

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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May 10, 2011

File Number: G.11-03-002
MGLEE, Los Angeles County

Eric Carlson
Project Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Civic Center Way (84E-5.44), La Verne Avenue (84E-5.53), and Woods Avenue (84E-5.69) At-Grade Highway-Light Rail Transit Crossings, in the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

Dear Mr. Carlson:

This refers to your letter, dated March 11, 2011 (received on March 14, 2011), requesting authorization, pursuant to Commission General Order (GO) 88-B, to modify the existing at-grade crossings of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Gold Line Eastside Extension (MGLEE) tracks over Civic Center Way (CPUC No. 84E-5.44), La Verne Avenue (CPUC No. 84E-5.53), and Woods Avenue (CPUC No. 84E-5.69) in unincorporated Los Angeles County (County).

Metro proposes to conduct a two-week traffic simulation project on the MGLEE Light Rail segment that encompasses the Civic Center Way, La Verne Avenue and Woods Avenue at-grade crossings. The project is meant to simulate the operational aspects of crossings equipped with conventional railroad warning devices consisting of flashing light signal assemblies with gate arms (gates), also known as Commission Standard 9 warning devices.. This Light Rail segment of the MGLEE currently operates in a street-running mode, whereby the light rail trains travel with the flow of surface motor vehicle traffic and obey the same traffic signals at street intersections as vehicles.

The purpose of the traffic simulation project is to have the traffic signals at each intersection/crossing behave as if gates were physically present, stopping traffic in all directions before the arrival of a train at the crossing. The project will simulate gate activations by having the traffic signals turn to the red phase and requiring every motorist to stop at the crossing as if stopping in front of a lowered warning device gate arm.

Metro proposes to alter the existing traffic signal system by modifying the signal phasing to simulate the necessary signal phase changes that would occur if the signal system were preempted by gates upon the approach of a train at the crossings.

Specifically, Metro proposes the following temporary measures to conduct its traffic simulation at the Civic Center Way, La Verne Avenue and Woods Avenue at-grade crossings:

- Traffic Signal modification to indicate “all-red” phase on all roadway approaches to each intersection in order to stop vehicles as trains approach each crossing;
- Traffic Signal Timing modifications to simulate advance preemption of normal traffic signal operations as an approaching train is detected to ensure safe termination of existing signal phases and initiation of “all-red” phase at each intersection as noted above;
- County Department of Public Works personnel will be onsite to monitor and, if necessary, adjust the traffic signal timing at each intersection to ensure safe operation;
- Warning Bells will be temporarily installed at two intersections/crossings:
 - Civic Center Way at the entrance to the existing Civic Center Station; and
 - Woods Avenue at the entrance to the existing Atlantic Station;
- Install “No Right Turn on Red” signs at each intersection to prevent right turns during simulated preemption and “closure” of crossings by warning devices lowered gates;
- Train Horns will be used/sounded by Metro Train Operators as they approach and pass through each intersection in order to simulate a gated crossing;
- Los Angeles County Sheriff’s (Sheriff) Department officers will monitor traffic at the three intersections from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM during each day of the two-week traffic simulation project, with one officer present at each location;
- Metro Rail Safety Ambassadors will observe and document motorist and pedestrian behavior during normal rail service hours (5:00 AM to 1:00 AM) for the duration of the project.

Following completion of the two-week traffic simulation project, Metro will prepare a report of its findings. Specifically, the report will document the following observations:

- Jay-waking and running
- Pedestrians ignoring “Don’t Walk” signals
- Running red lights (including “No Right Turn on Red” sign violations)
- Illegal left turns and right turns
- Illegal U-turns
- Not stopping at intersection limit lines
- Traffic signal timing issues
- Illegal parking
- Emergency Response vehicle activity (number of responses per day)

In addition to the above observations, the Commission’s Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) requests that Metro also document the number of violations and/or warnings issued by the Sheriff’s Department during the two-week simulation. RCES also requests that Metro submit their report of findings within 45 days from the end of the two-week simulation project.

RCES investigated the request by Metro and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As Metro and County are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, the improvements as described in your request dated March 11, 2011 and summarized above are authorized.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with 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.

This project is statutorily exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended. [California Public Resources Code 21080.13]

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the simulation is not completed within six months 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

Please notify us via e-mail to rces@cpuc.ca.gov when the simulation begins and at its conclusion.

If you have any questions, please contact Jose Pereyra at 213-576-7083 or jfp@cpuc.ca.gov .

Sincerely,



Daren Gilbert, Supervisor
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection and Safety Division

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