

Decision No. 41198

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES 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 Public
Works, for an order authorizing con-
struction of a crossing at separated
grades of the State Highway and the
tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad
(Central Pacific) at Washington Street,
in Roseville, Placer County, California.

Application No. 28460

FRANK B. DURKEE and HARRY S. FENTON, for Applicant.
R. S. MYERS for Southern Pacific Company.
L. DOWITT SPARK, City Attorney for City of Roseville.
EUGENE E. WATSON for Chamber of Commerce of Roseville.

O P I N I O N

In this application the Department of Public Works of the State of California seeks permission to construct a crossing at separated grades of Washington Street under the tracks of Southern Pacific Company in Roseville, Placer County, California. Hearing on the application was held at Roseville on January 14, 1948.

At present State Highway Route No. 3 (U.S. 99-E) diverts from State Highway Route 17 (U.S. 40) at the intersection of Lincoln and Vernon Streets in Roseville and proceeds northerly over Lincoln Street, crossing the railroad yard of Southern Pacific Company at grade, thence on through the city. By resolution the Highway Commission has adopted a new route over Washington Street one block west of Lincoln Street and connecting with the present highway about two miles to the north. This rerouting proposes depressing Washington Street from Oak Street to Church Street a distance of about 1400 feet passing under Vernon Street, the existing U.S. 40 route and an important business street of Roseville, Atlantic Street, which is parallel and adjacent to the southerly railroad right-of-way line, and the Southern Pacific Yard. The cost of the

project, exclusive of right of way, is estimated to be \$1,574,000. Applicant recommends that upon completion the existing grade crossing at Lincoln Street be closed.

A very large freight yard of Southern Pacific Company is located at Roseville, this being the junction between its Ogden route and the eastside Shasta route and the concentration point for transcontinental freight. Lincoln Street is located at the east throat of this yard and is crossed at grade by the double track main line of the Ogden route, the main line of the Shasta route and five other tracks. These tracks are arranged in two groups, the main lines and two sidings which are used as leads to the main classification yards are located on the northerly side of the railroad right of way. About 150 feet southerly is a group of three side tracks which serve the freight house, various warehouses and the track scale. Each group of tracks is protected by two standard No. 5 flashing light signals manually operated from a flagman's tower located between the two sets of tracks. Rail traffic on the south group of tracks is relatively light but the northerly group is heavily used by main line train movements and switching.

Lincoln Street for a block or more on each side of railroad right of way is closely built up with retail establishments and the residential areas of the town are also located on both sides of the railroad. As a result there is a large interchange of traffic across the tracks, much of which moves over the Lincoln Street crossing, the nearest adjacent crossings being 1500 feet to the east and over a mile to the west. An analysis of this traffic made by the Division of Highways indicates that about 70% of the vehicular traffic and practically all of the pedestrian traffic over the crossing is local.

Southern Pacific Company has conducted a very complete check of the traffic, both highway and rail, the survey extending continuously twenty four hours daily for a week in December, 1947. Full data as to volume, the time the crossing was blocked, and delays to vehicles were recorded (Exhibits 11, 12 and 13). This count shows an average daily traffic of about 10,800 vehicles, 3500 pedestrians and 230 rail movements. There is an unusually large number of rail movement over the crossing as it is situated at the throat of the yard with the main crossovers and ladder lead switches to both the eastward and westward classification yards located immediately west of Lincoln Street. Freight trains entering or

- (1) Traffic statistics abstracted and summarized from Exhibits 11, 12 and 13 and based on 7-day continuous check. Being daily averages the totals do not necessarily check.

Average Daily Highway Traffic

Autos	9141
Buses	59
Trucks	1327
Other Vehicles	280
Total Vehicles (Av. Daily)	10808
" Pedestrians "	3520

Average Daily Rail Movements Over Crossing

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Time Blocked</u>
Freight Trains	31	2 h. 03 m.
Passenger Trains	12	16 m.
Light Engines	107)	
Switching Moves	78)	2 h. 31 m.
Total (Average Daily)	230	4 h. 50 m.

