

Decision No. 29481 .

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of  
the people of the State of California,  
on relation of the Department of Pub-  
lic Works, for an order authorizing  
the installation and maintenance of  
certain crossing protection at the  
intersection of Firestone Boulevard  
and Alameda Street and the tracks of  
the Southern Pacific Railroad, in the  
County of Los Angeles, State of Cali-  
fornia.

Application No. 20792.

Frank B. Durkee, for the Department of Public  
Works, State of California, Applicant.

C. W. Cornell, for Southern Pacific Company,  
Protestant.

K. C. Bean, for the Board of Public Utilities  
of the City of Los Angeles, Interested Party.

H. J. Griley, Traffic Manager, for Firestone  
Tire and Rubber Company, Interested Party.

W. B. Holt, for Union Oil Company, Interested  
Party.

Everett W. Mattoon, Los Angeles County Counsel,  
by W. B. McKesson, Interested Party.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

This is an application filed by the Department of  
Public Works of the State of California, seeking an order pre-  
scribing a method of protecting the grade crossing of Firestone  
Boulevard with Southern Pacific Company's San Pedro Branch  
(Crossing No. BG-489.5), together with the adjacent highway  
intersection of Firestone Boulevard and Alameda Street. For  
convenience, this intersection and grade crossing hereinafter

will sometimes be referred to as the intersection.

A public hearing was conducted in this proceeding by Examiner J. G. Hunter at Los Angeles, on December 22nd and 23rd, 1936, on which latter date the matter was taken under submission and is now ready for decision.

The rail line involved is Southern Pacific Company's San Pedro Branch and at the particular point involved is a single track line. It extends in a general northerly and southerly direction through the district. Immediately north of the intersection, a track departs from the main line to the east, from which the spur track serving the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company is connected. The first track referred to also forms one leg of a wye connection with the Santa Ana Branch of Southern Pacific Company. At the present time, traffic is controlled through the intersection by four boulevard "Stop" signs, which require all traffic to stop prior to entering the intersection. In addition, there is one Standard No. 3 wigwag and one Standard No. 1 crossing sign protecting the grade crossing.

Exhibit No. 2 shows that for a 24-hour period, ending at 6:00 P.M., December 11th, 1936, there were a total of 34 rail movements over the grade crossing. The exhibit further shows that of this total, 23 were switching movements and the remainder train movements. The evidence shows that there normally are four regularly scheduled freight trains each way daily, operated at speeds of from 20 to 30 miles per hour, and that the trains average about sixty cars. While there is no regular passenger service operated over the line, there is an occasional special passenger train to or from the Harbor. The record shows that there are about 20 passenger trains operated over the line per year, at a permissible speed of 40 miles per hour.

Alameda Street, which is a main county highway artery, runs parallel to and immediately west of the railroad right of way. Firestone Boulevard, which is an important state highway, extends in a general easterly and westerly direction from Playa del Rey on the west to Santa Ana on the east. This highway to the west of the railroad sometimes is referred to as Manchester Avenue.

Exhibit No. 4 shows the results of a vehicular traffic count taken at the intersection of Alameda Street and Firestone Boulevard on February 7th, 1935, and covers a twelve-hour period from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., which indicates that there were 12,475 vehicles traveling on Alameda Street and 7,401 on Firestone Boulevard. This check was taken shortly after the completion of the paving of Firestone Boulevard. A spot count of the Alameda Street traffic, only, was taken on October 19th, 1936, which indicates that this traffic has increased approximately 14% since the date of the previous count in 1935.

The intersection involved herein is an important one from a vehicular traffic standpoint. The adjacent grade crossing, located about forty feet to the east of Alameda Street, complicates the traffic control situation at this point. Applicant presented a plan of traffic control at the intersection, consisting of light signals which will control vehicular traffic in all directions on a time interval basis, except when a train approaches, at which time the traffic signals will be controlled by the rail movement, rather than time interval; in other words, a synchronized traffic control system. This plan is similar to the one employed at the Florence Avenue grade crossing and adjacent highway intersection located 1.2 miles to the north, which was installed pursuant to the Commission's Order in

Decision No. 24299, dated December 14th, 1931, on Application No. 17362, and which has been in service since May 9th, 1933.

The County of Los Angeles subscribed to applicant's plan. Both the County and the State suggest, as a plan of apportioning expense, that the two public bodies bear the entire expense of providing the traffic signals for the highway intersection and one-half of the added expense of protecting the adjacent grade crossing, involving the synchronization of the signals.

