MO/ LM

Decision No. 73950

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of the City of Azusa for a Public Grade Crossing at Cerritos Avenue Over the Main Line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company in the City of Azusa, County of Los Angeles, for Access to the Northeast Residential Area of the City

Application No. 48431 (Filed April 25, 1966) (Amended February 10, 1967) (Amended April 17, 1967)

ORIGINAL

Richards, Watson & Hemmerling, by <u>Glenn R. Watson</u>; and <u>Richard R. Terzian</u>; for applicant. <u>Donald L. Stone and John L. Whitmeyer</u>, for The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company; protestant. <u>William L. Oliver</u>, for the Commission staff.

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After notice to interested parties, public hearings on the above application were held before Examiner Rogers in Azusa on October 18 and 20 and November 16 and 17, 1967. On the latter date the hearings were concluded, and submission was deferred pending receipt of concurrent briefs. The briefs were filed and the matter was submitted for decision. The Commission has considered the briefs.

By the application, the City of Azusa (Azusa) requests authority to construct Cerritos Avenue at grade across The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company's (Santa Fe) main line. Appendix "A" hereto shows this proposed crossing and other points and places in the city which will be referred to herein.

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General Information

Azusa was incorporated in 1898. In 1967 its population was approximately 27,500 persons and it contained 7.5 square miles. Foothill Boulevard is the principal east-west highway therein. The principal north-south streets going from west to east are San Gabriel Avenue, Azusa Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Dalton Avenue and Pasadena Avenue. Pasadena Avenue is approximately 945 feet west of the center of proposed Cerritos Avenue. The main line of the Santa Fe crosses over Foothill Boulevard in the west side of Azusa at separated grades and runs approximately parallel to and north of Foothill Boulevard. The named streets cross the Santa Fe at grade. West of Pasadena Avenue there are several spur tracks extending westward. East of Pasadena Avenue there is only a single line of track. The San Gabriel Avenue, Azusa Avenue and Pasadena Avenue crossings are protected by gates and flashing lights. The Alameda Avenue and Dalton Avenue crossings are protected by standard No. 8 fleshing light signals only. East of Pasadena Avenue there are two private crossings, one of which is approximately 930 feet east of the site of Cerritos Avenue, but no public crossings until Ben Lomond Avenue which is approximately one mile east of Pasadena Avenue. It is approximately 800 feet between Pasadena Avenue and Dalton Avenue and approximately 400 feet between Alameda Avenue and Dalton Avenue, 400 feet between Azusa Avenue and Alameda Avenue, and 400 feet between Azusa Avenue and San Gabriel Avenue.

The east-west streets in Azusa commence with 1st Street at the south and increase numerically to the north. Sixth Street is the first street south of Foothill Boulevard. Foothill Boulevard would be

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7th Street if numbered. Eighth Street is the first east-west street south of the Santa Fe. Ninth Street is north of the Santa Fe and at present terminates approximately 400 feet west of the proposed Cerritos Avenue. Cerritos Avenue extends from Foothill Boulevard south to Arrow Highway, which is south of proposed Foothill Freeway. South of 5th Street Cerritos Avenue is a four-lane collector street. Between 5th Street and Foothill Boulevard it is a two-lane street. Azusa proposes to develop Cerritos Avenue between 5th Street and Sierra Madre Avenue and has earmarked a total of \$909,000 therefor. The distance between Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Avenue is approximately 4800 feet. Between 5th Street and Sierra Madre Avenue, Cerritos Avenue is to be a four-lane collector street 80 feet in width and 64 feet from curb to curb. The portion between the Santa Fe and Foothill Boulevard, a distance of approximately 1200 feet, is to be through a shopping center. The street will be 58 feet from curb to curb, plus a six-foot sidewalk on each side thereof, and will be marked "NO PARKING" in this section. The proposed at-grade crossing is to be protected by Standard No. 8 flashing light signals supplemented by gates. As part of the development of the area, Sierra Madre Avenue will be extended in the near future east and west of the city. The Foothill Freeway will be immediately south of 1st Street. It will connect with San Gabriel Avenue which handles southbound traffic only and Azusa Avenue which handles northbound traffic only, and with Citrus Avenue which is approximately 3900 feet east of Pasadena Avenue. Traffic on the streets between Azusa Avenue and Citrus Avenue including Cerritos Avenue will be required to travel to one of said streets for access to the Footbill Freeway. There will be, however, connections so that various streets in between, including Cerritos Avenue, will be available for north-south traffic.

