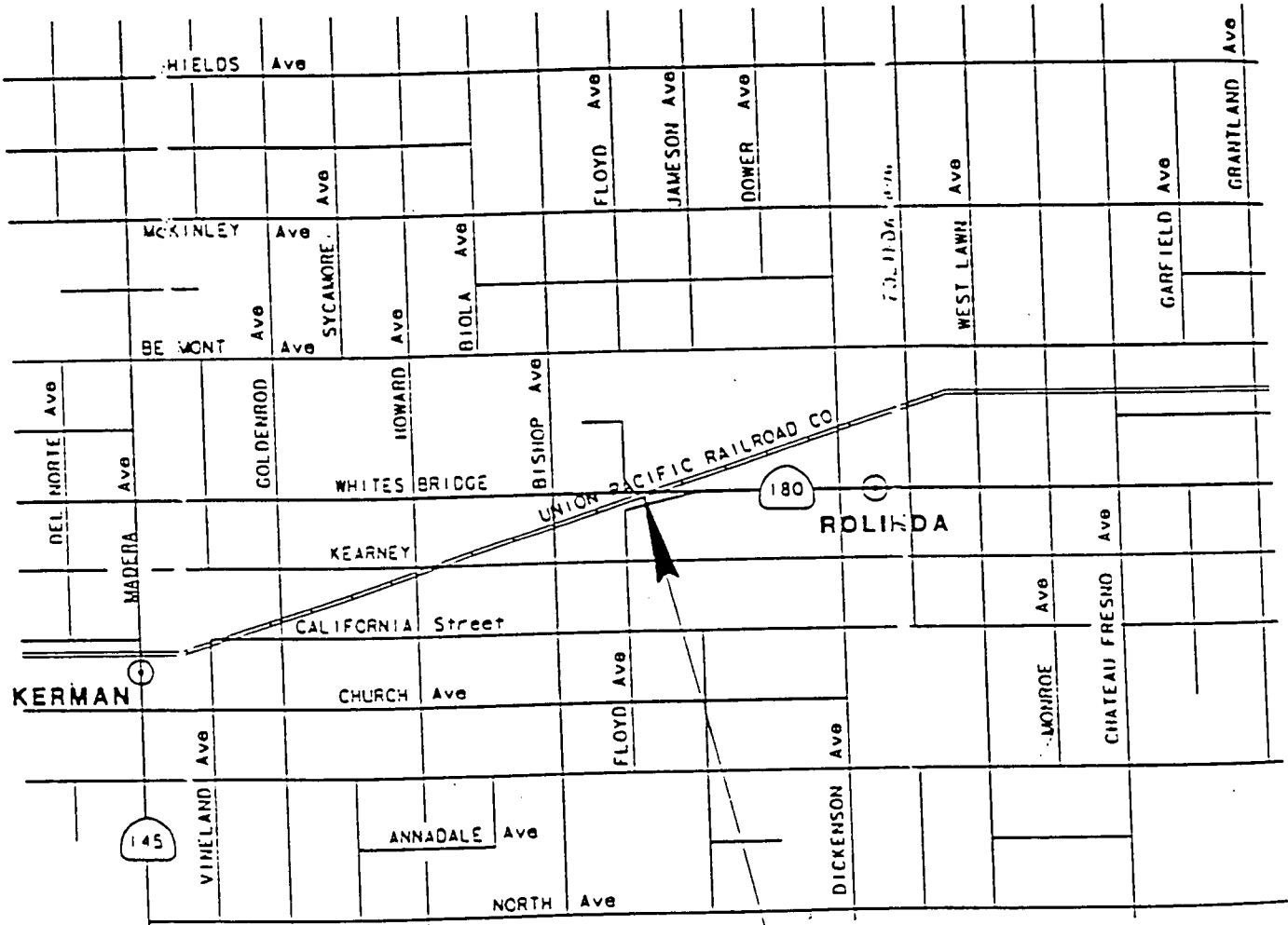
RICHARD A. BILAS

President

HENRY M. DUQUE

JOSIAH L. NEEPER

Commissioners



**PROPOSED WIDENING OF
EXISTING GRADE CROSSING**

