

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



October 7, 2020

File Number: XREQ2020090012
E. Childs Avenue
County of Merced

Matiel Holloway
Project Engineer
Department of Public Works
County of Merced
345 West 7th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the E. Childs Avenue At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 002-1047.00 and DOT Crossing No. 028647E, in the County of Merced.

Dear Mr. Holloway:

This refers to your letter, dated July 14, 2020, received by us on September 2, 2020, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the E. Childs Avenue at-grade highway-rail crossing (crossing) of the BNSF Railway (BNSF) tracks, in the County of Merced (County). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 002-1047.00 and DOT Crossing No. 028647E.

The E. Childs Avenue crossing has two tracks aligned in a northwesterly-southeasterly direction and the roadway has two lanes. The crossing is equipped with two 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 devices. BNSF operates 29 freight trains per day and National Railroad Passenger Corporation operates 12 trains per day at a maximum speed of 60 and 79 miles per hour, respectively. The average daily vehicle traffic across the crossing is 2,300.

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

- Realigning E. Childs Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue west of the tracks.
- Widening E. Childs Avenue from a two-lane to a three-lane roadway.
- Installing a cantilevered mast pre-signal on the shoulder west of the tracks for westbound traffic. The traffic signal lights on this cantilevered mast pre-signal will be staggered to not conflict with the lights of the Commission Standard 9-A east of the tracks.
- Installing a single mast pre-signal on the raised median and the shoulder, east of the tracks for westbound traffic on E. Childs Avenue.
- Installing a traffic signal system at the E. Childs Avenue/Santa Fe Avenue intersection with signal heads and poles and other equipment necessary for operation.
- Installing a cantilevered mast traffic signal with programmed visibility heads at the E. Childs Avenue/Santa Fe Avenue intersection to work with the pre-signal system.

- Interconnecting the new traffic signal system with the railroad circuitry.
- Providing traffic signal equipment necessary to attain advance preemption. The County has calculated an advance preemption time of 12 seconds.
- Installing train detection circuitry and other equipment necessary by BNSF to connect with the traffic signals to provide advance preemption.
- Providing limited service operation of the traffic signals during preemption.
- Installing train activated R3-1 “NO RIGHT TURN” blank-out signs for northbound traffic on Santa Fe Avenue.
- Removing the existing warning devices.
- Installing a new Commission Standard 9-A warning device for westbound traffic.
- Installing a new Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm) warning device for eastbound traffic.
- Replacing the existing signal house with a new signal house.
- Installing an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalk across the tracks on the north side of E. Childs Avenue.
- Installing detectable warning (tactile strips) on both sidewalk approaches at a minimum of 12 feet from the nearest rail.
- Installing additional concrete panels to accommodate the new sidewalk and the widening of E. Childs Avenue.
- Installing curb and gutter and ADA compliant curb ramps.
- Installing a raised median on both sides of the tracks.
- Installing striping, and pavement markings, including but not limited to, “RXR”, “WAIT HERE”, diagonal stripe cross-hatching used in conjunction with “KEEP CLEAR” markings located from the tracks west to the stop line at the E. Childs Avenue/Santa Fe Avenue intersection for westbound traffic, and for eastbound traffic, other diagonal stripe cross-hatching used in conjunction with “KEEP CLEAR” markings located from the tracks east to a point noted on the plans.
- Installing signage, including but not limited to, W10-1, W48(CA), R8-8, R10-6L, R10-6R, and R10-11.

The Commission’s Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) investigated the request by the County and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the County and BNSF (Parties) agree to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, the County may proceed with the alterations as described in its request letter and attachments and summarized above. The County must complete all the proposed alterations mentioned above for RCEB to consider this GO 88-B application closed.

BNSF must ensure that Emergency Notification System signs are installed to comply with Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 234.309.

The County shall provide temporary traffic controls in compliance with Section 8A.08, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the 2014 California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD), published by California Department of Transportation.

All Parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders and the latest version of the CAMUTCD.

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

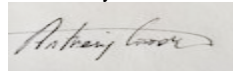
This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to RCEB, the time to complete the project may be extended. Any written request for a time extension must include concurrence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

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

At the conclusion of the project, the County or BNSF 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. 49 CFR 234 Section 234.409 requires the railroads to submit periodic crossing inventory updates a minimum of once every three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Marvin Kennix at (916) 597-5760 or email at mlk@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



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

Cc:

Dana Hertfelder, County
Kate Kalinosky, BNSF