

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 39918

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY, a)
corporation, for an In Lieu Certi-)
ficate of Public Convenience and)
Necessity.)
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THIRD SUPPLEMENTAL
APPLICATION NO. 26636

To extend North Hollywood and)
Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Lines,)
and establish Los Angeles-North)
Hollywood-Van Nuys Motor Coach Line.)

C. W. CORNELL and E. L. E. BISSINGER, for Applicant;
DON L. CAMPBELL and RODNEY F. WILLIAMS, for Asbury
Rapid Transit System, Protestant; T. M. Chubb, Assistant
Chief Engineer for K. CHARLES BEAN, Chief Engineer,
Board of Public Utilities and Transportation of the City
of Los Angeles, Interested Party; JOHN B. KINGSLEY, for
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, Interested Party; and
LLOYD GREGG, for San Fernando Valley Associated Chambers
of Commerce, Interested Party.

O P I N I O N

By the above-numbered proceeding Pacific Electric Railway
Company seeks authority to make certain changes in and additions to
the service now provided residents of the San Fernando Valley. For-
mal hearings in the matter were held at Los Angeles on May 21 and
June 20, 1946, and on the latter date it was taken under submission
and is now ready for decision.

The changes proposed by the applicant are briefly sum-
marized below:

1. To extend the Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Line from its present terminus at Universal City into Hollywood; also extend said line from its present westerly terminus at Roseda Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard northward to the community of Northridge and from Roseda Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard westward to the community of Woodland Hills.
2. To extend the North Hollywood Motor Coach Line from its present terminus at Universal City to Hollywood and also extend said line in the North Hollywood area.

3. To establish a new motor coach service between Van Nuys, North Hollywood, and Los Angeles by way of Riverside Drive.

For many years Pacific Electric Railway Company operated its Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Line and its North Hollywood Motor Coach Line over the Cahuenga Pass into Hollywood. On June 1, 1936, this applicant filed Application No. 20590 by which, among other things, authority was sought to abandon passenger rail operations between the central business district of Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley points and to substitute therefor motor coach service. Extensive hearings in this proceeding resulted in the issuance of Decision No. 29633 dated April 5, 1937, and Decision No. 30599 dated February 7, 1938, which denied applicant's request for the abandonment of the rail service as proposed and made certain suggestions for improvement of the service.

In the last-numbered decision, by permissive order applicant was authorized to "suspend operations on (a) that portion of its North Hollywood Motor Coach Line between Universal City and Hollywood, and (b) that portion of its Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Line between Universal City and Hollywood." This portion of the order was predicated on the finding contained in the opinion that "we also subscribe to the theory that duplicate operation over the Cahuenga Pass by two motor coach lines and a rail line is not justified under prevailing conditions and makes for unnecessary additional operating expenses."

Compliance with this order became effective on June 1, 1938, when the Ventura Boulevard and North Hollywood Motor Coach Lines were terminated at Universal City and passengers transferred at that point to the rail line. Subsequently coaches on the North Hollywood Line were terminated at North Hollywood Station, except for one round trip per day, and have been continuously operated to and from that terminus until the present time. The record indicates

that there has been a substantial increase in population in the San Fernando Valley during the war years, and assuming that building materials and labor become more plentiful, this development will in all likelihood continue. It is applicant's contention that patrons of the Ventura Boulevard and North Hollywood Motor Coach Lines should be provided with a through service to the Hollywood area so as to eliminate the necessity of transferring to the rail lines in accordance with the present practice. Testimony indicates that about 1500 people per day transfer at Universal City from coach to rail or the reverse. No figures are available as to the number who make the transfer at North Hollywood or how many of these transferees originate at or are destined to points beyond the area proposed to be served by these two coach lines, if extended. For those patrons whose ultimate destination is the downtown area of Los Angeles, the extensions as proposed herein into Hollywood would serve no particularly useful purpose, since they would still be required to transfer to a rail line in Hollywood.

The President of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce testified as to the retail business development in the Hollywood area, as well as the residential development in the San Fernando Valley. This witness expressed the opinion that the transfer now required at Universal City was an imposition and indicated that his organization had endorsed the proposal of Pacific Electric Railway that the Ventura Boulevard and North Hollywood Motor Coach Lines be extended over the Cahuenga Pass into Hollywood. This witness stated further, however, that if the proposed extensions were to jeopardize the future operation of passenger rail service between Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley, his opinion would be altered.

In the instant proceeding those portions of the application which propose the establishment of a new service from Van Nuys and

North Hollywood to Los Angeles by way of Riverside Drive, and the extension of the Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Line to the communities of Northridge and Woodland Hills, are proposed on a trial basis to enable applicant to determine whether or not the service can be made compensatory. As to the proposed extensions of the Ventura Boulevard Motor Coach Line to the Woodland Hills and Northridge areas in the western part of the Valley, there appears to be some question even in the applicant's mind as to the necessity for such extensions. (1)

Applicant's proposal to establish a new motor coach service between Van Nuys, North Hollywood and Los Angeles by way of Riverside Drive assumes there is a demand for an express service between such points, and that there is no possibility that an expedited service can be provided through use of existing facilities. A preferential type of service is proposed, with three inbound schedules to be operated during the morning and three outbound schedules in the evening. It is proposed that no commutation tickets shall be honored in this service, one of the reasons for such proposal being "the cost of this morning evening service will be excessive compared with the cost for an ordinary motor coach service, and due to the expedited service proposed to be rendered by the motor coaches, very little intermediate traffic will be handled, thus reducing revenue on the line." It is proposed that this service shall be instituted on a trial basis to determine whether or not the volume of traffic warrants its continued operation.

