

**ORIGINAL**Decision No. 70170

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Investigation into the safety,  
 maintenance, operation, use, and  
 protection of the crossing at grade  
 of Sampson Avenue and the tracks of  
 THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA & SANTA FE  
 RAILWAY COMPANY in or near the CITY  
 OF CORONA, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,  
 Crossing No. 2B-22.7.

Case No. 8004  
 (Filed September 15, 1964)

Application of CITY OF CORONA, a  
 Municipal Corporation and Political  
 Subdivision of the State of  
 California, for an Order Authorizing  
 It to Relocate at Grade Existing  
 Crossing No. 2B-22.7, and to Dismiss  
 Case No. 8004.

Application No. 47611  
 (Filed May 24, 1965)

Thomas H. White, Arthur E. Goulet, and  
 Howard Gesley, for City of Corona,  
 respondent and protestant in Case  
 No. 8004; and Thomas H. White, for  
 City of Corona, applicant in Applica-  
tion No. 47611.

Jayne C. Billey, for The Atchison, Topeka  
 & Santa Fe Railway Company, respondent  
 in Case No. 8004 and interested party  
 in Application No. 47611.

Steven Stafford and F. Demcy Mylar, for  
 Radio Station KREL, protestant in Case  
 No. 8004; and Paul F. Crouch, for KREL,  
 interested party in Application No. 47611.

Jacqueline Slaughter, for Corona Dee Gee Co.,  
 protestant in Case No. 8004.

Walter G. Danielson, for Olympic Rock  
 Products and Triangle Rock Products, Inc.,  
 protestants in Case No. 8004, and for  
 Industrial Asphalt of California, Inc.,  
 successor to Olympic Rock Products, inter-  
 ested party in Application No. 47611.

George Thwing, Jr., for Triangle Rock  
 Products, Inc., protestant in Application  
 No. 47611.

Lester Samstag in Case No. 8004, and Arthur R.  
 Seidler in Application No. 47611, for  
 Aluminum & Magnesium, Inc., interested party.

L. C. McNutt, for Mrs. Dorothy Long, interested  
 party in Application No. 47611.

Lawrence Garcia and W. F. Hibbard, for the  
 Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

The above matters were heard in the City of Corona before Examiner Chiesa, Case No. 8004 on February 2 and April 14, 1965, and Application No. 47611 on August 18, 1965. At the latter hearing it was stipulated that the record in Case No. 8004 be consolidated with and made a part of the record in the application matter and that the two matters be submitted simultaneously.

The Commission instituted the investigation on its own motion into the safety, maintenance, use and protection of the grade crossing of Sampson Avenue and the track of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company (Santa Fe), (Crossing No. 2B-22.7) in the City of Corona (City), County of Riverside. The investigation also includes a crossing over the Elsinore Branch line which is needed to provide access to a metal concern within a wye formed by the branch line and a passing track.

The evidence shows that:

Sampson Avenue at and in the vicinity of the crossing is a private road, not a dedicated street, used by the public and principally serving an area north of the Santa Fe tracks which is undeveloped except for several business establishments such as a radio station, rock and gravel pit, and granite quarry. The area is zoned M-3, heavy industrial. South of the tracks, in the vicinity of the crossing there is an aluminum and magnesium plant and a rock and gravel company. The residential and

industrial areas are separated by the Riverside Freeway which is north of and parallels the Santa Fe tracks at a distance of approximately one-half mile. The crossing also affords secondary access to a residential development located approximately one mile northwesterly of said crossing. Westerly of the crossing and southerly of the Santa Fe track, approximately one and one-half to two miles distance, is the business area of the City of Corona (Exhibits 1, 4 and 5).

The crossing consists of one main line and a passing track on a curve of 2 degrees and 13 minutes at an angle of 65 degrees to the street. Approaches are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent grade from the west and 5 per cent grade from the east, paved to a width of 24 feet. Train movements are obscured due to angle of crossing and curvature of main line track.

Present protection consists of two Standard No. 1 reflectorized crossing signs with reflectorized "3 Tracks" sign. Stops are located on both sides of the crossing, with the one on the west placed in advance of the branch line track.

Accident records, since January 1, 1959, show five auto-train collisions resulting in 9 injuries and no deaths, none occurring on the branch line track. The crossing is used by heavy trucking equipment and passenger vehicles. A 24-hour traffic count taken on January 11, 1965, shows 402 vehicles passed over the crossing. On January 19, 1965, between the hours of 6:20 a.m. and 6:20 p.m., 291 used the crossing.

Train traffic over the crossing consists of two passenger trains, 32 to 38 through freight trains, and 8 to 10 switching moves.

Approximately one-half of the switching moves are over the branch track and the remainder over the passing track, which is parallel and southerly of the main track. Timetable speeds of trains are 65 MPH for passenger and 60 MPH for freight.

A Commission witness testified that visibility for westbound trains varies from 800 feet to 1,000 feet, for eastbound trains the visibility is dependent on the extent of weed growth; that it takes from 9 to 11 seconds for passenger vehicles and small trucks to clear the three tracks from the stop sign on either side of the tracks; that the time from the first sound of the train whistle until the train enters the crossing varies from 7 to 12 seconds; and that larger trucks require several seconds longer to clear the crossing.

