

Decision No. 14505

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

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In the Matter of the Application of the CITY OF EL MONTE, a municipal corporation, for an order authorizing the construction at grade of the proposed extension of Columbia Street across the right of way and property of the Southern Pacific Company, a corporation, and to effect the extension of said Columbia Street.

ORIGINAL

Application No. 10633.

W. F. Dunn, City Attorney of El Monte,
for Applicant.
Frank Karr, for Southern Pacific Company.
John R. Berryman, Jr., for Los Angeles
County Grade Crossing Committee.
D. De Coster, Deputy County Counsel, and
P. F. Cogswell, Supervisor, for the
County of Los Angeles.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In the above entitled application the City of El Monte asks permission to construct Columbia Street at grade across Southern Pacific Company's tracks in the City of El Monte, County of Los Angeles, State of California.

A public hearing was held in this matter by Examiner Williams at Los Angeles on December 12, 1924.

Columbia Street is an east and west highway of El Monte which runs parallel to and approximately 170 feet south of the Pacific Electric railroad, extending from its intersection with Main Street on the east to Hoyt Street, a narrow street near the

west city limits. Applicant now desires to extend Columbia Street to the east boundary of the City, crossing the Southern Pacific Company's track immediately south of the existing crossing of that railroad over the Pacific Electric Railway Company's tracks.

The proposed extension of Columbia Street east of Main Street is also parallel to and on the southerly side of the Pacific Electric Railway Company's right of way. This street will connect with a new highway artery which the County contemplates building between Baldwin Park and El Monte, and thus will be a link in a through highway between Pomona and Los Angeles. This new highway artery avoids three grade crossings over railroads for traffic between Pomona and El Monte. The present highway between Baldwin Park and El Monte is by way of Bassett and the proposed highway will shorten the distance between these points about one and one-half miles.

Southern Pacific Company has a 100-foot right-of-way in the vicinity of the proposed crossing and the Pacific Electric has a right-of-way 80 feet in width. The proposed Columbia Street extension is fifty feet in width, and crosses the Southern Pacific tracks at an angle of approximately 48 degrees.

The grade crossing of the two railroads is protected by an interlocking plant, the tower of which is located south of the Pacific Electric tracks and easterly of Southern Pacific Company's tracks. If Columbia Street is to be constructed adjacent to and on the south side of Pacific Electric Railway Company's right-of-way, it will be necessary to relocate this tower, as it extends about twenty-five feet south of the south right-of-way line of the Pacific Electric Railway. Applicant proposes either to move the tower to the north side of Pacific Electric tracks or to detour Columbia Street around the tower as now located.

It would appear that if Columbia Street is to be constructed in this vicinity, the importance of maintaining a straight course for such an important highway would justify the comparatively small expense of moving the tower. Furthermore, this arrangement would offer a better view of the grade crossing if one is to be established here.

The nearest grade crossing over the Southern Pacific Company's track to the southeast of the one proposed herein is located at Peck Road, a distance of approximately 1400 feet. The westerly line of Peck Road is the easterly boundary line of the City of El Monte. This highway is improved with oil macadam, carries a considerable volume of traffic, and extends from Main Street on the southwest to Dalton Road on the north, a distance of a little over three miles.

The Los Angeles County Grade Crossing Committee's Exhibit No. 1 shows an alternative route for this through highway in the vicinity of El Monte. This alternate route leaves Columbia Street extended at a point approximately 800 feet west of Peck Road, runs thence in a southwesterly direction to an intersection with Meeker Road at Main Street, thence follows Meeker Road in a southerly direction a distance of 1400 feet, thence runs in a southwesterly direction to an intersection with Garvey Avenue. This alternative route crosses the Southern Pacific's track at right angles at a point approximately 850 feet southeast of the crossing proposed herein. The said Grade Crossing Committee also recommends that the grades be separated by constructing this alternate route under Southern Pacific Company's track. They further recommend that the Peck Avenue grade crossing be closed after constructing adequate connections to the proposed Columbia Street.

It is argued that this alternative route is a more

direct route for through traffic between Baldwin Park and Los Angeles than the route provided by Columbia Street if extended so as to cross the Southern Pacific Company's track at the location applied for in this application; furthermore, it is argued that the suggested alternative route makes a right angle crossing with the railroad and would therefore be more favorable for a grade separation than the crossing applied for.

