

**Consumer Protection and Safety Division
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Meeting Notes**



Date: April 24, 2007
Location: CPUC Los Angeles Office
Subject: A.0701017 (LATTC Driveways); Proposed Farmdale crossing

This meeting was held as a follow up to two previous meetings. The first was held on March 23, 2007 and focused on PUC staff (staff) protest of A.07-01-017 and 8 proposed crossings of the EXPO Phase I light rail project. The second meeting was held on April 4, 2007 and focused on the Farmdale crossing design and the crossings along Exposition Blvd. between Figueroa and Vermont, also known as the Expo Park area. The specifics of today's meeting follow.

A.07-01-017:

Expo Construction Authority (EXPO) has altered its initial plans by realigning its right-of-way (ROW) approximately 10 feet west of the initial alignment. The realignment places the tracks farther west from the eight existing driveways on the east side of Flower Street that provide access to Los Angeles Trade Tech College (LATTC). This new design reduces the number of proposed at-grade crossings from 8 to only 2. The new design includes a one-way, 16-ft. wide, single lane frontage road that provides access to 6 of the 8 LATTC driveways without requiring vehicles to cross the tracks. The new design also includes a 5 ft. wide sidewalk on the east side of the Frontage Rd. to maintain pedestrian access.

The EXPO ROW realignment and Frontage Road will extend from Washington Blvd. on the north to West 21st St. on the south. Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) indicated that this design requires modifications to the existing signalization scheme at the intersection of Washington Blvd. and Flower St. In addition, LADOT will signalize the intersection of West 21st St with Flower St., Frontage Rd. and the Central Delivery Driveway to LATTC.

At the Washington Blvd/Flower St. intersection, vehicles will access the frontage road by making a right turn from the second lane of eastbound Washington Blvd. or from the left turn lane on southbound Flower St. Vehicle access from westbound Washington Blvd. would be prohibited by signage (R3-18) and a raised median. LADOT will not provide a crosswalk on the east side of Flower St. at the intersection due to the long distance that pedestrians would be expected to clear. All Flower St. pedestrian traffic will be directed to the crosswalk on the west side of Flower St. using appropriate signage (e.g. R9-3A, B).

The frontage road will end at the intersection of West 21st St/Flower St./Frontage Rd./Central Delivery Driveway, which is currently not signalized. Signalization of this intersection is included in the new plans with an independent phase specifically for southbound vehicles exiting the frontage road. The vehicles exiting the frontage road will be able to either turn right onto West 21st St. or jog slightly to the right to rejoin southbound Flower St. There will be a crosswalk across Flower St. and the Frontage Rd. on the north side of the intersection, and across West 21st St. on the west side of the intersection. Pedestrian traffic will be directed to the crosswalk using appropriate signage (R9-3A, B).

yet they allow a longer north leg over 4 tracks??

At these signalized intersections, motorists will be notified of approaching trains using Blank-out LED light rail signs. There will be a mountable curb installed on either side of the EXPO ROW to prevent vehicles from accessing and driving on it.

The Expo Construction Authority will formally file an amendment to its original application including the revised design. The amendment shall state that with this revised alignment the applicant is requesting fewer new crossings, and shall include all applicable operational details at the affected intersections. If staff agrees with the final design, then staff will withdraw its protest to the application and cease to be a party in the hearing. Staff may then assist the Administrative Law Judge with the open proceeding.

The Expo Construction Authority has also agreed to improve the existing driveway crossings on Flower St. to the north of Washington Blvd. These improvements are covered within the scope of General Order 88-B and will be addressed independent of application 07-01-017.

Farmdale Ave. crossing at Exposition Blvd.:

There are two main concerns with the application for a new crossing at the intersection of Farmdale and Exposition. Both of these concerns deal with the high level of vehicular and pedestrian traffic related to the adjacent Dorsey High School. Vehicular concerns involve a school driveway just south of the proposed crossing on the west side of Farmdale that may cause queuing onto the tracks. Pedestrian concerns center on the western Farmdale Ave. sidewalk. Although there is a sidewalk and pedestrian crossing on the east side of Farmdale Ave., there is substantially more pedestrian traffic on the west sidewalk and pedestrian crossing comprised mainly of school children. The concern is that there is not enough storage space between the tracks and Exposition Blvd. to accommodate heavy pedestrian flow.

