

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Rail Safety Division

Resolution SX-170

May 14, 2026

R E S O L U T I O N

Resolution SX-170. Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for audible warning devices sound modification and deactivation.

PROPOSED OUTCOME:

- Approves the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) request to modify and deactivate audible warning devices at four at-grade crossings on VTA Tasman West Line in the City of Mountain View, County of Santa Clara.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Approval of the resolution will allow VTA to mitigate community noise concerns regarding audible warning devices while ensuring the crossings maintain safety and compliance with appropriate warning standards.

ESTIMATED COST:

- There are no costs associated with this resolution.
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SUMMARY

This Resolution approves Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) request to modify and deactivate audible warning devices at four at-grade highway-rail and pedestrian-rail crossings to mitigate excessive sound impacts on the community while ensuring public safety.

BACKGROUND

By letter dated September 23, 2025, and pursuant to Section 13.1 of California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 75-D, VTA requests authority to deviate from Section 9.5 of Commission GO 75-D, which requires the installation of a bell or other audible warning device on every automatic warning device assembly that operate in conjunction with the flashing light signals.

VTA operates light rail transit (LRT) service along the Tasman West Corridor Line and has received numerous complaints from the City of Mountain View residents about the train horns and crossing warning devices noise.

VTA’s Tasman West Corridor Line is a 12-mile LRT service operating from the City of San Jose to City of Mountain View. VTA operates approximately 114 LRT trains on the line beginning around 5 AM and ending at midnight daily.

Table 1 lists the four crossing names, CPUC Crossing Number, US Department of Transportation Crossing Number (DOT), and the City and County location that VTA requests authority to deviate from Section 9.5 of Commission GO 75-D.

Table 1: Crossings Subject to GO 75-D Exemption Request.

No.	CPUC No.	DOT No.	Crossing Name	County	City
1	82B-13.08	755017P	Central Expressway	Santa Clara	Mountain View
2	82B-12.58	926831V	Infinity Way	Santa Clara	Mountain View
3	82B-12.76-D	926830N	Pacific Avenue	Santa Clara	Mountain View
4	82B-12.84-D	926829U	Whisman Station	Santa Clara	Mountain View

DISCUSSION

Community concern regarding noise from the sounding of bells and other audible warning devices at grade crossings is not new. The issue has been previously addressed by the Commission and several light rail agencies in the State. The development and expansion of LRT systems have increased this concern and the Commission's Rail Safety Division (RSD) is working with California's LRT agencies to address the concern without degrading safety at grade crossings.

Commission GO 75-D, Section 9.5 states:

"Bells or other audible warning devices shall be included in all automatic warning device assemblies (except as provided in Section 10) and shall be operated in conjunction with the flashing light signals. See American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Associations *Communications and Signals Manual of Recommended Practice for reference.*"

VTA requests this exemption to mitigate right-of-way noise issues and proposes the following modifications to the audible warning devices:

- **Central Expressway Grade Crossing:** Disconnect the audible warning bells. VTA notes this crossing has only vehicular access and lacks pedestrian access entirely. The warning device gates and flashing light signals will continue to function throughout the entire warning operating cycle.
- **Infinity Way Grade Crossing:** VTA proposes to shorten the bell sounding duration by silencing them when the warning device gate arms are in the horizontal position. The warning device flashing light signals will continue to function throughout the entire warning operating cycle; however, the bells will silence once the gates are within 10 degrees of the horizontal position.
- **Pacific Avenue Pedestrian Crossing:** Deactivate one bell located on mast number 3. Two bells will be activated during warning operation cycle.
- **Whisman Station Pedestrian Crossing:** Deactivate one of the three bells located at this crossing.

RSD has reviewed VTA's request for exemption from Commission GO 75-D. RSD Recommends that the requested deviation be granted.

COMMENTS

Public Utilities Code section 311(g)(1) provides that this Resolution must be served on all parties and subject to at least 30 days of public review. Any comments are due within 20 days of the date of its mailing and publication on the Commission's website and in accordance with any instructions accompanying the notice. Section 311(g)(2) provides that this 30-day review period and 20-day comment period may be reduced or waived upon the stipulation of all parties in the proceeding.

The 30-day review and 20-day comment period for the draft of this resolution was neither waived nor reduced. The draft resolution of the Rail Safety Division in this matter was mailed in accordance with Section 311 of the Public Utilities Code and Rule 14.2(d)(1) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

No comments were received.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. VTA requests authority to deviate from the requirements of Commission GO 75-D to modify and deactivate audible warning devices at the crossings listed in Table 1 in the City of Mountain View, Santa Clara County.
2. Commission GO 75-D establishes the regulatory standards for warning devices at at-grade highway-rail and pedestrian-rail crossings.
3. Commission GO 75-D, Section 9.5 requires that a bell be included as part of an automatic warning device assembly and operate in conjunction with the flashing light signals.
4. RSD has reviewed VTA's request for exemption from Commission GO 75-D and considers it a practical and reasonable way to address neighborhood noise concerns while maintaining public safety.
5. RSD recommends that this resolution be adopted.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The request of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to modify and deactivate audible warning devices at the four crossings identified in Table 1, located in the City of Mountain View, County of Santa Clara, is approved.

2. This Resolution is effective today.

The foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed and adopted by the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 14, 2026. The following Commissioners voting favorably thereon:

/s/Leuwam Tesfai

LEUWAM TESFAI
Executive Director

JOHN REYNOLDS
President

DARCIE L. HOUCK

KAREN DOUGLAS

MATTHEW BAKER

CHRISTINE HARADA

Commissioners

Dated May 14, 2026, at San Francisco, California