

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Safety and Enforcement Division
Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch
Rail Crossings Safety Section

Resolution SX-113
November 6, 2014

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION SX-113 AUTHORIZING EXPOSITION METRO LINE CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY, ON BEHALF OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, TO ADD GATE SKIRTS TO THE GATE ARM COMPONENT OF THE GRADE CROSSING PEDESTRIAN WARNING DEVICES AT THE OVERLAND AVENUE GRADE CROSSING OF THE MID-CITY EXPOSITION LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT LINE IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES.

SUMMARY

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, by letter dated March 31, 2014, requests authority, pursuant to Section 13.1 of California Public Utilities Commission General Order 75-D, to add gate skirts to the gate arm component of the grade crossing pedestrian warning devices at the Overland Avenue grade crossing along Phase 2 of Mid-City Exposition Light Rail Transit Line Project in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority will conduct a demonstration project for the use of gate skirts on pedestrian warning devices to determine their effectiveness in deterring pedestrians from attempting to go under the lowered gates. The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority will evaluate the gate skirt design with regard to enhanced safety, susceptibility to vandalism, and maintainability.

BACKGROUND

Phase 2 of Mid-City Exposition Light Rail Transit Line (Expo Line Phase 2) is a 6.7-mile segment extending from the terminus of Phase 1, in Culver City, to the downtown area of City of Santa Monica. The project is currently in construction and includes 27 new highway-rail crossings of which 11 are grade separated, while the remaining 16 are at grade. Nine of the at-grade crossings traverse existing roadways and will be equipped with railroad warning devices with flashing lights and gate arms. The remaining seven at-grade crossings are oriented in a street-running alignment down the center of Colorado Avenue in downtown Santa Monica. Each of these crossings is an existing street intersection equipped with traffic signals and dedicated train signals.

When completed, the Expo Line Phase 2 will provide public rail transit service between downtown Los Angeles and the City of Santa Monica. The Expo Line will operate light rail vehicles at a maximum frequency of 2.5-minute intervals during morning and evening peak hours with train operations commencing at approximately 4 AM and continuing until approximately 2 AM, seven days a week, consistent with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) light rail system hours of operation.

DISCUSSION

There is an elementary school located one block north of the Overland Avenue crossing, identified as CPUC No. 084S-109.50. The community has raised concerns about the safety of the children that will travel through this crossing to reach the school. The community believes that children may circumvent the lowered gate arms on the pedestrian warning devices by going under them while light rail trains approach the crossing.

Gate skirts are in use by other rail transit agencies such as New Jersey Transit and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) in similar locations to deter children from going under lowered gates. In 1999, DART installed gate skirts at a crossing located one block from an elementary school in response to concerns for the children that would be using the crossing.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority (Expo Authority) will modify the gate arm component of the pedestrian warning devices by installing gate

skirts. The intent of the gate skirts is to deter pedestrians from attempting to go under the activated lowered gates when light rail trains are approaching.

Expo Authority will conduct a demonstration project for the use of gate skirts on pedestrian warning devices. The purpose of this demonstration will be to determine the effectiveness of a gate skirt in deterring pedestrians from attempting to go under the gates when the pedestrian gate arms are in the down position, and evaluate the gate skirt design with regard to enhanced safety, susceptibility to vandalism, and maintainability.

In all other respects the crossing warning devices will operate as intended, with the flashing lights and bells continuing to function throughout the entire warning operating cycle.

The demonstration project will also include the Westwood Boulevard crossing, identified as CPUC No. 084S-109.80, located immediately west of the Overland Avenue crossing on the Expo Line alignment. The Westwood Boulevard crossing will remain unmodified and used for comparison with respect to pedestrian compliance of warning devices.

Once revenue train operations begin, Expo Authority will utilize LACMTA's Safety Ambassadors (Ambassadors) to monitor pedestrian activity at both the Westwood Boulevard and the Overland Avenue crossings. Ambassadors will remain stationed during peak hours Monday through Sunday with the average hours of coverage being Monday through Friday from 6 AM to 6 PM, and 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday and Sunday.

During the first 90 days of revenue operations, Ambassadors will document the number of incidents where pedestrians attempt to go under the lowered gates at each crossing location using LACMTA's *Expo Line Ambassador Incident Report Form* (Incident Form). Ambassadors will document each incident on a separate Incident Form that will include all relevant information such as Time, Date, Location, Type of Incident, and a narrative describing the incident in detail.

