

Decision 99-12-044, December 16, 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: reconstruct the Fairview-Goleta )  
Overhead, located in the County of Santa Barbara,) )  
State of California )

Application A.99-02-034  
(Filed February 26, 1999  
Amended May 20, 1999)

OPINION

State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requests authority to reconstruct Fairview-Goleta Overhead grade separation over Union Pacific Railroad Company's (UP) Coast Main Line tracks, formerly owned by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, located in the Goleta area of Santa Barbara County.

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing inadequate Fairview Avenue overhead, across State Route (SR) 101 and the UP tracks, which will relieve traffic congestion at the freeway intersection. The structure is gradually deteriorating from reactive aggregate interaction in the concrete admixture. The estimated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on the Overhead at the time of completion is estimated to be 22,700 vehicles. The estimated ADT in Year 2021 is anticipated to be 25,000.

The Fairview Avenue interchange was originally constructed in 1961. At that time, the Fairview Avenue overhead was relinquished to the County of Santa Barbara. Each bridge—the overhead and overcrossing—is comprised of four through lanes, a left-turn lane (median island on the overhead), left and right shoulders, and a sidewalk on the west side. The widths for each component are within the standards specified for each structure. The overcrossing is a four span bridge, 64.5 m (211.5 ft.) in length. The overhead has three spans and is 49.6 m (162.7 ft.) long.

Santa Barbara County has determined that the overhead should be replaced. Their request for Federal funds required Caltrans' involvement, thus creating a three-way

partnership. It was also determined that the concurrent construction of the overhead and the overcrossing would minimize disruption to the travelling public; they were therefore combined into one project.

The overcrossing is structurally deficient due to concrete deterioration induced by chemical reactions involving reactive aggregate and water. The condition can be retarded by renovation, but does not insure against the need for continued repair in the future. The STRAIN (Structure Replacement and Improvement Needs) Report recommended replacement in the 95/96 fiscal year.

Caltrans' District Material Engineering Branch also studied the erosion aspects of the facility. Erosion of the side slopes is apparent at the southerly end of the overhead and at the northerly end of the overcrossing. The sidewalks and bridge abutments have been undercut at these locations, causing some buckling, which was the result of the combination of erosive soil and a poor bridge detail which allows water to flow behind and below the abutment wall.

The Fairview Avenue interchange with Route 101 carries very high traffic volumes during peak hours and throughout the normal weekday. Santa Barbara County requested that a right-turn lane be added to the overhead and an additional left-turn lane be added to the overcrossing to help alleviate the congestion caused by this high traffic volume.

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 issued a Negative Declaration and on March 25, 1996, filed a Notice of Determination with the State of California, Office of Planning and Research, which found that "the project will not have a significant effect on the environment."

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered Caltrans' environmental documentation. The site of the project has been inspected by the Commission's Rail Safety and Carrier Division - Rail Crossings Engineering Section staff. Staff examined the need for and the safety of the proposed grade separations and related railroad construction and 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

reconstruction and widening of public highway crossings and separations over a railroad. A site map of the grade crossing and separations is as shown on plans attached to the application and Appendix A.

Commission staff had discovered minor deficiencies in the original application. On May 20, 1999, Caltrans filed an Amended Application, which corrected the deficient items. There are no other unresolved matters.

In Resolution ALJ 176-3012, dated March 18, 1999, and published in the Commission Daily Calendar on March 23, 1999, the Commission preliminarily categorized this application as ratesetting, and preliminarily determined that hearings were not necessary. The Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division recommends that this application be granted. Given these developments, public hearing is not necessary, and it is not necessary to disturb the preliminary determinations made in Resolution ALJ 176-3012.

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 and amendment were published in the Commission Daily Calendar on March 5, 1999 and May 24, 1999, respectively. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. Caltrans requests authority under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201-1205 to reconstruct Fairview-Goleta Overhead grade separation over Union Pacific Railroad Company's Coast Main Line tracks, formerly owned by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, located in the Goleta area of Santa Barbara County.

3. The reconstruction of the Fairview-Goleta overhead is required to maintain the transportation link along Fairview Avenue across SR 101 and the Union Pacific Railroad Company's tracks and to relieve congestion at the intersection.

4. Need for reconstruction is also evidenced by concrete deterioration of the structure induced by chemical reactions involving reactive aggregate and water.