The protestants, other than the City, are property owners or business concerns situated in the vicinity of the crossing. Construction of the proposed Elsinore Freeway and simultaneous closing of the present overpass at the Riverside Freeway in the immediate vicinity of the Sampson Avenue crossing would create a cul-de-sac of the protestants' properties, north of the tracks, in the event that the Sampson Avenue crossing is closed. The only remaining crossing for travel to and from the City of Corona and other points south of the tracks would be at McKinley Avenue, a distance of approximately one and one-half miles easterly of the Sampson Avenue crossing.

Protestants contend that a closing of Sampson Avenue would adversely affect their businesses, retard development of the area, lower property values and unnecessarily inconvenience the public.

The City protested the Commission staff's recommendation that the crossing at Sampson Avenue be closed, and after submission of Case No. 8004, filed Application No. 47611 for authority to relocate Crossing No. 2B-22.7 (Sampson Avenue crossing) to Parkridge Road at a point approximately 450 feet west of the Sampson Avenue crossing which crossing would serve the same streets and area that is now served by the present crossing.<sup>1</sup> It also requested a dismissal of Case No. 8004. There is no evidence that two crossings are needed in the area.

The Parkridge Road crossing will connect with the same streets and serve the same area as the present crossing. Protection devices suggested by the City are traffic stop signs at the railroad right of way and crossbucks. The hazards at the proposed crossing, except for the angle of crossing and the elimination of the branch line crossing, are similar to those at the Sampson Avenue crossing, particularly the speed and number of trains, and partially obstructed view. Indicated development of the area would increase the possibility of accidents.

A 60-foot wide roadway, as an extension of Parkridge Road, is proposed. A crossing, 40 feet wide, consisting of 24 feet of asphalt concrete pavement and 8-foot gravel shoulders, will be constructed. The grades of approach are to be two percent.

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<sup>1</sup> A similar application for a crossing at Parkridge Road was filed in May of 1961 by the County of Riverside (Application No. 43453) which was dismissed at the request of the applicant (Decision No. 64236). The area was later incorporated into the city.

If the Sampson Avenue crossing is closed, constructing Route 71 (Elsinore Freeway) and closing the present northern access at Parkridge Road and the Riverside Freeway, as proposed by the Department of Public Works, would result in a cul-de-sac between the said Freeways and the Santa Fe tracks. This would be detrimental to a large area now in the process of development. The proposed crossing would alleviate an undesirable situation. The evidence clearly shows, however, that the crossing protection at Sampson Avenue and that suggested by the City for the Parkridge Road crossing are far from adequate. Retention of the Sampson Avenue crossing would require the upgrading of protection by automatic gates, paving and widening of the roadway and improvement of the approaches.

Based upon the evidence, the Commission finds that:

1. The Sampson Avenue crossing (Crossing No. 2B-22.7) is hazardous and present conditions pertaining to train and vehicle movements over said crossing are dangerous to the safety and health of the public.
2. Public convenience and necessity require that Parkridge Road be opened and that a crossing at grade over the tracks and rights of way of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company be constructed as hereinafter authorized.
3. The establishment of a crossing at Parkridge Road and the concurrent closing of the Sampson Avenue crossing, subject to the conditions set forth in the following order, are in the public interest as evidenced in this proceeding.

4. The costs for upgrading and maintaining the crossing protection should be borne equally by the City of Corona and The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company.

The Commission concludes that Crossing No. 2B-22.7 be closed and that the City of Corona be authorized to construct Parkridge Road at grade across the tracks of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, in the City of Corona, subject to the hereafter specified conditions. It will be so ordered.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The City of Corona is hereby authorized to construct Parkridge Road at grade across the tracks and rights of way of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company at the location described in Application No. 47611, the crossing to be identified as Crossing No. 2B-22.8. The width of the street portion of the crossing and the grades of approach shall be in accordance with the plan and profile attached to the application. Protection shall be by two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented by automatic crossing gates.

2. The costs of constructing the crossing and approaches and of raising the side track and preparing the tracks to receive pavement shall be borne by the City of Corona. The cost of installing the automatic crossing protection shall be borne equally by The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company and the City of Corona.

3. The cost of maintaining the crossing between lines two feet outside of outside rails shall be borne by The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company. Cost of maintaining the crossing outside of said lines shall be borne by the City of Corona.

4. The maintenance costs for said automatic protective devices shall be divided in the same proportion as the cost of construction has been apportioned herein, in accord with and pursuant to the provisions of Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code.

5. Concurrently with the completion of the Parkridge Road crossing (Crossing No. 2B-22.8) and its being opened to use by the public, but in no event later than four months after the effective date of this order, the City of Corona and The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company shall effectively close and barricade the Sampson Avenue crossing (Crossing No. 2B-22.7).

6. The portion of the existing Sampson Avenue crossing over The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, Elsinore Branch, shall remain open as a publicly used crossing and be identified as Crossing No. 2T-0.1.

7. Within thirty days after completion of the grade crossing and/or the grade crossing closure, pursuant to this order, the City of Corona and The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company shall so advise this Commission in writing. The authorization in paragraph 1 hereof shall expire if not exercised within one year of



the effective date of this order unless extended by the further order of this Commission.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 4th day of January, 1966.

Frederick B. Hallock  
President

George E. Thayer

Augustor

William M. Burnett  
Commissioners