

ORIGINAL

Decision No. \_\_\_\_\_.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

Decision No. 2248

In the matter of the application of )  
the CITY OF WATTS, Los Angeles County, )  
California, for permission to construct )  
Pacific Drive, a public street, at grade )  
across the private right of way and four ) Application No. 1106.  
tracks of Pacific Electric Railway Com- )  
pany, in said City of Watts, Los Angeles )  
County, California. )  
..... )

B. D. Neighbours, for City of Watts,  
Frank Karr, for Pacific Electric Railway Company.

LOVELAND, Commissioner,

### OPINION

This is an application by the City of Watts to construct Pacific Drive, a public street, across the private right of way of the Pacific Electric Railway Company, and to construct a crossing at grade over the four tracks of said railway company at said location.

The City of Watts is a municipal corporation of the sixth class, with a 1910 census population of 1922 people. It lies some seven and one-half miles almost directly south of Los Angeles and practically all through traffic on its streets, whether by train or automobile, is in a north and south direction. The only important east and west street is Main Street, at which all interurban electric cars stop. South of this street the open fields commence almost at once, while north of this street the country is laid out in 300 and 600-foot blocks, with no streets open across the Pacific Electric right of way for the equivalent of six 300-foot blocks. Pacific Drive is the third of these streets and Ruoff is the sixth.

The Pacific Electric Railway enters Watts from Los Angeles on a four track right of way. Directly south of Main

Street, in Watts, this four-track line forks into three two-track units through the open fields. On the four-track right of way through Watts the local trains use the two outer tracks, while the through trains use the two inner tracks.

Main Street is not only the terminus of a local Pacific Electric service to and from Los Angeles, but is also a stop for all the limited trains through Watts, namely, those of the Newport line, the Long Beach line, the Santa Ana line, the Redondo Beach line and two San Pedro lines. Thus, Main Street becomes naturally very important, and the crossing is adequately protected; and as all trains stop here, it may be fairly considered as safe as a grade crossing can be made. It would be natural for traffic to seek such a crossing, even at some inconvenience as to the distance in reaching it. All public buildings which serve the population on both sides of the Pacific Electric right of way are located on this street, with the exception of the new Carnegie Library between Pacific Drive and Oak Street. The fact that Main Street is not tapped on the north by any street on the west side of the Pacific Electric right of way tends to make it difficult to approach the library from the territory southwest of Main Street Station. From the territory southeast of Main Street Station pedestrians are inclined to cross the Pacific Electric tracks at several places where there are no crossings; and the testimony showed that the fence along the right of way had been torn down at Pacific Drive, to make it possible for foot passengers to cross there.

The crossing at Ruoff Street, 1900 feet to the north of Main Street, appears to adequately serve this northern district of the city of Watts. Because of the small amount of travel here at the present time, this crossing is not protected. If Ruoff Street should ever in the future become an important crossing, adequate protection will have to be furnished.

Under present conditions a crossing at Pacific Drive would be of practically the same degree of hazard as the one at Ruoff Street now is. Whatever traffic the proposed crossing might divert from the crossing at Ruoff Street would probably not increase the total hazard appreciably under present operating conditions, where the trains in general run at full speed past non-stop crossings; but any traffic which a crossing at Pacific Drive would divert from Main Street would be diverted from an entirely safe crossing to one of very real danger. Pacific Drive is not in any sense a through street. To the west it extends but two blocks and to the east but seven blocks from the Pacific Electric tracks. There was very little indication of traffic on it when the situation was investigated by the Commission's engineers; and there is an average of less than two houses per 300-foot block front in the eighteen blocks which might be considered as being tributary to the crossing here proposed. A crossing at Pacific Drive would be used by pedestrians living east of the tracks in going to and from the library; by pedestrians living west of the tracks, practically not at all; and by vehicles, only of the nature of delivery wagons. In my opinion, access from one side to the other of the Pacific Electric right of way, by means of grade crossings, is not now difficult in this territory, and entails only a minimum degree of inconvenience by reason of round-about travel. Such inconvenience clearly is bound to exist where a community is divided by a four-track, high-speed railroad, as is the case in the city of Watts. The duty of the Commission in applications such as the one under consideration is clear. It is necessary to weigh against each other the factor of necessity and convenience to the community and the people to be served by the crossing and the other factor of added hazard and danger to the same community and the same people and also to the public utility in question. In this

instance there is no doubt in my mind that this additional grade crossing on Pacific Drive would be a far greater source of danger than of convenience, and I am equally convinced that the necessity for this grade crossing is not serious at this time. Investigation shows that approximately 380 regular trains, not counting extras, pass the point of the proposed crossing every day in the 21 hours between 4 A.M. and 1 A.M. It is practically impossible to make such a crossing safe by the installation of an automatic flagman, as such flagman would be wigwagging and ringing practically continually; and there can be no question that the opening of Pacific Drive would simply mean the addition of a death-trap to the city of Watts. If traffic conditions should materially change in the future and the opening of Pacific Drive across the Pacific Electric right of way become a matter of real importance to the city of Watts, consideration will then have to be given by the Commission to a grade separation or a grade crossing at this point.

I shall therefore report to the Commission that under the conditions now existing this application should not be granted, and I recommend the following form of order.

O R D E R

CITY OF WATTS, Los Angeles County, California a municipal corporation, having filed its application with the Commission for permission to construct Pacific Drive, a public street, at grade across the private right of way and four tracks of the Pacific Electric Railway Company, in said city of Watts; and a public hearing having been held, at which all interested parties were represented; and it appearing to the Commission that it would be against public policy and not in the best interest of the city of Watts to grant this application;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, That this application be, and the same is hereby, denied without prejudice.

The foregoing opinion and order are hereby approved and ordered filed as the opinion and order of the Railroad Commission

of the State of California.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 22nd day  
of March, 1915.

Max Thelen

H. S. England

Edwin O. Edgerton

Commissioners.