To resolve both of these issues, the Expo Construction Authority has decided to relocate the existing driveway approximately 30 feet to the south of its present location. This leaves a larger area for pedestrian queuing on the south side of the tracks, an area of approximately 1900 square feet. The pedestrians that stop here will be just south of the tracks and north of the driveway, and contained on both the east and west by pipe rail fencing. Between the tracks and Exposition Blvd. there will be approximately 900 square feet of pedestrian storage area.

The proposed crossing design was modeled with respect to pedestrian traffic flow characteristics by EXPO's consultant, Legion & Associates. They measured actual pedestrian traffic counts and analyzed the data that occurs at peak flow, which occurs at approximately 3 pm. Legion showed the meeting participants the model that they have created to simulate the operation of this crossing with respect to pedestrian traffic flow. They found the highest pedestrian flow occurred between 3:00 and 3:15 pm on school days, as children left the adjacent high school. The highest values of pedestrian flow ranged from 94 to 108 pedestrians per minute. This data was used to model the operation of the crossing during peak pedestrian traffic times and concurrent train arrival at the crossing. Using a model that contained 2 swing gates to the north and south of the crossing, they demonstrated that the maximum pedestrian flow will be adequately served using this configuration of holding areas to the north and south of the tracks. Additional simulations were performed using a 4 swing gate configuration on each side of the tracks, and a pedestrian gate and swing gate configuration. Each simulation demonstrated adequate levels of pedestrian storage and flow.

The group discussed the type of gate configuration to be used for pedestrians and finally agreed on the pedestrian gate and swing gate combination. This configuration is currently used through LACMTA's Gold Line and has been proven acceptable by them and the Commission.

LADOT is concerned that the gains made due to the increased width of the sidewalks and crosswalks to the south of Exposition Blvd. will be negated due to the lack of sidewalk space on Farmdale Ave north of Exposition Blvd. Currently, the eastern sidewalk on Farmdale north of Exposition Blvd. is 8 ft wide. It was clearly indicated on the pedestrian model that there is some spill-over of pedestrians into the street after crossing Exposition Blvd. to the north. Currently there is no problem because the intersection is controlled by a "STOP" sign which allows for a fairly constant flow of pedestrians across Exposition Blvd. At the future signalized intersection, pedestrians will cross Exposition Blvd. in larger groups resulting in congestion at the north-west corner of the intersection as pedestrians reach the existing 8 ft wide sidewalk. EXPO's consultants agreed to send LADOT their data and analysis so that LADOT can evaluate the need to widen the sidewalk.

With regard to vehicular traffic over the crossing, staff was particularly concerned about the increased vehicle traffic that currently occurs when parents drop off and pick up their children. Expo states that there is no significant increase in the amount of traffic due to the school, and from their investigations they only found issues regarding pedestrians. The soon to be relocated driveway just south of the crossing will be modified into a "Right-In, Right-Out" configuration. Since the actual entrance to the high school and the most used drop-off/pick-up points are located approximately 100-150 feet south of the crossing, there is little concern that this traffic will impact the crossing. Farmdale Ave. has one lane in each direction, and the southbound lane adjacent to the high school is approximately 26' wide. This gives ample space for vehicles to park for loading/unloading purposes while allowing through traffic to pass. To help address these concerns, EXPO & LADOT agreed to paint the curb immediately adjacent to the crossing red indicating that it is a no stopping zone. That area will also have pipe rail fencing between vehicle traffic and the sidewalk, and will discourage parents from dropping off students at this location. EXPO agreed to provide STAFF with a copy of its video tape illustrating current vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns at the intersection.

Staff requested that the Expo line sound its horn as it approaches the crossing due to the large numbers of pedestrians. This item was not finalized during the meeting, but there were many different ideas discussed. Staff recommends that, at a minimum, the horn be sounded during the times of day that students are arriving and leaving school. The idea of wayside horns was presented as an option. Silencing the bells when the gates are down was also discussed, but staff did not support that option due to the large number of pedestrian activity.

EXPO will be providing revised crossing design plans for staff review prior to filing a formal application.

Yea that will work - as much!

School Standards for noise

*

Dorsey expansion plans even considered - of course not!