

**ORIGINAL**

Decision No. 70865

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application )  
of THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, a )  
municipal corporation, to improve )  
and widen the existing crossings )  
at grade of TORRANCE BOULEVARD )  
at TORRANCE PLACE and TORRANCE )  
BOULEVARD at NORMANDIE AVENUE )  
across the tracks of the Southern )  
Pacific Company's Torrance Branch )  
Line and Gardena-San Pedro Branch )  
Line respectively. )

Application No. 48099  
(Filed December 6, 1965)

Roger Arnebergh and Charles E. Mattson by  
Charles E. Mattson, for the City of  
Los Angeles.  
Walt A. Steiger, for Southern Pacific  
Company, Protestant.  
Ronald I. Hollis, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

A public hearing on the above application was held before Examiner Rogers in the City of Los Angeles on April 12, 1966 and the matter was submitted.

The City of Los Angeles (City) seeks authority to improve and widen Torrance Boulevard (sometimes referred to herein as the Boulevard) across a Southern Pacific Company (Railway) branch line (Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70) and a spur track (Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C). In the vicinity of the crossings the City is bounded by the east side of Normandie Avenue on the east and by the east side of Western Avenue on the west. The area east of Normandie Avenue is in the County of Los Angeles and the area west of Western Avenue is in the City of Torrance. The distance between said boundaries is approximately

3,200 feet. In the City the Boulevard extends between Normandie Avenue and Denker Avenue, a distance of approximately 1,400 feet. At present, the City plans to improve only these 1,400 feet. West of Denker Avenue the Boulevard continues as 208th Street. Torrance Place extends southwest from an intersection with Normandie Avenue north of the Boulevard to an intersection with Denker Avenue, Torrance Boulevard and 208th Street. At this intersection Torrance Place terminates and continues as Torrance Boulevard which in turn continues southwest to and across Western Avenue between 211th and 212th Streets. The latter two streets are south of 208th Street. The Railway's branch line is in its right-of-way along Torrance Place between its intersection with Normandie Avenue and its intersection with Denker Avenue (the latter intersection will hereinafter be referred to as Denker) and in its right-of-way in Torrance Boulevard between Denker Avenue and Western Avenue. (Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70 is at Denker Avenue - Exhibit 2.) The Railway's spur track extends from the intersection of Torrance Place and Normandie Avenue due south in its right-of-way in the center of Normandie Avenue across the Boulevard (Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C - Exhibit 1) and for a distance of approximately one-half mile south thereof, at which point the spur terminates.

The City intends to make Torrance Boulevard a secondary highway in its master plan of highways. For this reason, it desires to widen the vehicle-travelled portion thereof between Denker Avenue and Normandie Avenue from its present width of 46 feet with two vehicle traffic lanes to a width of 66 feet from curb to curb, and to improve the street to 86 feet including sidewalks and curbs. The proposed improvement will accommodate four lanes of traffic and

two parking lanes. The record shows that, except for the intersection of Torrance Boulevard and Normandie Avenue, the width of the 1,400-foot-long improved portion, including sidewalks, will be 82 feet due to restrictions caused by existing improvements on the south side of Torrance Boulevard.

Normandie Avenue is presently a divided highway north and south of the Boulevard with the Railway's spur track located in the divider. The City intends to close the west roadway of Normandie Avenue north of the Boulevard, so that north of the Boulevard only the east roadway will remain. All portions of Normandie Avenue in the vicinity of the Boulevard are two-way streets.

As part of the improvement of the Boulevard, the City intends to pave across the branch track on the east side of Denker Avenue so vehicular traffic proceeding west across or into Denker Avenue from Torrance Boulevard will not be required to run over bare rails (see Exhibit 2; also Exhibit C on application).

The city alleges that improvements it proposes will improve vehicular circulation in the area and speed up the movement of all types of vehicles, including service vehicles and emergency vehicles; that public convenience and necessity require that the crossings be widened and improved as it proposes; that the proposed improvements have been approved by the City Council; that a separation of grades is not feasible at either crossing due to excessive costs; and that other grade crossings in the City require separations of grades prior to the crossings herein considered. These allegations were not denied by any party to the proceeding.

A 24-hour traffic count made on September 10, 1964 (Exhibit 3) of traffic on Torrance Boulevard between Denker Avenue and Dalton Avenue, the first street east of Denker Avenue, showed a total of 8,081 vehicles on the boulevard between said points. The origin and destination points of such vehicles were not given. A similar count made on February 14, 1966 (Exhibit 4) at the same location showed a total of 11,656 vehicles. These exhibits show an approximate 44 percent increase in vehicular traffic volume between the two dates. On the spur track crossing (Normandie Avenue) there are two to three movements per week to and from one industry south of Torrance Boulevard. The records of the Commission, of which we take official notice, show approximately four train movements per day on the branch line.

The applicant, the Railway, and the staff engineer agreed that at the crossing of the spur track (Crossing No. SRC-16.69-C) the protection should consist of two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals on cantilevers coordinated with traffic control signals for Normandie Avenue and Torrance Boulevard, together with double clearance lines and advance warning signs.