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The Azusa director of public works testified that Azusa plans to improve Cerritos Avenue as a secondary highway between Sierra Madre Avenue on the north and 5th Street on the south; that portions of the shopping center on each side of the proposed street have been constructed; that east of the shopping center there is a drivein theatre; that between the drivein theatre and the proposed line of Cerritos Avenue, and approximately 200 feet south of the Santa Fe there is a bowling alley; that immediately north of the extension of 9th Street and the Santa Fe and west of the proposed street, there is an apartment house extending to Pasadena Avenue; that north of this there is an elementary school; and that north of this and in the northwest quarter of Azusa there is a fairly dense residential area (Exhibit 1). The witness further testified that there is a steep bluff east of the residential area; that the northern portion of the area is a citrus grove and that the southern portion adjacent to the Santa Fe and bounded on the south thereby is occupied by a large nursery; that the citrus area is separated from the residential area by the bluff; and that the citrus grove is to be developed and a high school constructed at the intersection of Cerritos Avenue and Sierra Madre Avenue (Exhibit 2).

The director further testified that the only north-south street (streets) in Azusa extending between the north city limit (north of Sierra Madre Avenue) and the south city limit (Arrow Highway) not interrupted by the Santa Fe or streets is the Azusa Avenue (south) San Gabriel Avenue (north) combination; that when the Foothill Freeway is completed in 1970, the only streets having full ingress and egress to or from the freeway will be the said

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streets and Citrus Avenue; that Azusa plans to construct streets parallel to the freeway so that when Cerritos Avenue is completed, through traffic will be able to cross the freeway and travel from the north to the south of Azusa by using parallel east-west streets and the streets which will cross the freeway, including Cerritos Avenue; and that Cerritos Avenue and the Azusa Avenue-San Gabriel Avenue (State Eighway 39) combination will be the only two streets whereby a person can travel in a direct line from the extreme south to the extreme north of Azusa.

The witness further testified that Sierra Madre Avenue extends east to the city of Glendora and now ends in Azusa; that the traffic thereon filters through Azusa to Foothill Boulevard; and that Sierra Madre Avenue is to be extended west into the city of Duarte.

The witness further testified that the projected cost of the 5th Street to Sierra Madre Avenue segment of Cerritos Avenue, including the crossing and crossing protection, is \$909,000; that Azusa contemplates completion of the street in October, 1970; that the Foothill Freeway is to be completed through Azusa in the spring of 1969; that Azusa and the County of Los Angeles have agreed to split the costs of the project 50/50; that the project is to be financed by gas tax funds; that to use such funds the street must be approved by the State Highway Commission; that it was approved on July 30, 1964; that in November, 1966 the traffic count on Pasadena Avenue at the Santa Fe was 3,960 vehicles, on October 10, 1967 at said place it was 3900 vehicles; that the average daily traffic on combined Azusa Avenue and San Gabriel Avenue at the Santa Fe was 18,000 vehicles; that the average daily traffic on Alameda Avenue

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at the Santa Fe was 1,350 in April, 1966; and that the average daily traffic on Dalton Avenue at the Santa Fe was 530 in December, 1966.

