

ORIGINALDecision No. 64150

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY for an order prescribing its established timetable speeds as the permissible speeds for the operation of trains within the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles.

Application No. 44596
(Filed June 28, 1962)

Commission investigation into the safety, maintenance, operations, use and protection of certain crossings at grade of public streets and the tracks of the Southern Pacific Company in the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles, the City of Burbank and the City of San Fernando, all in the State of California.

Case No. 7406

E. D. Yeomans and James W. O'Brien, for Southern Pacific Company, applicant and respondent.
Robert E. James, for the City of San Fernando, respondent.
Roger Arnebergh, City Attorney, by Arthur Karma, Deputy City Attorney, for the City of Los Angeles; Warren P. Marsden, for State Department of Public Works, Division of Highways; George W. Ballard, for Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, AFL-CIO; G. R. Mitchell, for Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; Robert W. Jackson, for the Panorama City Chamber of Commerce; Towson T. Maclaren, for Northridge Chamber of Commerce and Valleywide Committee on Streets and Highways; Donald D. Lorenzen, for West Valley Associated Chamber of Commerce and Valleywide Better Government Committee; James Stanley, for Valleywide Street, Highway & Transportation Committee; Paul McCann, for West Valley Associated Chamber of Commerce and Valleywide Better Government Committee; and Jerry J. Willey, for Locomotive Engineers, Division 126, interested parties.
Timothy E. Treacy, for the Commission staff.

INTERIM OPINION

Public hearings on the above proceedings were held in Burbank before Commissioner Everett C. McKeage and Examiner Kent C. Rogers on August 13, 1962, and before Examiner Kent C. Rogers on August 14 and 15, 1962.

Oral and documentary evidence was adduced and the application of Southern Pacific Company (Company) and the issue of the closing of Greg Avenue were submitted.

Company offered evidence that it had agreed to install Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented by automatic gates at all crossings on its Coast and Valley Lines in San Fernando Valley within the City of Los Angeles, except at the crossings of Chatsworth Street, Crossing No. E-444.7; Lassen Street, Crossing No. E-445.7; and Greg Avenue, Crossing No. B-469.0. It recommended that Greg Avenue be closed and offered evidence in support thereof showing that the street only ran for a block and that the roadways of San Fernando Road on both sides of its right of way permitted traffic to operate in both directions and the crossing of Hollywood Way was .23 of a mile in one direction and that Arvilla was .33 of a mile in the other direction and that the traffic count at this crossing was only approximately 263 vehicles per day. Company also produced evidence that it had submitted to the City of Los Angeles (City) an agreement executed by it covering certain crossings on the Coast Line in the City providing for the installation of two (2) flashing light signals in accordance with Standard No. 3 of General Order No. 75-B of the Public Utilities Commission, supplemented by

automatic gates at the following crossings:

	<u>Crossing No.</u>
De Soto Avenue	E-446.8
Lindley Avenue	E-450.4
Woodley Avenue	E-452.9
Coldwater Canyon	E-457.0
Bellaire Avenue	E-457.3

The agreement also provided for the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing light signals at Chatsworth Street and Lassen Street. A similar agreement covering the crossing at Clybourne Avenue, Crossing No. E-460.2, which is partly in the City of Burbank, providing for the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing signals with automatic gates was also executed and submitted to the City of Los Angeles.

Evidence was introduced that arrangements had been made with the City of Burbank for the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented by automatic gates at Buena Vista Street, Crossing No. E-461.5, and Hollywood Way, Crossing No. E-460.8, and like arrangements with the State at Devonshire Street, Crossing No. E-445.2, which is a State Highway on the Coast Line.

Company also stated it was willing to proceed with the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing light signals at all crossings on its Burbank Branch in San Fernando Valley.

Company produced evidence to show that a speed of 60 miles per hour is a reasonable speed at grade crossings in the San Fernando Valley when equipped with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals, supplemented with crossing gates, and that because of the low vehicular traffic at Chatsworth and Lassen Streets, a speed of 60 miles per hour would be a reasonable speed if said crossings were equipped with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals.

Evidence was also introduced that speed restrictions below 60 miles per hour caused serious operating problems and resulted in delays to freight and passengers and vehicular traffic using the crossing streets.

The Commission staff presented its evidence recommending that all crossings on the Coast and Valley Lines, except Chatsworth Street and Greg Avenue, be improved with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals, supplemented by automatic gates, and recommended that Greg Avenue crossing be closed and that at Chatsworth Street Standard No. 8 flashing light signals be installed.

The staff witness also recommended that upon such improvements being made, speed restrictions below 60 miles per hour should be removed. The witness in his direct testimony recommended that Lassen Street be equipped with automatic gates as well as Standard No. 8 flashing lights but upon later examination, he testified that the automatic gates could be delayed in order to permit the progress of the work under the pending agreements between the Southern Pacific and the City to go forward without delay. He further recommended that in the near future automatic gates be provided at this crossing, but said that in the meantime, because of the low density of the use of this crossing at the present time, a speed of 60 miles per hour with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals would not be opposed.

The staff witness also recommended that all crossings on the Burbank Branch be improved with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals and made certain specific additional recommendations as to certain of the crossings.

The City and the Company stated that they had reached an agreement subject to the approval of the Commission that an order, effective upon issuance, be issued to provide that Company will restrict its speeds at grade crossings in the City in San Fernando Valley to a maximum speed of 35 miles per hour with the following exceptions:

(a) Where the crossing is or becomes protected by Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented by automatic crossing gates, the restriction will not apply.

(b) At Chatsworth and Lassen Streets, the restriction will no longer apply upon the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing light signals.

It was also agreed that the hearings on the remaining issues in the above proceedings be continued until September 5, 1962.

As it appears that the agreement between the City of Los Angeles and Southern Pacific Company is in conformity with the recommendations of the staff of the Commission and that an order as requested is in the public interest to assist in the improvement of the crossing protection as set forth in this opinion, and upon the assurance of Southern Pacific Company and the City of Los Angeles that every effort will be made by both parties to see that such crossing protection is installed as soon as possible, an order will be issued accordingly.

INTERIM ORDER

Public hearings having been held on the above-entitled application, the Commission being fully advised in the premises,

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Southern Pacific Company shall restrict the speed of its trains at grade crossings in the City of Los Angeles in San Fernando Valley to a maximum of 35 miles per hour with the following exceptions:

(a) Where the crossing is or becomes protected by Standard No. 8 flashing light signals, supplemented by automatic crossing gates, the restriction shall not apply.

(b) At Chatsworth and Lassen Streets, the restriction shall no longer apply upon the installation of Standard No. 8 flashing light signals.

2. In all situations where the 35 miles per hour restriction does not apply, Southern Pacific Company shall restrict the speed of its trains in the City of Los Angeles in San Fernando Valley to a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour.

3. The crossing of Greg Avenue, Crossing No. 3-469.0, is hereby ordered physically closed to vehicular traffic. All pavement within the right of way shall be removed and the right of way shall be barricaded. Costs of such work shall be borne by the Southern Pacific Company.

4. Hearings on the remaining issues in the above proceedings will be held at times and places determined by the Commission.

5. This order shall become effective upon issuance, except as to the closing of Greg Avenue, which part of said order shall become effective twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this
28th day of August, 1962.

George H. Hoover
President

D. L. Fox

Wesley A. Page

Fredrick B. Hallock

Commissioners

Commissioner Peter E. Mitchell, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.