

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 W. 4TH STREET, SUITE 500
LOS ANGELES, CA 90013



June 21, 2021

File Number: XREQ 2021060002
Sassafras Street
City of San Diego, San Diego County

Duncan Hughes
Deputy Director & City Traffic Engineer
Transportation & Storm Water Department
8050 Othello Ave
San Diego, CA 92111

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Modify the Sassafras Street At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, Identified as CPUC Crossing Number (NCTD) 106-266.10, (MTS) 081MW-1.56 and DOT Crossing Number 026859B, in the City of San Diego, San Diego County.

Dear Mr. Hughes:

This refers to your letter dated March 22, 2021, and an email received by us on June 8, 2021, requesting authorization pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC/Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B to modify the Sassafras Street at-grade highway-rail crossing (crossing) at the North County Transit District (NCTD) Coaster track and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Trolley track in the City of San Diego (City), San Diego County. The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing Number NCTD 106-266.10, MTS 081MW-1.56 and DOT Crossing Number 026859B.

The crossing is comprised of four sets of tracks and a three-lane roadway, with two lanes in the westbound direction and one lane in the eastbound direction. The crossing is equipped with two curb-mounted Commission Standard 9-A (Flashing Light Signal Assembly with Automatic Gate Arm and Additional Flashing Light Signals Over the Roadway on a Cantilever Arm), one median-mounted Standard 9 (Flashing Light Signal Assembly with Automatic Gate Arm), and two pedestrian off-quadrant Commission Standard 8 (Flashing Light Signal Assembly) warning devices. Approximately 50 passenger trains, 7 freight trains and 152 rail transit trains operate through the crossing daily at a maximum speed of 50 miles per hour (MPH) for passenger trains, 30 MPH for freight trains and 55 MPH for rail transit trains. The average daily traffic at the crossing is approximately 8,617 vehicles.

The City proposes to make the following alterations as indicated in the request letter and/or shown in the attachments:

- Add one additional vehicle traffic lane in the eastbound direction.
- Reconstruct the existing Commission Standard 9-A warning devices, on both roadway approaches, as Commission Standard 9 warning devices by removing the cantilevers and adding back-to-back pairs of flashing light signals to the existing gate arm masts.
- Install a new Commission Standard 9 warning device in the median on the westbound roadway approach.
- Relocate the existing Commission Standard 9 warning device within the median on the eastbound roadway approach.

- Realign and reconstruct the medians along both approaches with nine feet width at the location of the Commission Standard 9 warning devices.
- Place back-to-back pairs of flashing light signals on the two pedestrian off-quadrant Commission Standard 8 warning devices to provide warning to both drivers and pedestrians.
- Add near-side station forestalling functionality for trolley movements from both the Middletown Trolley Station and the Washington Street Station toward the Sassafras crossing.
- Install a queue cutter signal downstream of the tracks for each direction of traffic.
- Provide advance preemption time of seven seconds.
- Include supervisory circuits, a gate-down confirmation / island occupancy circuit, and a traffic signal health circuit in the railroad preemption interconnection.
- Modify traffic signal phasing at the intersection of Kettner Boulevard and Sassafras Street to eliminate a potential yellow trap situation.
- Reconstruct all four pedestrian approaches to the crossing for accessibility and channelization. Add pedestrian swing gates on all four quadrants of the crossing, as well as 12-inch-wide thermoplastic striping through the crossing to define the pedestrian path of travel.

The Commission's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) investigated the request filed by the City, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the City, MTS, and NCTD are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, the improvements as described in your request dated June 8, 2021, and summarized above, are authorized. All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission GOs and current version of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), published by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The City must complete all the proposed alterations mentioned above for RCEB to consider this GO 88-B application closed.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with the current version of the CA MUTCD. Refer to CA MUTCD Section 6G.18 and Figure 6H-46 regarding "Work in the Vicinity of a Grade Crossing."

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

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

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with, or if proposed project 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 re-evaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

The City shall notify RCEB at least 45 days prior to the date that the new or modified interconnection is placed in service by sending a notification to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

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 titled *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossing and Separations*. Form G requirements and forms 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, NCTD shall 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. RCEB request a concurrent copy of the updated inventory from the submitted to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Howard Huie at howard.huie@cpuc.ca.gov or (415) 308-0533.

Sincerely,



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

cc: **(SENT VIA E-MAIL)**
Sharon Cooney, MTS
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