

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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March 4, 2011

File Number: G.11-02-006

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

**Re: GO 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Churchill Avenue Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 105E-31.00, DOT No. 754998E 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 Churchill Avenue Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 105E-31.00, DOT No. 754998E.

The Churchill Avenue crossing is currently a double-track crossing on the Caltrain mainline, and is equipped with one Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate) warning device in the northwest quadrant and one Commission Standard 9-A (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm and additional flashing light signals over the roadway on a cantilevered arm) warning device in the southeast quadrant, both supplemented with a Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate. Additionally, the northeast and southwest quadrants are equipped with Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gates on the sidewalk approaches. 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:

- Removal of the existing auxiliary pedestrian gate arms in the northwest and southeast quadrants, and installation of two pedestrian gate arms on separate masts (no flashers or bell) adjacent to the remaining Commission Standard 9 and Commission Standard 9-A warning devices.
- Relocation of the existing Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate assemblies (with bell and flashers) in the northeast and southwest quadrants.
- Installation of additional flashing lights on the Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate assembly in the northeast quadrant facing eastbound Alma St traffic.
- Installation of emergency exit swing gates; one in each quadrant.
- Installation of ADA compliant detectable warning tactile strips just prior to the pedestrian gate arms in each quadrant, along the full width of the walkway.
- Installation of ADA compliant handrails in the northeast quadrant to channelize pedestrians to the pedestrian gates and prevent pedestrians from easily circumventing the gates.
- Installation of pedestrian guardrails in the northeast, southeast, and southwest 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 to pedestrians walking across the track.
- Installation of continuous fencing in the northwest quadrant extending from the Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate and tying to the existing fencing to channelize pedestrians to the safe and lawful crossing.
- Installation of continuous fencing in the southwest quadrant tying to the guardrail and to the existing fencing to channelize pedestrians to the safe and lawful crossing.
- Installation of continuous fencing in the southeast quadrant extending from the Commission Standard 9 pedestrian gate and tying to the existing fencing to channelize pedestrians to the safe and lawful crossing.
- Reconstruction of the sidewalks in all quadrants.
- Replacement of the rubber crossing surface with concrete panels. The crossing will be widened to accommodate the pedestrian pathways 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 warning device in the northwest quadrant with a new Commission Standard 9 warning device with additional flashing light signals pointed at westbound Alma Street.
- Replacement of all incandescent light units with new 12 inch LED units with 24 inch backgrounds on the existing Commission Standard 9 and Commission Standard 9-A warning devices.

- Relocation and replacement of the crossing signal house in the northeast quadrant.
- Installation of two R3-1 Active “No Right Turn” signs, one each in the northeast and northwest quadrants facing eastbound Alma Street traffic.
- Installation of pavement markings to delineate the pedestrian and vehicle travel ways through the crossing.
- Painting the curbs red for 50 feet in the southeast and southwest quadrants to restrict parking near the crossing.
- Painting the curbs red for 10 feet in the northeast quadrant to restrict parking near the crossing.
- Relocation of the existing advanced warning signs.
- 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.

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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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