



VTA Light Rail Track Grinding Project

Overview

Rail grinding is a maintenance process that removes imperfections from light rail track and returns worn track to its desired shape, or profile. The benefits of these actions are that excessive train noise is reduced, as is excessive track and wheel wear.

The 2008 grinding program takes place throughout much of the VTA light rail system, with approximately one-third of the light rail system scheduled for grinding. The work is being performed as part of a three-year contract entered into by VTA with Advanced Rail Management (ARM) Corporation.

Rail embedded in concrete, such as in the downtown Transit Mall, requires more time to grind, at a speed of approximately 1.5 track miles per hour. Tie-mounted track requires less time to grind, at approximately 5 track miles per hour.

Project Schedule

The work will begin in early December, depending on availability of the rail grinding equipment utilized by the contractor. Due to the size of the grinding equipment, grinding is almost always done during non-revenue hours, which typically are between 1:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m., depending on location. The contractor has estimated 16 work shifts will be necessary to finish all field work throughout the system.

An up-to-date work schedule is posted on VTA's website, www.vta.org. Once at the site, click on the service/construction notice link for more information.

Although several traditional holidays fall within the project's potential time frame, VTA has directed the contractor to not grind track during holidays, or days immediately adjacent to holidays.

2008 Rail Grinding Locations:

Alum Rock to Santa Teresa Line

- Baypointe to Alum Rock stations
- Tamien to Santa Teresa stations
- Taylor to Santa Clara streets

Mountain View to Winchester Line

- Convention Center to Winchester stations
- Lick Mill to Tasman stations

Project Impacts

Short-term impacts include increased night time noise levels in neighborhoods near to the light rail tracks. Work at any one location is typically completed within one or two nights. The contractor is required to keep noise levels below 85 decibels at a distance of 25 feet from the center of rail. This noise level roughly compares to shop tools or someone shouting but is quieter than a train whistle or a gas-powered lawn mower.

Long-term enhancements include an overall reduction in noise levels generated by light rail vehicles, a smoother ride for passengers, and reduced costs for maintenance of light rail vehicles.

Project Cost

\$240,070 - for 2008 Rail Grinding Program.

How to Reach Us

For more information on this project, please contact VTA Community Outreach at (408) 321-7575, TDD for the hearing impaired (408) 321-2330 or visit the service and construction notice section of www.vta.org.

You can also send an e-mail to community.outreach@vta.org and request that you receive periodic project updates by e-mail.