

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 60315

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the City of Santa Fe Springs, a General Law City, for Authority to Construct Pioneer Boulevard, a Public Highway, at Grade Across Tracks of Pacific Electric Railroad and Southern Pacific Company in the City of Santa Fe Springs.

Application No. 40725

William Camil, for the City of Santa Fe Springs, applicant.
E. D. Yeomans, for Southern Pacific Company and Pacific Electric Railway Company, Protestants.
Howard F. Christenson, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

The City of Santa Fe Springs, a recently incorporated General Law City located west of Whittier and southeast of Montebello in Los Angeles County, in an application filed on January 6, 1959, seeks authority to construct Pioneer Boulevard at grade across tracks of the Pacific Electric Railway Company and Southern Pacific Company, which tracks are located in said city. A public hearing was held on this matter in Los Angeles on April 21, 1960, before Examiner James F. Mastoris at which time evidence was presented and the matter submitted.

Physical Description of the Crossing Area

The proposed crossing is located in the northwestern quadrant of said City of Santa Fe Springs in an area zoned for light and heavy manufacturing as well as for residential purposes. Pioneer Boulevard runs north and south and is a major highway on Los Angeles County's Master Plan of Roads. It extends from the City of Long

Beach in the south to Slauson Boulevard on the north and except for a small segment in the City of Santa Fe Springs and the gap at the crossing in question runs continuously between these points. It is contemplated that this highway when completed will reach to Whittier Boulevard on the north. Pacific Electric-Southern Pacific tracks are situated in an east-west direction at the proposed crossing with trains moving to the west over Pacific Electric's tracks to Los Angeles, to the northwest over Southern Pacific By-Pass line to Puente, to the southeast over Southern Pacific's tracks through Los Nietos classification and switching yards and to the east over Pacific Electric line to Whittier and La Brea. The single track at the site in issue is jointly operated with the aforementioned lines branching off approximately fifty feet from the respective sides of the proposed crossing. San Gabriel River, running generally in a north-southwesterly direction, is located 600 feet west of Pioneer Boulevard at this point. Under present budget proposals the State of California plans to construct a freeway alongside this dry river bed connecting, among other points, the San Bernardino and Santa Ana freeways. Access roads of said freeway are expected to lead into and out from the Santa Fe Springs area.

Approximately 1000 feet north of the proposed crossing Pioneer Boulevard crosses the main line tracks of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at grade. Said tracks which parallel the aforementioned Pacific Electric east-west line cross the aforementioned Southern Pacific By-Pass line beneath the grade separation located at Slauson Boulevard. Approximately 2000 feet east of the proposed crossing and running parallel to said Pioneer Boulevard lies De Costa Avenue. Said street crosses both the tracks of Pacific

Electric and Santa Fe at grade. Norwalk and Parsons Boulevards, north-south highways situated approximately 4000 feet east and 5000 feet west, respectively, of the site in issue, both cross Pacific Electric and Santa Fe's tracks at grade.

Evidence by the Applicant

Evidence presented by the city indicated that the proposed crossing was needed in order to:

(1) Accommodate the present traffic connecting the Santa Ana Freeway and the business district of Santa Fe Springs on the south with the aforementioned Slauson Avenue, a major east-west thoroughfare, on the north.

(2) Enable the fire and police departments of said city, located south of the tracks in question to provide service in the northern half of the city in the shortest elapsed time by the most expeditious route. It is alleged the new crossing will reduce the present difficulties incident to emergency fire and police department passage over heavily congested Norwalk Boulevard.

(3) Alleviate street maintenance problems attributed to the present lack of a crossing in this area.

(4) Relieve the hazards created by elementary and high school children crossing the aforementioned tracks on foot as is done at present.

(5) Meet and satisfy the anticipated and immediate future demands from the traveling public for access to this rapidly developing industrial area. This city -- nine square miles in area, seven and one-half of which are zoned for manufacturing purposes -- has grown in population

from 450 in 1940 to 15,533 at present. With the industrial area only 20 percent developed the applicant claims that an estimated 100,000 people will be employed in the city within the next ten years. It is alleged this particular section is the only light and heavy industrial area close to the City of Los Angeles capable of expansion within the near future.

Position of the Railroads

This application was opposed by the railroads for the following reasons:

(1) That the topography, physical conditions and expected future development of the highway involved might justify, rather than a crossing at grade, a separation of grades at the proposed site. It was claimed the city could obtain supplementary funds, if necessary, to support such a project from the county of Los Angeles or the legislative-sponsored crossing protection fund. The protestants argue therefore that the applicant has failed to explore or provide for remedies other than a crossing at grade.

(2) That the aforementioned San Gabriel freeway will accommodate the anticipated traffic and meet all necessary demands into and out from this region assuming the community develops as claimed by the applicant.

