

Decision No. 13630

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

-000-

ORIGINAL

In the matter of the application of )  
City of Compton for a permit to cross )  
the tracks of the Southern Pacific )  
Railroad Company between the lines of )  
Palmer Avenue (sometimes known as Tere- ) Application No. 9845.  
binth Street) extended across the tracks )  
of the said Southern Pacific Railroad )  
Company in the City of Compton. )

A. C. Cooney, City Attorney, and  
Fredericks & Hanna and Charles W. Lyon, for Applicant.  
F. W. Mielke and J. P. Edwards for Southern Pacific  
Company.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

The City of Compton, in this application, asks permission to construct Palmer Avenue, also known as Terebinth Street, across the tracks of the San Pedro Branch of Southern Pacific Company.

A public hearing was held on this application at Compton on April 4, 1924, before Examiner Williams.

The object of the City of Compton in opening up Palmer Avenue across the Southern Pacific right of way to Alameda Street is twofold. The city believes that the opening of a broad thoroughfare close to and parallel with Main Street from Alameda Street to Long Beach Boulevard will relieve the congestion in traffic which now occurs at the crossing of Main Street with Alameda Street and the Southern Pacific tracks, and that it will also be a matter of great convenience to those people residing east of the Southern

Pacific tracks and north of Main Street.

The City of Compton has been growing rapidly during the past two years. There are three improved and one unimproved crossings over the Southern Pacific tracks within the city limits on the following east and west streets; Orange Street, Main Street, Laurel Street and Olive Street. Orange Street is about one-quarter of a mile south of the north city limits; Main Street is one-half mile south of Orange Street, and Olive Street is one-half mile south of Main Street. The Laurel Street crossing, which is open but unimproved is about 675 feet south of Main Street. Compton Avenue is a north and south highway on the west side of Compton. Alameda Street, a north and south street parallel with and adjacent to the westerly right of way line of the Southern Pacific, runs through the center of the city and is on the route of the Harbor Truck Boulevard. Long Beach Boulevard runs north and south along the easterly city limits of Compton.

At the present time all through traffic through Compton between Compton Avenue or Alameda Street and Long Beach Boulevard moves via Main Street which is the most southerly improved street connecting these north and south arteries. Orange Street has only recently been paved and through traffic has not yet become accustomed to this additional route. Some traffic could undoubtedly be diverted here by properly posted signs.

Main Street is the principal business street of Compton especially in the vicinity of Alameda Street. Local traffic parking in this section adds to the congestion. The intersection of Alameda Street and Main Street on account of its proximity to the Main Street crossing of the Southern Pacific tracks and the station adds to the hazards of the crossing and to the congestion during the peak hours of travel which occurs between four and six

in the afternoon, as a freight train generally switches in this vicinity during a part of this period. Witnesses testified that blocked traffic sometimes extended from one hundred feet to two blocks from the intersection of Main and Alameda Streets.

The district between Main Street and Orange Street east of the Southern Pacific tracks has been developing as a residential section and now contains in the neighborhood of two hundred homes. The distance between the Orange and Main Street crossings is 2650 feet. An additional crossing would be a convenience to the residents of this district. Palmer Avenue is chosen by applicant as the street for this purpose, as it is eighty feet wide between property lines and fifty-six feet wide between curbs as compared to a width between property lines of forty feet at Elm Street, the only other east and west street between Main and Orange Streets. Main Street is only fifty-seven feet wide between property lines and thirty-four feet wide between curbs, east of the railroad tracks. Elm Street is about 930 feet south of Orange Street and about 1710 feet north of Main Street and would, therefore, not tend to relieve traffic conditions at Main Street to the same extent as Palmer Avenue which is only 850 feet north of Main Street.

At the time of the filing of this application, Palmer Avenue did not extend the full distance from the Southern Pacific right-of way to Long Beach Boulevard. However, the city has since acquired the necessary land to complete the street between these points.

Southern Pacific Company objected to the installation of a crossing at Palmer Avenue as an additional hazard. They are of the opinion that Orange Street should be used to divert traffic from Main Street in preference to opening an additional crossing. Testimony shows that long freight trains will block the crossing at Palmer Avenue when the crossing at Main Street is blocked, but this will only happen occasionally in the case of very long trains.

The railroad company proposed the construction of a street sixty feet wide parallel with and adjacent to its easterly right of way line, running from Main Street to Orange Street. The company claimed that this street would relieve the traffic conditions and serve the residents of the section east of the tracks. The company also claimed that as this was a residential section the usual objection to the installation of roads parallel with and adjacent to the right of way in industrial districts on account of spur track installations across the road would not hold. Applicant testified that the proposed road was unnecessary as Rose Avenue, which is about four hundred to five hundred and fifty feet east of the tracks and nearly parallel thereto, would serve the same purpose. As the Southern Pacific Company did not offer to donate the right of way for such a street or to pay any portion of the costs of moving the buildings of the Los Angeles County Highway Maintenance Station, adoption of the plan does not appear at all probable.

