

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



March 4, 2026

ENVR 20260200003

Mindy Fogg  
City of Carpinteria  
5775 Carpinteria Avenue  
Carpinteria, CA 93013

**Re: Surfliner Inn Project [SCH 2025051396](#) — *Draft Environmental Impact Report***

Dear Mindy Fogg,

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 Surfliner Inn Project. The City of Carpinteria (City) is the lead agency.

RCEB previously provided comments to the Project's Notice of Preparation (NOP) on June 18, 2025 under [ENVR 20250600002](#), filed on CEQAnet. This letter is in response to the Project's DEIR filed on January 23, 2026.

The Project proposes development on both sides of Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks on the northwest side of Linden Avenue, consisting to the north a structure that would be a two-story contemporary cottage-style hotel, and to the south a new 93-space parking lot. The interior floor space of the hotel is proposed to be 28,290 square feet in size and contain 36 guest rooms. The project would accommodate parking for hotel guests, hotel employees, and the general public within the proposed parking lots. Adjacent to the southwestern side of the proposed hotel is the UPRR Santa Barbara Subdivision tracks on which freight and passenger trains operate, as well as the Carpinteria Amtrak passenger station. At the southern corner of the proposed hotel is the [Linden Avenue at-grade highway railroad crossing](#) (crossing).

Given the addition of a lodging facility at the project site, pedestrian and vehicular activity across and around the crossing, station and track are expected to increase. The Executive Summary DEIR's Table ES-1 does not identify project and cumulative environmental impacts specific to the crossing under Section 3.14, Transportation. All Transportation impacts in Section 3.14 are classified as a Class III impact, which is defined in Section ES.6 as "Adverse but Insignificant Impacts", and no mitigations measures are proposed for any of the Transportation impacts. RCEB considers the Project to have a significant impact at the crossing and should be classified as a Class II impact, which is defined as "Significant but Mitigable Adverse Impacts".

The project is changing the physical characteristics in the area around the crossing that has impacts to the operation of the crossing. For example, the proposed hotel will reduce the sight distance along the tracks; limiting the visibility of a train that is stopped at the station or may be passing through the station and provide driveway access to proposed Parking Lot 4 that is adjacent to the crossing where it is currently prohibited today.

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RCEB recommends investigating the impact of increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the Linden Avenue crossing and any necessary supplemental measures to mitigate this increase, such as, but not limited to; pedestrian fencing, vehicle-channelizing median curbs, off-quadrant railroad warning devices, and automatic pedestrian gates.

It is also our understanding, in conversations with local residents, that this area sees heavy congestion during peak hours, particularly during the summer season. As such, the project should also review traffic conditions during peak seasonal usage and provide any mitigation needed to prevent cars from queuing over the crossing and stopping on the track, particularly in the westbound direction where there is an all-way stop condition at the intersection of Linden Ave and Dorrance Wy. The City should also evaluate if the existing crosswalk across Linden Ave at Dorrance Wy causes vehicles to stop and queue over the crossing. Mitigations can include, but are not limited to, queue-cutter signals at the crossing and/or the signalization of the intersection of Linden Ave and Dorrance Wy.

Additionally, the parcel for the proposed Parking Lot 4 is currently an unpaved pedestrian trail that restricts vehicular access. Though there is an existing driveway, a bollard and decorative hardscape (large rocks/small boulders) is installed to physically prevent vehicles from entering the trail. The project is proposing to provide access to the proposed Parking Lot 4 via this existing driveway. Driveways near crossings are not desirable as they have the potential of causing spillback queuing over the crossing. As such, RCEB recommends that the driveway be relocated to be 100' or more from the crossing or access to the proposed Parking Lot 4 be relocated to Elm Ave.

Lastly, access to and from the Amtrak Station from Linden Ave should be evaluated and brought up to current industry standards, which includes proper setback from the tracks, channelization railing, additional warning devices, and lighting along the access path to the platform. As noted in our response to the Project's NOP, the station access should be realigned to be in front of the warning device.

These improvements and mitigations can be accomplished through a capital project funded by the City or as a condition of approval for the development and should also bring the crossing up to current standards and in compliance with ADA requirements.

Any proposed crossing improvement project will require authorization from the CPUC and must also conform to the goals of the CPUC's Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan. This includes improving safety and access to transportation, improving local air quality and public health, and expanding outreach and public participation opportunities in disadvantaged communities. For more information, please visit <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/esjactionplan>.

RCEB staff is available to discuss any potential safety impacts or concerns at the crossings and address any questions from the City.

If you have any questions, please contact Oliver Garcia at (213) 369-4674, or [oliver.garcia@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:oliver.garcia@cpuc.ca.gov).

Mindy Fogg  
ENVR 20260200003  
March 4, 2026

Sincerely,



Anh Truong  
Senior Utilities Engineer (Supervisor)  
Rail Crossings Engineering Branch  
Rail Safety Division

cc: State Clearinghouse, [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)  
Kenneth Tom, Union Pacific Railroad, [ktom@up.com](mailto:ktom@up.com)