

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 65158

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of The City of Commerce, a General Law City, for authority to construct Greenwood Avenue, a public highway, at grade across tracks of The Pacific Electric Railway's La Habra Line in The City of Commerce.	} } } } } } }	Application No. 44512 (Filed June 4, 1962)
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William Camil, for applicant.
E. D. Ycomans and James W. Obrien, by James W. Obrien, for The Pacific Electric Railway, protestant.
Lloyd C. Young and W. F. Hibbard, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

By the application herein the City of Commerce (City) seeks an order authorizing the construction of Greenwood Avenue, Crossing No. 6C-10.81, across the tracks and right of way of The Pacific Electric Railway Company (Railway) at grade.

Public hearings on the application were held in Los Angeles, California, before Examiner Rogers on November 13 and 14, 1962. Evidence was presented and the matter was submitted subject to the filing of concurrent briefs on or before December 4, 1962. City filed a brief but Railway has informed the Commission it will not do so. The matter is therefore ready for decision.

The record herein discloses the following facts:

Greenwood Avenue (Greenwood) is to be an 80-foot secondary highway in the Los Angeles County Master Highway Plan extending south a total distance of approximately 4 miles from Beverly Boulevard in Montebello through City to a terminus at Bluff Road

in the City of Downey. At present, Greenwood is continuous for approximately 2-1/2 miles from Whittier Boulevard on the north to Telegraph Road (Telegraph) which is immediately north of and parallel to the Santa Ana Freeway (Freeway). Bandini Boulevard (Bandini) is immediately south of and parallel to Freeway. Greenwood extends south from Bandini, across Slauson Avenue (Slauson), to the north edge of Railway, a distance of approximately 1/4 of a mile. There is no crossing at present of Railway at this point; Greenwood resumes on the south side and extends across Gage Avenue (Gage) to a point approximately 1,500 feet south thereof.

In the future, it is proposed to extend Greenwood under the freeway with no access thereto, but there is no estimate when such underpass will be constructed.

Bluff Road will eventually be the southerly terminus of Greenwood. It will be parallel to and on the northwest side of the present channel of the Rio Hondo and will extend at least from Telegraph on the east to Foster Bridge Boulevard (Foster) on the west. At present, Bluff Road is open from what would be the extension of Greenwood to Foster.

Greenwood has a right-of-way width of 50 feet between Slauson and Bandini and varies from 50 feet on the north to 100 feet on the south between Slauson and the north side of Railway. South of Railway, the Greenwood right of way is 100 feet wide to Gage and 50 feet wide south thereof. The only portion of Greenwood in the boundaries of City is that portion south of Telegraph.

The nearest existing crossings of Railway are Garfield Avenue (Garfield), Crossing 6C-10.02, which is 8/10 of a mile west of Greenwood, and Gage Crossing 6C-11.10 which is 1/4 of a mile to the east.

Applicant contends that opening of Greenwood across the track would alleviate congestion at the Gage and Slauson intersection from which, in the morning peak hours, traffic tends to back into the Slauson-Telegraph intersection east of Gate; that the crossing would help alleviate congestion at the intersection of Garfield and Slauson; that the lack of a crossing between Gage and Garfield makes it difficult to police the large triangle in the city bounded by Garfield, Gage, and Slauson; and that the opening of Greenwood would give easier and faster access for fire-fighting equipment to the area south of Railway, and would give the public easier access to a park and a library to be constructed by the City south of Railway between Garfield and Gage. ✓

At Greenwood, Railway has a single line of track, a segment of its freight line between its Los Nietos Yard near Santa Fe Springs, California, and Los Angeles. Between Telegraph and Garfield there are numerous industry spur tracks. In addition, there is a long siding capable of handling 70 to 80 cars immediately west of Garfield and an industry spur serving Weiner Steel east of Telegraph. Five of the switch points west of Greenwood are within 1,500 feet, approximately, thereof, including the Baker Oil Tool spur which has a switch point 150 feet west of Greenwood, and a drill track serving several industries which has a switch point approximately 500 feet west thereof.

The contentions of the railroad are as follows: There are five regular trains each day in each direction at the point of the proposed Greenwood crossing. Although the permissible speed of trains in the area is 30 miles per hour, the trains proceed at approximately 20 miles an hour due to the fact that it is ✓

