ORIGINAL

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Transcript Exhibit(s)

Docket #(s): RR-02635B-15-0197

Arizona Corporation Commission
DOCKETED
OCT 21 2015
DOCKETED BY

Exhibit #: S-1

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2015 OCT 21 P 4: 03
AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

EXHIBIT
S-1
ADMITTED

MEMORANDUM

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To: THE COMMISSION

Arizona Corporation Commission
DOCKETED
SEP 15 2015

2015 SEP 15 P 3:01
AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

From: Robert Marvin
Director
Safety Division

DOCKETED BY

Date: September 15, 2015

RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO INSTALL A NEW GRADE SEPARATED CROSSING AND FOR THE BNSF RAILWAY TO REMOVE AN EXISTING AT-GRADE CROSSING AT THE US 60 AND BELL ROAD IN THE CITY OF SURPRISE, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, USDOT 025-392-A.

DOCKET NO. RR-02635B-15-0197

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Background

On June 17, 2015, the Arizona Department of Transportation ("ADOT") filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission ("Commission") a request for approval for ADOT to construct a new grade separated crossing and for the BNSF Railway ("Railway") to remove an existing at-grade crossing at US 60 and Bell Road in the City of Surprise ("City"), Maricopa County, Arizona at USDOT No. 025-392-A.

The rail line in this area runs in a southeast to northwest direction, parallel to US 60. (See Appendix "A").

Bell Road

Bell Road is currently an at-grade crossing that intersects the US 60 (Grand Avenue) and the BNSF tracks. The crossing is currently protected with flashing lights, gates, and cantilevers. The proposed project would allow ADOT to construct a grade-separated structure that would span both the US 60 (Grand Avenue) and the BNSF tracks. Traffic on the US 60 would no longer have to stop, and US 60 would connect to the new Bell Road overpass via on-and-off ramps traveling to and from US 60's center median area. The grade separation will also eliminate vehicle conflicts with the BNSF railroad tracks as the at-grade crossing will be eliminated. ADOT's application initially called for the project to be done in phases. The first phase would widen Bell Road on the north side to accommodate two lanes of traffic in each direction. Before traffic could be shifted to the north, the existing BNSF at-grade crossing would need to be modified to accommodate the widening of the roadway to the north. BNSF is asking for a 28 day closure of Bell Road to do the modifications to the grade crossing. Once the traffic is shifted to the north side of Bell Road, construction of the south half of the grade separation would begin. When the south side of the grade-separation is complete, traffic would be shifted to the newly constructed south side grade separation, and construction would begin on the north side grade separation. Once the new grade separation is complete, the at-grade crossing would be removed.

Since ADOT's initial application, Commission Railroad Safety Section Staff ("Staff") has worked with ADOT and BNSF closely to keep abreast of the latest updates on the proposed project. On August 25, 2015, the City of Surprise sent the Director of ADOT a letter (See Appendix "B") stating their wish to proceed with a full closure of Bell Road during the construction of the grade separation. It is Staff's understanding that Bell Road will be closed from approximately April 1, 2016 till September 26, 2016. ADOT has furnished a copy of the proposed detour routes while the full closure is in effect (See Appendix "C"). It is further Staff's understanding that the project will no longer be constructed in phases. The entire grade separation will be constructed in a single phase during the full closure of Bell Road. With the full closure of Bell Road, the modification of the existing at-grade road crossing will not be needed, thereby reducing the overall cost of the project.

The project is estimated to take 18 months to construct, and is tentatively scheduled to start in January of 2016.

This project is being funded by the Arizona Department of Transportation ("ADOT"), with a portion of the bridge being funded by BNSF. The total cost of the entire project is estimated to be $66.6 million.

According to ADOT, the Average Daily Traffic ("ADT") taken in 2012 was 44,100 vehicles per day ("vpd"). The current Level of Service ("LOS") for this roadway is LOS D.

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.

The posted speed limit on Bell Road is 45 MPH. There has been one accident at this crossing, on 1/31/1975. A car struck the train, there were no injuries.

Alternative routes from this crossing are as follows: Dysart Road is .5 miles to the southeast, and Meeker Road is 1.87 miles to the northeast.

Train Data

Data provided by the Railroad to ADOT regarding train movements through this crossing are as follows:

Train Count: 11 average trains per day
Train Speed: 49 mph freight
Thru Freight/Switching Moves: All moves through this crossing are thru freight.

Schools and Bus Routes

The nearest school to this location is:

- West Point Elementary School .6 miles away
- Valley Vista High School 2.2 miles away
- Surprise Elementary School 1.4 miles away

ADOT estimates there to be about 19 school buses crossing the at-grade crossing per day.

Hospitals

The nearest hospitals to Bell Road are:

- Banner Del E Webb Medical Center
- Northwest VA Health Care Clinic

Hazardous Materials

ADOT gave the following response when asked about hazardous materials crossing this crossing:

It is not known how much hazardous materials traffic uses the existing crossing each day.

Zoning

Staff requested that ADOT provide information regarding the type of zoning in adjacent areas from the crossing. The following was their response:

Surrounding area is zoned for light industrial, Regional Commercial, and Planned Area Development.

