

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 7274.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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THE SAN PEDRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,)
)
 Complainant,)
 vs.)
)
 PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY,)
)
 Defendant.)
)

Case No. 1331.

J. E. Stephens, for Complainant,
 Frank Karr, for Defendant.

LOVELAND AND BRUNDIGE, Commissioners.

O P I N I O N

This complaint deals with the Pacific Electric Railway Company's local service in San Pedro and with main line track changes, depot facilities and traffic congestion, all in San Pedro. The Commission is asked to make its order to the Pacific Electric Railway Company in the following four matters:

1. Requiring the installation of a 20 minute through service continuously from 6 A. M. to 6 P.M. between Point Firmin and the yards of the Los Angeles Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.
2. Requiring the removal of main line tracks from Harbor Boulevard (Front Street).
3. Requiring the removal of the concrete retaining wall from the east line of Front Street between 5th and 6th Streets.

4. Requiring immediate commencement of work on the proposed depot and yard layout.

The complainant incidentally asks that the Commission obtain for it copies of pertinent statistics of traffic and revenue covering the San Pedro operations of defendant.

Hearings were held in San Pedro on October 31 and November 22, 1919, and the engineering department of the Commission, in conjunction with the engineering department of the Los Angeles Board of Public Utilities, thereafter made a report on the San Pedro situation. The case is now ready for a decision.

Some of the relief sought in this matter lies within the jurisdiction not of this Commission but of the city government of Los Angeles through its Board of Public Utilities. Since the engineers' report is practically a joint report and the engineers' recommendations are available to the Los Angeles Board of Public Utilities, the city authorities are in a position to take such action as may seem to them desirable on all matters falling outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

We will state the conclusions we have reached with regard to the four items on which an order is sought from this Commission.

- (1) Twenty-minute through service between Point Firmin and the shipbuilding yards:

The service and operation on the Point Firmin and La Rambla lines, as a matter of fact, comprises the principal points of the entire complaint. It is not feasible, as an engineering proposition, to run the Point Firmin line across Harbor Boulevard to the prolongation of 6th Street. The difference in grade between the Harbor Boulevard official grade on the center line of 6th Street to the top of rail of the Pacific Electric Railway Company's yards is too great to permit of such a solution, and the presence of team

tracks and house tracks makes an incline out of the question.

With reference to the service on the Point Firmin and La Rambla lines, it appears that the present headway on both lines is satisfactory. Traffic statistics show that during peak hours the combined load on the Point Firmin and La Rambla cars is too great for the capacity of a single car such as can be taken around the short curves at 6th and Pacific and elsewhere. This makes it unwise to carry both loads on a single car for the length of 6th Street. Also the transfer itself is an inconvenience. A better arrangement eliminating the transfer can be had with a very small additional mileage. Under one-man car operation the cost of this additional mileage will be very small.

The best ultimate solution would be a double track to Point Firmin laid in a center strip which is paved only at crossings and downtown, and with one-man cars operating on a 7½ or a 10 minute headway. Such a proposition would probably be as attractive to the street car company as to the public if all bus lines could be removed from the territory where they would compete with such a service. Such a general program would mean a great deal to San Pedro but would require either the widening of 6th Street or a non-parking ordinance for 6th Street.

In a choice between auto busses and street cars on service such as is given over these lines in San Pedro, we believe that in the present state of development it is to the public interest to use light and speedy one-man cars for local service of this nature rather than auto busses. This is true particularly in this instance where with public ownership of the track structure such service could be given without loss by the railway company. We believe, therefore, that the present 20-minute service on the Point Firmin line and 30-minute service on the La Rambla line should be continued and that the

idea of establishing a transfer point for the La Rambla line at 6th and Pacific should be abandoned but that a one-man car should be placed in operation on the La Rambla run as soon as such a car is available.

