

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



May 19, 2026

ENVR 20260500001

James Golden
Supervising Planner
Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
2700 M Street Suite 250
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Shafter Community Park Project [SCH 2026041273](#) – Notice of Exemption (NOE)

Dear James Golden,

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission/CPUC) has jurisdiction over rail crossings (crossings) in California. The CPUC ensures that crossings are safely designed, constructed, and maintained. The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) is in receipt of the *Notice of Exemption (NOE)* for the Shafter Community Park Project (Project). The County of Kern (County) is the lead agency.

The Project is located at East Ash Avenue and Golds Avenue. The project consists of the development of a 42.4-acre park on a vacant parcel of land. The project consists of street-related improvements and four phases of park improvements. Phase one consists of the design, installation, and construction of park-related improvements, including: road and street access, pedestrian and park walkways, and three parking areas. Park facility-related improvements include: four baseball fields, two softball fields, three soccer fields, three universal courts, three handball courts, two picnic and barbeque areas, four basketball courts, batting cages, two playgrounds, and related improvements. Additional future phases will add and expand additional park facilities and amenities; including a gymnasium and a track and field area.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Bakersfield subdivision lies west of the project site and the majority of residential homes in the City is west of the BNSF railroad corridor. The crossing at [Beech Ave/Los Angeles St](#) will be closed pending completion of a separate construction project. Upon closure of the Beech Ave/Los Angeles St crossing, the site can be accessed from the west from two routes, both of which cross the BNSF Bakersfield subdivision; [Lerdo Highway](#) (DOT# 028390W, CPUC# 002-905.10) and [Riverside Street](#) (DOT# 028385A, CPUC# 002-903.70). The Lerdo Highway at-grade highway-rail crossing consists of a 4-lane paved asphalt roadway with active railroad warning devices. The Riverside Street at-grade highway-rail crossing consists of a 2-lane paved asphalt roadway with active railroad warning devices.

The City should investigate the impact of increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic through these two at-grade highway-rail crossings and any necessary supplemental measures to mitigate this increase, such as but not limited to installation of sidewalks and pedestrian gates and pre-signals for queue mitigation at the Lerdo Highway crossing and installation street lighting and signalization/interconnection of the adjacent Santa Fe Wy (Central Valley Hwy) at the Riverside St crossing. These measures can be accomplished through a capital project funded by the County or a condition of approval for the development, and should also bring the crossings up to current standards and in compliance with ADA requirements.

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Any proposed crossing modifications will require authorization from the CPUC through a [General Order 88-B request](#) 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 County.

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

Sincerely,



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

cc: State Clearinghouse, state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov
Dionisio Martinez, BNSF, dionisio.martinez@bnsf.com
Ravi Pudipeddi, City of Shafter, rpudipeddi@shafter.com