The City requests that the crossing protection signal work costs be apportioned 50 percent to the City and 50 percent to the Railway; the Railway be required to prepare the track to receive the paving and pay 100 percent of the cost thereof; the Railway be required to pay for any paving work on the existing portion of the highway between lines two feet outside the rails; the City be required to pay the cost of paving the widened portion of the highway; the City be required to pave the approaches to two feet outside rails; and the City be required to pay for all advance warning signs and the costs of coordinating the traffic signals with the

Railway crossing signals. It was the City's position that the changes will benefit the City, the Railway and the travelling public.

The Railway witness stated that all of the expenses of changing any crossing protection at the Normandie Avenue crossing should be paid by the City inasmuch as the City is the initiating party, the Railway will receive no benefits, the spur track serves one Railway customer and will probably be abandoned in approximately ten years, and the widening of Torrance Boulevard is entirely for the benefit of the travelling public.

The City recommends only relocating one Standard No. 8 flashing light signal at Denker Avenue and, in addition, adding some paving across the branch track. The City desires a division of costs.

The Railway objects to paying any share of the costs of relocating the crossing protection at Denker Avenue inasmuch as the signal was installed approximately four years ago in its present location and it claims it will receive no benefits from moving the signal. It also suggests a traffic island or cantilever lights at this crossing.

The staff engineer recommended that the costs of upgrading the Railway signals to cantilevered signals at the Normandie Avenue crossing be apportioned 50 percent to the City and 50 percent to the Railway.

Findings

The Commission finds that:

1. Torrance Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles is to be made a secondary highway in the City's master plan of highways and for this reason is to be widened from two lanes to 86 feet with a 66-foot curb-to-curb roadway at the intersection of Torrance Boulevard and Normandie Avenue and to 82 feet with a 66-foot roadway between Normandie Avenue and Denker Avenue. In this area there are two Southern Pacific Company crossings which are protected by Standard No. 8 flashing light signals.

2. The widening of Torrance Boulevard will require that the two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals at Normandie Avenue (Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C) be removed and two cantilevered railroad signals be installed. The widening will also require the moving of one Standard No. 8 flashing light signal now located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Torrance Place and Denker Avenue (the Denker Avenue crossing) north a distance of approximately 12 feet, and an additional two feet of paving being placed across the right-of-way and track of the Railway at the line where the north side of Torrance Boulevard and the south end of Torrance Place (Denker Avenue) join.

3. Public need and safety require the improvement of Torrance Boulevard as proposed by the City. The proposed highway construction and alteration at each crossing herein considered are reasonable and proper. The relocation of the Railway signal at Denker Avenue and the installation of cantilevered railroad

signals at Normandie Avenue are reasonable and proper methods of protection at said Railway crossings and are not adverse to public health, safety, or welfare.

4. Public health, safety and welfare require that the Railway crossing protection at Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C be coordinated with the vehicle traffic signals thereat as proposed by the City of Los Angeles.

5. The Railway and City will receive benefits from the upgrading of protection at Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C, but no benefit will be realized by the Railway because of the signal relocation at Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70.

6. A separation of grades is not warranted at either crossing.

7. The cost of moving the existing protection at Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70 should be entirely borne by the City. The cost of the installation of the cantilevered railroad signals and the cost of maintenance thereof at Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C should be borne equally between the Railway and the City.

8. Costs of coordinating traffic signals and the improvement of the streets at each crossing should be borne 100 percent by the City.

9. Costs of preparing the tracks to receive paving at each crossing should be borne 100 percent by the Railway.

#### Conclusion

The Commission concludes that the application should be granted subject to the conditions set forth in the order herein.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The City of Los Angeles is authorized to widen Torrance Boulevard across Normandie Avenue (Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C) and Torrance Boulevard across Denker Avenue (Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70) in accordance with the plans set forth in Exhibits 1 and 2 in this proceeding, subject to the conditions set forth herein.

2. The costs of preparing the tracks to receive paving in the existing and widened portions of the crossings and the costs of paving the crossings for the existing widths thereof within lines two feet outside the rails shall be borne by the Railway. The costs of paving outside the said areas shall be borne by the City.

3. At the Normandie Avenue crossing (Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C) the two existing Standard No. 8 flashing light signals shall be removed and replaced with two cantilever type Standard No. 8 flashing light signals with the installation cost to be borne equally between the City and the Railway and in accordance with the plans in Exhibit 1. After such removal and the installation of the two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals on cantilever arms, the cost of maintaining said protection shall be apportioned equally between the City and the Railway.

4. At the Denker Avenue crossing (Crossing No. 6RCA-16.70) one Standard No. 8 flashing light signal shall be relocated in accordance with the City's plans (Exhibit 2) and the street shall be widened across said right-of-way in accordance with said plans. The costs of relocation of said protection shall be borne 100 percent by the City.

5. At Crossing No. 6RC-16.69-C the traffic signals shall be coordinated with the Railway crossing protection, as suggested



by the City herein. The City, at its sole expense, shall place double clearance lines and advance warning signs on each side of the track at each crossing herein considered.

6. Within thirty days after completion of the work herein authorized, the City of Los Angeles and the Southern Pacific Company shall each notify the Commission in writing of the compliance with the conditions hereof.

7. All crossing protection and coordination thereof specified in this order shall be fully installed, completed and placed in operable condition before the widened crossings are fully opened to the public.

8. The improvements and changes herein provided for are to be completed within one year of the effective date of this order, unless an extension of time is granted by the Commission.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE, 1966.

Frederick B. Holhoff  
President

John E. Pritchard

George T. Trovati

William W. Bennett  
Commissioners

Commissioner A. W. Gatov, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.