

Decision No. 30041.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of the  
CITY OF WHITTIER to construct a grade  
crossing of the LOS ANGELES AND SALT  
LAKE RAILROAD on College Street in the  
City of Whittier, and open College  
Street to Whittier Boulevard

Application No. 21137

Thomas N. Bewley, City Attorney, Whittier, California  
Edward C. Renwick, Attorney, Union Pacific Railroad  
Company, Protestant

ORIGINAL

BY THE COMMISSION:

O R D E R

In this application the City of Whittier seeks authority to construct College Street at grade across certain tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

A public hearing was conducted in this matter before Examiner Hunter at Whittier, June 16, 1937.

College Street is one of the east and west streets of the City of Whittier, 60 feet in width, extending from Painter Street on the east to a point 150 feet west of Union Avenue, a total distance of about 4,000 feet. The City now proposes to extend this street west to a connection with Whittier Boulevard, a distance of approximately 700 feet. This proposed extension passes through Union Pacific Railroad Company's freight yard at Whittier involving the main line track (Anaheim Branch) and five adjacent tracks. These grade crossings are the subject of this application. For convenience hereinafter this six track grade crossing will be referred to as a single grade crossing.

Applicant's witnesses testified the proposed extension of College Street would provide a direct route between Whittier Boulevard, one of the main highway arteries to the south of Los Angeles, and Whittier College which is located east of Painter

Avenue at College Street which would assist in directing traffic to the College, among other things by establishing a highway directorial sign at the intersection of College Street and Whittier Boulevard. It is contended by applicant that the proposed extension would greatly relieve highway traffic congestion to and from the College, particularly during times of special events, such as the more important football games. It is also alleged that the extension of College Street would afford more direct access to certain industries and business establishments located along College Street to the east of Union Street as well as enhance the value of this property.

The record shows that the proposed extension passes through property which is more or less level and, therefore, the proposed crossing could be constructed with light grades of approach.

The granting of this application was opposed by the Union Pacific Railroad Company. This carrier takes the position that the public benefits which would accrue from the opening of College Street over the tracks and freight yard as proposed herein, would not measure up with the objections in the way of hazard to vehicular traffic that would flow over the crossing if constructed, as well as compensate for the added inconvenience which would be imposed on the railroad operation.

The daily train movements over the tracks involved in the proposed grade crossing consist of from two to four operations over the main line track and some fifteen switch movements over the adjacent tracks involved. The testimony shows that the view for approaching vehicles at the proposed grade crossing would be seriously impaired by buildings as well as cars stored on the tracks in this vicinity. Estimates presented by a railroad witness show that it would cost approximately \$7,000. to construct a suitable crossing over all the tracks involved and provide automatic signals for the main line track. It appears that the most practical means of

protecting movements along the tracks adjacent to the main line, if the proposed crossing were constructed, would be to flag such movements. At this time the railroad enjoys the privilege of storing its cars without restriction along the tracks in the vicinity of the proposed crossing. If the crossing is constructed, however, this practice of storing cars within the limits of the proposed highway extension, and for a reasonable distance on either side thereof, must be discontinued. It is also apparent that if the crossing is to remain open for vehicular traffic except at times when it is being occupied by moving trains or closed due to approaching trains, it will necessitate the cutting of freight trains on the main line if the present method of rail operation is continued, as it is the practice in some instances to hold trains on the main line while the yard is being switched.

A review of this record shows that while some public benefits would flow from the establishment of the proposed crossing, particularly the affording of a direct connection between Whittier Boulevard and Whittier College via College Street, it would, at the same time, establish objectional features in the way of creating a rather hazardous grade crossing situation. As far as ingress and egress to the property fronting on College Street to the east of the railroad right-of-way is concerned, this property is now afforded crossing over Union Pacific Railroad Company's tracks at the adjacent highways on either side, mainly at Philadelphia Avenue, located about 600 feet to the north of College Street and Penn Street located 600 feet to the south thereof. Access to either Philadelphia or Penn Streets is afforded the property immediately east of the railroad yard by the connecting streets of Union Avenue to the south of College Street and Pierce Avenue to the north thereof.

Although no mention is made in this application, the record shows that the proposed extension would involve a grade crossing over a spur track of the Southern Pacific located along the east side of Whittier Boulevard.

Summing up the evidence in this record the conclusion is reached that applicant has failed to show that the public benefits which would accrue from the proposed grade crossing offset the objections thereto, particularly in the way of hazard to the travelling public. At this time considerable public money is being spent to reduce hazards at grade crossings in the way of elimination and added protection, and it is in the public interest to limit the number of grade crossings to a minimum consistent with public needs for access over the railroad. We cannot on this record justify the granting of this application. Therefore, it will be denied.

O R D E R

Public hearing having been held in the above entitled matter and it being now ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the above entitled application is denied.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1937.

William J. ...  
James A. ...  
Ray ...