

MTA Can Reduce Gold Line Crossing Bell Duration, CPUC Says

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 5, 2003) The California Public Utilities Commission agreed, Thursday, to allow MTA to shorten the duration of warning bells at seven Metro Gold Line rail crossings in South Pasadena and Los Angeles.

Once software modifications are completed, warning bells at the seven crossings will ring for only about 12 seconds each time a train passes, rather than the 45 to 50 seconds they currently are sounded.

Changes to the duration of the bells will be made at five intersections in South Pasadena – Fremont Avenue/Grevellia Street, Hope Street, Orange Grove Avenue, Indiana Avenue and Arroyo Verde Road.

Bell alterations also will be made at the Avenue 59 and Avenue 60 intersections in the Highland Park section of Los Angeles.

About 200 Metro Gold Line trains make the roundtrip between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa each day. In service from 4 a.m. until 2 a.m. the following day, the trains operate on 10-minute headways during peak periods with a north- or southbound train entering an intersection about every five minutes.

Currently, bells begin ringing and lights flash on intersection crossing gates when an approaching train activates the system, according to Vijay Khawani, director of Rail Operations Safety.

The bells begin ringing while the gates are lowered and continue ringing until the train has passed and the gates are raised – about 45 to 50 seconds under normal conditions.

Under the revised operation approved by the CPUC, the bells at the seven crossings will begin ringing while the gates are lowered, but will stop when the gates are in the horizontal position – a duration of about 12 seconds. The bells will remain silent during the passage of the train and while being raised.

"This is a significant difference, especially at night," says Khawani. "It's a considerable mitigation as far as noise is concerned when you have residences in the area."

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