The witness further testified that in 1970, assuming the completion of the Foothill Freeway through Azusa, Cerritos Avenue completed between Sierra Madre Avenue and south city limits, 9th Street extended to Cerritos Avenue, 10th Street completed to Cerritos Avenue, the school completed at the corner of Sierra Madre Avenue and Cerritos Avenue, and a residential area along Cerritos Avenue under construction, the average daily traffic at the crossing will be 4,960 vehicles.

The witness stated that whenever there is switching on the double tracks west of Pesadena Avenue, traffic is held up at the effected gated crossing over which the movement is being made (Azusa Avenue, San Gabriel Avenue or Pasadene Avenue); that each of these crossings has a time-out circuit; that there is only one track at the location of the proposed crossing; that the proposed crossing will be very nearly a 90-degree crossing; that to the north the present grade is three to four feet below the top of the reil and to the south it is about ten fect below the top of the rail; that the rate of escent to the track from the south is 3.9 percent, and from the north is .3 percent; and that the only obstruction to view at the proposed crossing at grade within 200 feet of the track is a row of eucalyptus trees which can be removed. The witness testified that Pasadena Avenue cannot serve the northeast portion of Azusa because of a severe bluff (Exhibit 1); that the projected average daily traffic on Pasadena Avenue in 1970 will be approximately 4,000 vehicles; and that if Cerritos Avenue is opened, Pasadena Avenue will still serve as a minor collector serving a public school at 10th Street and

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Pasadena Avenues, a Catholic school and church at Pasadena Avenue and Foothill Boulevard and a plunge at 5th Street and Pasadena Avenue; that if the project is completed there will be a high school on each side of the proposed crossing; that the citrus grove area is zoned R-l; that when this area is developed, Cerritos Avenue will be the most direct route from the northeast part of Azusa to the downtown area; and that the speed limit on Cerritos will be 35 miles per hour.

The witness further testified that if there were a separation of grades the Santa Fe would be over the highway; that if 9th Street were extended to Carritos Avenue and the grades separated, there could be a problem of access from 9th Street as the slope for the hole would have to commence 622 feet west of Cerritos Avenue; that Azusa does not have the right of way for an extension of 9th Street; that a separation of grades would cost \$408,200 more than a grade crossing; and that Azusa cannot afford such an expenditure. The witness agreed that if the separation were made by the grade separation fund and Pasadena Avenue closed, the Railroad would pay 10 percent and Azusa and the County each 45 percent, so Azusa would have to pay less than \$200,000 of this cost.

The witness agreed that if Cerritos Avenue is not opened as proposed, traffic will still be able to cross the track at Pasadena Avenue.

The witness further testified that 9th Street is also a secondary highway on the master plan of streets and highways; that it will be approximately 120 feet from the center line of the Santa Fe to the center of 9th Street; that when traffic warrants, signals will be installed at the intersection of 9th Street and Cerritos Avenue; that if a grade separation is required, 9th Street could be on the

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same structure as the Santa Fe; and that Cerritos Avenue could be connected to 9th Street if the grades were separated but that this would cause sharp curves where 9th Street joins Cerritos Avenue.

The witness further testified that the cost of Cerritos Avenue between 5th Street and Sierra Madre Avenue will be about \$909,000; that Cerritos Avenue will have the capacity to handle the Pasadena Avenue traffic and the Cerritos Avenue traffic at the time the street is opened; that the Pasadena Avenue crossing should not be closed as a condition to opening Cerritos Avenue because of the churches, apartments, city hall, parks and swimming pool on or near Pasadena Avenue; that if Azusa is required to put in a separation at grades the proposed crossing will be abandoned for the reasons that it does not have the funds for its share of the cost and the County will only participate in an at-grade crossing; and if a grade crossing is not permitted, Cerritos Avenue will be constructed between 9th Street and Sierra Madre Avenue; that Azusa would, if required in order to secure authority for the proposed grade crossing, close either Dalton Avenue or Alameda Avenue but not Pasadena Avenue; and that, disregarding the cost, a separation of grades is the safest railroad crossing.