5. Public convenience, necessity and safety require reconstruction of the existing Fairview Avenue Overhead.
6. Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under CEQA, as amended.
7. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's Negative Declaration and Notice of Determination.
8. This project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

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. State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requests authority to reconstruct Fairview-Goleta Overhead grade separation over Union Pacific Railroad Company's (UP) Coast Main Line tracks, formerly owned by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, located in the Goleta area of Santa Barbara County, to be identified as Crossing E-362.10-A.
2. Clearances shall be in accordance with GO 26-D. 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.
3. Construction and maintenance costs shall be borne in accordance with an agreement entered into between parties. A copy of the agreement shall be filed by Caltrans with the Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division prior to commencing construction.
4. Within 30 days after completion of the work under this order, Caltrans shall notify the Commission in writing that the authorized work was completed.

5. 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.

The application is granted as set forth above.

Application 99-02-034 is closed.

This order is effective 30 days from today.

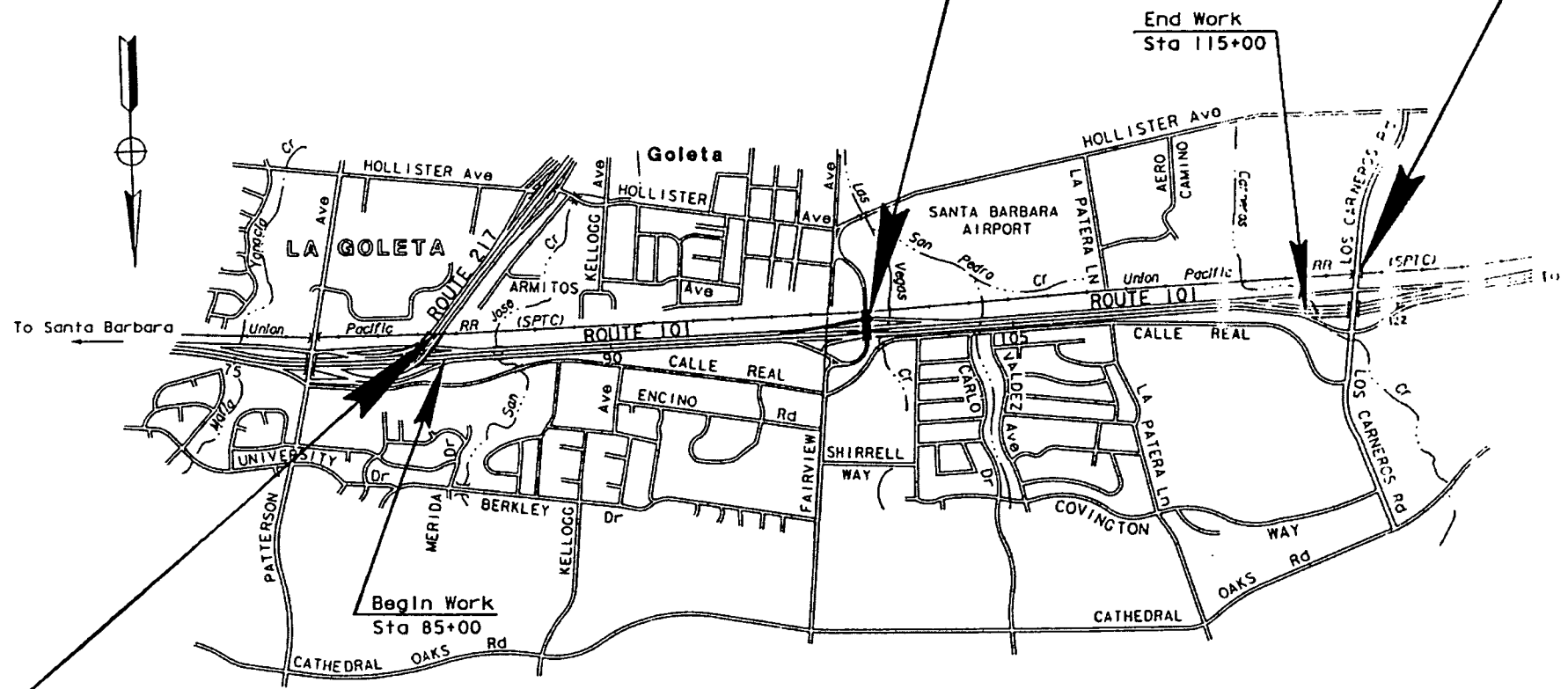
Dated December 16, 1999, at San Francisco, California.

