

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 36638

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of THE)	
ATCHISON, TOPEKA AND SANTA FE RAILWAY)	
COMPANY, a corporation, for an investiga-)	
tion of Downey Road Crossing No. 2-114.5)	Application
and Crossing No. 2-114.6, and for an order)	No. 25688
determining the reasonable and necessary)	
safeguards at said crossings and regulating)	
applicant's use thereof.)	

J. C. GIBSON and CHAS. L. EWING, for Applicant

THOS. V. CASSIDY, City Attorney, and
EDWARD R. YOUNG, for the City of Vernon, Protestant

CRAEMER, COMMISSIONER:

O P I N I O N

In this application, as amended, The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company asks for an investigation of the crossing at grade of its tracks with Downey Road (Crossing No. 2-114.5) and with the so-called Globe Mills Road (Crossing No. 2-114.6) for the purpose of determining the reasonableness of the safeguards now in effect at said crossings.

Public hearings were held in this matter on August 30 and 31, 1943, and on the latter date the matter was submitted for determination.

The Third District tracks of the Los Angeles Division of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company are located, in part, in the City of Vernon between the stations of Redondo Junction and Hobart, and in this territory consist of a double track main line. At the Downey Road crossing, in addition to the double track main line, an interchange track known as Track No. 6 crosses at grade. This interchange track connects the Santa Fe with the Union Pacific Long Beach Branch which runs approximately parallel to Downey Road and

crosses applicant's track at grade about 600 feet east of the Downey Road crossing. At the Globe Mills crossing, situated about 100 feet east of the Union Pacific crossing, only the double track main line is involved.

The Downey Road crossing is now protected by two flash-light signals (Standard No. 5 of G.O. No. 75-B), located on each side of the crossing, and by two boulevard stop signs. The Globe Mills crossing is protected by one Standard No. 1 crossing sign and one No. 3 automatic wigwag signal. Since June of 1942 trains have been operating over these crossings at speed not greater than 12 miles per hour, in accordance with an ordinance of the City of Vernon.

According to applicant this slow speed of operation of its main line freight and passenger trains materially delays its service to the general public and in particular to the armed forces during our present war emergency. Applicant presented testimony to show that it has expended, and is still expending, many millions of dollars to improve facilities on its coast lines in order to expedite safe movement of its abnormally heavy traffic, and that it is agreeable to make expenditures to better safeguard the crossings herein involved.

The Transportation Department of the Commission, through its engineers, presented testimony and exhibits (1) which showed the following vehicular and rail traffic over the Downey Road crossing for a 24-hour period (8:00 a.m. August 19, to 8:00 a.m. August 20, 1943).

(1) Exhibits Nos. 8, 9, 10, and 11 were introduced by Senior Engineer Howard F. Christenson of the Commission's staff.

Vehicular Traffic (Ex. No. 9)

	<u>Northbound</u>	<u>Southbound</u>	<u>Total</u>
Passenger Automobiles	5,991	5,887	11,878
Tank Trucks	39	76	115
All other Trucks	1,140	1,203	2,343
Total Vehicles	7,170	7,166	14,336

Maximum hour (5:00 to 6:00 p.m.)

Passenger Automobiles	947	489	1,436
Tank Trucks	0	4	4
All other Trucks	50	68	118
Total Vehicles	997	561	1,558

Train Traffic (24-hour period)

	<u>Westbound</u>	<u>Eastbound</u>	<u>Total</u>
Passenger	6	5	11
Freight	11	11	22
Freight Switching	26	33	59
Total	43	49	92

These exhibits also showed the number of vehicles delayed at the crossing waiting for trains and the calculated number of man-hours lost by users of automobiles. This loss of time represented only the time the crossing was occupied by trains; the time between the starting of the signal and the train reaching the crossing was not taken into consideration.

Analysis of the existing protection at Downey Road crossing, including ringing circuits, indicates that the signals operate for abnormally long periods before the trains reach the crossing. Exhibit No. 4 shows that should a train approach the crossing at 48 miles per hour the signals would start operating about 48 seconds before the train reached the crossing. A slower movement, such as 12 miles per hour, results in an advance warning of about three minutes, which invites automobiles to proceed over the crossing.

while the signal is in operation and in the face of an on-coming train, thereby increasing the accident hazard. These warning circuits should not operate for longer than 20 to 30 seconds for the fastest moving train, as provided for in our General Order No. 75-B.

The City of Vernon did not present any testimony, but adopted as its evidence the exhibits filed by the Commission's engineer.

Taking into consideration the volume of both rail and vehicular traffic at Downey Road, we are convinced that a complete solution of this matter would be to separate grades. Separation would not only eliminate the hazard but would also eliminate waste of time by users of vehicles while waiting for trains to clear the crossing. It is apparent, however, that under our present emergency war conditions a grade separation cannot be built, and we must therefore find some method of protection which will reduce the hazard at the crossing to a minimum and obviate unnecessary delays to vehicular and rail traffic.

The record leads us to the conclusion that the most satisfactory type of protection for this location would be so-called short-armed automatic gates. These gates are not any of the standards set up in our General Order No. 75-B, but the record shows that they have been used successfully throughout the nation. They are so constructed that they cover only that half of the roadway used by approaching vehicles. This precludes the possibility of a vehicle being trapped on the crossing. If the older type of gates were used, which barricade the entire crossing, a vehicle could be trapped on the crossing as the gates might lower before it could get completely across. The most satisfactory track circuits for such an installation would be for the gates to lower approximately 25 seconds before

the approach of the fastest train, the bell on the gates starting to ring about five seconds before the gates start lowering. On track No. 6, over which only slow switching movements are carried on, the circuits should be relatively short.

With respect to the Globe Mills crossing (Crossing No. 2-114.6) the record shows that the vehicular traffic is very light and that the view of approaching trains is clear in all directions, therefore it appears that no additional protection is required.

The record shows that the installation of automatic gates at the Downey Road crossing will afford greater protection to the patrons of the railroad and to the users of the highway, and will result in increased efficiency and expedition of rail service by permitting rail operation with reasonable safety at speeds up to thirty miles per hour.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held and the above matter submitted, and the Commission being of the opinion that public safety, together with efficiency of railroad operation, so require,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company is hereby authorized and directed as follows:

- (1) To install and maintain, at its own expense, short arm automatic gates at the crossing at grade of Downey Road over its main line tracks in the City of Vernon (Crossing No. 2-114.5).
- (2) To file, within sixty days from the effective date of this order, a supplemental application setting forth plans of said automatic gates and of the necessary track circuits, and requesting approval of said plans.
- (3) To protect said crossing by a human flagman at all times, during the installation of such automatic gates, when it may become necessary to discontinue the operation of the existing flashlight signals.

- (4) To remove the existing flashlight signals when such automatic gates have been placed in operation.
- (5) To operate its trains over said Downoy Road crossing (Crossing No. 2-1114.5) and the Globe Mills crossing (Crossing No. 2-1114.6) at speeds not greater than thirty (30) miles per hour, after the automatic gates above mentioned have been placed in operation.

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.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 5th day of October, 1945.

Frank A. Howens
W. B. B. B.
Richard Kachse
Justus F. Craven

Commissioners