

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

180 Promenade Circle, Suite 115
SACRAMENTO, CA 95834-2939



March 25, 2011

File Number: G.11-02-017

Benjamin H. Scharf
Senior Assistant Council
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95134-1927

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the North First Street and Trimble Road At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 82B-2.46, in the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara

Dear Mr. Scharf:

This refers to your letter dated February 18, 2011 and received by us on February 23, 2011 requesting authorization pursuant to Commission General Order (GO) 88-B to alter an at-grade highway-rail crossing of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light rail track in the City of San Jose (City), County of Santa Clara (County). The crossing is located at the North First Street and Trimble Road intersection and is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 82B-2.46.

The VTA alignment is median running along North First Street. The crossing is currently a double track at-grade crossing traveling north and south on North First Street. Eastbound Trimble Road has three through lanes, one left turn lane, one right turn lane, and one bicycle lane. All of these lanes travel through the crossing with the exception of the right turn lane. Westbound Trimble Road has three through lanes, two left turn lanes, and one bicycle lane, all of which travel through the crossing. Northbound North First Street has two left turn lanes which travel through the crossing. Southbound North First Street has two left turn lanes which travel through the crossing.

VTA states in its GO 88-B request letter that "The crossing modification proposed in this Request will assist in controlling driver behavior, and enhance overall safety, at this crossing. Additional signage and traffic control markers will alert motorists on an LRT median alignment and enhance warning for left-turning motorists."

The modification of this crossing is part of VTA's Light Rail Left Hand Turn and Track Intrusion Project Phase 2. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2009. This project's goal is to reduce the number of left turn and track intrusion incidents along this corridor through the implementation of several measures specifically designed to mitigate these types of events. These measures include installation of pavement markings, retro-reflective markers, lane striping, a combination W10-7 "Trolley Approaching" sign and R3-2 "No Left Turn" active warning sign, and relocation of left turn lane stop lines away from the intersection on parallel roadways to tracks. This crossing is one of the sixteen VTA crossings involved in this project.

The proposed alterations as indicated in the request letter and/or shown on the plans shall consist of:

- Relocation of the stop bars and left turn arrow pavement markings 20 feet from their existing locations away from the intersection for the northbound and southbound North First Street left turn lanes.
- Installation of “Keep Clear” pavement markings between the stop bars and intersection in the northbound and southbound North First Street left turn lanes.
- Installation of new “RXR” pavement markings behind the new locations of the left-turn arrows on northbound and southbound North First Street.
- Installation of new detector loops in the northbound and southbound North First Street left turn lanes to accommodate the new stop bar locations.
- Replacement of the two existing W10-7 “Trolley Approaching” active warning signs on North First Street for northbound and southbound traffic with two combination active warning signs alternating between the W10-7 trolley icon and an R3-2 “No Left Turn” flashing image.
- Installation of lane guidance striping through the intersection and across the tracks for the left turn lanes on both eastbound and westbound Trimble Road to direct vehicles to the appropriate lanes.
- Installation of a semi-circular island of pavement markings and reflective markers on both the north and south ends of the crossing, adjacent to the light rail median on North First Street to deter vehicles from entering the light rail right of way.
- Installation of new “RXR” pavement markings in the through and left turn lanes of Trimble Road.
- Installation of a Type K marker between the two tracks on the north and south legs of the crossing.
- Installation of six Type Q markers on each median on the north and south legs of the crossing for a total of twelve Type Q markers to delineate the light rail alignment.

Staff has investigated the request by VTA, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As VTA and the City are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, you may proceed with the improvements as described in your request letter and attachments, and summarized above.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with Section 10A.05, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), published by the California Department of Transportation.

All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders and CA MUTCD.

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This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code 21084].

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to this office, the time to complete the project may be extended. Any written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by involved parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, the Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after completion of this project, VTA shall notify RCES that the authorized work is completed, by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G titled *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossings and Separations*. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site Form G page at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/formg>. This report may be submitted electronically to rces@cpuc.ca.gov as outlined on the web page.

If you have any questions, please contact Felix Ko at (415) 703-3722 or fko@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



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Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection and Safety Division

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