

ORIGINALDecision No. 70065

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the City of El Segundo, California, for an order authorizing construction of a crossing at grade between the Harbor Line of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, and Douglas Street in the City of El Segundo, California.

Application No. 47429
(Filed March 23, 1965)

Auten F. Bush, for the City of El Segundo, applicant.

Jayne C. Billey, for The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, protestant.

Lester Peake, for the City of Manhattan Beach; Anson, Gleaves & Larson, by Norman Oliver, for the Unimerc Corporation; John E. Murphy, for the Utah Construction & Mining Co.; J. Jason Gale, for the Aerospace Corporation; Stanley Footlik, for Scientific Data Systems; Jack G. Wood, for Hughes Aircraft Co.; Richard H. Nolan, for Consolidated Controls Corporation; and Matt Franich, for the Unimerc Corporation, interested parties.

W. F. Hibbard and John P. Ukleja, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

By the application herein the City of El Segundo (City) requests an order for the construction of Douglas Street at grade at Mile Post 2H-14.9 across the single line of track of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company (Railway) in said City.

Public hearings on the application were held before Examiner Rogers in Los Angeles on September 21 and 22, 1965, and the application was submitted. It is ready for decision.

By a prior application, the City sought authority to make a crossing at Mile Post 2H-14.9 herein considered as well as Crossing No. 2H-14.7. The Commission authorized the Crossing No. 2H-14.7, but denied authority to make the herein considered crossing at Mile Post 2H-14.9 (Decision No. 65703, dated July 12, 1963, in Application No. 45112). Crossing No. 2H-14.7 was completed September 20, 1965.

The location of the proposed crossing (Mile Post 2H-14.9) and the Railway's lines of track are shown on Exhibit 1 herein. This exhibit also shows the location of industries in the area with which we are concerned. The area is approximately one mile square, is bounded by El Segundo Boulevard on the north, Sepulveda Boulevard on the west, Rosecrans Avenue on the south, and Aviation Boulevard on the east. It is zoned for heavy industry.

Douglas Street, which is approximately 1,300 feet west of and parallel to Aviation Boulevard, extends from Imperial Highway, which is one mile north of El Segundo Boulevard, south across El Segundo Boulevard and over Crossing No. 2H-14.7 to a dead end approximately 200 feet north of the proposed crossing. Douglas Street has also been constructed between the proposed crossing and Rosecrans Avenue. A dead-end street, Park Place, extends west from Douglas Street between the proposed crossing and Rosecrans Avenue. The City of Manhattan Beach has tentative plans to extend a street on the approximate alignment of Douglas

Street south from Rosecrans Avenue. When and if this street is to be constructed is not known at the present time.

The San Diego Freeway is approximately one-fourth mile east of and parallel to Aviation Boulevard and has on and off ramps at El Segundo Boulevard and Rosecrans Avenue.

Utah Avenue extends between Douglas Street and Aviation Boulevard. South thereof is Alaska Avenue which also extends between Douglas Street and Aviation Boulevard. Hawaii Street extends from Alaska Avenue, commencing at a point midway between Douglas Street and Aviation Boulevard, south and east to Aviation Boulevard. All of these streets are north of the proposed crossing and south of Crossing No. 2H-14.7. There is no public crossing of the Railway south of the latter crossing by Douglas Street. A private road known as Kramer Avenue extends from approximately the west end of Alaska Avenue west across the Railway's Redondo Beach branch and Wilmington branch, infra, approximately 300 feet south of the switch point for the said branches.

Applicant's line of track from Los Angeles extends from approximately the intersection of El Segundo Boulevard and Aviation Boulevard southwest approximately 600 feet past Crossing No. 2H-14.7 where the line branches. The Redondo Beach branch crosses Rosecrans Avenue approximately 800 feet east of Sepulveda Boulevard. The Railway has side tracks on this branch between the switch point and Rosecrans Avenue. The Wilmington branch extends south and east from the switch point and crosses over the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard at separated grades. The Railway has a single line of track between

the switch point for the two branches and a point southeast of the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard. A track south of the switch point connects the Redondo Beach branch and the Wilmington branch. This latter track also connects with Southern Pacific Company tracks in the area and must be kept open. The proposed crossing is to be over the Wilmington branch approximately 1,500 feet south and east of the switch point for the Redondo Beach branch and the Wilmington branch, approximately 1,975 feet from Crossing No. 2H-14.7, and 1,830 feet from the bridge over the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard. The Railway's El Segundo depot is in the triangle formed by the Redondo Beach branch, the Wilmington branch, and the connecting line. There are several industries in the space east of Douglas Street and north of the Wilmington branch. Development is also taking place south of the Wilmington branch and on both sides of the new Douglas Street.

Representatives of various existing or proposed industries in the areas north and south of the proposed crossing testified in support of the opening thereof. Their principal contention was that opening the crossing would enable employees, either present or future, to leave and return from their places of employment in and near the area without incurring delays due to traffic congestion on the four highways surrounding the area. It was also contended that communication in the area would be improved by opening the crossing.

An engineer for the City testified that the crossing is needed for the development in the area; that new industries

are developing and are planned therein; and that the crossing is essential to the growth thereof. He testified that a separation of grades is not economically feasible. He also testified that, in his opinion, the only traffic on Douglas Street, if it is opened between El Segundo Boulevard and Rosecrans Avenue, will be traffic originating at or destined to the area. It was his opinion that when the area is fully developed there will be 8,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day over the crossing.

