

**ORIGINAL**

Decision No. 73261

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Investigation into the status, safety, )  
maintenance, use and protection or )  
closing of the crossing of the Southern )  
Pacific Company in the City of Oxnard, )  
with Cooper Road; Crossing No. E-407.3.)

Case No. 8636  
(Filed May 23, 1967)

Randolph Karr and William E. Still,  
by William E. Still, for Southern  
Pacific Company; Steven Thurston,  
for the City of Oxnard;  
Joseph C. Easley, for the State  
Department of Public Works,  
Division of Highways; respondents.  
Reverend Gilbert Jackson;  
Richard C. Chala; Armando Lopez;  
Alberto L. Ordonez; Richard Carmona;  
Robert L. Soria; and Mrs. Paralee  
Rhodes; interested parties.  
Elmer Sjostrom, Counsel, for the  
Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

After notice to all parties concerned, a public hearing on the above-entitled matter was held before Examiner Rogers in Oxnard, California on September 5, 1967, and the matter was submitted.

The purpose of the investigation is set forth in the title of the case, supra.

The Staff Evidence

An associate transportation engineer investigated the crossing and made a report which was presented in evidence at the hearing (Exhibit 1). The essential portions of the report are as follows:

Cooper Road is an east-west city street, one-quarter mile in length, located northeast of Oxnard's Civic Center, terminating at a school and public park to the east and State Route 1 to the west. The street provides access to light industry, commercial and residential areas between these termini.

Southern Pacific Company's main line runs north-south and parallel to State Route 1 through this area and is located 52 feet east of State Route 1.

Cooper Road is one of four mainline grade crossings in the city of Oxnard and is located between the crossings of Colonia Road to the north (Crossing No. E-407.1) and 3rd Street to the south (Crossing No. E-407.7). All the mainline grade crossings in the city, with the exception of Cooper Road, are presently equipped with automatic gates.

Exhibit A is a vicinity map of the area surrounding the crossing.

The physical characteristics and accident record at the crossing are as follows:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Number of tracks:                  | 1 Main Line<br>1 Passing Track             |
| 2. Width of crossing:                 | 62 Feet                                    |
| 3. Width of street approaches:        | 52 Feet                                    |
| 4. Maximum approach grade:            | 8 Percent                                  |
| 5. Illumination:                      | 2 Luminaires                               |
| 6. Protection devices:                | 2 Standard No. 8 flashing<br>light signals |
| 7. Maximum permitted train<br>speeds: | 35 MPH                                     |

8. Posted maximum permitted vehicle speed: 25 MPH

9. Drivers' visibility when 150 feet from main line track:  
Westbound vehicles Restricted  
Eastbound vehicles Unrestricted

Vehicle and train use of the crossing is as follows:

Vehicles per day (May 1 & 2, 1966) - 3,463

Number of through train moves per day - 20-25

In addition to through train moves, numerous switching moves are made across this crossing.

Accidents recorded since the existing protection was installed in March, 1949 are as follows:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Injured</u>
14	0	18

The accident record since July 1, 1962, is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Injured</u>
8-21-62	0	0
11-3-62	0	1
5-20-65	0	1
7- 7-67	0	7

The staff witness stated that some of the hazardous characteristics of this grade crossing are:

1. The short distance between the crossing and the heavily traveled State Route 1 (1966 annual average daily vehicle traffic - 32,500) related to the turning movements off of the highway and the possibility of blocked vehicles in the crossing area.
2. The existence of a multiple track crossing and the possibility of two train-type vehicle-train accidents.
3. Restricted visibility for westbound vehicles.

It was the opinion of the staff witness that because of this grade crossing's restricted visibility, geometric arrangement and vehicle and train use, it warrants improved automatic protection and that, in addition to the advance warning provided by the existing flashing light signals, a positive barrier is desirable to restrict vehicles from the crossing area during the approach of trains.

The staff witness recommended that, within six months from the effective date of the order in this proceeding, the crossing of Cooper Road be improved by supplementing the two existing Standard No. 8 flashing light signals with automatic gates.

The staff witness further testified that it would be reasonable to install traffic signals at the intersection of State Route 1 and Cooper Road interconnected with and preempted by the automatic protection at the railroad crossing but that, in his opinion, the traffic signals are not necessary at the present time. He further testified that the traffic signal preemption should include an adequate advance green display to clear vehicles from the track area.

