

ORIGINAL

Staff Memorandum  
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Arizona Corporation Commission

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SEP 27 2012

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To: THE COMMISSION

2012 SEP 21 P 4: 23

From: Robert Marvin  
Director  
Safety Division

AZ CORP COMMISSION  
DOCKET CONTROL

Date: September 27, 2012

RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TO ABOLISH THE PUBLIC AT-GRADE CROSSING AT MARTIN ROAD, IN THE TOWN OF SAHUARITA, PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA AT USDOT NO. 742-137-T.

DOCKET NO. RR-03639A-12-0338

**Background**

On July 25, 2012, the Union Pacific Railroad ("Railroad") filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission ("Commission") an application for approval for the Railroad to abolish the public at-grade crossing at Martin Road, in the Town of Sahuarita ("Town"), Pima County, Arizona at USDOT NO 742-137-T.

**Geographical Information**

Martin Road is located in Pima County within the town limits of Sahuarita. The Arizona Department of Commerce estimates the Town's population at 25,259 for the year 2010. As one of Arizona's fastest-growing communities, the Town is the newest jurisdiction in Pima County, incorporated in 1994. Currently 30 square miles, the Town is located just 15 minutes south of Tucson and approximately 40 minutes north of the Mexican border (See Exhibit "A").

**Martin Road**

Martin Road is an unimproved dirt road heading in an East/West direction with two tracks running through it: a mainline and a siding. It is a passive crossing with stop signs and cross-bucks for protection. Per the Federal Railroad Administration's ("FRA") crossing data base, the latest Average Daily Traffic ("ADT") for Martin Road was 50 vehicles per day ("vpd"), with a Level of Service ("LOS") of A. No future projections were provided.

**Note:** The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 2004, states that the Level of Service characterizes the operating conditions on a facility in terms of traffic

performance measures related to speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, and comfort and convenience. This is a measure of roadway congestion ranging from LOS A--least congested--to LOS F--most congested. LOS is one of the most common terms used to describe how "good" or how "bad" traffic is projected to be.

Per the Town, there is no posted speed limit on Martin Road. Commission Rail Safety Section ("Staff"), as well as FRA accident/incident records indicates no incidents at this location.

Alternative routes from this crossing are as follows: to the south 1.32 miles is Madera Highland Parkway, and to the north .82 miles is Quail Crossing Boulevard. Both of these crossings are equipped with active warning devices including flashing lights, automatic gates and bells. Also, Quail Creek Parkway is a new north to south roadway connecting the two communities of Quail Creek and Madera Highlands east of the railroad tracks. Quail Creek Parkway can be used if one of the two crossings would be blocked due to a crossing system malfunction or a stopped train.

### **Train Data**

Data provided by the Railroad regarding train movements through the crossing is as follows:

Train Count: Average of 7 – 9 trains per day

Train Speed: 40 mph on the mainline, and 30 mph on the siding

Thru Freight/Switching Moves: Occasionally used for switching movements.

### **Schools and Bus Routes**

Per the Railroad:

*Union Pacific is not aware of any schools in the immediate area of the crossing. Union Pacific is not aware of any school buses, which utilize this crossing. The residential neighborhoods located east of the crossing, Quail Creek and Madera Highland are directly accessible via Quail Crossing Boulevard and Madera Highland Parkway, which have improved crossings with active warning devices.*

### **Hospitals**

Per the Railroad:

*Union Pacific is not aware of any emergency vehicles that extensively utilize the crossing as it is only accessible via an unimproved dirt road. Also, there are two improved crossing with active warning devices in the immediate area, which would provide access for emergency vehicles to Quail Creek and Madera Highland subdivisions.*

## **Zoning**

Per the Town:

*West of the crossing is currently zoned as agricultural. There are two housing developments in the general area east of the crossing- Quail Crossing and Madera Highland. Both Quail Crossing and Madera Highland are accessible by at-grade crossings with active warning devices via Quail Crossing Boulevard and Madera Highland Parkway, which are located north and south of Martin Road.*

## **Hazardous Materials**

The Railroad gave the following response when asked about vehicles transporting hazardous materials through these crossings:

*Union Pacific has been unable to obtain any information responsive to this request. It is Union Pacific's understanding that any vehicle carrying hazardous materials may utilize public crossings unless otherwise posted, but Union Pacific knows of no way it can investigate or determine whether such vehicles use this crossings or with what frequency.*

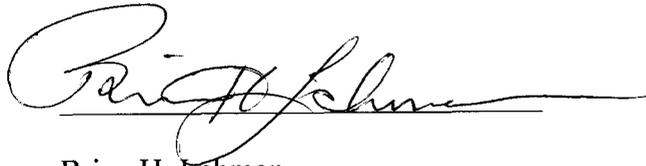
## **Why the Closure is Proposed**

Per the Town of Sahuarita:

*Closing the Martin Road crossing will improve public safety in the area. The two subdivisions east of the crossing, Quail Creek and Madera Highland are each primarily accessible by improved paved crossings with active warning devices via Quail Crossing Boulevard and Madera Highland Parkway. Removing the Martin Road crossing, which is protected by a stop sign and crossbucks and only accessible via an unimproved dirt road, will increase public safety for the area residents by removing an unnecessary and infrequently used crossing.*

