

Union Pacific Says Section of Road Between Davis and Yolo Causeway Too Dangerous, Wants to Shut it Down

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DAVIS -- A favorite shortcut around 1-80 between Davis and the Yolo Causeway may be off limits if Union Pacific Railroad has its way. They say it is too dangerous where the road crosses the tracks and has petitioned the Public Utilities Commission to close that section of road.

The section of Road 32A that parallels Interstate 80 just east of Davis can get busy during commute hours. Motorists use the frontage road to avoid interstate gridlock.

But the road crosses Union Pacific tracks near Mace Boulevard. Drivers have to take two abrupt 90-degree turns to cross the tracks -- a recipe for numerous accidents because some don't slow down or miss the turns.

A county road worker told FOX40 that he had to repair the same guard rail three times in a month. They finally did away with the guard rail altogether and put up signs. There were so many accidents it was just a cheaper way to go.

Headed the other way, a railroad utility shed has been hit three times in recent years.

Train vs. vehicles accidents in the area are rare. But any accident can potentially halt train traffic on the heavily used track used by the Capital Corridor and freight trains.

But closing the road entirely?

"I think it is a very drastic measure because there are other repercussions," said Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza.

The crossing is in Provenza 's district. He says garbage trucks, farm equipment and fire engines need the road. And of course, there's the shortcut around the mess on I-80 during commute hours.

"That frontage road creates some relief from the traffic that everybody is aware of on I-80 going towards Sacramento and from Sacramento to Davis," Provenza said.

Chiles Road fronting the freeway to the south serves the same purpose, and a lesson was learned when it was closed temporarily during winter flooding.

"Gridlock throughout South Davis as a result of the frontage road being closed," Provenza said.

Provenza says they've installed one stop sign at the crossing and want to install two more. A larger goal is to install traffic lights to make it a totally controlled intersection.

"I think it's a great solution, it's expensive, but we're hoping we can get some help," Provenza said.

The job now is to convince Union Pacific and the PUC.