

Decision No. 322-78

CONFIDENTIAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY, a)
corporation, for exemption from) Application No. 22700
General Order No. 75-B for wigwags)
at 24th Street on the Long Beach Line.)

C. W. CORNELL, for Applicant
RAY L. CHESEBRO and FREDERICK VON SCHRADER,
for City of Los Angeles.
K. CHARLES BEAN, for the Board of Public Utilities
and Transportation of the City of Los Angeles.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In this proceeding Pacific Electric Railway requests permission to install No. 8 flashlight signals at the crossing of its 4-track Long Beach line at grade over 24th Street (Crossing No. 6L-2.45), in the City of Los Angeles, and to provide said crossing with night illumination.

A public hearing was held in this matter before Examiner Hall in Los Angeles on February 28, 1940.

The Long Beach 4-track line of the Pacific Electric Railway Company runs in a general northerly and southerly direction and is paralleled on each side of the right of way by Long Beach Boulevard. Vehicular traffic travels in both directions on each lane of Long Beach Boulevard.

Twenty-fourth Street crosses the tracks at approximately right angles and extends easterly to Alameda Street and westerly to Compton Avenue. This portion of 24th Street between Long Beach Boulevard and Alameda Street is lightly used and only a small part of it is improved and dedicated to public use and travel.⁽¹⁾

(1) The streets in this vicinity are clearly set forth in Exhibit No. 5 filed in this proceeding.

It is the proposal of applicant, and agreed to by the City, to install signals at this crossing controlled by trolley contact circuits instead of circuits which would comply with the provisions of the Commission's General Order No. 75-B. The circuit control provided would start the signals operating at the prescribed distance from the crossing, but upon that portion of the train having a trolley reaching the crossing, the signal would immediately stop operating. In the case of a freight train, the signal would stop operating when the motor passed over the crossing, and the signal would be non-operative while the remainder of the train was on the crossing.

Due to the fact that the 24th Street crossing is within the limits of the Amoco interlocking plant of applicant, there would be times when trains approaching from the north would be stopped by the home signal of the plant, which is between the starter point of the crossing signal and 24th Street.⁽²⁾ In that event the signal would not start operating until the home signal cleared and the train moved toward the crossing, thereby producing the warning aspect of the signal at a shorter time interval than prescribed by General Order No. 75-B. The record shows that since the date of filing of the application the City of Los Angeles has installed a 400-watt lamp on one side of the crossing and a 600-watt lamp on the opposite side, with the idea in mind of properly illuminating the sides of a train.

Witnesses for both applicant and the City contended that the crossing would be amply protected if the warning aspect were given on the approach of trains and the illumination during the hours of darkness would thereafter clearly show to the drivers of approaching automobiles that a train was occupying the crossing.

(2) Exhibit No. 4 shows the position of the various signals of the interlocking plant and the location of the controls of the crossing signals.

Applicant estimated that the proposed installation would cost approximately \$1,725, whereas, if a signal installation were provided which would comply with the provisions of General Order No. 75-B, the cost would be approximately \$6,090. Most of this excess cost is due to the location of the crossing within the interlocking limits.

Exhibit No. 2 was entered purporting to show the volume of all types of traffic passing over the crossing for a 24-hour period, which includes 402 passenger trains in both directions, 44 box motors, and 10 freight trains. The vehicular traffic over the crossing amounted to 2,689 automobiles, 766 trucks, and 53 other vehicles. On that particular day the number of cars in the freight trains ranged from 2 to 14; however, evidence showed that once a week applicant has a freight train from the Los Angeles Harbor consisting of from 30 to 35 cars and that an average number of cars on a freight train the year round would be about 16.

It is clear that the method of signal control proposed would be ample for all passenger train movements, as normally these passenger trains consist of not more than two cars. However, with freight trains the signal would be non-operative after the motor had passed the crossing.

Testimony indicated that 24th Street, although carrying around 3,000 vehicles per day, is relatively unimportant and that traffic could be satisfactorily handled in the area if the crossing were closed. This is primarily due to the fact that 24th Street, between Long Beach Boulevard and Alameda Street, in the main is not dedicated and poorly improved, and it is our opinion that serious consideration should be given to the closing of this crossing.

A station stop for local passenger trains is located at 24th Street and cars make the station stop before crossing over 24th Street. Applicant proposed, in the event the application is

granted, to stop its trains after crossing over the street so that the signal would not be operating when a car is standing at the station stop. It appears to us that this procedure should tend to decrease both hazard and interference at this crossing.

A review of the entire record in this proceeding leads to the conclusion that if these signals were installed in conformity with the present provisions of General Order No. 75-B, better protection would be provided; however, this protection would involve a cost of approximately \$4,000 in excess of the plan proposed, and in view of the relative unimportance of this crossing it does not appear that the expenditure of this additional amount of money is justified. It is our belief that this amount could be spent to better advantage at other crossings needing protection, and that serious consideration should be given by the City to the closing of this crossing before expenditure is made for the protection proposed. If the crossing is to remain open to public use, the record indicates that protection should be installed and that that proposed by applicant is reasonable. The application will therefore be granted.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held and the matter having been duly submitted

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that permission and authority is granted to Pacific Electric Railway Company to deviate from the provisions of sub-sections (d) and (e) of Section VI of General Order No. 75-B so as to permit the installation of two trolley contact control No. 8 flashlight signals (General Order No. 75-B) at the crossing of 24th Street over applicant's Long Beach line (Crossing No. 6L-2.45), and to permit the operation of said signals in connection with the interlocking plant, as hereinbefore

set forth in the Opinion, subject, however, to the following conditions:

- (1) Applicant shall provide sufficient night illumination at said crossing, consisting of at least one overhead light on each side of the crossing sufficient to illuminate the sides of a train during the hours of darkness.
- (2) The entire expense of installing and maintaining said crossing signals shall be borne in accordance with the terms of an agreement to be entered into by applicant and the City of Los Angeles, a copy of which shall be filed with the Commission within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date hereof. Should said agreement not be filed within the above-mentioned time, and further time be not granted by subsequent order, said cost shall be apportioned by supplemental order.
- (3) Applicant shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify the Commission, in writing, of the completion of the installation authorized herein and of its compliance with the conditions hereof.
- (4) The authorization herein granted shall lapse and become void if not exercised within one (1) year from the date hereof, unless further time is granted by subsequent order.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 12th day of March, 1940.

Ray & Kelly
Frank D. Kelly
Ray & Kelly
J. J. Kelly
Justus J. Kelly
Commissioners