RICHARD A. BILAS  
President  
HENRY M. DUQUE  
JOSIAH L. NEEPER  
JOEL Z. HYATT  
CARL W. WOOD  
Commissioners

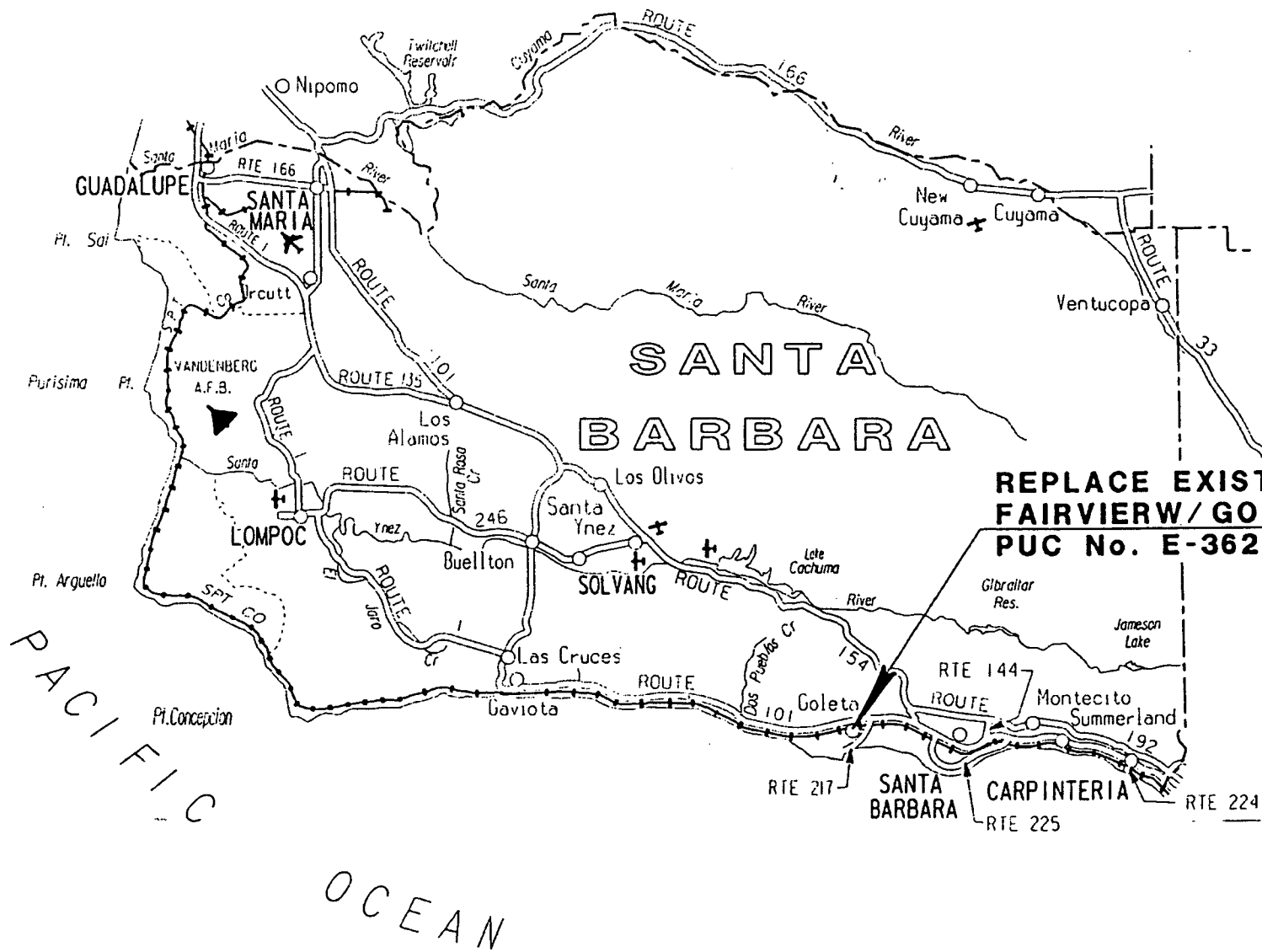


**REPLACE FAIRVIEW/GOLETA OVERHEAD**  
**PUC No. E-362.10-A**

**LOS CANEROS RD OVERHEAD**  
**PUC No. E-360.90-A**



**WARD MEMORIAL BLVD-SR 217 OVERHEAD**  
**PUC No. E-363.20-A**



**REPLACE EXISTING  
FAIRVIEW/GOLETA OVERHEAD  
PUC No. E-362.10-A**