Delays to Highway Traffic

	<u>Total 7 Days</u>	<u>No. Delayed</u>	<u>% Delayed</u>
Vehicles	75,659	12,001	15.7%
Pedestrians	24,644	4,182	17.0%

leaving the yards move at reduced speeds taking several minutes to pass and switching is constantly in progress. The 7-day check indicates that the crossing is blocked about 20% of the time. A large volume of highway traffic must necessarily be delayed and inconvenienced. The exhibits show that an average of fifteen trains daily block the crossing for five minutes or more and numerous times accumulations of 50 to 100 vehicles occur, disrupting traffic in the Roseville business section and sometimes backing up to the main highway intersection at Vernon Street. About 16% of the vehicular traffic and 17% of the pedestrian traffic using the crossing is subject to delay. Based on the ratio developed by the highway engineer the average daily distribution between local and through traffic is about as follows:

	<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Pedestrian</u>
Local	7566	3520
Through	<u>3242</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	10808	3520

The crossing also has an extensive accident history. The Commission's records show that during the twenty-two year period ending December 31, 1947, 122 accidents were reported resulting in one fatality and 38 persons injured (Exhibit 9).

Because of these delays to traffic and the accident hazard something must be done to alleviate conditions at this crossing. To construct a grade separation at Lincoln Street would involve immense property damage in that a large portion of the existing business district would be rendered useless for its present purpose. While a less expensive location for a separation to take care of through traffic than that proposed could probably be found this would not solve the local problem. If an expenditure of over

a million and one-half dollars is to be made it certainly should supply relief to the 7500 local vehicles and 3500 pedestrians having occasion to cross the tracks daily.

Two local witnesses appeared and signified that while they favored the grade separation they did not want the existing grade crossing closed in that such closing would ruin the retail business on Lincoln Street. While the solution proposed in this application will undoubtedly affect property values, disturb the traveling habits of the local traffic and cause inconvenience, these factors may be largely, if not entirely, offset by the elimination of congestion, delays, and hazards now existing because of the grade crossing. The problem must eventually be faced and it is desirable to do so before further growth and major improvements make the solution impossible or much more expensive. The Commission is of the opinion that if the grade separation is to be economically justified the existing grade crossing at Lincoln Street must be closed.

Southern Pacific Company raises the issue that if Lincoln Street is closed across all its tracks access to its freight house and other facilities on its right of way will be destroyed. Attention is called, however, to the fact that Atlantic Street, an improved public thoroughfare, is parallel and adjacent to the railroad's right of way and the company therefore has access to its property at any point it may desire. If, when Lincoln Street is vacated and closed to public use, it chooses to obtain such access by private driveway at the site of the present street, it is at full liberty to do so. A crossing with the three house tracks would be required but such crossing would then exist as a railroad facility and

not as a public crossing. The important feature would be to effectively barricade against any crossing either vehicular or pedestrian with the main line group of tracks on the northerly side of the right of way.

The general plan of the subway at present provides for pedestrian walks on the westerly side of the roadway but the opposite side is nearer to the Lincoln Street business district and the existing crossing. Since pedestrians will probably be more inconvenienced by the closing of Lincoln Street than other traffic, it would appear desirable to provide a pedestrian passageway on that side of the subway and to furnish ample access to intersecting surface side walks, preferably by ramps.

No pertinent testimony was received with respect to the apportionment of cost as it was requested by the railroad and agreed to by applicant that the matter of cost be left undetermined until after a decision is reached as to the terms under which the grade separation is authorized. If then the parties cannot agree on the division of cost, the Commission can reopen the matter for the purpose of getting a record upon which an apportionment of cost can be made.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that the Department of Public Works of the State of California is authorized to construct State Highway Route 3 (Washington Street) at separated grades under the tracks of Southern Pacific Company, in Roseville, Placer County, at the

location shown by map (Exhibit A) attached to the application, subject to the following conditions:

1. Said crossing shall be identified as Crossing No. A-106.5-B.

2. Upon completion of the grade separation the existing crossing of Lincoln Street (Crossing No. A-106.6) shall be vacated as a public thoroughfare across the right of-way of Southern Pacific Company and said crossing shall be effectively barricaded to prevent any use by the public.

3. Prior to adoption of final plans for said grade separation applicant shall submit to the Commission for its approval a sketch showing the location and type of barricade it proposes to use in connection with the closing of the Lincoln Street crossing and also the general arrangement of vehicular and pedestrian ways which are to be provided at the crossing herein authorized.

4. Prior to commencement of construction detailed plans of said grade separation, approved by Southern Pacific Company, shall be filed with the Commission.

5. Construction and maintenance expenses shall be borne in accordance with agreement entered into between the parties and copy of said agreement shall be filed with the Commission within thirty days from the date thereof. Should the parties fail to agree the Commission shall apportion the cost of construction and maintenance by a further order.

Within thirty days after completion pursuant to this order applicant shall so advise the Commission in writing. This

authorization shall become void if not exercised within two years, unless time be extended or if conditions are not complied with.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, February 10 1948.

R. Z. Dwyer
Justin F. Green
Frank J. Lawrence
Harold H. Kils
Samuel H. Potter
COMMISSIONERS