

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 11649

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of the application)
of the County of Fresno, in the)
State of California, for permission)
to construct a public highway cross-) Application No. 8171
ing at grade over the right-of-way)
and tracks of the Southern Pacific)
Company at Placer Avenue in the)
said County.)

Ray C. Wakefield, for Applicant.

F. B. Austin, for Southern Pacific Company.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

This is an application by the County of Fresno for permission to construct a public highway at Placer Avenue, crossing the Riverdale branch of the Southern Pacific at grade near the Town of San Joaquin.

A public hearing on this application was held in Fresno before Examiner Satterwhite on December 13th, 1922.

Placer Avenue is a north and south road along the east boundary of the Town of San Joaquin, which line is also the center line of Section 24, Township 15 South, Range 16 East, M.D.B. & M. and extends south from the south boundary of the townsite about one mile, except for the crossing of the Southern Pacific about one quarter mile south of the southeasterly corner of the townsite.

The railroad in this vicinity extends northwesterly and

southeasterly and is paralleled on its northeasterly side by a county highway, called Colorado Avenue, both the railroad and highway passing through the central portion of the town of San Joaquin. Within the town itself, the street system is laid out parallel with and at right angles to the railroad, but in the adjacent portions of the county the roads, except Colorado Avenue, are constructed on Section lines and half-section lines.

Manning Avenue is an east and west road running along the southerly line of Section 24 which crosses the railroad about one quarter of a mile northwest of the proposed crossing at Placer Avenue. Another east and west road, Springfield Avenue, runs along the center line of Section 25, and crosses the railroad a little over one quarter of a mile southeast of the proposed Placer Avenue crossing. There is also a north and south road along the west line of Section 25, Colusa Avenue, which leads directly to the business section of the Town of San Joaquin, crossing the railroad near the center of the town adjacent to the depot.

The principal purpose of constructing the Placer Avenue crossing is to allow residents south of the railroad along Placer Avenue a direct access to the county highway parallel to the railroad. There are about ten families so situated, and for them the construction of the Placer Avenue crossing would save approximately one quarter mile travel in going to the town of San Joaquin over that required in going by the route now available by way of Springfield and Colusa Avenues. In addition to the distance saved, there is, of course, the added convenience due to the improved condition of the highway as compared with the condition of the other county roads, which are merely graded dirt roads, but since the total distance available for these people to travel on the highway from its intersection with Placer Avenue is only a

little over one half mile, this factor does not seem to be of primary importance. It should also be noted that by using the existing routes, access from this territory may be had to the station facilities of the railroad at San Joaquin without crossing the track at all, whereas if the Placer Avenue route were used this traffic would be required to cross the railroad twice.

The physical conditions at the location of the proposed Placer Avenue crossing are such that the hazard would be no greater than that of any ordinary rural grade crossing, the view being practically unobstructed, the topography being flat and the railroad being constructed on a nearly level grade at an elevation of about two feet above the adjacent ground surface. Traffic on the railroad normally consists of two passenger and two freight trains per day.

Although we are not unmindful of the fact that a certain public convenience would accrue from the installation of this crossing, we are also faced with the fact that every grade crossing constitutes a public hazard and it is clearly the duty of the Commission under the law to keep the number of grade crossings at a minimum. In view of the close proximity of the adjacent crossings and the availability of other routes to serve the needs of the residents along Placer Avenue, it appears that the proposed crossing is not justified at this time and that this application should be denied.

O R D E R

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno having made application for permission to construct a public highway at grade across the track of Southern Pacific Company at Placer Avenue on the north and south center line of Section 25, Township

15 South, Range 16 East, M. D. B. & M., a public hearing having been held, the Commission being apprised of the facts, the matter being under submission and ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY FOUND AS A FACT, that public convenience and necessity do not require the establishment of a public crossing at grade at the point above indicated, therefore,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that the above entitled application be and it is hereby denied.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 16th day of February, 1923.

W. H. Seaver
H. P. Brundage
Wm. Martin

Commissioners.