(3) That because of the close proximity to the aforementioned switching yards, the location of the tracks in issue, the heavy amount of traffic thereover, the slow movement of trains traveling through the area and the frequency of unusually long trains passing over this site,

the proposed crossing will be faced with considerable blocking during a substantial portion of the day. Evidence was received that during a representative day in April 1960, this crossing was closed to vehicular traffic for approximately two hours, including periods during expected peak traffic hours, and for a duration varying from one to thirteen minutes. Such blockage under these circumstances will result, it is declared, in many complaints by the traveling public and will create traffic problems that the applicant has not considered in its plans to enlarge Pioneer Boulevard to Master Plan width.

(4) That crossings at grade are disfavored as a matter of Commission policy and the number thereof should be reduced in the interests of public safety.

Findings and Conclusions

Upon full consideration of the record the Commission is of the opinion that the present and future growth and development of the northern half of the City of Santa Fe Springs is dependent, to a large extent, upon the opening of the proposed crossings. A grade separation is not practicable at this time and the new freeway cannot be expected to satisfy local traffic requirements when the anticipated population influx and industrial expansion becomes evident. The disadvantages of prolonged blocking of this site claimed by the protestants are, upon analysis, overestimated. Furthermore, the benefits to the traveling public outweigh the occasional inconvenience that might be encountered. Accordingly, the Commission finds and concludes that public convenience and necessity and safety require that the application be granted,

subject, however, to the condition that the two aforementioned De Costa Avenue crossings (at The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's mainline tracks, Crossing No. 2-152.7, and at Pacific Electric Railway tracks at Los Nietos Avenue, Crossing No. 6C-14.16) shall be legally abandoned and physically closed by said City of Santa Fe Springs. With the opening of the Pioneer Boulevard site these De Costa Avenue crossings serve a slight utilitarian purpose. Because of their design, profile and curvature they present a potential safety hazard. These two crossings must be closed as above directed prior to or upon completion of the opening of the Pioneer Boulevard crossing but in no event later than one year after the effective date of this decision unless time be extended. If at some time in the future changed conditions warrant crossings at these tracks, application may be made and the Commission will view the question in the light of the then prevailing situation.

Apportionment of Costs

The proper allocation of the construction cost and expense of the Pioneer Boulevard crossing proposed in this application is that the City of Santa Fe Springs pay eighty-five percent of the actual cost thereof and that Pacific Electric Railway Company pay fifteen percent of such costs. The costs of closing the two aforementioned De Costa Avenue crossings shall be borne entirely by said City of Santa Fe Springs. The continuing benefits to be received by the protestant railroad by the closing of De Costa Avenue at Los Nietos Avenue are equivalent to the city's burden in bearing the entire closure expenses of both De Costa Avenue crossings as well as the possible acquisition cost of an easement from Pioneer Boulevard to said De Costa Avenue.

Maintenance cost at Pioneer Boulevard outside of lines two feet outside of rails shall be borne by the applicant, and between such lines by Pacific Electric Railway Company and Southern Pacific Company.

O R D E R

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

IT IS ORDERED that:

(1) The City of Santa Fe Springs is authorized to construct Pioneer Boulevard at grade across the tracks of Pacific Electric Railway Company and Southern Pacific Company in the City of Santa Fe Springs, Los Angeles County, at the location described in the application, to be identified as Crossing No. 6C-13.71. The width of this crossing shall be not less than 64 feet and grades of approach not greater than three percent. Construction shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 2 of General Order No. 72. Protection shall be by two Standard No. 3 flashing light signals (General Order No. 75-B), supplemented with automatic crossing gates.

(2) Construction expense of the crossing, including the installation of automatic crossing signals, shall be borne to the extent of eighty-five percent of the actual costs thereof by the City of Santa Fe Springs and fifteen percent by the Pacific Electric Railway Company.

(3) Maintenance costs at Pioneer Boulevard outside of lines two feet outside of rails shall be borne by the City of Santa Fe Springs, and between such lines by Pacific Electric Railway Company and Southern Pacific Company.

(4) Prior to or upon the completion of Crossing No. 6C-13.71, De Costa Avenue at The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's mainline tracks (Crossing No. 2-152.7) and De Costa Avenue at Los Nietos Avenue (Crossing No. 6C-14.16) shall be legally abandoned, physically closed and pavement removed on the portions of these crossings within the railroad right-of-way limits by the applicant. Costs for this closure and removal shall be borne by said applicant.

(5) Within thirty days after completion pursuant to this order, applicant shall so advise the Commission in writing. This authorization shall become void if not exercised within one year after the effective date of this decision unless time be extended, or if above conditions are not complied with. Authorization may be revoked or modified if public convenience, necessity or safety so require.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 28th day of June, 1960.

[Signature] President
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature] Commissioners

Commissioner Everett C. McKeage, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.