

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 78251

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Investigation on the Commission's own motion into the installation and maintenance of automatic gates at the Knott Avenue, Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue crossings of the railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company in Buena Park, Orange County.

Case No. 9129
(Filed September 29, 1970)

Forest L. Yaberg, Director of Public Works,
for City of Buena Park, and Walt A. Steiger,
Attorney at Law, for Southern Pacific
Transportation Company, respondents.
R. G. Thayer, Attorney at Law, and John Ukleja,
for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

The Commission upon its own motion dated September 29, 1970 instituted an investigation into the Knott, Western and Stanton Avenues at grade crossings Nos. BK-503.6, BK-504.1 and BK-504.7 on the Santa Ana Branch of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company in Buena Park, Orange County, in order to determine:

1. Whether, for the public welfare and safety, automatic gates should be installed at said Knott Avenue, Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue crossings.

2. Apportionment of the cost of installation and maintenance of automatic gates or other safety devices that may be ordered as the result thereof.

The scope of the above investigation includes, but is not limited to the installation and maintenance of the aforesaid automatic gates.

Public hearing was held before Examiner DeWolf at Los Angeles on November 17, 1970 and the matter submitted on the same date.

An associate transportation engineer testified on behalf of the Commission staff and presented a report of investigation of the crossings which was received in evidence as Exhibit No. 1, and recommended installation of automatic gates at these crossings.

A public projects engineer testified for the railroad and did not object to the recommendation of the Commission staff.

The City of Buena Park appeared by its Director of Public Works who examined the witnesses and opposed, as unnecessary at this time, the installation of automatic gates at these crossings. No evidence was presented by the City.

The evidence discloses the situation at these three crossings is as follows:

Rapid growth and development is taking place in the area of Buena Park. This growth has caused substantial increases in vehicular traffic as well as train traffic at the three crossings involved in this proceeding and it is expected that with continued growth, additional traffic volumes will be generated.

Commission studies show that automatic crossing gates substantially reduce train-vehicle accidents and deaths or injuries at crossings where such protection has been installed.

The Japanese Deer Park, Anaheim Stadium, Anaheim Convention Center and Disneyland are served by the Santa Ana Freeway in this vicinity and traffic is steadily increasing. The Japanese Deer Park is in the southeast quadrant of Knott Avenue and Artesia Boulevard with heavy traffic patterns at said intersection. Gates are in operation at the adjacent Artesia Boulevard crossing and installation of gates is pending at Beach Boulevard Crossing (State Route 39) which is between Western and Stanton Avenues. The tracks carry 10 daily train movements and the vehicle crossing traffic at Knott Avenue is approximately 20,000 and at Western and Stanton is 10,000 daily.

The testimony of the witnesses and the staff Exhibit No. 1 show that crossing protection at these three crossings should be improved by supplementing the four Standard No. 8 flashing lights presently at Knott Avenue with the installation of automatic gates and by replacing the two No. 8 flashing lights at Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals and installation of additional flashing light signals on cantilever arms supplemented with automatic gates and that all of this crossing protection should be controlled by circuits to prevent over activation.

The witness for the railroad testified that the improvement of the crossing protection of these crossings at the same time would be more economical and would result in savings of \$5,000 each at Western and Stanton if installed in conjunction with Beach

Boulevard. The witness estimated costs to be: Knott, \$13,000; Western, \$29,000; Stanton, \$32,000, if done at the same time.

The staff recommendation is as follows:

"In view of the increasing high vehicle and train volume and rapid growth and development in this area, it is concluded and recommended that automatic crossing gates controlled by circuits which will prevent over activation of the flashing lights and unnecessary down time of the gates, be installed within two years to supplement the existing flashing light signals at the crossings of Knott Avenue, Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue. It is further recommended that the cost of the installations be shared equally between the Southern Pacific Transportation Company and the City of Buena Park and the maintenance cost divided equally between the railroad and City pursuant to the provisions of Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code."

Findings

Upon consideration of the evidence, the Commission finds as follows:

1. Based on current use of the Knott Avenue, Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue crossings, public health, safety and welfare do not require, within one year from the date hereof, any change in the protection now installed at said crossings.
2. Based on the anticipated growth in the areas and the increasing of vehicular traffic, that within one to two years from the date of this order, public health, safety and welfare will require that the Knott Avenue crossing should be protected by supplementing the four Standard No. 8 flashing lights presently

operating there with installation of automatic gates. Back lights may be omitted from the signals mounted on the center medians.

3. The Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue crossings should be protected by two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals with additional flashing lights on cantilever arms supplemented with automatic gates.

4. The Commission further finds that all of the crossing protection at these crossings should be equipped with controlled circuits to prevent over activation of flashing lights and unnecessary down time of gates.

5. The cost of the installation should be apportioned 50 percent to the City of Buena Park and 50 percent to Southern Pacific Transportation Company and the maintenance cost divided equally between the railroad and City pursuant to the provisions of Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code.

We conclude that the crossing protection at the Knott Avenue, Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue crossings of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company should be improved, and cost apportioned, as provided in the order which follows.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Southern Pacific Transportation Company shall, within one to two years from the effective date of this order, improve its crossing protection of Knott Avenue by supplementing the four flashing lights with automatic gates (back lights may be omitted from the signals mounted on the center medians) and at Western Avenue and Stanton Avenue by installation of two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals with additional flashing light signals on cantilever arms supplemented with automatic gates. All of this protection shall be controlled by circuits which will prevent over activation of the flashing lights and unnecessary down time of the gates.

2. The installation costs of said protective devices specified in numbered paragraph 1 of this order shall be apportioned as follows: 50 percent to Southern Pacific Transportation Company and 50 percent to the City of Buena Park.

3. The maintenance costs for said automatic protective devices specified in numbered paragraph 1 of this order shall be apportioned in the same manner as the installation costs are ordered to be apportioned in numbered paragraph 2, pursuant to the provisions of Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code.


4. Within thirty days after the completion of the work pursuant to the first numbered paragraph of this order, Southern Pacific Transportation Company shall so advise the Commission in writing.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 2nd day of FEBRUARY, 1971.



Chairman



Vernon L. Sturgeon

Commissioners

Commissioner William Symons, Jr., being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.