



RailPAC
Rail Passenger Association
of California and Nevada

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Carole Kendrick
City of Beaumont
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August 8, 2021

Re: Pennsylvania Avenue Widening Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH #2021070147)

Dear Ms. Kendrick,

This letter is in response to the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Pennsylvania Avenue Widening (“Project”) which is proposed by the City of Beaumont. The focus of this letter is the work that would be done at the grade crossing of the Union Pacific tracks. Given that the proposed Project would reconstruct that grade crossing, it is imperative that that work be coordinated with other work slated for the same location as part of the Coachella Valley (“CV”) Rail project being undertaken by the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

In the Draft Tier I/Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the CV Rail project which was recently made available for public comment, it was stated that one of the requirements for initiating that service would be to add a third main track in the Union Pacific Yuma Subdivision from Colton to various points in the Coachella Valley (depending on the service scenarios)¹. As such, all options for that additional third track would pass through the same grade crossing that is slated to be reconstructed as part of the Project under discussion here.

Historical imagery on Google Streetview shows that up until around 2015, the grade crossing included three tracks. After that point and into the present, it has since been reduced to only two. While the City of Beaumont is not carrying out the CV Rail project, given that the third track is needed for the implementation of the CV Rail project, it is highly desirable for the widening Project to be coordinated with RCTC to maximize public benefits of the planned improvements and minimize disruptions to the community. This would ideally mean returning the third track at the grade crossing in its entirety as part of the work done to the grade crossing for the Project, but at the very least, it should be designed and built to require minimal work to add the third track in the future. Additionally, the opportunity should be taken to implement a quiet zone at this grade crossing as part of the Project.

Sincerely,
Marven Norman and Brian Yanity
Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC)

CC:
Sheldon Peterson, Riverside County Transportation Commission
Andrew Cook, Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation
Amanda Ciampolillo, Federal Railroad Administration

¹ RCTC, FRA, Caltrans (2021). Tier I/Program Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report. Retrieved from <https://files.ceganet.opr.ca.gov/193526-2/attachment/vKzdWSGIgYKJOCIV6EBbsuBdDknhE8twR1mqEaUVLQ-yfJqAAMcguBlpJjr1jEWCueU3spA9VqjhbRH10>.