#### The Respondents' Evidence

The Southern Pacific Company and the City of Oxnard requested that the crossing be protected by gates as proposed by the staff engineer and agreed that the costs of installation should be equally divided.

The City and the Division of Highways have agreed to install traffic signals at the intersection of State Route 1 and Cooper Road coordinated with the crossing protection to give rail traffic at the crossing the right-of-way. They have also agreed on the division of costs of the traffic signals.

The Southern Pacific Company urged that crossing protection and the intersection protection be installed simultaneously. The City's witness stated that the crossing needs protection as soon as possible and the gates should be placed first and the traffic lights as soon thereafter as possible. The engineer for the Division of Highways stated it would be approximately nine to twelve months before the traffic signals would be completely installed.

All interested parties supported the proposed protection at the crossing.

#### Findings

The Commission finds that:

1. Southern Pacific Company's main line between Los Angeles and San Francisco runs north and south parallel to State Route 1 and 52 feet east thereof in the city of Oxnard, in which there are four mainline crossings, one of which is Cooper Road. At Cooper Road there are a main line and a passing track.

2. The traffic on the railway consists of 20 to 25 through trains per day plus numerous switching movements. The authorized train speed is 35 miles per hour. The posted motor vehicle speed is 25 miles per hour. The vehicular traffic is approximately 3,463 vehicles per day. Since March, 1949 there have been 14 vehicle-train accidents at the crossing in which 18 persons have been injured. On July 7, 1967 there was an accident, included in the totals above, in which seven persons were injured.

3. The existing crossing protection at Cooper Road consists of two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals. Visibility is unrestricted for eastbound vehicles (turning from State Route 1) but restricted for westbound vehicles (across the tracks onto

State Route 1) by building on the south side of Cooper Road and immediately east of the tracks.

4. The crossing is hazardous to trainmen and the public using the crossing.

5. The City and the Railway will each voluntarily contribute 50 percent of the cost of installing two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented with automatic gates.

6. The Division of Highways intends to install traffic signals at the intersection of State Route 1 and Cooper Road, and the City of Oxnard and the Division of Highways have agreed on the division of costs between them. They have also agreed that this work should be done within one year.

7. The public health, safety and welfare require that the crossing be protected as stated in the order herein.

8. The cost of installation of the automatic crossing protection should be divided 50 percent to the Railway and 50 percent to the City pursuant to the agreement between them.

9. Public safety requires that the traffic signals at the intersection of Cooper Road and State Route 1, when installed, be interconnected with the crossing protection at Cooper Road so that the railroad crossing protection preempts the signals at the intersection of Cooper Road and State Route 1, to prohibit all traffic from proceeding across the tracks when a train is approaching, with an adequate advance green display to clear vehicles from the track area.

#### Conclusion

The Commission concludes that the crossing of the Southern Pacific Company track by Cooper Road should be protected as specified in the order herein.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Southern Pacific Company shall replace the existing protection at the Cooper Road crossing (Crossing No. E-407.3) with two Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented with automatic gate arms. The costs of the improved protection shall be divided 50 percent to the City of Oxnard and 50 percent to the Southern Pacific Company.

2. 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 accordance with and pursuant to the provisions of Section 1202.2 of the Public Utilities Code.

3. When the City of Oxnard and the Division of Highways of the State of California install traffic control devices at the intersection of Cooper Road and State Route 1, said devices shall be interconnected with the crossing protection at Crossing No. E-407.3 (Cooper Road) so that all traffic across the tracks will be prohibited when a train approaches the crossing, with an adequate advance green display to clear vehicles from the track area. Within thirty days after the effective date of the order herein or thirty days after the City of Oxnard and the Division of Highways of the State of California have executed an agreement for the division of costs of traffic signals at the intersection of Cooper Road and State Route 1, whichever is later, the City of Oxnard shall file a copy thereof with this Commission.

4. The crossing protection herein ordered shall be completed within six months from the effective date of this order unless such time is extended by 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 27<sup>th</sup> day of OCTOBER, 1967.

[Signature]  
President

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]  
Commissioners

Commissioner William Symons, Jr., being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.