

High-Risk Railroad Crossings Graded

Report Outlines How Improvements Could Enhance Safety, Reduce Emissions

Caltrans photos by Scott Lorenzo



A locomotive rolls through the railroad crossing at Cutting Boulevard in Richmond, an intersection identified as being at a high risk of accidents based on recent statistics. Safety improvements to lessen the chance of collisions with vehicles or pedestrians are planned.

Caltrans prepared a Railroad Crossing Evaluation Report for the Legislature to examine potential improvements to safety, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and improvements to intercity rail passenger service and ridership that could be achieved through investments to grade crossings at key intersections along the state's three rail routes — the Capitol, San Joaquin and Pacific Surfliner corridors.

The report evaluated and identified intersections with a high risk of accidents, as defined in the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Web Accident Prediction System with a predicted collision risk of 0.15 or greater. Based on that previous accident history and other factors, the FRA predicted the annual collision rate for each of the 18 crossings ranging from 0.15 to 0.28 percent — the probability that a collision between a train and a highway vehicle will occur at the crossing in a year.

In all, 18 grade crossings were evaluated: 10 in Southern California, five in Central California, and

three in Northern California.

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Each of the 18 sites were evaluated on the level of improvement that could be achieved from suggested safety measures and the reduction of greenhouse gases. The cost of recommended upgrades are also factored in. Planned improvements to particular crossings, or studies now underway, are listed in the report as well.

The formal report with the details can be found at www.dot.ca.gov/reports-legislature.htm. **MM**

Source: Caltrans Railroad Grade Crossing Evaluation Report

Railroad Crossing	Planned Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rosecrans-Marquardt grade crossing, Santa Fe Springs, Los Angeles County 	<p>The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority is now conducting a study to realign Rosecrans and adjacent roadways. The study will include recommendations for a grade separation and construction of a third track.</p> <p>In addition to safety benefits, the report states more than 5,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases could be reduced annually if idling vehicles were no longer forced to wait for passing trains.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cutting Boulevard grade crossing, Richmond, Contra Costa County 	<p>This crossing is currently scheduled for at-grade safety improvements funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highways (Section 130) Program.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Washington Street grade crossing, San Diego, San Diego County 	<p>At-grade safety could be improved by installing quad and pedestrian gates.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ La Palma Avenue grade crossing, Anaheim, Orange County ■ Grand Avenue crossing, Santa Ana, Orange County ■ Vineland Avenue grade crossing, Burbank, Los Angeles County ■ 7th Street, Hanford, Kings County ■ 11th Avenue, Hanford, Kings County ■ Bellevue Avenue, Atwater, Merced County 	<p>The installation of quad gates at these crossings could prevent vehicles from driving around the barricades as trains pass.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grand Avenue, Carlsbad, San Diego County ■ Los Nietos Road, Santa Fe Springs, Los Angeles County ■ Ferry Street, Martinez, Contra Costa County ■ Mission Avenue, Oceanside, San Diego County ■ Hesperian Boulevard, San Leandro, Alameda County ■ Kansas Avenue, Guernsey area, Kings County 	<p>These crossings are currently scheduled for at-grade safety improvements funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highways (Section 130) Program.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Church Avenue, Fresno, Fresno County 	<p>The California High-Speed Rail Authority is constructing a grade separation at this location.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grape Street, Hawthorn Street; San Diego, San Diego County 	<p>On these parallel streets one block apart, grade separation recommended to lower intercity/commuter tracks to same level as light-rail tracks that share railbed. Study planned.</p>



The Cutting Boulevard grade crossing in Contra Costa County, looking east and west in these two photos, is one of three Northern California locations that the Caltrans report concludes would likely benefit from safety upgrades. The work on this intersection will be funded through the Federal Highway Administration. The Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin Corridor passenger rail lines are among the trains that use this track.