

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

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May 11, 2007

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Darryl Boyd
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113-1905

**CITY OF SAN JOSE
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

RE: Coyote Valley Specific Plan, SCH# 2005062017

Dear Mr. Boyd:

As the state agency responsible for rail safety within California, we recommend that any development projects planned adjacent to or near the rail corridor in the County be planned with the safety of the rail corridor in mind. New developments may increase traffic volumes not only on streets and at intersections, but also at at-grade highway-rail crossings. This includes considering pedestrian circulation patterns/destinations with respect to railroad right-of-way.

Safety factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the planning for grade separations for major thoroughfares, improvements to existing at-grade highway-rail crossings due to increase in traffic volumes and appropriate fencing to limit the access of trespassers onto the railroad right-of-way. Any project that includes a modification to an existing crossing or proposes a new crossing is legally required to obtain authority to construct from the Commission. If the project includes a proposed new crossing, the Commission will be a responsible party under CEQA and the impacts of the crossing must be discussed within the environmental documents.

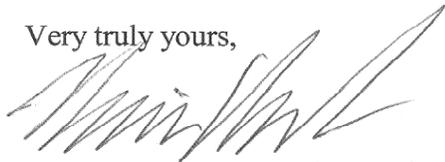
Of specific concern is that a plan for grade-separating every existing at-grade highway-crossing within the vicinity, be a requirement of approval for the project. This could consist of a fair-share payment to fund preliminary engineering and land acquisition that would facilitate the possibility of future matching/subsidy monies. The rail line currently carries Amtrak and Caltrain passenger service as well as Union Pacific Railroad freight; a significant increase in rail service is proposed for the corridor. The existing at-grade crossings all share an inherent safety problem due to their close proximity to Monterey Road, which can create problems with vehicles queuing onto the tracks. The increase in traffic from the development will create impacts that must be mitigated. Mitigation costs can be significant, and the project approval must build in both a plan to address them as well as a funding mechanism to assure they are implemented.

The work on Fisher creek should include a bridge over the creek to allow the residents on Blanchard Road direct alternative to Santa Teresa Boulevard, thereby allowing for the closure of the at-grade crossing at Blanchard Road.

The above-mentioned safety improvements should be considered when approval is sought for the new development. Working with Commission staff early in the conceptual design phase will help improve the safety to motorists and pedestrians in the County.

If you have any questions in this matter, please call me at (415) 703-2795.

Very truly yours,



Kevin Boles
Environmental Specialist
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection and Safety Division

cc: Terrel Anderson, Union Pacific Railroad
Lisa Carvalho, Steefel, Levitt & Weiss
Dick Dahllof, Caltrain
Jay Thorstensen, City of San Jose