

Summary of Comments to Formula Used for Establishing the Priority List

There are two formulas used to establish the priority rankings. One deals with new grade separation proposals and the other with replacement or reconstruction of existing grade separation structures. Parties submitting comments recommend changes to the formula for new grade separations which pertain to the factors that make up various elements of the formula, rather than the formula itself. No changes were proposed for the formula evaluating replacement or reconstruction of existing grade separation structures.

Comment from Assembly Member Barbara Matthews and the request of Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 151

Recommends giving more points for potential emergency vehicle blockage, particularly in rural areas.

Additional Information Relevant to Request of ACR 151

As part of the nomination, in the Grade Separation Nomination form requests that the nominating party “also attach a brief explanation of the community impact including its justification, how it meets transportation planning goals, and impacts especially emergency vehicle usage.” That element is intended to account for impacts to the community that may not be captured elsewhere in the formula, particularly emergency vehicle impacts. But with only 5 points each, RCES staff is indicating that Community Impact (CI), Passenger Buses (PB), School Buses (SB) and Blocking Delay (BD) are all equally important, and maybe that is not appropriate.

Although, the awarding of CI points may be thought of as ‘subjective,’ RCES staff considers applicant information given as to the potential for emergency vehicle blockage if the crossing is near a hospital, or if the path over the crossing is classified as an emergency vehicle route; if there is a mention of a school bus or passenger bus route; location of nearby fire/police station(s) and even school(s); designated hazardous material carrier route; a major arterial route; classification as a state highway/route; description of no grade-separation crossings in the city/area; and/or inclusion of data showing the actual blockage of an emergency vehicle. When awarding CI points, some pertinence is given to the current pool of applications. When reviewing past applications, RCES staff reevaluated the CI points given to some nominations, since (a) some nominating parties revised their CI statements or (b) the issues expressed in their nomination weighed differently.

CI is part of Other Factors (OF) and the part of the Special Conditions Factor (SCF) which makes up the second half of the formula for crossing nomination for separation or

elimination. Therefore, for projects reconstructing or altering existing grade separations, CI is not a factor. Points are given as follows:

OF = Other Factors- Other Factors are valued in a range from 0 to 14 points based on:

CATEGORY	POINTS
SCHOOL BUSES (SB)	0-3
PASSENGER BUSES (PB)	0-3
HAZ-MAT TRUCKS* (HM)	0-3
COMMUNITY IMPACT (CI)	0-5

*Hazardous material trucks must display the placard with a clearly visible diamond-shaped sign to be counted for this category.

RCES staff calculated the percentage that CI factors in the priority index, showing that for higher ranked projects CI is usually less than 1%. Yet, the evaluation of the CI part of OF and finally SCF is significant regardless of the percentage against the priority index total. In the lower ranked projects, the CI makes up a higher percentage of the total priority index, since the first part of the formula has less significance (as a result of lower values for vehicle, train, and accident counts), regardless of whether they happen to be rural or urban communities.

Comments from JPB

JPB staff are recommending revisions be made to the formula that include:

- 1) Considering pedestrian incidents (fatalities and/or injuries) on an equal weighting in the scoring formula as incidents that occur in vehicles.
- 2) The potential for incidents is greatest during peak commute periods factoring all trip modes. Therefore, consideration should be given to providing an emphasis in the formula on trips made during peak commute hours (e.g. am and pm commuter periods). In this scenario, a crossing that has a high number of train trips and a high number of vehicle trips during the same time (e.g. during the peak commute periods) would score higher than a crossing that may have a high number of vehicle trips and a high number of train trips during different times.
- 3) Flexibility to potentially include trespasser accidents that have occurred in the near vicinity of a crossing, but not directly at it, if it can be demonstrated that a grade separated crossing could have prevented the trespass from occurring.

Comments from City of Vista:

To Whom it may concern,

I am responding to express my interest on behalf of the City of Vista in commenting on the formula used for establishing the priority list. In my past testimony before the Administrative Law Judge before the PUC at the Grade Separation hearing, I have expressed my concerns about the formula only taking into account current train counts, and not allowing future train counts for project that are “on track” to be constructed. If grade separations could be funded then, they would be much less costly than after the trains are operational.

Summary of Proposed Changes

1. Increase Community Impact (CI) factor: One party suggested the CI factor be valued from 0-10, rather than the current 0-5 points, to give more points to potentially blocked emergency vehicles at crossings. That would mean that the Other Factors (OF) available points, of which CI is part, would be 0-19, rather than the 0-14 that is currently available.

OF = Other Factors- Other Factors are valued in a range from 0 to 14 points based on:

CATEGORY	POINTS
SCHOOL BUSES	0-3
PASSENGER BUSES	0-3
HAZ-MAT TRUCKS*	0-3
COMMUNITY IMPACT	0-10

2. Accident History (AH) factor: One respondent suggested the formula include all pedestrian and vehicle (including those pedestrian accidents which occur within 50 feet of the at-grade crossing) incidents/accidents, rather than just those involving motor vehicles.
3. Consideration should be given to providing an emphasis in the formula on trips made during peak commute hours (e.g. am and pm commuter periods).
4. Include trespasser accidents that have occurred in the near vicinity of a crossing, but not directly at it.
5. The formulas should take into account future train counts for projects that are “on track” to be constructed.

FURTHER COMMENTS OR REPLY COMMENTS to the initial proposals or RCES staff recommendations are DUE BY DECEMBER 11, 2006. Please submit comments or reply comments in the manner specified in the Section 190 Formula Revision Information webpage.