

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 W. 4th Street, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90013



September 6, 2016

File Number: XREQ 2016080001

Bruce W. Armistead
Director of Operations and Maintenance
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the W. Belmont Avenue Underpass Grade-Separated Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 001B-203.80-B and DOT No. 757323N, in the City of Fresno, Fresno County.

Dear Mr. Armistead:

This refers to your letter received by us via email on July 27, 2016, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the W. Belmont Avenue underpass grade-separated highway-rail crossing (crossing) of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks in the City of Fresno (City). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 001B-203.80-B and DOT No. 757323N.

The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) proposes to replace the existing underpass grade separation with an overhead grade separation over the two existing UPRR tracks and two proposed CHSRA tracks (Sierra Division). In order to facilitate construction, the new overhead, W. Belmont Avenue Overhead, will be located on an offset alignment to the north of the existing crossing. The two CHSRA tracks will be located in the Fresno Trench structure along the existing alignment of N. Golden State Boulevard, generally parallel and west of the existing UPRR tracks. The UPRR tracks will remain in their present location. As part of other work, N. Golden State Boulevard will be realigned to the west and reconfigured with other nearby local streets due to the proposed horizontal and vertical alignments of the proposed overhead grade separation. After construction of the overhead is completed and the two CHSRA tracks are installed, the CPUC No. for the UPRR and CHSRA tracks will be 001B-203.82-A and 135S-190.29-A, respectively. The proposed DOT No. upon completion of the crossing project will be DOT No.450428A, which will be shared by both sets of UPRR and CHSRA tracks.

The W. Belmont Avenue Overhead roadway will consist of the following for each direction of traffic: one 12 foot lane, one 7 foot bike lane, and a 12 foot or 8 foot sidewalk on the north and south sides, respectively, with chain link fencing atop a concrete edge barrier. An 8 foot high, 4 foot wide center median will separate opposing traffic. N. Wesley Avenue, the proposed CHSRA tracks within the Fresno Trench, the existing UPRR tracks, and N. Weber Avenue/N. H Street will be under the W. Belmont Avenue Overhead from west to east. The length and width of the overhead will be 611 feet-6 inches and 64 feet-0 inches, respectively, as measured along the alignment of W. Belmont

Avenue. The width of the overhead as measured along the alignment of the tracks, which are at a skew to W. Belmont Avenue, will be 84.80 feet.

This crossing project is part of Construction Package 1 (CP1) of the California High-Speed Train (CHST) Project involving the Merced to Fresno Section of the CHST Project. CHSRA has prepared and filed a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, with findings of significant impact, for the overall Merced to Fresno Section of the CHST Project. This particular project, however, involves the replacement of an existing underpass grade separation with an overhead grade separation and the installation of two CHSRA tracks within a trench adjacent to the right-of-way of existing UPRR tracks.

The proposed alterations, as indicated in the CHSRA's request letter and/or shown on the plans, shall consist of:

- Establishing a temporary minimum vertical clearance exception of 21 feet-6 inches during all phases of construction over UPRR tracks;
- Demolishing the existing W. Belmont Avenue underpass grade separation;
- Constructing the new W. Belmont Avenue Overhead. The new overhead shall meet the vertical and horizontal clearance requirements of the Commission's GO 26-D. The permanent minimum vertical clearance requirements shall also be met per plans for UPRR and CHSRA tracks of 24 feet-3 inches and 48 feet-3 inches, respectively, along with the minimum horizontal clearance requirement per plans of 36 feet-3 inches and more than 10 feet-0 inches, respectively.
- Installing two CHSRA tracks in the Fresno Trench; and
- Installing 8 foot high welded wire mesh fencing along the CHSRA right-of way and/or expanded metal mesh or barrier walls.

Pursuant to Commission Resolution SX-76 and Section 16.2 of GO 26-D, CHSRA is granted a temporary deviation from GO 26-D, Section 2.1 and is authorized a temporary vertical clearance of not less than 21 feet-6 inches from the top of rail, during construction of the structure.

The following requirements shall apply to the temporary deviation of GO 26-D, Section 2.1:

1. CHSRA shall notify UPRR and the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division – Rail Operations Safety Branch (ROSB) and Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) at least 15 days but not more than 30 days in advance of the date when CHSRA will create the temporary reduced vertical clearance. For the Commission, this notification may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.
2. UPRR shall issue instructions to all individuals responsible for operation of trains over these tracks of the temporary reduced vertical clearance of 21 feet-6 inches, and shall submit the instructions in advance of the date when CHSRA will create the temporary reduced vertical clearance to the office of ROSB and RCEB. This notification may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

The overall Merced to Fresno Section of the CHSTS Project, of which this project is a part, is not exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as

amended [California Public Resources Code § 21084]. As a modification involving the replacement of an underpass grade separation with an overhead grade separation, this project is statutorily exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code §21080.13].

The Commission's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) staff has investigated the request by CHSRA, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the City, UPRR, and CHSRA (Parties) are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, CHSRA may proceed with the improvements as described in its request letter and attachments, and summarized above.

All Parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including other Commission General Orders and the latest version of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD). Temporary traffic controls shall be in compliance with the latest version of the CAMUTCD and detour plans as agreed to by the Parties.

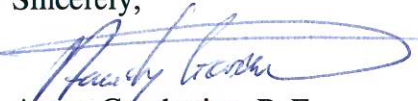
This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to this office, the time to complete the project may be extended. A written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by interested Parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, RCEB may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after completion of this project, the City shall notify RCEB that the authorized work is completed by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/crossings/>. This report may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

At the conclusion of the project, CHSRA must submit an updated electronic inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the Federal Railroad Administration, reflecting the changes. The Commission requests a concurrent copy of the updated inventory form be submitted to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Marvin Kennix at (916) 928-3809 or email at mlk@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Anton Garabetian, P. E.
Program and Project Supervisor
Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch
Safety and Enforcement Division

Cc: Andrew Benelli
Mary Schroll