Spur Lines

ADOT gave the following answer regarding spur lines located in the area:

Unknown if railroad spurs have been removed within a 10 mile radius.

Grade Separation

This proposed project is for the construction of a new grade-separated crossing over the BNSF tracks and the US 60. Once the new grade separation is constructed and put into service, the existing at-grade crossing will be removed.

Staff Conclusions

Having reviewed all applicable data, Staff supports ADOT's application. Staff believes that constructing a grade separation is in the public's interest and is reasonable. Staff believes that the measures proposed by ADOT are consistent with other similar grade-separated crossings in the State and will provide for the public's safety. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of ADOT's application.

for BHL.

Brian H. Lehman
Railroad Safety Supervisor
Safety Division

Originator: BHL

Original and thirteen (13) copies
of the foregoing were filed this
_15th_ day of September, 2015 with:

Docket No. RR-02635B-15-0197

Copy of the foregoing mailed
this 15th day of September, 2015 to:

Mathew Keim
Manager of Public Projects
BNSF
740 E. Carnegie drive
San Bernardino, CA 92408-3571

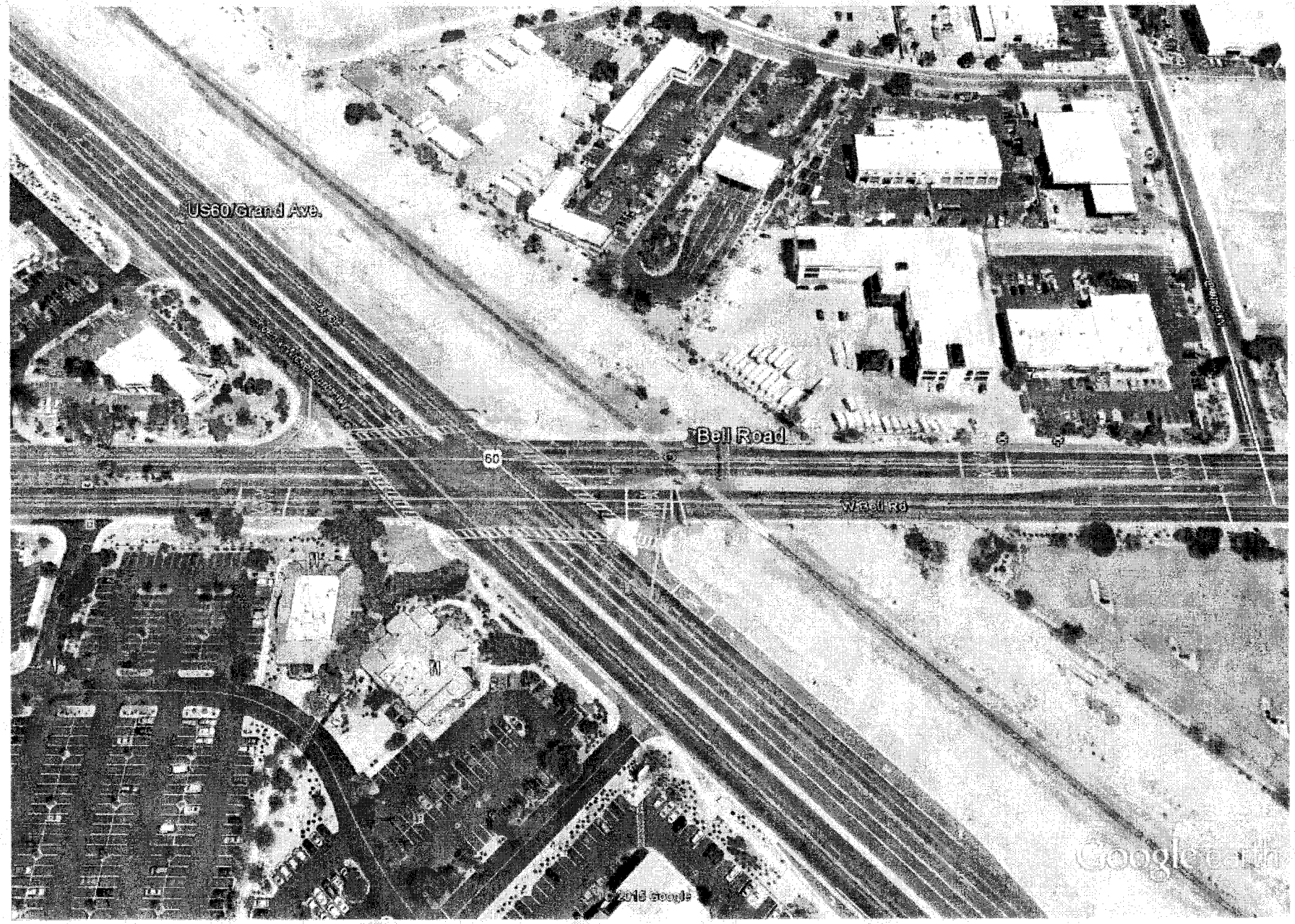
Patrick Black
Fennemore Craig
2394 E. Camelback Road, Suite 600
Phoenix, AZ 85016-3429

