

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 74022

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 Coast Line crossing of
Lindley Avenue (Crossing No. E-450.4)

} Application No. 49892
} (Filed December 20, 1967)
}

Roger Arnebergh, City Attorney, by
Charles E. Mattson; and
Leslie E. Corkill; for applicant.
Randolph Karr and Walt A. Steiger, by
Walt A. Steiger, for Southern
Pacific Company, protestant.
Ronald I. Hollis, for the Commission
staff.

O P I N I O N

The City of Los Angeles seeks to widen and improve
Lindley Avenue, and relocate protection at Crossing No. E-450.4
across the tracks of the Southern Pacific Company.

Public hearing was held before Examiner DeWolf at
Los Angeles on March 1, 1968, at which time the matter was
submitted.

The City alleges that Lindley Avenue is to be widened
to a roadway width of 66 feet on account of increasing population
and traffic in the area; that Valley State College north of
the crossing has a student enrollment of 13,000 which is increasing;
and that areas north and south of the crossing are zoned for
residential and commercial development which generate additional
volumes of traffic. The application further alleges that the
improvement of the grade crossing will reduce traffic congestion
and that public convenience and necessity require the improvement.

The testimony of two city engineers was received in support of the application pursuant to stipulation of the parties.

The applicant's evidence shows that Lindley Avenue, a north-south City street, is designated a secondary highway from Ventura Boulevard to Nordhoff Street. This street is continuous for 5-3/4 miles between hillside residential areas in Encino, south of Ventura Boulevard, and the main entrance to Valley State College on Nordhoff Street in Northridge. Valley State College has a current enrollment of about 13,000 students. It is an important distributor street for college-oriented traffic which originates southerly of Nordhoff Street. The grade crossing of the Southern Pacific Company's Coast Line on Lindley Avenue is especially critical since it is the only crossing available in a two-mile reach between Balboa Boulevard and Reseda Boulevard. This situation places the Master Plan Highway System of the Northridge area in an out-of-balance condition insofar as providing a satisfactory level of service for highway users is concerned. Four moving traffic lanes are necessary to provide a satisfactory level of service for the present and projected user needs of this street.

Construction at the Southern Pacific Railroad Company right of way consists in widening the present roadway of approximately 36 feet to a new roadway width of 63 feet all within the existing 84-foot wide dedication. Included in the widening is the construction of variable height concrete curbs and integral gutters,

concrete sidewalks, and the erection of a reinforced concrete retaining wall, handrail, and paved drain. Typical cross sections of the proposed improvements are shown on the plan No. P-25603 consisting of seven sheets introduced into evidence by stipulation of the parties (Exhibits 1 through 7). The legal descriptions of street, drainage and temporary slope easements are as stated in the application.

The Railroad is to make the necessary improvements within the track area. No change of grade or alignment of the railroad track will be required. Full financing is available for this project, and a contract is to be awarded as soon as all approvals and easements have been obtained. The citywide priority for grade separation of this crossing would be too low to consider any such financing in the foreseeable future. Therefore, funds are not available for a grade separation at this time.

A witness testified for the Southern Pacific Company that the estimated cost of the work to be performed by the Railroad and charged to the City of Los Angeles would amount to the sum of \$3,350.

The parties stipulated that applicant will pay 100 percent of the cost of relocating the existing protection and 100 percent of the cost of paving and planking in the widened portion of the crossing and the Railroad is to do all of the work within lines two feet outside of rails and to bear the cost of paving and planking within the areas of the existing crossing. The parties further stipulated that the time for reimbursement by the City for its share of the cost is to be pursuant to agreement of the parties, and that if the parties are not able to agree upon the manner and time of reimbursement then any who are dissatisfied are to be given leave to reopen this matter for further decision of this Commission.

Findings of Fact

The Commission finds as follows:

1. The City's proposal to widen Lindley Avenue across the tracks of Southern Pacific Company railroad is necessary to relieve traffic conditions and to provide for future growth of the community.
2. The existing crossing which is designed for one lane in each direction is insufficient for present and future traffic and the proposal to widen the crossing to 63 feet and to carry two lanes in each direction is necessary to correct the deficiencies.
3. The present crossing protection of two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals augmented by automatic gates is to be re-located to accommodate the widened crossing, and is the best available protection for the widened crossing.
4. Public convenience, necessity and safety require the improvement and widening of the street and relocation of the crossing protection at Lindley Avenue and the Southern Pacific Crossing No. E-450.4 and that the protection is to be two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals augmented by automatic gates.
5. Findings as to time of payment by the City are deferred pending agreement of the parties, and if no agreement can be reached the parties may request the Commission to reopen this matter for further order.

The application will be granted.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The City of Los Angeles is authorized to widen Lindley Avenue across the tracks of the Southern Pacific Company Crossing No. E-450.4 in accordance with the plans set forth in its application. Width of crossing shall be not less than 63 feet and

grades of approach not greater than 6 percent. Construction shall be equal or superior to Standard No. 2 of General Order No. 72.

2. Protection at the crossing shall be by two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals (General Order No. 75-B) augmented by automatic gate arms.

3. The cost of relocating the existing grade crossing protection and the cost of paving and planking in the widened portion shall be borne by the City of Los Angeles.

4. The Southern Pacific Company shall bear 100 percent of the costs of preparing track necessary within the limits of the widened crossing, and any paving and planking work within lines two feet outside of rails in the existing crossing.

5. The City of Los Angeles shall bear 100 percent of all other costs of widening the crossing and approaches.

6. The Southern Pacific Company shall bear the cost of maintenance of the widened crossing within lines two feet outside of rails and the City of Los Angeles shall bear the maintenance costs of the crossing and approaches outside of said lines.

7. 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 its compliance with the conditions hereof.

8. The improvements and changes herein provided for are to be completed within one year of the effective date of this order unless time is extended.

9. The widened portion of crossing shall not be opened to public use until the protection ordered herein is installed and operative.

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10. Granting of this application shall not establish the rights of the parties as to the matter of time of payment, and settlement of this matter is deferred pending negotiation of an agreement between the parties or if no agreement is reached, the issuance of a subsequent order 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 APRIL, 1968.

John E. Fitzhugh President
William L. Bennett
Augusta
William H. Hyslop, Jr.
Fred P. Monahan Commissioners