

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 35672

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of the CITY OF NAPA, a municipal corporation, for an order authorizing the City of Napa to construct, at grade, Adrian Street crossing over the right of way and railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, in the City of Napa, State of California.

Application No. 24587

In the Matter of the Application of the CITY OF NAPA, a municipal corporation, for an order authorizing the City of Napa to construct, at grade, Brown Street crossing over the right of way and railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, in the City of Napa, State of California.

Application No. 24588

NATHAN F. COOMBS and WILLIAM L. BLACKENBURG, for Applicant.

R. S. MYERS, for Southern Pacific Company, Protestant.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In the above entitled applications the City of Napa requests authority to construct two crossings at grade with the branch line track of Southern Pacific Company in a newly annexed subdivision in the northerly part of the city. A public hearing was held in Napa on February 24, 1942, before Examiner Malquist at which time the matter was submitted.

In this portion of the city the Calistoga Branch of Southern Pacific Company runs in a general northwesterly and southeasterly direction crossing north and south streets at an angle of about 45 degrees. At the present time there are three such streets in the district concerned, these being Yajome Street, Main Street, and Jefferson Street, the latter street being the route of the St. Helena highway into the city. The distance from Jefferson Street, the most westerly of the three, to Yajome Street, the most easterly, is one-quarter of a mile. Both of these streets cross the railroad line at

grade as does Main Street, which lies half way between the two, and all three crossings are protected with standard wigwags.

The two streets which it is now proposed to extend across the railroad are Adrian Street, half way between Yajome Street and Main Street, and Brown Street, lying midway between Main Street and Jefferson Street. These streets are now open to a short distance north of the old city limits at Lincoln Avenue and it is proposed to extend them to the new northerly limits at Pueblo Avenue, Pueblo Avenue being one-half mile north of Lincoln Avenue. A third east and west street, Central Avenue, is located half way between Lincoln Avenue and Pueblo Avenue.

That portion of the district lying to the south of the railroad is moderately developed as a residential area, particularly in the southern section near Lincoln Avenue. North of the railroad there is practically no development except a few scattered residences. Much of the area through which it is proposed to extend Adrian Street and Brown Street is now an orchard. There is, however, at present an acute housing shortage in the City of Napa and, since the section it is proposed to subdivide lies on high ground away from the sections of the city now subject to seasonal floods, the city hopes that with the building of sewers and other public utilities the district will rapidly develop as a residential section. Applicant particularly stressed the point that the lack of proper sewerage had retarded development in this section.

There is considerable testimony in the record as to the public need for the crossings of Adrian and Brown Streets with the railroad. Statements are made that the opening of these crossings will shorten the distance to the business section of Napa, relieve existing traffic congestion, and generally help to develop the district. Under present conditions, however, we fail to see wherein the opening of these crossings will in any way shorten distances or relieve

traffic congestion. Even though the section which is at present orchard land becomes solidly built with residences, the opening of these crossings would shorten traveling distances to and from schools and the business section to an extremely limited number of such residences. If the shortening of distances is essential to the proper development of this district, this could be accomplished by shortening the north and south length of these long blocks and opening east and west streets from Brown and Adrian Streets to the existing through streets.

While the blocks in this district are long (one-quarter mile), they are only about 260 feet in width. With existing crossings at Yajome, Main, and Jefferson Streets and the establishment of additional crossings at the intervening Adrian and Brown Streets, the distance between streets crossing the railroad would be less than 350 feet. The present rail operations over the line involved consist of one train each way daily, serving an extensively developed agricultural valley, and it is not improbable that with increasing shortage of rubber and the curtailment of motor vehicles, rail traffic over this line may substantially increase.

We quite agree with applicant that the construction of sewers is a necessity for the proper development of this district. However, we are of the opinion that such sewers can be constructed without creating the hazard of surface roadway crossings. Southern Pacific Company, while protesting the applications for the grade crossings, stated that it was entirely willing to grant easements for the sewers and other utilities.

This record does not justify the opening of additional crossings at Brown and Adrian Streets, and the applications will accordingly be denied.

ORDER

The City of Napa having filed the above entitled applications requesting authority to construct grade crossings at Brown Street and Adrian Street with a branch line track of Southern Pacific Company, public hearing having been held, and the matter duly submitted and ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Applications Nos. 24587 and 24588 are hereby denied.

This order shall be effective twenty days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 11th day of August, 1942.

Justus F. Gaeum

11/10/42

Francis L. Havenue
Arthur R. Baker
Commissioners