

ORIGINALDecision No. 71206

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 widen and improve
 Southern Pacific Company's spur line
 crossing of WASHINGTON BOULEVARD and
 Union Pacific Railroad Company's spur
 line crossing of WASHINGTON BOULEVARD

)
 Application No. 48269
 (Filed February 25, 1966)

Roger Arnebergh and Charles E. Mattson by Charles E. Mattson, for Applicant.
 Ramcolph Karr and Walt A. Steiger by Walt A. Steiger,
 for the Southern Pacific Company; Marshall W. Vorkink,
 for the Union Pacific Railroad Company, Interested
 Parties.
W. F. Hibbard, for the Commission Staff.

O P I N I O N

A public hearing on the above application was held in Los Angeles before Examiner Rogers on June 2, 1966. Evidence was presented and the matter was submitted.

By the application the City of Los Angeles (City) seeks authority to widen Washington Boulevard from its present width of 70 feet to a width of 80 feet over the Southern Pacific Company's Crossing No. BG-485.68-C and Union Pacific Railroad Company's Crossing No. 3-1.67-C.

There are two tracks at the crossing. One crosses Washington Boulevard at approximately a 90 degree angle. The other crosses the Boulevard on a curve from the north to the southeast. The two tracks join at or about the north side of Washington Boulevard. The 90 degree track is jointly owned by the two railroads, and the curved connecting track is owned by the Union Pacific.

Washington Boulevard is a primary east-west highway beginning in the east in the City of Whittier and ending in the west in the City of Venice. It carries heavy industrial traffic and the crossings are located in an industrial area. Washington Boulevard has direct connections with the Santa Ana Freeway, the Long Beach Freeway, the Harbor Freeway and the San Diego Freeway.

Santa Fe Avenue is a north-south secondary highway intersecting Washington Boulevard at a 90 degree angle approximately 120 feet west of the crossings. The intersection of the two streets is protected by traffic signals.

The City will include in the widening project curbs, gutters, sidewalks, drainage structures, street lighting facilities, and left turn pockets approximately 250 feet in length. It will install advance warning signs, double clearance lines and RKR pavement markings at the crossings which are now protected by two Standard No. 1 crossing signs plus the other listed warnings.

The City and the railroads contend that proposed markings and protection at the crossings will afford adequate protection if the trains are required to stop before entering Washington Boulevard and flagmen precede the trains across the Boulevard.

All parties agreed that the proposed widening is necessary.

The City alleges that a separation of grades is not practicable because of the short distance between the tracks and Santa Fe Avenue.

The City's witness testified that the railroads now have a total of two to six movements per day over the crossings; that the trains stop before entering Washington Boulevard and flagmen precede the trains over the Boulevard; that such protection is adequate;

that sight distances are not good; that a traffic count made on Wednesday, January 21, 1966, showed a total of 15,635 vehicles crossed the tracks in a 24-hour period; that very few vehicles crossed the tracks between 12 midnight and 5:00 A.M. during which period most of the train movements take place; and that whatever protection the Commission requires will be acceptable to the City. The City witness further stated that if automatic signals are required at the crossings, such signals should be coordinated with the signals at Washington Boulevard and Santa Fe Avenue. The records show that there have been no accidents at those crossings since 1943.

A Commission assistant transportation engineer made a study of the proposal. His findings are as follows:

The average daily vehicular traffic is 15,635 vehicles.

During the period between midnight and 8:00 A.M., there is an average total of approximately 4,729 vehicles over the crossings. Much of the vehicular traffic consists of large trucks, some travelling at speeds between 35 and 45 miles per hour. The railroads have between two and six train movements per day at the crossings. These movements are made between midnight and 8:00 A.M., but there is no restriction against the railroads operating over the crossings at other times. The trains consist of a single locomotive or a locomotive and from two to six freight cars. The trains cross Washington Boulevard at speeds ranging from five to ten miles per hour. The crossings are marked "exempt" and trucks carrying flammable liquids and passenger buses are permitted to cross without stopping.

The physical characteristics of the crossings and the

traffic at the crossings as determined by the staff are tabulated below:

1. Number of tracks	2 Spur Tracks	
2. Width of crossing	70 feet	
Width of approach	70 feet west approach	64 feet east approach
3. Angle of crossing	90 degrees	
4. Drivers' visibility when 200 feet from track:	<u>To the Right*</u>	<u>To the Left*</u>
Westbound drivers	47 feet	45 feet
Eastbound drivers	55 feet	49 feet
5. Present Crossing Protection	2 Standard No. 1 Crossbucks 2 Advance warning signs	
6. Traffic signals	4 sets of traffic signals west of tracks at inter- section of Santa Fe Avenue not coordinated with train moves.	
7. Illumination	NONE	
8. Speeds		
Trains	5 to 10 miles per hour	
Autos (posted)	35 miles per hour	
(observed)	35 to 45 miles per hour	
9. Traffic		
Trains	2 - 6 per day	
Vehicles	16,000 (City of Los Angeles count, 1-26-66)	

* Maximum distance of train from center line of street when it is visible by driver.

The staff recommended that authority for widening the

crossing be granted only upon the following conditions:

That there be installed at the crossings two No. 8 flashing light signals with backlights on 14-foot cantilevered arms.

That traffic signals at the adjacent intersection of Santa Fe Avenue be interconnected with the railroad signals so as to eliminate conflicting aspects of the traffic signals and the railroad signals.

