

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the City of
South Gate for order of author-
ization for grade crossing over,
on and across the Southern Pacific
Railroad tracks in the City of
South Gate.)

Application No. 10458.

ORIGINAL

Gordon M. Gale and B. A. Hayne,
for applicant.
Frank Karr for Southern Pacific Company.
J. R. Berryman, Jr. for Los Angeles County
Grade Crossing Committee.

WHITTLESEY, Commissioner:

O P I N I O N

In this application the City of South Gate seeks permission to construct California Avenue and Mountain View Avenue at grade across Southern Pacific Company's Santa Ana Branch.

A public hearing in this matter was held in Los Angeles, November 5, 1924.

South Gate is an incorporated city with an estimated population of 6,000, situated about one mile south of Huntington Park in Los Angeles County. The corporate limits extend a little over three-quarters of a mile north and south and a little less than two miles east and west. Southern Pacific Company's track runs through the city in an easterly and westerly direction, dividing the city into about equal parts with respect to area. The business center and greater portion of the residences of South Gate are located north of the railroad. At present there are two public crossings over Southern Pacific Company's track within the city limits which are located at Long Beach Boulevard and State Street, situated approximately 3200 feet apart. Long Beach Boulevard is a through traffic artery ex-

tending from Los Angeles to Long Beach and carries a very heavy volume of vehicular traffic. This highway crosses Southern Pacific Company's track in the westerly portion of the city. State Street is a north and south highway of South Gate which passes through the business center and is situated approximately in the center of the town. In addition to the two public crossings there are two other crossings over the railroad, one a private crossing used principally to serve a sand and gravel bunker located near Garden View Avenue some 1200 feet west of State Street, and the other an unofficial crossing near San Juan Avenue used by the general public and situated approximately 3300 feet east of State Street.

The City of South Gate filed an application with this Commission April 23, 1923, asking permission to construct Otis Street, Chestnut Avenue and California Avenue at grade across Southern Pacific Company's track in the City of South Gate. By the terms of the Commission's order in its Decision No. 12866, dated November 26, 1923, applicant was granted permission to construct Otis Street beneath the tracks of Southern Pacific Company under certain conditions. That portion of the application asking permission to construct Chestnut Avenue and California Avenue, at grade across the railroad was denied without prejudice. Otis Avenue is located in the easterly portion of the city some 4500 feet east of State Street. The testimony shows that to date the City of South Gate has not exercised its privilege of constructing the Otis Street crossing. The principal reason that the work has not gone forward is, the city officials have felt that the city could not afford the improvement at this time.

The Southern Pacific Company's line involved herein, known as the Santa Ana branch, has a single main line track along the center of a 100 foot right of way through the City of South Gate. At present the railroad operates normally six freight train

movements per day over this branch line. These trains travel at moderate rates of speed in the vicinity of the proposed crossings. Adjacent to the railroad and paralleling it with a width of 45 feet on either side is a public highway known as Independence Avenue.

The California Avenue crossing applied for herein, is desired to serve the easterly portion of the city, being located some 1800 feet east of State Street. This avenue is favorably situated to become an important north and south highway artery extending from its intersection with Long Beach Boulevard in Lynwood north to an intersection with Florence Avenue in Huntington Park, a distance of some four miles. It passes through Walnut Park, South Gate and Home Gardens. California Avenue in the vicinity of the proposed crossing is an 80 foot highway which is unpaved at this time. The evidence shows that the paving of this highway through South Gate is contingent upon the granting of this application; that in the event permission is granted to construct the crossing applied for, the street will be paved at once. The crossing applied for at California Avenue will serve as a material convenience to many of the school children attending the school located three blocks to the east of California Avenue and 300 feet south of the railroad. No serious objections to the granting of this application were presented. It is evident that California Avenue when paved will afford a desirable route for a rather large volume of vehicular traffic in the vicinity, and that public convenience and necessity will then justify the granting of a public crossing over this point. As for protection at the crossing, it would seem that an automatic flagman should be installed as there will undoubtedly be a large volume of vehicular traffic using this highway when opened, and the fact that the crossing of the railroad is situated between highway intersections adds to its hazard. With a grade crossing at California Avenue, it would appear that the unofficial crossing located between San Juan and San

Luis Avenues should be effectively closed.

The crossing applied for at Mountain View Avenue is situated approximately 2400 feet west of the grade crossing at State Street and 800 feet east of the Long Beach Boulevard crossing. The evidence shows that there is a tentative plan to make Mountain View a through street from Florence Avenue in Huntington Park to Long Beach Boulevard in South Gate, a distance of about one and one half miles. The highway is planned to serve the adjacent territory and relieve the congestion on Long Beach Boulevard. At present this street through South Gate is improved with light oil macadam which is now in a rather poor condition. Applicant contends that a crossing at Mountain View Avenue would permit of re-routing the municipal busses to advantage, as such re-routing would avoid the necessity of going upon Long Beach Boulevard where heavy traffic is encountered. Until such time as the proposed plans for opening and improving Mountain View Avenue have taken final form, there is little public necessity for this crossing to accommodate through traffic, and it would, if installed, shorten the distance but little to local traffic as compared with the courses now available in crossing over the railroad.

From the evidence, it does not appear that public convenience and necessity justifies the granting of a grade crossing at Mountain View Avenue at this time. While it would not create a public hazard of unusual magnitude, the public benefit derived does not appear to justify the public hazard and inconvenience to railroad operation that would be incident to its construction.

The following form of order is hereby recommended:

O R D E R

The City of South Gate having made application for permission to construct California Avenue and Mountain View Avenue, respectively, at grade across southern pacific company's track in the

City of South Gate, County of Los Angeles, State of California, a public hearing having been held, the Commission being apprized of the facts, the matter being under submission and ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that the City of South Gate be and it is hereby granted permission to construct California Avenue at grade across Southern Pacific Company's track in the location shown on the map attached to the application and marked Exhibit "A", the said crossing to be constructed subject to the following conditions:

(1) The entire expense of constructing the crossing shall be borne by applicant. The cost of its maintenance up to lines two (2) feet outside the 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.

(2) The crossing shall be constructed of a width not less than twenty-five (25) feet and at an angle of ninety (90) degrees to the railroad, and with grades of approach not greater than five (5) per cent; shall be protected by suitable crossing signs, and shall in every way be made safe for the passage thereon of vehicles and other road traffic.

(3) An automatic flagman shall be installed for the protection of said crossing at the sole expense of applicant, said automatic flagman to be of a type and installed in accordance with plans of data approved by the Commission. The maintenance of said flagman to be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

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

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(7) When said crossing is constructed and open to public traffic, the existing grade crossing now used by the public between San Juan and San Luis Avenues shall be abandoned and effectively closed at the sole expense of Southern Pacific Company.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that permission to construct Mountain View Avenue at grade across the track of Southern Pacific Company be and it is hereby denied without prejudice.

This order shall become effective within ten days after the making thereof.

The foregoing Opinion and Order are hereby approved and ordered filed as the Opinion and Order of the Railroad Commission of the State of California.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 9th day of December, 1924.

CL Seary

Jessie M. Austin
Egerton Shore

Commissioners.