

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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March 4, 2011

File Number: G.11-02-005

C.H. Harvey  
Deputy CEO, Operations, Engineering and Construction  
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board  
1250 San Carlos Ave  
PO BOX 3006  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

**Re: GO 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Alma Street Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 105E-29.80, DOT No. 754992N in the City of Palo Alto, Santa Clara County.**

Dear Mr. Harvey:

This refers to your letter dated January 31, 2011 and received by us on February 7, 2011 requesting authorization pursuant to Commission General Order (GO) 88-B to alter an at-grade highway-rail crossing of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) track in the City of Palo Alto (City), Santa Clara County. The crossing is identified as the Alma Street Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 105E-29.80, DOT No. 754992N.

The Alma Street crossing is currently a double-track crossing on the Caltrain mainline, and is equipped with two Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assemblies with automatic gates) warning devices, one each in the northeast and southwest quadrants. The JPB operates 90 passenger trains per day over this crossing and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) operates approximately four freight trains per day over this crossing.

Modification of this crossing is part of a county wide project in which the JPB is proposing systematic improvements to eight of the grade crossings along the corridor in Santa Clara County to improve safety. This crossing is one of the eight crossings involved in this project. The JPB states in its GO 88-B request letter that "The crossing modifications proposed in this request will enhance pedestrian and motorist safety at this crossing. Additional signal installations will provide greater warning of train movements to motorists and pedestrians."

The proposed alterations as indicated in the request letter and/or shown in the attachments shall consist of:

- Installation of one Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate on a separate mast (no flashers or bell) adjacent to the Commission Standard 9 in the northeast quadrant.
- Installation of one Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate (with bell and flashers) in the northwest quadrant.
- Installation of emergency exit swing gates in the northeast and northwest quadrants.

- Installation of ADA compliant detectable warning tactile strips just prior to the pedestrian gate arms in the northeast and northwest quadrants, along the full width of the walkway.
- Installation of pedestrian guardrails in the northeast and northwest quadrants to channelize pedestrians to the pedestrian gates and prevent pedestrians from easily circumventing the gates.
- Relocating existing “No Trespassing/Suicide Prevention” signs on both sides of the crossing to accommodate the new sidewalk and improve visibility for pedestrians walking across the tracks.
- Installation of continuous fencing in the northwest quadrant tying to the guardrail and extending west to channelize pedestrians to the safe and lawful crossing.
- Reconstruction of the sidewalks in the northeast and northwest quadrants.
- Widening the crossing to accommodate the pedestrian pathway over the crossing.
- Installation of new asphaltic concrete (AC) ramps around the crossing surface to provide a proper transition for pedestrians from the sidewalks to the crossing surface.
- Replacement of the existing Commission Standard 9 automatic warning device in the northeast quadrant with a new Commission Standard 9 warning device with additional flashing light signals pointed at westbound Alma Street.
- Replacement of the existing mechanical gong bell with an electronic bell on the Commission Standard 9 warning device in the southwest quadrant.
- Replacement of all incandescent light units with new 12 inch LED units with 24 inch backgrounds on the existing Commission Standard 9 warning devices.
- Replacement of the two crossing signal houses in the southeast quadrant with a single new crossing signal house located in the southwest quadrant.
- Installation of pavement markings to delineate the pedestrian and vehicle travel ways through the crossing.
- Painting the curbs red for 50 feet in the northeast and northwest quadrants to restrict parking near the crossing.
- Installation of a pedestrian barricade at the intersection of Alma Street and El Camino Real to direct pedestrians to the north side of Alma Street.
- Installation of curbs in the northeast and northwest quadrants in front of the automatic warning devices.
- Installation of passive signage associated with railroad crossings as indicated in Chapter 8 of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD).

Staff has investigated the JPB’s request, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the JPB and City are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, you may proceed with the improvements as described in your request letter and attachments and summarized above.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with Section 8A.05, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the CA MUTCD, published by Caltrans.

All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders and CA MUTCD.

This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code 21084].

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to this office, the time to complete the project may be extended. Any written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by involved parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, the Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after completion of this project, the JPB shall notify RCES that the authorized work is completed, by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G titled *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossings and Separations*. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site Form G page at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/formg>. This report may be submitted electronically to [rces@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rces@cpuc.ca.gov) as outlined on the web page.

If you have any questions, please contact Felix Ko at (415) 703-3722 or [fko@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:fko@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



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