Expo Authority and LACMTA will review data gathered during the 90-day monitoring period weekly to ensure that any issues arising with use of the gate skirts are quickly addressed and resolved. At the end of the monitoring period,

Expo Authority will compile the data gathered into a report on the effectiveness of gate skirts.

Thirty days after completion of the 90-day monitoring period, Expo Authority will provide the Commission's Safety Enforcement Division Rail Crossing Engineering Branch (RCEB) with a report of findings and all Incident Forms for the demonstration project.

If the findings indicate the gate skirts effective in enhancing pedestrian safety, and Expo Authority desires to keep the gate skirts installed, then Expo Authority shall request Commission authorization for continued use of the gate skirts.

RCEB has reviewed and analyzed Expo Authority's request. RCEB recommends that the requested deviation from the requirements of General (GO) 75-D be granted. RCEB will coordinate with Expo Authority and visit the crossings to observe execution of the demonstration project.

NOTICE

On September 27, 2014, the Expo Authority request was published in the Commission's Daily Calendar.

COMMENTS

The draft Resolution of the Commission's RCEB regarding this matter was mailed in accordance with Section 311 of the public Utilities Code and Rule 14.2 (c) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. ____ comments were received.

FINDINGS

1. Expo Authority requests authority for a deviation pursuant to Commission GO 75-D Section 13.1, to add gate skirts to the gate arm component of the crossing pedestrian warning devices at the Overland Avenue crossing (CPUC No. 084S-109.50), on the Expo Line Phase 2 Project in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles.
2. In all other respects the crossing warning devices will operate as intended, with the flashing lights and bells continuing to function throughout the entire warning operating cycle.

3. Expo Authority will conduct a demonstration project for the use of gate skirts on pedestrian warning devices. The purpose of the demonstration project is to determine the effectiveness of gate skirts with regard to enhanced pedestrian safety, susceptibility to vandalism, and maintainability.
4. The demonstration project will also include the Westwood Boulevard crossing, identified as CPUC No. 084S-109.80, located immediately west of the Overland Avenue crossing on the Expo Line alignment. The Westwood Boulevard crossing will remain unmodified and used for comparison with respect to pedestrian compliance of warning devices.
5. Expo Authority will conduct a study for 90 days during which time stationed Ambassadors will monitor and record the number of incidents in which pedestrians attempt to violate the warning devices at the crossing.
6. Thirty days after completion of the 90-day monitoring period, Expo Authority will provide the Commission's RCEB with a report of findings and all Incident Forms for the demonstration project.
7. If the findings indicate the gate skirts are effective in enhancing pedestrian safety, and Expo Authority desires to keep the gate skirts installed, then Expo Authority shall request Commission authorization for continued use of the gate skirts.
8. RCEB has reviewed Expo Authority's proposal and finds that the request is a practical and reasonable approach for evaluating the benefits of enhancing pedestrian safety and addressing the community's safety concerns without compromising safety.
9. RCEB will coordinate with Expo Authority during execution of the demonstration project and 90-day monitoring period.
10. RCEB recommends that the Commission adopt this Resolution.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority on behalf of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is granted authority to modify the pedestrian crossing warning device gate arms by adding gate skirts at the Overland Avenue (CPUC No. 084S-109.50) crossing in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles.
2. Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority shall notify the City of Los Angeles and California Public Utilities Commission's Safety Enforcement Division Rail Crossings Engineering Branch when the modifications to the pedestrian crossing warning devices are complete prior to executing the 90-day demonstration project.
3. Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority shall conduct a study for 90 days during which time Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority stationed Safety Ambassadors will monitor and record the number of incidents in which pedestrians attempt to violate the warning devices at the crossing.
4. Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority shall provide the California Public Utilities Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch with a report of findings and all Incident Forms for the demonstration project no later than 30 days after completion of the demonstration project.
5. If the findings indicate the gate skirts are effective in enhancing pedestrian safety and Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority (Expo Authority) desires to keep the gate skirts installed, then Expo Authority shall request Commission authorization for continued use of the gate skirts.
6. If the California Public Utilities Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch determines that collisions, or near collisions involving light rail vehicles at the Overland Avenue crossing are caused by any of the authority granted by this Resolution, the Safety Enforcement Division Director is authorized to suspend the authority granted by this Resolution.

This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted by the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 6, 2014. The following Commissioners voted favorably thereon:

PAUL CLANON
Executive Director