

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 WEST 4TH STREET, SUITE 500
LOS ANGELES, CA 90013



Governor's Office of Planning & Research

October 26, 2021

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Anna Buzaitis
San Diego Unified Port District
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Sent by email: abuzaiti@portofsandiego.org

**Re: National City Bayfront Projects & Plan Amendments
SCH 2018121054 — Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Ms. Buzaitis:

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission/CPUC) has jurisdiction over rail crossings (crossings) in California. CPUC ensures that crossings are safely designed, constructed, and maintained. The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) is in receipt of the *Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)* for the proposed National City Bayfront Projects & Plan Amendments. The San Diego Unified Port District is the lead agency. The DIER is prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125.

The San Diego Port (District), City of National City (City), GB Holdings and Pasha Automotive Services (Pasha) are proposing a project on 77 acres, consisting of approximately 58 landside acres and 19 waterside acres, within the jurisdiction of the District and City. The proposed project is an amendment to the District's Port Master Plan (PMP); amendments to the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP), General Plan, Harbor District Specific Plan (HDSAP), Land Use Code (LUC) and Bicycle Master Plan.

Currently, trains that service the surrounding industrial properties, National City Maritime Terminal, and Pasha are owned and operated by BNSF. The project proposes the construction and operation of a rail connector track and storage track within the City's jurisdiction to improve Pasha operations (Pasha Rail Improvement Component). The project also proposes of the construction and operation of Segment 5 of the Bayshore Bikeway within the District's and City's jurisdiction (Bayshore Bikeway Component).

CPUC General Order (G.O.) 88-B establishes criteria for altering existing crossings, including (but not limited to) addition of one track within the existing railroad right-of-way, reconstruction of grade-separated structures, and changes in the type or addition of automatic signaling devices at crossings. The District will be required to submit a G.O. 88-B request for alteration of each existing crossing included in the Project. Requests to alter existing crossings may be approved by RCEB staff, provided completion of request as outlined in G.O. 88-B, Section 5 and consensus among parties.

G.O. 88-B also establishes cases for which the Authority must apply to the Commission for authorization, including construction of new highway-rail or rail-rail crossings. Refer to the CPUC Rules of Practice and Procedure (www.cpuc.ca.gov/rpp/), Rules 3.7–3.11 for new crossing application requirements. You may consult with RCEB staff to determine the need for authorization by G.O. 88-B or by application at each proposed crossing on the corridor.

Minimum vertical and horizontal clearance requirements are outlined in CPUC General Order (G.O.) 26-D, Section 2, Section 3, and Section 4. Clearance between parallel tracks is governed by G.O. 26-D, Section 5.

The National City Bayfront Projects and Plan Amendments – Draft Environmental Impact Report defines the following capital projects that impact rail. RCEB provides the following comments for each improvement.

Pasha Road Closure Component, Connector Track, Storage Track

The Pasha Road Closure Component includes the closure of Tidelands Ave between Bay Marina Drive on the north and West 32nd Street on the south as well as West 28th Street between Quay Ave and Tidelands Ave will also be closed.

The proposed connector track will be located on the southern end of Tidelands Ave between the existing at-grade crossing and West 32nd Street. Accompanying the connector track will be a proposed storage track which will run parallel to the connector track on the north side. The proposed storage track will add approximately 2000 feet of train storage, which can accommodate approximately 18 to 20 railcars.

There are two existing crossings that lie within the boundaries of the proposed Pasha Road Closure Component: 1) 28th Street Near Quay Ave, DOT # 026914Y, 2) Tidelands Ave north of West 32nd Street, DOT # 026127N as well as the proposed connector track and storage track described above.

The two existing crossing and the two proposed tracks which may be an extension of the existing Tidelands Ave crossing will require Commission authorization. This may be accomplished by a G.O. 88-B request. Please contact RCEB to schedule a field diagnostic meeting with all stakeholders at the crossings. The diagnostic team consists of representatives from the railroads, roadway agencies, local government agencies, CPUC, and private stakeholders.

Bayshore Bikeway

Route 1

Route 1 travels along the former railroad ROW to the southern end of the Best Western Marina Gateway Hotel where it turns west to travel along the western side of Marina Way. The route turns east on West 23rd Street and north to McKinley Ave. This proposed route run adjacent to the Bay Marina Dr. railroad crossing, DOT # 026904T.

Route 2

Route 2 travels along the existing alignment for Marina Way from West 32nd Street to the southern end of the Best Western Marina Gateway Hotel where it turns east into the hotel parking lot. The route then turns north between the two buildings on the hotel property, cross Bay Marina Drive, then travel north along Cleveland Ave to West 19th Street. The route then turns west at West 19th Street then north on Tidelands Ave. This proposed route run adjacent to the Bay Marina Dr. railroad crossing, DOT # 026904T and will cross the 19th Street railroad crossing, DOT # 026902E, the 19th Street (E/O Tidelands) railroad crossing, DOT # 029608V, and the Tideland Ave (North of 19th St) railroad crossing, DOT # 026125A.

Route 3

Route 3 travels between the former railroad ROW and existing Marina Way on the southern end, and along McKinley Ave on the northern end. This route travels along the Bay Marina Dr., between marina Way and McKinley Ave., then turns north on McKinley Ave. The southern portion of this route is consistent with the Bayshore Bikeway location identified in the PMP and the City's Harbor

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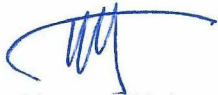
District Specific Area Plan. This proposed route run adjacent to the Bay Marina Dr. railroad crossing, DOT # 026904T.

Any alterations or construction to a crossing will require CPUC authorization. This may be accomplished by a G.O. 88-B request. Please contact RCEB to schedule a field diagnostic meeting with all the stakeholders at the crossing. The diagnostic team consists of representatives from the railroads, roadway agencies, local government agencies, CPUC, and private stakeholders.

Any development adjacent to or near the railroad right-of-way (ROW) should be planned with the safety of the rail corridor in mind. New developments may increase pedestrian or vehicular traffic volumes not only on streets and at intersections, but also at nearby rail crossings. Traffic impact studies should analyze rail crossing safety and potential mitigation measures. Safety improvement measures may include the planning for grade separations or improvements to existing at-grade crossings. Examples of improvements may include but are not limited to: addition or upgrade of crossing warning devices, detectable warning surfaces and edge lines on sidewalks, and pedestrian channelization. Pedestrian and bicycle routes should be designed to clearly prohibit and discourage unauthorized access (trespassing) onto the tracks, except at authorized crossings.

Please continue to keep RCEB informed of the project's development. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, at (213) 620-6503, or howard.huie@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Howard Huie
Utilities Engineer
Rail Crossings Engineering Branch
Safety and Enforcement Division

CC: State Clearinghouse, state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov
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