

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 43334

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
 CITY OF LONG BEACH, a municipal)
 corporation, for the construction of)
 a crossing, at grade, over the tracks) Application No. 30147
 of the Pacific Electric Railway)
 Company, by a public street, in the)
 City of Long Beach, County of Los)
 Angeles, State of California.)

Irving M. Smith, City Attorney, by Joseph B. Lamb, Deputy City Attorney, for applicant. E. L. H. Bissinger for Pacific Electric Railway Company; Mrs. Paul Kowal for Los Cerritos Parent Teachers Association; Edward Lindstein for California Heights Business Men's Association; R. D. Elliott for 85 business houses in Wrigley Heights District; Earl Kausch for Orange and South Street Improvement Association; Frederick Sykes for the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce.

O P I N I O N

In this proceeding, the City of Long Beach requests an order directing the establishment, at grade, of a crossing for street purposes over the right of way and tracks of the Pacific Electric Railway Company, at Wardlow Road in said city.

A public hearing was held in Long Beach on August 8, 1949, before Examiner Rowe, and the matter is now submitted for determination.

Wardlow Road runs in an easterly and westerly direction, while the Pacific Electric tracks run generally in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction, carrying passengers between Los Angeles and Long Beach and intermediate points.

A. 30147 - JAR:AA (re-write)

The nearest existing public crossing to the south of Wardlow Road is approximately a half mile away at Spring Street, designated as Crossing No. 6L-17.04. The nearest crossing (No. 6L-14.95) to the north is west of the Los Angeles River Flood Control Channel and is of small benefit to persons residing in the triangle east of said channel, north of Spring Street and west of the tracks. Subsequent to the opening of Spring Street across the Pacific Electric Railway Company tracks, the population in this area has increased approximately 300%, and the population in Long Beach, generally, has nearly doubled.

At present, the use of an underpass by the public in the county adjacent to Bixby Road, designated as Crossing No. 6L-15.89-B, creates a serious safety hazard. This underpass was constructed as a storm drain and should be closed to vehicular traffic in the event the application herein is granted and the Wardlow Road crossing is constructed, thereby lessening the need for a vehicular traffic outlet near Bixby Road. This, according to the City Engineer, could be effected by the city by physically closing Bixby Road to vehicular traffic at the city boundary line upon the completion of Wardlow Road crossing. The order authorizing construction of the Wardlow Road crossing will be conditioned upon the closing of Bixby Road.

Construction is presently under way upon a county bridge over the flood control channel, at a cost of, roughly, one and a half million dollars, at a point nearly opposite 223rd Street on the westerly side. The proposed crossing will provide a convenient means of reaching this bridge for traffic originating east of the

Pacific Electric Railway tracks and north of Spring Street, and for traffic entering the City of Long Beach by way of the new bridge to reach points east of the Pacific Electric tracks and northorly of Spring Street.

It is anticipated that this new bridge will carry a large volume of traffic and the proposed crossing will be the most convenient means of access to the east and north for those using the bridge. The completion date, as provided in the contract for the construction of this bridge, is September 14, 1950. The approaches and the construction of the streets to this bridge are expected to be completed before the end of June, 1950.

A study of the desirability of the proposed crossing was made by the Los Angeles County Grade Crossing Committee, which has recommended that the crossing be authorized without grade separation, if such separation is found to be impracticable. The Sepulveda Freeway, which is contemplated by the State Highway Commission, is expected to use the above-mentioned bridge, and will, in reasonable probability, be constructed over or above the tracks and will diminish the necessity for a grade separation at Wardlow Road so that an expenditure of large sums of money for a grade separation at the latter location does not appear justified.

The presence of a thirty-inch water main of the Metropolitan Water District, an eight-inch oil pipe line of Sunset Oil Company, as well as several large gas pipe lines of the city and of private companies would greatly increase the difficulty and cost of a grade separation at Wardlow Road. While an expert witness for the Pacific Electric Railway Company stated that, in his opinion, it would be a mistake to open this crossing without a grade

separation, he admitted that a grade separation here would be an expensive proceeding.

This witness further stated that this crossing would be purely for the benefit of automobile traffic and would be detrimental to the Pacific Electric Railway Company. There was no conflict in this testimony; consequently, the entire cost of the crossing construction should be paid by the applicant. The expert for the city recommended the use of the No. 4 wigwag, or automatic flagman, as a safety factor. The Pacific Electric Railway Company's witness stated that, in his opinion, nothing less than two standard No. 8 flashing light signals would suffice. It appears, however, that, from the danger involved in this grade crossing, protection should be afforded by automatic crossing gates incorporated with the flashing-type automatic crossing signals. Any future traffic signals which are installed at the intersection of Wardlow Road and the proposed Pacific Avenue Diagonal, should be effectively coordinated with rail movements.

According to the testimony of an engineer witness for the city, the work involved on the proposed crossing will require approximately one year. Consequently, the completion of the construction proposed in the present application should approximately coincide with that of the above-mentioned bridge over the Los Angeles River Flood Control Channel.

The application to establish a crossing at grade will be granted subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the following order. Additional protective measures may be prescribed in the future should the need therefor appear.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held, and the matter being under submission,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the City of Long Beach, in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, is authorized to construct Wardlow Road, at grade, across the tracks of Pacific Electric Railway Company at the location more particularly described in the application, and as shown on the map attached thereto, subject to the following conditions and not otherwise:

- (1) The crossing herein authorized shall be identified as Crossing No. 6L-16.51.
- (2) Applicant shall bear the entire construction expense, and maintenance cost outside of lines two feet outside of rails. Pacific Electric Railway Company shall bear maintenance costs between such lines.
- (3) Protection shall be afforded by two automatic crossing gates incorporated as a supplement to two standard No. 8 flashing light signals (General Order No. 75-B). Prior to their installation, plans and circuits of signaling devices shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Commission. The entire cost of acquiring and constructing this protection shall be borne by applicant, and its maintenance shall be at the expense of the Pacific Electric Railway Company.
- (4) All future traffic signals which are to be installed at the intersection of Wardlow Road and the proposed Pacific Avenue Diagonal, shall be effectively coordinated with rail movements over the tracks hereby authorized to be crossed in a manner satisfactory to the Commission.
- (5) The opening to the public of Wardlow Road across Pacific Electric Railway Company tracks, as authorized herein, shall not be made until such time as the bridge over the Los Angeles River Flood Control Channel, referred to in the opinion of this order, has been completed, together with the connecting roadway east of the bridge, and both have been opened to public travel, nor shall such opening to the public of Wardlow Road across said tracks be made unless contemporaneously therewith,