## **Staff Conclusions**

Staff is in agreement with the Town and the Railroad. Martin Road is an unimproved roadway protected with just passive devices; stop signs and crossbucks. Staff believes the traveling public will be considerably safer using the crossings equipped with active warning devices. Staff believes the closure is warranted. Further, Staff believes closing Martin Road will not inconvenience the traveling public due to the relatively close proximity of the two adjacent crossings. Having reviewed all applicable data, Staff supports the at-grade crossing closure of Martin Road. Staff believes that the crossing closure is in the public interest and is reasonable. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Railroads application.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian H. Lehman", written over a horizontal line.

Brian H. Lehman  
Railroad Supervisor  
Safety Division

COPIES of the foregoing mailed  
this 27th day of September, 2012 to:

Docket No. RR-03639A-12-0338

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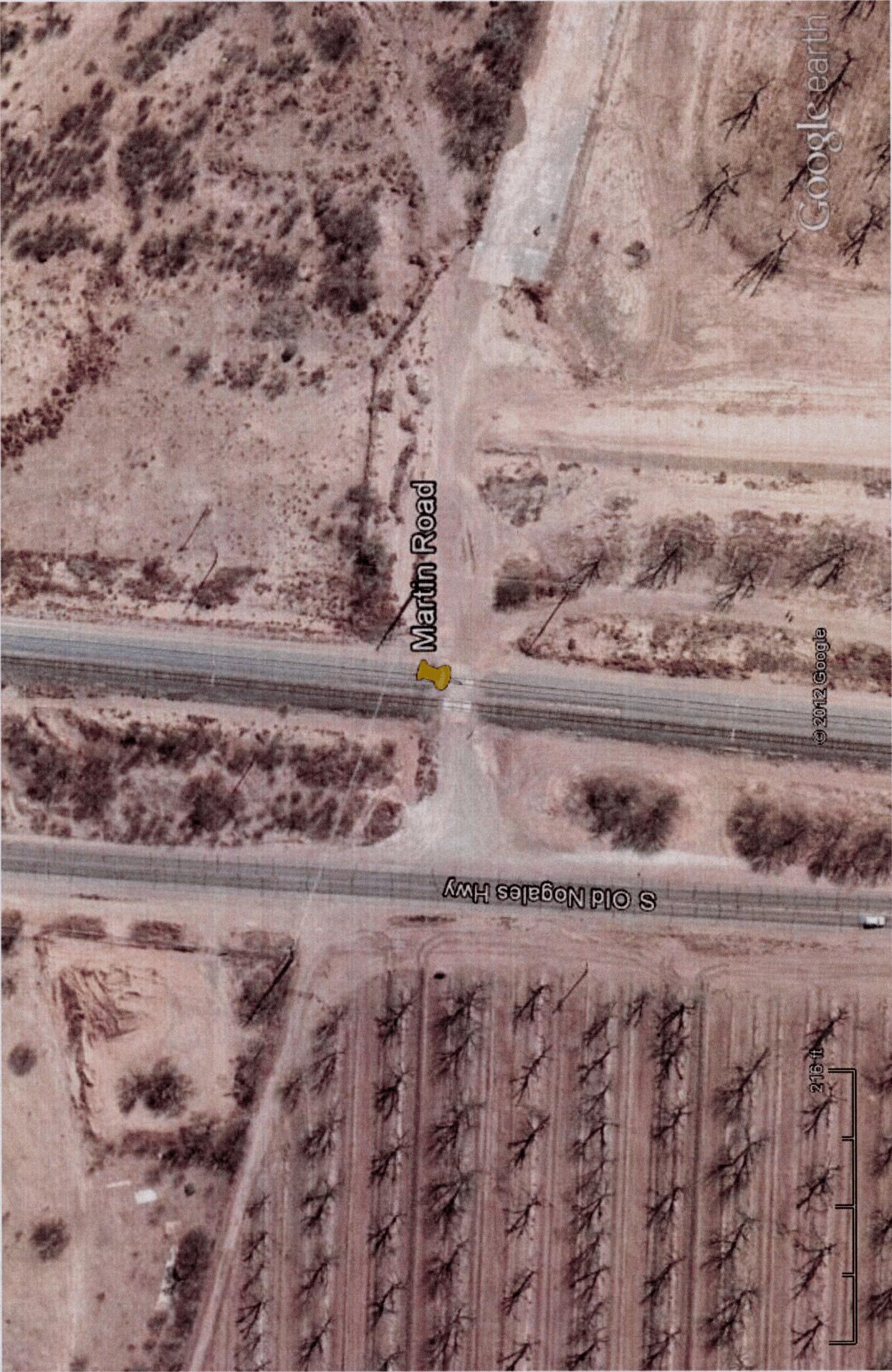
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# **Exhibit A**



Google earth

Martin Road

S Old Nogales Hwy

213 ft

feet  
meters

600  
200



Google earth



Google earth

miles 1 km

3

Google earth