

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Rail Safety and Carriers Division
Rail Engineering Safety Branch
Traffic Engineering Section

RESOLUTION SX-17
Date: October 8, 1998

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION SX-17 AUTHORIZING THE SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT TO CONSTRUCT ONE PRIVATE AT-GRADE CROSSING WITHOUT AUTOMATIC WARNING DEVICES, ACROSS THE LIGHT RAIL TRACKS OF THE FOLSOM LINE AT MILEPOST 10.64 AND THE FREIGHT TRACKS OF THE PLACERVILLE BRANCH LINE AT MILEPOST 100.4, BOTH OWNED BY THE SACRAMENTO-PLACERVILLE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR JOINT POWER AUTHORITY, IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY.

SUMMARY:

The Sacramento Regional Transit District (District), by letter dated August 25, 1997, requests authority to deviate from Section 7.08 of the Commission's General Order (GO) 143-A, and construct one private at-grade crossing without the installation of automatic warning devices. The crossing is to be located across the Folsom Line (milepost 10.64) and the Placerville Branch Line (milepost 100.4), in Sacramento County.

The proposed crossing is a 15 feet wide, asphalt paved surface across three sets of tracks. It is needed solely by Sacramento County (County) to gain access to and maintain a nearby channel and culvert of its storm drain system.

In lieu of automatic warning devices, the District proposes the installation of a swing gate at the northside entrance to the crossing. The gate will be fitted with a keyed lock (normally locked), reflectorized warning aspect, and sign indicating access restrictions. The southside entrance is physically bounded and inconvenient for normal travel.

BACKGROUND:

Within the project area, the Folsom Line runs east-west and is paralleled by Folsom Boulevard to the north and by the Placerville Branch Line to the south. The Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Joint Powers Authority owns the entire rail right-of-way, and allows the District to operate a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system on the Folsom Line (double-track) and the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) to run freight trains on the Placerville Branch Line (single-track).

At present, the project area sees six UP trains per week running at 25 mph. A private crossing is in place at the proposed location. However, the District has plans to operate 132 LRT trains per day at 55 mph, beginning September 1998. This new passenger service subjects the private crossing to requirements described in GO 143-A, Safety Rules and Regulations Governing Light-Rail Transit.

DISCUSSION:

The safety requirements of private railroad crossings, as described in GO 75-C, are not as stringent as those for LRT crossings, be it public or private. Section 7.08 of GO 143-A states, "LRT systems which cross streets, roads, and highways at grade shall install and maintain automatic gate crossing signals to control motor vehicle traffic and automatic warning signals to control pedestrian traffic."

These requirements are appropriate since LRT trains typically operate at higher frequencies and are quieter than their freight counterparts. Furthermore, LRT systems are designed to provide transportation between urban downtown areas and outlying residential/suburban areas. This often results in LRT alignments across streets that are private by definition, but public by practice (i.e., comparable vehicular counts with limited restrictions on access).

The proposed crossing will have limited vehicular use, approximately six events per year. Access will be restricted to County workers performing maintenance on a nearby channel and culvert. To assure restricted access, the District has proposed the installation of a locked swing gate at the crossing's northside entrance. The key will be maintained by District personnel, thus requiring coordination between the County and District on any usage of the crossing. Further description of restrictions and procedures are discussed in the ordering section of this resolution.

After a review of the factual material submitted by the District, as well as conducting several on-site, diagnostic meetings with representatives from the County and District, the Rail Safety and Carriers Division Traffic Engineering Section (TES) and Rail Transit Safety Section (RTSS) staff is in agreement with the District's proposal.

TES concludes that the District's proposal is a safe and reasonable alternative to the requirements described in GO 143-A.

PROTESTS:

There are no protests at this time. TES, RTSS, District, and County support this proposal.

FINDINGS:

1. The Sacramento Regional Transit District requests authority to deviate from the provisions of GO 143-A, Section 7.08 by constructing one private at-grade crossing without automatic warning devices, in Sacramento County.
2. Access will be limited by a normally locked, swing-gate installed on the northside approach to the crossing. The key will be maintained by District personnel.
3. The southside approach is physically bounded and inconvenient for normal travel.
4. Access across the crossing will be limited to County workers for maintenance of its storm drain system.
5. By letter dated August 13, 1998, addressed to the District, County has indicated its concurrence with the proposed project and restrictions.
6. TES has reviewed the District's proposal and finds that request has merit and should be granted.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

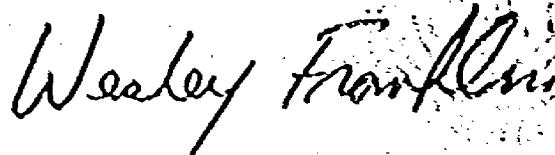
The Sacramento Regional Transit District (District) be granted authority to deviate from the provisions of General Order 143-A, Section 7.08 by constructing one private at-grade crossing without automatic warning devices across the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Joint Powers Authority's Folsom Line light-rail tracks (milepost 10.64) and Placerville Branch Line freight tracks (milepost 100.4), in Sacramento County as shown on the plans attached to the proposal.

The District, in lieu of automatic warning devices, shall ensure restricted access by maintaining one locked swing-gate at the northside approach to the crossing, as shown on the plans attached to the proposal. The District is responsible for access across the crossing and for maintaining the key to the locked gate.

The District shall provide personnel for flagging when County workers occupy the rail right-of-way. Same personnel shall be equipped to communicate with Union Pacific Railroad and District train engineers.

This resolution is effective today.

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its regular conference on October 8, 1998. The following Commissioners approved it:



WESLEY M. FRANKLIN
Executive Director

Richard A. Bilas
President
P. Gregory Conlon
Jessie J. Knight, Jr.
Henry M. Duque
Josiah L. Neeper
Commissioners