

Mailed 10/20/00

Decision 00-10-059 October 19, 2000

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of the State of California, Department of Transportation, for an order authorizing the Department to: add one median High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction to that segment of the State Route 10 at the East El Monte Overhead, existing Bridge No. 53-0867R/L.

Application 00-07-023  
Filed: July 12, 2000

**OPINION**

**Summary**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 proposes to widen that portion of the Interstate 10 (I-10) Freeway known as the East El Monte Overhead grade separation bridge structure over tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad Company and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority's (SCRRA) Metrolink to accommodate the construction of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on the freeway in the City of El Monte, Los Angeles County.

**Discussion**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) have approved the implementation of median high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, one in each direction of traffic, along a 3.2-mile segment of Interstate 10 (I-10) Freeway. The project includes widening the freeway structure to accommodate the median HOV lanes, construction of auxiliary lanes between selected ramps, construction of 10-

foot outside shoulders on the mainline and 8-foot shoulders on the ramps, and construction of sound walls at recommended locations. The project limits are Baldwin Avenue in the City of El Monte, on the west, and the I-10 / I-605 Interchange, on the east, in the City of Baldwin Park.

The East El Monte Overhead grade separation bridge structure, crossing over tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP), Crossing No. B-495.60-A, and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), Crossing No. 101SG-13.59-A, will be widened to provide both eastbound and westbound HOV lanes. The eastbound structure will be widened approximately 24 feet and the westbound structure will be widened approximately 36 feet.

The I-10 Freeway is a major urban freeway serving commuters, truckers, and personal travel needs for a number of cities and communities in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. This freeway has historically and will continue to experience serious traffic congestion, particularly in peak periods. Long-range traffic forecasts indicate continued increases in traffic volumes on this route, related to continued population and employment growth along the majority of I-10 in the three counties.

There is a critical need to reduce existing and projected congestion on I-10 by improving the person carrying capability of the freeway. The provision of freeway median HOV lanes would provide cost effective improvements that address the needed increase in person carrying capacity while minimizing environmental impacts and community disruption.

Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, Public Resources (PR) Code Sections 21000, et. seq. On April 5, 1999, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) filed an "Initial Study/Environmental Assessment

Negative Declaration/FONSI. It is determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the environment.

The Commission is a responsible agency for this project under CEQA and has reviewed and considered the applicant's Initial Study and Environmental Assessment, which was approved by the United States Department of Transportation- Federal Highway Administration. The site of the project has been inspected by the Commission's Rail Safety and Carrier Division staff – Rail Crossings Engineering Section. Staff examined the need for and the safety of the freeway widening, and recommends that the alterations be approved.

The application was found to be in compliance under the Commission's filing requirements, including Rule 39 of Rules of Practice and Procedure which relates to the alteration of existing crossings and separations over railroad tracks. A location map and details from the project plans are shown in Appendix A.

In Resolution ALJ 176-3044 dated August 4, 2000, the Commission preliminary categorized this application as ratesetting, and preliminarily determined that hearings were not necessary. No protests have been received. The Commission's Rail Safety and Carriers Division recommends that this application be granted. Given these developments, public hearing is not necessary, and it is not necessary to disturb preliminary determinations made in Resolution ALJ-176-3044.

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the relief requested. Accordingly, pursuant to PU Code Section 311 (g) (2), the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comments is being waived.

**Findings of Fact**

1. Notice of the application was published in the Commission Daily Calendar on July 21, 2000. No protests have been received. A public hearing is not necessary.

2. Caltrans requests authority, under Public Utilities Code Sections 1201-1205, to widen the East El Monte Overhead grade separation bridge structure over UP's and SCRRA's main line tracks in El Monte, Los Angeles County.

3. Public convenience, necessity and safety require widening of the East El Monte overhead grade separation structure.

4. Caltrans is the lead agency for this project under CEQA as amended.

5. The Commission is a responsible agency for this project and has reviewed and considered the lead agency's Initial Study and Environmental Assessment.

6. The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

7. The Commission staff recommends that the application be granted.

**Conclusions of Law**

1. The application should be granted as set forth in the following order.

2. Under Public Utilities Code Section 21080.13, the activity is exempted from the requirements set forth in CEQA; therefore the guidelines (14 Cal. Admin. Code - Division 6) concerning the evaluation of projects and the preparation and review of environmental documents do not apply.

**O R D E R**

**IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is authorized to widen East El Monte Overhead grade separation bridge structure over Union Pacific Railroad Company's (UP) main line tracks, identified as Crossing No. B—495.60-A, and Southern California Regional Rail Authority's (SCRRA) main line tracks, identified as Crossing No. 101SG-13.59-A in the City of El Monte, Los Angeles County.

2. Clearances shall be in accordance with General Order (GO) 26-D.

3. Walkways shall conform to GO 118. Walkways adjacent to any trackage subject to rail operations shall be maintained free of obstructions and shall be promptly restored to their original condition in the event of damage during construction.