impractical to slow trains for the crossings and accelerate to 30 miles per hour between crossings. Eastbound there is a 40- to 50-car train at approximately 1:00 a.m., a 35- to 40-car train at 3:30 a.m., a 20- to 25-car train at 6:00 a.m., and a 50- to 65-car train at 10:30 a.m. None of these trains performs any switching operations in the area involved. At 4:30 a.m. daily, there is a local train of 25 to 30 cars which switches in the area for approximately three hours. On arrival, this train is parked on Walker Siding immediately west of Garfield. The engine, and cars destined for Weiner Steel then proceed to that company's area. The new cars for Weiner Steel are delivered and "empties" picked up and returned to the Walker siding. Such operation takes approximately 1/2 hour; thereafter the train crew switches cars in and out of the remaining industries between Garfield and Telegraph. In doing this work, the minimum number of times Greenwood is crossed is four and some operations require as many as 10 to 12 crossings. In addition to the eastbound trains, there are several trains westbound: a 40-car train at 4:30 a.m. with another short train immediately following, a 50- to 60-car train at 12:30 p.m., a 30- to 40-car train at 9:30 p.m., and a 35- to 40-car train at 10:30 p.m. The 12:30 p.m. train switches approximately once or twice a week in this area. The other trains do no switching. There are, also, approximately three or four 95- to 125-car ore trains westbound per day. Two of the westbound ore trains are scheduled to arrive in the vicinity of Garfield to meet eastbound freight trains at 12:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. daily. About

one-third of the time at present, the east- and westbound trains do not meet, requiring the ore trains to remain on the track east of Garfield, blocking the Greenwood area. If there were a Greenwood crossing, the only remedy would be to break the train at Greenwood. This movement would require 3 to 5 minutes to rebuild air pressure after the trains were broken, in addition to crew signal time and the time it would take the portion of the train east of Greenwood to pass that point.

In order to provide protection at Greenwood, it would be necessary to place signal circuits 1,400 to 1,450 feet on each side thereof. In this distance, there are the five spur switch points referred to above. Any car standing or moving within such distance would actuate the standard warning signals and they would remain in operation as long as a car or train stood or moved in the circuit. As Gage is only 1/4 mile east of Greenwood and has no time-out circuits, and the signal circuit points for the crossings overlap, any car moving or standing between Greenwood and Gage would actuate the signals at both crossings. Under ordinary warnings, with the switching movements which would occur, this would be from 15 minutes to two hours. If trap circuits and time-out circuits recommended by the Commission staff are installed at Greenwood, the minimum time the crossing signals would operate for each activation would be 1-1/4 minutes. Such activation would take place each time a train crossed Greenwood or approached within approximately 150 feet of the crossing for a switching movement.

The cost of Greenwood protection will be \$10,000, approximately, for four standard No. 8 flashing-light signals as recommended by the staff, plus \$6,500 for time-out and trap

circuits to permit switching without unduly interfering with vehicle traffic. The annual out-of-pocket maintenance costs of signal protection, including the insulated joints required, will be \$500 to \$540. Overheads will cost an estimated additional 43 percent.

Slauson is a six-lane major highway running essentially in an east-west direction. Gage is approximately parallel thereto until its intersection with Garfield, from which point Gage proceeds in a northeasterly direction, crossing Railway, then Slauson, and then connects with the eastbound lanes of Freeway. After Gage crosses Railway, there is a lane for traffic proceeding east onto Slauson which is separated from the balance of Gage by an island. Slauson, at the point where it meets and crosses Gage, has center dividers. At this intersection, it is approximately 400 feet from Slauson to the eastbound Freeway and approximately 100 feet from Slauson to Railway.

Traffic on Slauson may enter the westbound Freeway by a ramp on the east side thereof. Immediately east of the Freeway on Slauson is Telegraph, a major city road. Eastbound, traffic coming off the Freeway onto Slauson may make a right turn on Slauson, may proceed across Slauson with a signal onto Gage, or may make a left turn with the signal onto Slauson to proceed east. Northbound traffic on Gage may cross Slauson with a signal, turn left on Slauson, proceed north onto the Freeway to proceed east thereon, or may proceed east on Slauson. Traffic making a left turn from Slauson onto Gage proceeds from a left-turn-only lane. All lanes on Slauson are controlled by a computer activated by treadles. This computer is so set up that during peak movements approximately 600 cars an hour may make a left turn from Slauson onto Gage. The maximum number of vehicles making this turn has been 404 in the hour between 6:15

and 7:15 p.m. and 378 in the hour between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., the heaviest traffic hours.

The record herein shows and we find that the existing railway crossings at Gage Avenue and Garfield Avenue now and in the foreseeable future will adequately handle the traffic south of the Railway; that the area of the City south of Railway is reasonably accessible for present and foreseeable needs; that Greenwood Avenue south of the freeway is a short street and no extension to Bluff Road or under the freeway is contemplated in the near future; that the volume of traffic on the Railway and the number of industries requiring service in the area result in a situation which would be unduly hazardous compared with any benefits to be derived from opening the crossing; and that the public safety and convenience do not now require the proposed crossing.

We conclude that the application should be denied without prejudice.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that Application No. 44512 is denied without prejudice.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 2nd day of APRIL, 1963.

George J. Trover
President

Arthur J. ...

Arvid H. ...

Frederick B. Hallock

William G. ...
Commissioners