Southern Pacific Company, on the other hand, takes the position that the signal installation becomes necessary as a result of the highway traffic, rather than the railroad traffic, and, therefore, it should not be called upon to bear any cost over and above one-half of the cost of providing standard signals for the railroad crossing, which in this case would be a second wigwag, as there is now one wigwag maintained at this location. The company introduced an exhibit (No. 10), showing the estimated cost of providing track circuit control for traffic signals at the grade crossing, only, on a synchronized basis, amounting to \$2,521. Exhibit No. 8 shows the estimated cost of installing an additional wigwag to be \$490. It was the opinion of the railroad witnesses that two wigwags should be maintained at this crossing, whether or not synchronized signals are employed.

The railroad's contention - that the signal system controlling the intersection and the grade crossing should be independent - is based upon its conclusion that vehicular traffic in a west bound direction on Firestone Boulevard will not stop at the highway signal located to the east of the track when it is in a "Stop" position but will continue on across the

track to the east line of Alameda Street.

It is apparent from this record that it would not be desirable to install independent signals to govern the traffic at the highway intersection and the traffic at the adjacent grade crossing, due to the fact that, when a train is approaching, the highway signals might give a clear indication for traffic on Firestone Boulevard at the same time the railroad signals would be in a "Stop" position for this traffic. Clearly, this would be misleading and hazardous for such vehicular traffic.

In this case, the Commission must choose between one of the two plans presented. The applicant's plan appears to afford the motorists complete protection if the signals are observed. On the other hand, the railroad's plan permits of a condition where a motorist may be governed by the highway signals and disregard the railroad signals and find himself on the track when there is an approaching train. Clearly, the plan offered by applicant is the one to which we should subscribe.

Careful review of this record leads to the conclusion that the most practical and effective means of providing signals to control the traffic at this intersection is to employ applicant's plan of traffic signals at the intersection of Firestone Boulevard and Alameda Street and two wigwags at the adjacent grade crossing, these two systems of signals to be synchronized. It would appear that the expense of providing this protection should be borne on the following basis:

Applicant should bear:

(1) the entire expense of providing the traffic signals at the intersection of Firestone Boulevard and Alameda Street.

(2) One-half the expense of providing a second wigwag at the adjacent grade crossing.

(3) One-half the expense of synchronizing the intersection and grade crossing signals.

Southern Pacific Company should bear:

(1) One-half the expense of providing a second wigwag at the adjacent grade crossing.

(2) One-half the expense of synchronizing the intersection and grade crossing signals.

It appears that the expense of maintaining the traffic signals at the intersection should be borne by the applicant and that the expense of maintaining the wigwags and track circuits should be borne by Southern Pacific Company. The following Order will so provide.

#### O R D E R

A public hearing having been held, the matter having been submitted and the Commission being fully advised;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Department of Public Works of the State of California is hereby authorized to install a three-light signal system for traffic control at the intersection of Firestone Boulevard and Alameda Street, with a four-lens signal face for traffic on Alameda Street, which signal system is to be synchronized with Southern Pacific Company's San Pedro Branch, so as to provide protection for vehicles at the grade crossing of Firestone Boulevard (Crossing No. EG-489.5), subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The entire cost of providing traffic signals at the intersection of Alameda Street and Firestone Boulevard shall be borne by the applicant.
- (2) The cost of installing the necessary circuits for the synchronization of these signals with the rail movements shall be borne on a basis of 50 per cent by Southern Pacific Company and 50 per cent by the applicant.

- (3) The maintenance of the traffic signals thereafter shall be borne by the applicant and the maintenance of the synchronization mechanism shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.
- (4) Southern Pacific Company shall, within sixty (60) days from the date of this Order, submit a plan of the proposed installation for the Commission's approval.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that, as further protection at the grade crossing of Firestone Boulevard with Southern Pacific Company's San Pedro Branch (Crossing No. BG-489.5), an additional Standard No. 3 wigwag, as specified in General Order No. 75-A of this Commission, shall be installed, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The cost of installing this additional wigwag shall be borne on a basis of 50 per cent by Southern Pacific Company and 50 per cent by the applicant.
- (2) The maintenance of this additional wigwag thereafter shall be borne by Southern Pacific Company.

This entire Order is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Applicant shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify this Commission, in writing, of the completion of the installation of the protective devices authorized herein and of its compliance with the conditions hereof.
- (2) The authorization herein granted shall lapse and become void if not exercised within one year from the date hereof, unless further time is granted by subsequent order.
- (3) The Commission reserves the right to make such further orders, relative to the protection of said intersection, as to it may seem right and proper, and to revoke its permission

if, in its judgment, public convenience and necessity demand such action.

The authority herein granted shall become effective twenty (20) days from and after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1937.

Walter A. Ware  
Leon A. Whidely  
Frank R. Waller  
Paul W. Walker  
Ray L. Kelley  
Commissioners.