The railroad company submitted a traffic check of travel at Alameda and Main Streets from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on April 2, 1924:

Through traffic north and south on Alameda Street. . . . .	2845 or 237 per hour
Through traffic north and south on Alameda Street but turning across tracks at Main Street or from Main Street into Alameda Street . . . . .	4439 or 370 per hour
Through traffic east and west on Main Street across tracks . . . . .	3933 or 328 <u>per hour</u>
Total. . . . .	935 per hour
Traffic across tracks. . . . .	698 per hour

Train movements which are exclusively freight, were given from the carrier's train sheets from March 24th to March 30, inclusive and show an average of nine trains a day. Traffic counts

taken by applicant on April 11th to 13th, inclusive, and jointly by applicant and Southern Pacific Company on April 25th to 27th, inclusive, are as follows:

	April 1924					
	Joint			Applicant		
	Count by App't. & Southern Pacific			Applicant		
	<u>25th</u>	<u>26th</u>	<u>27th</u>	<u>11th</u>	<u>12th</u>	<u>13th</u>
1. North & south on Alameda Street. . . . .	2277	2256	3540	2326	2311	3954
2. Alameda St. to East Main & vice versa.. . . .	2726	2657	3690	1288	1288	2257
3. East & west on Main Street. . . . .	6513	6465	8004	7020	6606	9512
4. Alameda to West Main Street and vice versa.. . . .	2714	2881	2837	2576	2627	2837

Southern Pacific traffic item of vehicles from Alameda Street into Main Street probably includes traffic into West Main Street as this item is comparable with applicant's and the joint count only when Items 2 and 4 are totaled in these two counts. These traffic counts also show that traffic is blocked at Main and Alameda Streets from three to seven times a day.

It would appear that an automatic flagman will be necessary for the protection of the Palmer Avenue crossing if the crossing is opened. Giving full consideration to the testimony and to the exhibits filed in this proceeding it appears that the best interests of the public would be best served by the granting of this application subject to certain conditions.

O R D E R

City of Compton having applied for permission to construct Palmer Avenue at grade across the tracks of Southern Pacific Company, 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 require the establishment of a public crossing at grade at the point hereinafter specified,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that permission be and it is hereby granted the City of Compton, Los Angeles County, State of California, to construct Palmer Avenue, also known as Terebinth Street, at grade across the tracks of Southern Pacific Company at the location described as follows:

Beginning at a point on the westerly right of way line of the Southern Pacific Company where same is intersected by the southerly line of Palmer Avenue produced westerly, thence northerly eighty (80) feet more or less to a point also on said right of way line; thence easterly one hundred (100) feet more or less to a point on the easterly right of way line of the Southern Pacific Company, thence southerly eighty (80) feet more or less to a point on the same right of way line, thence westerly one hundred (100) feet more or less to the point of beginning.

All of the above as shown on the map attached to the application, said crossing to be constructed subject to the following conditions, and not otherwise:

(1) Said crossing shall not be installed until Palmer Avenue is paved from the Southern Pacific right of way to Long Beach Boulevard for full width between curbs.

(2) The entire expense of constructing the crossing shall be borne by applicant. The cost of its maintenance up to lines two (2) feet outside of the outside rails shall be borne by applicant. The maintenance of that portion of the crossing between lines two (2) feet outside of the outside rails shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

(3) The crossing shall be constructed of a width not less than fifty-six (56) feet and at an angle of approximately ninety (90) degrees to the railroad and with grades of approach not greater than five and one-half per cent; shall be protected by

an automatic flagman and by a suitable crossing sign and shall in every way be made safe for the passage thereon of vehicles and other road traffic. Sidewalks and crossings shall also be installed on each side of the crossing roadway.

(4) Automatic flagman shall be installed at the expense of applicant and thereafter maintained at the expense of the Southern Pacific Company.

(5) Applicant shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify this Commission, in writing, of the completion of the installation of said crossing.

(6) If said crossing shall not have been installed within one year from the date of this order, the authorization herein granted shall then lapse and become void, unless further time is granted by subsequent order.

(7) The Commission reserves the right to make such further orders relative to the location, construction, operation, maintenance, and protection of said crossing as to it may seem right and proper and to revoke its permission if, in its judgment, the public convenience and necessity demand such action.

This order shall become effective three (3) days from the making thereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 31st day of May, 1924.

O. S. Seaver  
H. B. Anderson  
David Martin

J. T. Whittey  
Commissioners.