In case the City of Los Angeles lays the necessary tracks on Harbor Boulevard the question of through service from Point Firmin to Ship Street during rush hours can be re-opened, and if by that time auto bus service has been discontinued, Pacific Electric service can be considered for the whole day.

Pending the completion by the City of Los Angeles of such track construction, the Pacific Electric Railway Company should consider the advisability of an extension of the Gardena-San Pedro line and the Municipal Belt Line Railway to Ship Street on its Outer Harbor run northward, during the hours of 6 to 7 A.M., and from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M., or such other hours as appear desirable in view of existing or proposed auto bus service.

(2) Removal of main line tracks from Harbor Boulevard:

From what has been said under the previous heading, it appears that the idea of running the tracks on 6th Street east across Harbor Boulevard to the connection with the main line tracks should be abandoned. The Point Firmin and La Rambla cars should be parked, as soon as feasible, at their inbound terminus on the east side of Harbor Boulevard east of 5th Street near the junction with the new tracks of the main line. It will be desirable, as a part of the widening of Front Street on Harbor Boulevard, to move the local tracks in the center of the Boulevard between 6th and 5th Streets. Such a shifting of tracks, when that boulevard is graded, will much improve the bad curves at 6th and Front Streets, and the parking of the local street cars considerably north of 5th Street

instead of between 5th and 6th Streets will eliminate, we believe, all reasonable objection to the method of operating the local cars.

In the matter of automobile parking, for which the city authorities alone are responsible, the engineers of the Board of Public Utilities and our own engineers point out that track conditions in San Pedro could be much improved if all parking during the busy hours were eliminated.

- (a) on Front Street between 5th and 6th Streets,
- (b) on 5th Street between Front and Beacon Streets,
- (c) on 6th Street between Front and Palos Verdes.

The city council has already worked out an excellent system of routing all auto busses through the downtown portion of San Pedro without using and obstructing Front Street. An extension of this system to include auto parking will, we believe, be of advantage to the city of San Pedro.

(3) Removal of concrete retaining wall from east line of Front Street between 5th and 6th Streets:

It developed at the hearing and also during the investigation of the engineers that responsibility for this wall rests with the city and not with the railway company.

(4) Proposed depot and yard construction:

It appears that the execution of the present plan for main line and track changes and for the construction of the new depot has been delayed by reason of shortage of men, and high prices. The construction estimates as revised contemplate an expenditure more than \$10,000 greater for the depot alone than was originally authorized. The Commission is assured by the Company that this construction will not be delayed but will be gone ahead with as rapidly as possible.

We recommend the following form of order:

O R D E R

THE SAN PEDRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE having filed complaint with the Commission for an order requiring defendant to offer additional service, make track changes and build a suitable depot, all in or near San Pedro in the City of Los Angeles; public hearings having been held and the Commission having found that complainant is entitled to certain relief and that the interests of the public will be served by certain changes in the general traffic situation, all as outlined and discussed in the foregoing opinion:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, That the defendant exercise due diligence in executing present plans for depot construction and main line track changes at San Pedro in the vicinity of Front Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets, and file monthly progress reports with the Commission.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That upon the completion by the City of Los Angeles of an adequate track structure along Harbor Boulevard and the execution of a satisfactory lease to operate, the defendant shall file with this Commission its proposed schedule for through operation of its Point Firmin cars to Ship Street.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That pending the completion by the City of Los Angeles of an adequate track structure along Harbor Boulevard defendant give earnest consideration to an extension northward on the route of the Gardena-San Pedro line and the Municipal Belt Line Railway to Ship Street of its Outer Harbor run during the hours 6:00 to 7:00 A.M. and 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. only or during such other hours as may by that time have been defined in effect as rush hours by the action of the City Council of Los Angeles in granting permit to operate peak load auto bus service between San Pedro and the Shipyard.

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 15th day of March, 1920.

Edwin C. Edgerton
H. D. Leland
Frank K. Kohn
H. V. Brundage

Commissioners.