

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



May 11, 2020

File Number: XREQ 2020050001
Lee Road
Watsonville, Santa Cruz County

Murray A. Fontes
Principal Engineer
City of Watsonville
250 Main Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Lee Road At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 017B-2.80 and DOT No. 768289P, in the City of Watsonville, Santa Cruz County.

Dear Mr. Fontes:

This refers to your letter dated April 8, 2020, received by us on April 10, 2020, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the Lee Road at-grade highway-rail crossing of St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (SPP) tracks in the City of Watsonville (City), Santa Cruz County (County). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 017B-2.80 and DOT No. 768289P.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) owns the track and has contracted SPP to operate over and maintain the tracks.

The double-track crossing is equipped with two Commission Standard 1-R (crossbuck sign on a post) and two "STOP" signs. Four freight trains operate per week over the crossing at a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour. The crossing average daily traffic is 1,641 vehicles.

This project is part of the City's plan to construct a bike trail in the City of Watsonville that will connect to a 50-mile bicycle and pedestrian pathway along the coast of Santa Cruz County, from the San Mateo County line in the north to the Monterey County line at the Pajaro River. The trail provides pedestrians and cyclists a commute alternative and an outlet for recreation and exercise. It is also a part of the SCCRTC Network Master Plan for the County.

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

- Installing a Class I bike trail on the south side of the tracks.
- Installing a painted crosswalk on the south side of the crossing.
- Installing concrete sidewalk in the southeast, northwest, and southwest quadrants.
- Installing a R1-1 "STOP" sign in the southeast quadrant to stop trail users prior to crossing Lee Rd.
- Installing edge lines to delineate the vehicle travel path.
- Installing fencing along the trail.

- Installing 4-inch-wide solid line warning stripes with glass beads to slow bikes approaching the crossing.
- Installing Americans with Disabilities Act compliant detectable warning strips on the sidewalk approaches to the crossing as well as for the trail crossing at Lee Rd.
- Widening the crossing by installing additional concrete panels on the west side of the crossing.
- Trimming bushes on southeast corner to improve visibility.
- Installing signage, including W11-15P “TRAIL ENDS” signs, striping, and “RXR” pavement markings compliant with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD).

The Commission's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) staff has investigated the City's request and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the City and SPP 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, attachments, and summarized above.

SPP must also ensure that Emergency Notification System signs are installed to comply with CFR 234.309.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with Section 8A.08, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the CA MUTCD, 2014 Edition, published by the California Department of Transportation.

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 RCEB may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

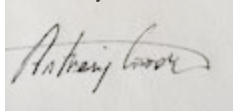
Within 30 days after completion of this project, the City shall notify RCEB that the authorized work is completed by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G that can be obtained at the Commission web site at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Crossings>. This report may be submitted electronically to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

At the conclusion of the project, SPP should electronically submit an updated Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the FRA, reflecting the changes. 49 CFR 234 Section 234.409 requires the railroads to submit periodic crossing inventory updates a minimum of once every three years.

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If you have any questions, please contact Ade Sogbesan at (415) 703-1869 or es3@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to read "Anton Garabetian".

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

cc:

Guy Preston, SCCRTC
Lon VanGemert, SPP
Alfred Yalda, Zephyr Rail