The Secretary-Manager of the North Hollywood Chamber of Commerce testified as to the need for additional service between

(1) Quoting from the Application: "These areas at the present time are sparsely settled and there is some question in our minds as to whether or not the volume of traffic that will use public transportation, if provided, will justify the cost of operating such service."

San Fernando Valley points and the Hollywood-Los Angeles area, and expressed the opinion that there was some need for the proposed service by way of Riverside Drive. He had no idea as to what the volume of passengers might be and like the President of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, was opposed to anything which might adversely affect the continued operation of the passenger rail service.

The Asbury Rapid Transit System operates a service between San Fernando and Los Angeles via alternate routes, one of which is by way of Riverside Drive. In addition thereto said company performs local service between Burbank and Hollywood, as well as service in the North Hollywood area. Objection to the proposal that service be restored by Pacific Electric between Universal City and Hollywood was voiced by this protestant, as it would duplicate a service it is now providing and would be in direct competition therewith. Likewise, protestants expressed objections to the proposal that the Riverside Drive service be instituted unless restrictions were imposed which would provide full protection to its operations.

A substantial portion of the population growth in the San Fernando Valley has taken place in the North Hollywood area, and there appears to be ample justification for the extension of the North Hollywood Motor Coach Line northerly on Lankershim Boulevard to Saticoy Street, thence easterly to Tujunga Avenue. The record also substantiates applicant's contention that service should be provided on Victory Boulevard between Lankershim Boulevard and Tujunga Avenue and on Tujunga Avenue between Victory Boulevard and Lankershim Boulevard.

There appears to be little justification for the continuation of service on Laurel Canyon Boulevard between Victory Boulevard and Vanowen Street, since there is service on these last two-named

streets and the maximum walking distance to reach either established service is one-quarter mile.

A thorough review of the record in this proceeding fails to convince us that any changes in the present service provided by Pacific Electric Railway Company in the San Fernando Valley are necessary at this time, except for minor modifications in the routing of the North Hollywood Motor Coach Line. The matter of transfers from coach to rail or the reverse at Universal City or North Hollywood does not from this record appear to impose a serious burden on this traffic.

The proposal to establish a new service between Van Nuys, North Hollywood and Los Angeles by way of Riverside Drive would represent a duplication of existing transportation on certain portions of the route and, if authorized, would necessarily be encumbered by numerous restrictions that would adversely affect its earning position.

If the changes as proposed herein were to be authorized, ten additional motor coaches would be required, and although it is anticipated that additional equipment will be available in the relatively near future, these coaches are not now available to applicant. Even though the record in this proceeding were conclusive as to the need for the proposed service, we are of the opinion that its institution should be deferred until such time as service on existing lines is made to conform more nearly to the standards which existed prior to the war.

Predicated upon the foregoing opinion, we believe the people of the San Fernando Valley as a whole will best be served by the retention of the present practice of transferring passengers at Universal City and North Hollywood, thereby insuring the continuation of passenger rail service between San Fernando Valley and the Hollywood-Los Angeles area. Extension of the two lines as proposed

and the institution of the new service by way of Riverside Drive would, in our opinion, definitely jeopardize the rail service, which is the backbone of public transportation between San Fernando Valley and the Hollywood-Los Angeles areas.

Applicant has failed to sustain the burden of proof that public convenience and necessity require the granting of this application, and in consonance with the above findings of fact, the application will be denied except for the proposed modification of service in the North Hollywood area.

O R D E R

Public hearings having been had in the above-entitled application, and based upon the evidence received at the hearings and upon the findings and conclusions set forth in the preceding opinion,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. Route No. 26, as described in Appendix "A" of Decision No. 38827, dated April 9, 1946, in this proceeding is hereby amended to read as follows:

Route 26

From Lankershim Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard (Los Angeles,) via Lankershim Boulevard, Victory Boulevard, Whitsett Avenue, Vanowen Street, Lankershim Boulevard and Saticoy Street to Tujunga Avenue; also, along Lankershim Boulevard between Victory Boulevard and Vanowen Street.

Alternate Route

Also, from Lankershim Boulevard and Tujunga Avenue (North Hollywood) via Tujunga Avenue and Victory Boulevard to Lankershim Boulevard.

2. In all other respects the application is denied.

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

Dated at Los Angeles, California, January 28, 1947.

Harold P. Hula
Justice F. Cassen
Edward J. Russell
A. J. [Signature]