From the evidence it appears that a more direct route than that suggested by the Los Angeles County Grade Crossing Committee's Exhibit No. 1, can be provided between Baldwin Park and Los Angeles by extending Peck Avenue northeast from Main Street in a straight line to the proposed extension of Columbia Street and southwest to an intersection with Garvey Avenue. The angle in Peck Road about 800 feet northeast of the Southern Pacific Company's tracks would thus be eliminated. Not only would this route be shorter for through traffic between Baldwin Park and Los Angeles than either the route suggested by applicant or that suggested by the Los Angeles County Grade Crossing Committee, but it would not create any additional grade crossings with the railroad; and, due to the fact that Peck Avenue is a right angle crossing, it would admit of favorable conditions for a grade separation when such improvement is justified.

While it is not incumbent on this Commission to direct the County of Los Angeles and the City of El Monte where they shall build their roads, the Commission is called upon in this proceeding to decide whether or not public convenience and necessity require the granting of this application. Applicant, as well as representatives of Los Angeles County, respectively contend that it is the desire of each that Columbia Street shall be constructed so as to cross Southern Pacific Company's track at

the location proposed herein; that the right-of-way for this street on either side of the proposed crossing has been procured after years of effort; and that a portion of the right-of-way for Columbia Street east of El Monte has been granted the county, contingent upon the highway being constructed upon the south side of the Pacific Electric Railway Company's right-of-way to an intersection with Main Street in the City of El Monte. Furthermore, it appears that the local interests of the City of El Monte will be best served by the construction of the crossing as requested.

The railroad involved herein is Southern Pacific Company's main line to Yuma, over which twelve passenger trains, six freight trains and several extra trains are normally operated every day. These trains travel at fairly high rates of speed in the vicinity of the proposed crossing. Applicant has suggested that the grade crossing applied for be protected by means of gates to be operated by the towerman in the interlocking plant. This method of protection appears to be proper at this time if a grade crossing is to be established. The fact that this crossing can be given reasonable protection by means of gates with little additional maintenance expense materially supports the Commission's opinion that this application should be granted, especially in view of the fact that the testimony tends to show that a grade separation at any crossing selected for Columbia Street over Southern Pacific Company's tracks in this vicinity cannot reasonably be required at this time.

There was no serious objection presented by the Southern Pacific Company to the granting of this application. After due consideration of all the evidence presented, it appears that public convenience and necessity require the granting of this application, and it will be so ordered.

O R D E R

The City of El Monte, having applied to this Commission for authority to construct Columbia Street at grade across Southern Pacific Company's track at the location shown on Exhibit No. 2 attached to the application, a public hearing having been held, the matter having been submitted and now ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that permission and authority be and it is hereby granted to the Board of Trustees of the City of El Monte, County of Los Angeles, State of California, to construct Columbia Street at grade across Southern Pacific Company's track, as shown in yellow on Exhibit No. 2 attached to the application, said crossing to be constructed subject to the following conditions, namely:

(1) The entire expense of constructing the crossing, including the cost of moving the Southern Pacific - Pacific Electric interlocking tower to the northerly side of the Pacific Electric Railway Company's tracks, shall be borne by applicant. The cost of its maintenance up to lines two (2) feet outside of the outside rails shall be borne by applicant. The maintenance of that portion of the crossing between lines two (2) feet outside of the outside rails shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

(2) The crossing shall be constructed of a width not less than twenty-four (24) feet and at an angle of forty-eight (48) degrees to the railroad, and with grades of approach not greater than four (4) per cent; shall be protected by suitable crossing signs, and shall in every way be made safe for the passage thereon of vehicles and other road traffic.

(3) Crossing gates shall be installed for the pro-

tection of said crossing at the sole expense of applicant; said gates to be of a type and installed in accordance with plans or data approved by this Commission. The operation of said gates to be under the control of the operator of the interlocking tower adjacent to the said crossing. The maintenance and operating cost of these gates shall be borne by the Southern Pacific Company.

(4) Applicant shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify this Commission, in writing, of the completion of the installation of said crossing.

(5) If said crossing shall not have been installed within one year from the date of this order, the authorization herein granted shall then lapse and become void, unless further time is granted by subsequent order.

(6) The Commission reserves the right to make such further orders relative to the location, construction, operation, maintenance and protection of said crossing as to it may seem right and proper, and to revoke its permission if, in its judgment, the public convenience and necessity demand such action.

For all other purposes, the effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days from and after the date thereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 30th day of January, 1925.

H. B. Brundage
C. S. Seaver
Egerton Shaw
George D. Squires
Commissioners.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
PRISON INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

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