4. Construction and maintenance cost shall be borne in accordance with an agreement to be entered into between parties. A copy of the agreement shall be filed with the Commission's Rail Safety and Carrier Division prior to commencing construction. Should the parties fail to agree, the Commission will apportion the cost of the construction and maintenance by further order.

5. Within thirty (30) days after completion of the work under this order, Caltrans shall notify the Commission in writing that the authorized work has been completed.

6. This authorization shall expire if not exercised within three years unless time is extended or if the above conditions are not complied with. Authorization may be revoked or modified if public convenience, necessity, or safety so require.

A.00-07-023 RSCD/RRT/ppl

7. The application is granted as set forth above.
8. Application 00-07-023 is closed.

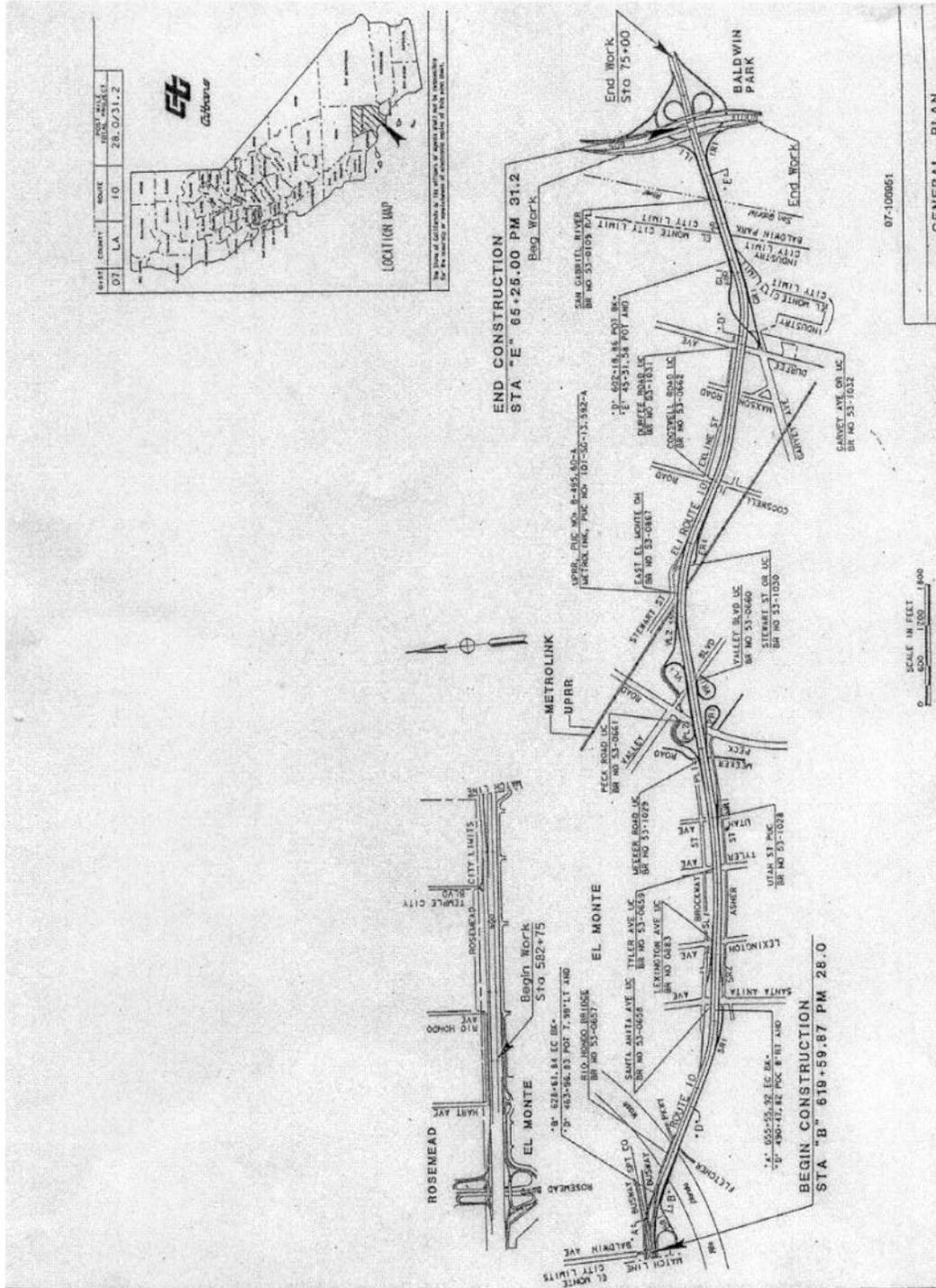
This order is effective thirty (30) days from today.

Dated October 19, 2000, at Los Angeles, California.

LORETTA M. LYNCH  
President  
HENRY M. DUQUE  
JOSIAH L. NEEPER  
RICHARD A. BILAS  
CARL W. WOOD  
Commissioners



APPENDIX A  
MAP 2



APPENDIX A  
MAP 3

