

Decision No. 8656

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application  
of COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE for the in-  
stallation of a grade crossing on  
the main county highway from Mecca  
to Blythe of the main track of the  
Southern Pacific Company at Mecca,  
California.

Application No. 6073.

Loyal C. Kelley, District Attorney  
for Applicant.

Frank B. Austin, for Southern Pacific  
Company.

BY THE COMMISSION.

O P I N I O N

By the above application, the County of Riverside seeks permission to cross at grade the tracks of the Southern Pacific system in connection with the straightening of the main county highway from Mecca to Blythe, extending along the north line of Sections 17 and 18 and over First Street in the town of Mecca. It proposes to abandon the existing crossing about 931 feet to the northwest of the proposed crossing.

A public hearing upon the application was held at Riverside by Examiner Westover.

The highway which the county desires to straighten is part of a paved highway to be built from Blythe through Mecca to the State Highway connecting Los Angeles, Riverside and Yuma, and lying about five miles to the west of the railroad and parallel with it. At a point about 920 feet west of the railroad, the county highway turns at right angles to the north and extends along the west line of Section 8, crossing over the railroad

tracks which extend northwest and southeast, and turns with a sharp angle southeasterly, paralleling the railroad.

The proposed crossing would cross the station grounds of the Southern Pacific Company at an angle of about fifty degrees, and extend directly through the freight house and two bunk houses, which, with others, would have to be moved or reconstructed if the crossing is opened. The relocation of the freight house would necessitate the moving of the house track and the crossover to the north of it, to place these facilities in the same relative position to the freight house which they now occupy. The new location for the freight house is about 425 feet west of the present location. The railroad company estimated the cost of these improvements at \$8,000.00, as follows:

Relocate freight house.....	\$ 600.00
Relocate one bunk-house.....	75.00
Construct one new bunk-house, 16' x 40'.....	925.00
Relocate 5 car-body bunk- houses.....	120.00
Relocate tool house.....	30.00
Relocate five switches.....	700.00
Relocate 1000 feet of track.....	1650.00
Construct driveway to freight house, 2400 sq. ft. ....	2000.00
Improve crossing.....	1300.00
Relocate and renew bell.....	600.00
	<u>8000.00</u>

The engineering department of the Commission has gone over the detailed estimates submitted by the railroad company and estimates the cost at about \$5700.00. The principal changes are in the cost of 2400 square feet of 4" gravel driveway, the relocation of four switches instead of five, and the construction of a new bunk house.

As the improvements are desired by the county for the public convenience and as the railroad company would not benefit in any way by the moving of the crossing and its facilities, it

would appear that the costs should be paid by the county.

Testimony shows that the present crossing is in open country with no obstructions to the view within two hundred feet of the roadway. The view of the railroad track to the west is entirely unobstructed for a long distance. The view to the east is somewhat obstructed by station buildings, trees and water cars for the full width of the two hundred foot right of way.

A traffic check for twenty-four hours, October 12, 1920, showed 119 automobiles, 20 other vehicles, and 30 trains passing over the crossing, the trains passing at an average speed of 25 miles per hour. Of these, 17 stopped at Mexca, 5 took the siding, and one was cut for the crossing.

The proposed crossing is in as much more dangerous location than the existing crossing. When approaching it from the west, the view is obscured to the south by a group of section buildings and water tanks surrounded by trees, and to the north by a water loading rack, a long line of water cars, a line of trees shading them, and also by a second group of section buildings. When approaching the crossing from the east, the view to the north would be somewhat obstructed by the freight house and car body section houses and to the south by a fruit packing house. The existing crossing is much to be preferred from the standpoint of safety.

Under all of the circumstances, we conclude that the application should be denied.

#### O R D E R

County of Riverside having applied to the Commission

for permission to construct a crossing at grade across the tracks of the Southern Pacific Company on the north line of section 17 T. 7 S., R. 9 E. at Mecca and to abandon the existing crossing about 930 feet to the north, as shown on the map accompanying the application; a public hearing having been held upon the above application, and it appearing from the evidence submitted that the application should be denied,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the above described application be and it is hereby denied, without prejudice.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of ~~January~~ February 1921.

H. J. [Signature]  
Frank [Signature]  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
[Signature]

Commissioners.