Vicki Bever, Manager
Utility and Railroad Engineering
ADOT
205 S. 17th Avenue M/D 618E
Phoenix, Az. 85007-3212

City of Surprise Attorney's Office
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374

James R. Redpath
Assistant Attorney General
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
1275 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

APENDIX "A"



Google earth

feet 700

meters 200

APENDIX "B"

SURPRISE
ARIZONA

Office of the City Manager
16000 N Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, Arizona 85374
Phone 623-222-1100
Fax 623-222-1021

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 25, 2015

To: John S. Halikowski, Director

From: Bob Wingenroth, City Manager

CC: Dallas Hammit, State Engineer
Eric Gudino, Public Affairs Manager

Re: Bell Rd - Grand Ave Interchange Project

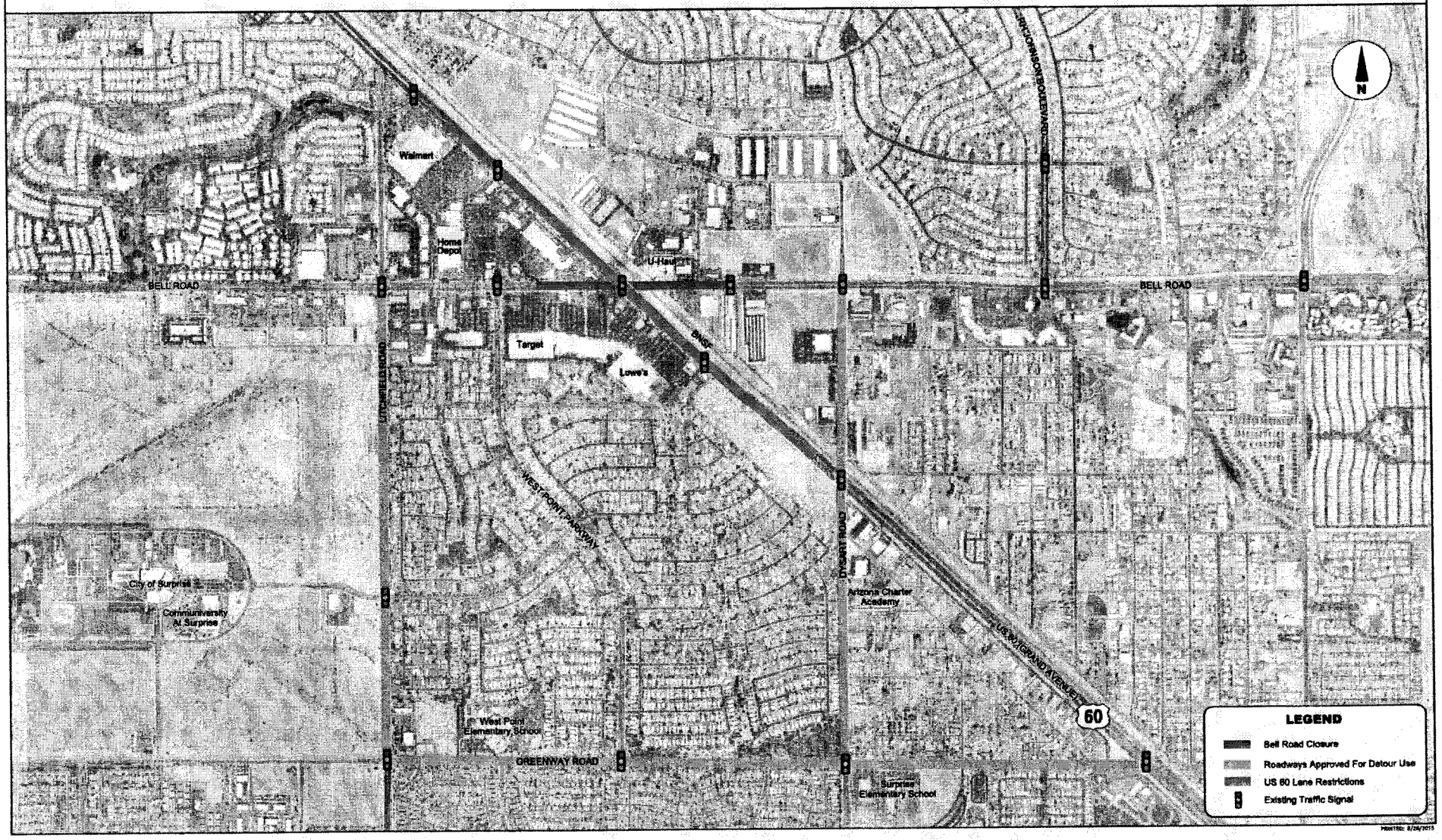
Dear Director Halikowski,

This letter shall serve as confirmation that the City of Surprise wishes to proceed with the full closure option for the Bell Rd - Grand Avenue interchange project scheduled to begin construction in early 2016.

We appreciate the cooperation and support of the ADOT staff throughout the project to date, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

APENDIX "C"

ADOT

BELL ROAD EXTENDED FULL CLOSURE

US 60 (Grand Avenue) / Bell Road Traffic Interchange