A representative of the El Segundo Police Department testified that the crossing is needed to facilitate police protection. He also stated that there are private crossings available to the police. These are used now and can be used if the crossing is not opened.

A representative of the El Segundo Fire Department testified that the crossing would aid fire protection in the area in the vicinity of Rosecrans Avenue south of the crossing when there is congestion on the principal highways which bound the area.

An assistant engineer for the Railway testified that a crew is maintained at the Railway's depot south of the junction of the Redondo Beach and Wilmington branches; that the visibility in the vicinity of the proposed crossing is good except in the southeast quadrant where there is a parking lot, and parked vehicles thereon block views of the train from vehicles traveling north toward the proposed crossing; that the Railway would prefer a separation of grades; and that if a grade

crossing is authorized, it should be protected by four No. 8 flashing light signals, supplemented with automatic gates.

An office engineer for the Railway, whose main duties are to estimate costs of automatic protection, estimated the cost of four No. 8 flashing light signals, supplemented with automatic gates, to be \$30,104. He stated there would be no technical problems to installing gates, except that the crossing would be at an angle of approximately 45° which would require exceptionally long gates. He stated that the ringing circuit for traffic from Wilmington would necessarily be 1,232 feet long from the center of the proposed crossing, and from Los Angeles the circuit would commence 800 feet from the center of the crossing. These circuits are for trains going 20 miles per hour. He said that time-out circuits allow the gates to rise after a train occupies the circuit for a stated period of time.

Exhibit 9 herein lists all train movements for a 24-hour period commencing at 9 a.m. on September 16, 1965. During this period there were 24 movements across the proposed crossing. Two of these movements were by motor cars carrying inspection personnel. These vehicles are insulated so that they do not activate gates. Ten of these movements were by switch engines which operate in the area 24 hours per day. These movements occur at any time of the day or night and would occupy the crossing site for short periods only. The remaining movements were by trains which operate regularly and vary in length from 35 to over 100 cars. The trainmaster stated that the trains from Los Angeles would not present too much of a problem at the

proposed crossing. There are, he said, two trains from Wilmington, however, which necessarily stand on the Wilmington branch track between the existing crossing of Douglas Street and the bridge at the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard. These trains, because of their lengths, necessarily, in most instances, are parked across the proposed Douglas Street crossing site. One of these trains requires servicing on the track at the site of the crossing and would require blocking the crossing site for as much as two hours and 45 minutes. Another train stops on the east leg of the wye while cars are picked up and, in most instances, would block the site of the crossing. He said there is no place for the trains from Wilmington to park, except north of Rosecrans Avenue and south of the existing crossing. He said that if the trains were broken at the proposed crossing site, it would require from three to five minutes to build up air before the trains could be moved.

Findings

We find that:

1. That portion of the City of El Segundo, bounded by El Segundo Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Rosecrans Avenue, and Aviation Boulevard, is a commercially zoned area and is approximately one mile square.
2. There is no north-south street therein except Douglas Street.
3. Douglas Street terminates north of the proposed crossing. It is also constructed south of the proposed crossing to Rosecrans Avenue.

4. The Railway has approximately 24 train movements per day across the site of the proposed crossing. Two of these movements are by motor cars which are insulated against activating automatic protection. The remaining movements include movements by switch engines with from one to 15 cars as well as non-scheduled trains. There are two regular trains six days per week in each direction which contain 35 to 100 cars each. The movements from Wilmington to Los Angeles include two trains which must be parked on the single line of track between the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard and the switch point for the Redondo Beach branch. One of these latter trains is held while switching takes place from the Redondo Beach branch. The other train is held while cars are inspected and bearings replaced. This latter operation requires as much as two hours and 45 minutes. Because of the lengths of these trains, they frequently extend over the site of the proposed crossing. If they were broken at the crossing site, it would take three to five minutes after the train is reconnected before it could be moved.

5. The City desires to construct Douglas Street across the proposed crossing site to enable it to develop the entire area commercially, assist in police protection, and expedite fire protection for points in the southern portion of the area.

6. The area south of the proposed crossing site is being developed commercially.

7. The Railway could operate its trains if Douglas Street were open across the track at the proposed crossing site. The

opening of Douglas Street, however, would seriously inconvenience the Railway and cause much added time for maintaining its services in the area.

8. Opening the Douglas Street crossing would, on some occasions, assist the City in maintaining fire protection and police protection, but there are alternate methods of reaching the area south of the proposed crossing which are nearly as fast as if the proposed crossing were open. The police can use private crossings to secure access to the area south of the proposed crossing.

9. A separation of grades at the proposed crossing is feasible and would permit the Railway to continue its operations and would enhance the public safety and welfare.

10. Public safety requires that if the proposed crossing is open, it be at separated grades.

Conclusion

We conclude that the request for authority to open Douglas Street at grade across the Wilmington branch of the Railway at Mile Post 2H-14.9 should be denied.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that authority to extend Douglas Street across The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's track at Mile Post No. 2H-14.9 is denied.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 7th day of DECEMBER, 1965.

Frederick B. Holdhoff
 President

George T. Crow

August

William B. ...
 Commissioners