



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council

Item No. _____

FROM: City Administrator

SUBJECT: Removal of Abandoned Railroad Cross-buck Signs

MEETING DATE: July 5, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Receive and file this report on the removal of the abandoned railroad cross-buck signs in the northeast area of the City of Commerce, within the vicinity of the Citadel Outlets, or provide Staff direction with respect to further action.

BACKGROUND:

Various railroad signs (i.e., “cross-buck” signs) were scattered in the northeast section in the City of Commerce. Most of these signs were located within the vicinity of the Citadel Outlets, and over the years, as the streets in this area were re-constructed and re-paved, the existing railroad spurs (i.e., tracks) were removed, but the railroad cross-buck signs had remained.

Staff introduced this item to the Traffic Commission on February 8, 2017, and upon the commission’s recommendation and approval, Staff removed these obsolete and abandoned signs since they served no useful purpose, other than to cause confusion for passing motorists.

ANALYSIS:

As a predominantly industrial city, Commerce has long been a gateway for intermodal and railroad transport for goods across the southland and throughout the state and the nation. By virtue of this reality, both the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) maintain their railyards in the City of Commerce in which railroad tracks criss-cross throughout the entire city.

For many decades, short length railroad tracks called “branch lines” or “spurs” that led into private warehouses and factories for the purpose of loading and unloading railroad cargo were common throughout Commerce. This was especially the case in the northeast section of the city near the Citadel Outlets.

Over time, corporations have merged while others have transferred to other locations or have ceased operations altogether. As a result, many of these spurs have been removed, and the streets re-constructed or re-paved. However, many of the railroad cross-buck signs remained due to the fact that state government agencies needed to be contacted first before removal. This final step was never undertaken, and thus, the railroad cross-buck signs remained in place for many years afterwards, despite the fact that the railroad spur tracks have long been removed.

Staff undertook the next step by contacting UPRR, BNSF, and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The CPUC is the state agency that oversees rail safety in California. This oversight is categorized into three (3) areas: 1) Railroad Safety; 2) Rail Transit Safety; and 3) Rail Crossing Safety. Since the removal of the railroad cross-buck signs is related to rail crossing safety, staff reached out to the CPUC to gain approval for the removal of these obsolete signs.

Within the course of several weeks, the CPUC granted permission for these abandoned railroad cross-buck signs to be removed [see *Exhibit "A"*]. The following is the list of the signs [seven (7) in total] that were removed:

- Camfield Ave. at Telegraph Rd. (Carl's Jr. corner)
- Westbound Corvette St. (between Tubeway Ave. & Saybrook Ave.)
- Northbound Tubeway Ave. at Corvette St.
- Northbound Tubeway Ave. at Smithway St.
- Southbound Tubeway Ave. at Triumph St.
- Southbound 1935 & 1945 Tubeway Ave. (next to "Luminance")
- Eastbound Corvette St. at Tubeway Ave.

Staff brought this item to the Traffic Commission on February 8, 2017 and was unanimously approved by the commission.

In conclusion, staff has conferred with the CPUC, UPRR, and BNSF and undertook the final removal of the abandoned railroad cross-buck signs.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Reject staff recommendation
3. Provide staff with further direction

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff issued a work order request with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (County). The removal of the seven (7) aforementioned railroad cross-buck signs was estimated to cost approximately \$650 and was funded through the Public Works operations fund (street maintenance and signs).

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

This item relates to Council's 2016 Strategic Action Plan's:

Infrastructure and Facilities

Guiding Principle 4 to "develop and invest in infrastructure and beautification projects that support economic growth."

Respectfully submitted: Maryam Babaki, P.E., Public Works & Development Services Director

Prepared by: Seung Yang, Deputy Director of Engineering Services

Fiscal Impact reviewed by: Vilko Domic, Director of Finance

Approved as to form by: Eduardo Olivo, City Attorney

ATTACHMENT:

- A. Removal of Obsolete Railroad Cross-buck Signs (north of Telegraph Rd.)