That 50 percent of the installation and maintenance costs for the railroad crossing protection be apportioned to the City of Los Angeles and the remaining 50 percent be divided between the Southern Pacific Company and the Union Pacific Railroad Company in accordance with existing agreements between the two railroads.

That the railroads bear 100 percent of the cost of preparing track within the limits of the widened crossing and any paving work in the existing crossing within lines two feet outside of outside rails.

That the City bear 100 percent of all other costs of widening the crossing and approaches including the cost of making the traffic signal coordination.

That the railroad bear the cost of maintenance of the widened crossing within lines two feet outside of outside rails and that the City bear the maintenance costs of the crossing and approaches outside of said lines.

The public projects engineer for the Southern Pacific Company recommended that the City's application be granted without the necessity of automatic protection; and that the railroad men be instructed to walk in front of trains over the crossing. He said this recommendation was based on the past history of the crossing, the time of

day the trains operate, the frequency of the train movements, and the volume of vehicular traffic. The witness further stated that the Southern Pacific train crews will be instructed to bring the trains to a full stop before entering Washington Boulevard and a member of the train crew will be required to precede each train across Washington Boulevard, placing thereon any necessary protection, including flares.

The public project engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad Company stated that no automatic protection is needed at the crossing, and that train crews stop the trains before entering Washington Boulevard and a member of the crew walks across the street with a flag and/or fuses. The witness further stated that operations may be conducted six nights a week; that some nights no trains are operated over the crossing; that occasionally more than one train moves over the crossing; and that normally the train movements are between midnight and 5:00 A.M.

The evidence on behalf of both railroads was that between July 1 of one year and June 30 of the following year all operations are by one railroad, and that during the succeeding 12-month period the other railroad operates the trains. At the time of the hearing the Union Pacific Railroad Company was conducting the operations.

Findings

The Commission finds that:

1. The crossings herein considered on Washington Boulevard are in the City of Los Angeles. Washington Boulevard is 70 feet in width and the City proposes to widen said street to 80 feet.

Vehicular traffic on Washington Boulevard at the crossings averages 15,635 vehicles per day. This traffic includes heavy trucks,

some transporting gasoline. The crossings are exempt crossings.

2. Train traffic at the crossings consists of between two and six movements of trains ranging from a single locomotive to a locomotive and six freight cars. These movements are ordinarily between midnight and 8:00 A.M., but may be made at any time of the day or night.

3. The crossings are protected by Standard No. 1 crossing signs plus advance warning signs and RXX pavement markings. They are approximately 120 feet east of Santa Fe Avenue. Vehicular traffic at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Washington Boulevard is controlled by automatic signals.

4. Public safety and convenience require the widening of Washington Boulevard as proposed by the City. The proposed method of construction and the proposed alterations of the street at the crossings are reasonable and proper.

5. Public safety requires the widened crossings to be protected by two No. 8 flashing light signals with back lights on 14-foot cantilevered arms, the railroad signals to be interconnected with the traffic signals at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Washington Boulevard so as to eliminate any conflicting indications between the two sets of signals.

6. A separation of grades is not warranted at the crossings.

7. The costs of installation and maintenance of the railroad crossing signals should be borne 50 percent by the City and 50 percent by the two railroads.

8. The cost of paving the widened portion of the roadway between lines two feet outside the rails should be borne by the City.

9. The costs of preparing the tracks to receive paving at the widened portions of the crossings and the cost of rehabilitating the existing roadway between lines two feet outside the rails should be borne by the railroads.

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 Washington Boulevard over the Southern Pacific Company's spur track Crossing No. BG-485.68-C and Union Pacific Railroad Company's spur track Crossing No. 3-1.67-C in conformance with Exhibit 2 in this application.
2. The City of Los Angeles shall install and maintain advance warning signs and shall paint and maintain double clearance lines and RXR pavement markings at the crossings.
3. The railroads shall install two No. 8 flashing light signals with back lights on 14-foot cantilever arms.
4. The City of Los Angeles shall interconnect the railroad signals with the traffic signals at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Washington Boulevard so as to eliminate any conflicting indications between the two sets of signals.
5. The City of Los Angeles shall bear 50 percent and the railroads shall bear 50 percent of the costs of installing the railroad crossing signals ordered herein.
6. The railroads shall bear 100 percent of the cost of preparing the tracks to receive paving within the widened portion of the highway between lines two feet outside the outside rails and 100 percent of the cost of any paving work in the existing crossing area between lines two feet outside the outside rails.
7. The City of Los Angeles shall bear 50 percent and the railroads shall bear 50 percent of the costs of maintenance of the

railroad crossing signals ordered herein in accordance with and pursuant to Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code.

8. The City of Los Angeles shall bear 100 percent of all other costs of widening the crossings.

9. Within thirty days after completion of the work herein authorized, the City of Los Angeles and each railroad herein referred to shall each notify the Commission, in writing, of its compliance with the conditions hereof.

10. The improvements and changes herein provided for are to be completed within one year after 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 23rd day of AUGUST, 1966.

Ed. E. Mitchell

President

Augata

William W. Bernard

Commissioner Frederick B. Holoboff, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.

Commissioners

I dissent as to that portion of the decision which calls for automatic signal protection. In my view, the expense of such protection has not been justified on this record. I would authorize the widening of the crossing subject to an express condition that each train be stopped before entering the crossing and a flag or fusee warning be given by a member of the crew.

George T. Grover