

ORIGINALDecision No. 1856

In the matter of the application of the)
 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS of Fresno County,)
 California, for permission to construct)
 a public highway crossing at grade over)
 the tracks of Southern Pacific Company)
 at Isabella Street, near the City of)
 Fresno, Fresno County, California,)
)

Application No. 1351.

M. G. Gallaher, for applicant.

Geo. D. Squires, for Southern Pacific Company.

GORDON, Commissioner,

OPINION

The Board of Supervisors of Fresno County filed this application with the Commission on September 29, 1914, and on October 8, 1914, a public hearing was held in the City of Fresno, at which all interested parties were represented.

Isabella Street is an eighty-foot street extending from the right-of-way of the Southern Pacific Company at the site of the proposed crossing, north, to where it joins "K" Street. This application looks to the opening of Isabella Street across the tracks to join the state highway, which is parallel to and just south of the railroad, with a view of making a through route for the southeast portion of the territory around Fresno to and from the city, via Isabella Street and "K" Street.

At the present time all the traffic for this section of the country uses a crossing known as the "Cherry Avenue" crossing, which crosses the tracks of the Southern Pacific about 1200 feet northwest, measured along the track, from the site of this proposed crossing. At this Cherry Avenue crossing five streets come together and cross the two main line tracks of the Southern Pacific, a track known as the "ice track" and the track of the Sanger Branch, which has its junction with the main line practically at this point.

This crossing is an exceedingly busy one, taking care, as it does, of all traffic from that part of the county, and over it many automobiles pass each day and much hauling is done. The Southern Pacific run a large number of trains over the main line; quite a number over the Sanger Branch and there is considerable switching done on the "ice track". To drivers of vehicles coming from the north there are several bad obstructions to the view, and in spite of the fact that this crossing is protected by crossing bell, I consider the situation here very dangerous.

At the site of the proposed crossing on Isabella Street, there will be crossed two main line tracks of the Southern Pacific and the "ice track" previously mentioned. Along the north boundary of the right of way of the Southern Pacific at this point and extending some distance east and west is a high hedge which would make an absolute obstruction to the view, but with the hedge entirely removed or enough of it removed to permit of a good view being had of the tracks, this crossing will be entirely open, and properly protected, it will not be a dangerous crossing.

About 800 feet north of this proposed crossing Isabella Street crosses the Sanger Branch, which at this point is on California Street, California Street running approximately east and west. Although this crossing is at present open and was not mentioned in the application, in view of the large amount of traffic which will undoubtedly be diverted from Cherry Street to Isabella Street and over this crossing if this application is granted, it is necessary to consider it in this connection. The speed of trains at this point is not great but there are several trees and other obstructions, the removal of which will greatly increase the safety of the public at this place, and if the crossing is protected and these obstructions removed, the crossing of the Sanger Branch will be much safer than it can be made at Cherry Avenue.

By granting this application a shorter road (via Isabella and "K" Streets) will be opened to the public to and from Fresno and the southeast part of the county, and this route will have the further advantage, over any other route, of being on streets which are free from street car lines, but in my opinion, the greatest advantage in permitting this crossing to be constructed will be the substitution, for a large traffic, of a crossing which is fairly safe for a crossing which is very dangerous, and this advantage will accrue not only to the people of Fresno County and others who use the highways, but to the Southern Pacific as well. This latter reason makes this case an exception to the proposition so often stated by the Commission that every additional grade crossing means an additional hazard.

I recommend to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno that, with the granting of this application, it take such steps as are necessary to remove the obstructions to the view which now exist at the California-Isabella Street crossing of the Sanger Branch, and I recommend to the Southern Pacific Company that it install an automatic flagman to protect this crossing.

The question of a separation of grades at the crossing involved in the application was not gone into at the hearing since it was apparent that the proximity of the State Highway, immediately south of the crossing, would make such a grade separation inconvenient and exceedingly costly.

I recommend the following form of order:-

O R D E R

County of Fresno having made application to the Commission for permission to construct Isabella Street at grade across the tracks of the Southern Pacific Company, near the City of Fresno, Fresno County, California, and a hearing having been held, and it appearing to the Commission for the reasons hereinbefore mentioned, that it is proper and advisable to grant this application,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that permission be and the same is hereby granted the Board of Supervisors of Fresno County, California, to

construct Isabella Street at grade across the tracks of Southern Pacific Company at the point shown by the map attached to the application; said crossing to be constructed subject to the following conditions and not otherwise:-

(1) This crossing shall be made with grades of approach not exceeding six (6) per cent, and shall in every way be made safe for the passage thereover of vehicles and other road traffic.

(2) The entire expense of constructing this crossing, together with all incidental expenses connected therewith except the furnishing and installing of cattle guards, wing fences and automatic crossing protection, hereinafter to be mentioned, shall be borne by the County of Fresno.

(3) The expense of furnishing and constructing cattle guards and wing fences, and furnishing and installing an automatic flagman of a type approved by the Commission, shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

(4) The expense of maintaining the crossing in good and first-class condition for the safe and convenient use of the public shall be borne by the County of Fresno up to within two (2) feet of the tracks of Southern Pacific Company.

(5) The expense of maintaining the crossing over the tracks and to a distance of two (2) feet outside thereof shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

(6) The expense of maintaining the automatic flagman, hereinbefore mentioned, shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

(7) The existing hedge fence along the north line of the right of way of Southern Pacific Company shall be removed from across Isabella Street and shall be removed as far as it now exists to the west and not less than six hundred (600) feet to the east of Isabella Street, and the entire expense of removing this hedge shall be borne by the County of Fresno.

(8) The Commission reserves the right to make such further orders relative to this crossing and the crossing of the Sanger Branch

by Isabelle Street, hereinbefore mentioned, 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.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 10th day of October, 1914.

John M. Eschleman

Alfred Gordon

Max Thelen

Commissioners.