A civil engineer with the Road Department of the County of Los Angeles testified that he reviewed the proposed crossing site and surrounding area; that Cerritos Avenue was added to the County's master plan of highways within the past three years as a secondary

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¹ There was a great deal of testimony relative to the cost of a grade separation as opposed to a grade crossing. However, both the applicant and the County made it very clear that no separation is to be constructed, hence such evidence will be disregarded.

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highway; that the County recognizes that local streets in Azusa are reaching the capacity of the desirable amount of traffic on them; that Azusa and the County agreed that the open arez of Azusa (northeast quarter, Appendix "A") should have a collector street (Cerritos) to handle the additional traffic and not impose additional loads on local streets; that the vacant area will develop in 1972 when the Foothill Freeway is completed through Azusa; that the alignment of Cerritos Avenue is the one suggested by the County and the Santa Fe; and that the County will not participate in a grade separation project at the proposed crossing. The witness further stated that when the crossing is opened there will be 5,000 vehicles per day, in 1977 there will be 8,000 vehicles per day and in 1987 there will be 10,000 vehicles per day. He recommended that the crossing be protected by Standard No. 8 flashing lights with gates. His reasons were the relatively low volume of traffic enticipated; that the additional costs of a grade separation structure do not economically justify the construction; that the drainage situation would be bad; that there would be restricted sight distances coming into or leaving the shopping center to or from Cerritos Avenue; that the grades of approach to the grade crossing will be reasonable; that there will be good lighting in the area due to the shopping center; and that the speed on Cerritos Avenue is to be restricted to 35 miles per hour. The witness recommended a grade crossing and stated, "I have made my recommendation and I will stand on it."

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A Santa Fe trainmaster testified that an eastbound engineer can first see the proposed crossing site when 950 feet west thereof and a westbound engineer can first see the crossing site when 1,980 feet east thereof; and that the speed limit for both freight and passenger trains eastbound is 40 miles per hour, for westbound passenger trains is 65 miles per hour, and for westbound freight trains is 50 miles per hour. The witness further testified that there are, on an average, five passenger trains and three freight trains per day over the crossing site, and that this number will probably increase; that the average freight train consists of 100 freight cars, six locomotives and a caboose, and weighs 8,155 tons; and that the average passenger train contains approximately 18 cars and weighs 1,706 tons. The witness further testified that he does not know the average length of the trains over the crossing site.

The Santa Fe's Supervisor of Air Brakes for the Coast Line testified that a 100-car freight train with six engines and one caboose, weighing 8,155 tons, going west (1.2 percent descending grade) at 40 miles per hour, would require 4,755 feet to stop in an emergency and 7,060 feet to stop with a service application; that a westbound average passenger train at 40 miles per hour would require 1152 feet to stop in an emergency and 1329 feet for a service stop;

2 Exhibit 6 is a group of photos, including eight taken from points between 1288 and 1339 feet west of the crossing site, and eight taken from points between 1861 and 2801 feet east of the crossing site. The site can be seen from the most distant photo in each case.

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that eastbound (1.2 percent ascending grade) the passenger train would require 1,066 feet in an emergency and 1,205 feet with a service application to stop at 40 miles per hour; and that an eastbound freight train as described on the same ascending grade would require 2,350 feet to stop in an emergency and 2,750 feet for a service stop. He further testified that if the westbound passenger train were proceeding at the authorized speed of 65 miles per hour, it would require 2,621 feet to stop in an emergency and 3,174 feet to stop with a service application.

The witness further testified that if the train consisted of two locomotives, 30 cars and a caboose, weighed 1500 tons and was traveling 40 miles per hour westbound, it would require 2,809 feet to make an emergency stop and 3,568 feet for a service stop, and eastbound it would require 1,764 feet to make an emergency stop and 2,028 feet to make a service stop.

A Commission assistant transportation engineer investigated the proposed crossing. He recommended that the application for the grade crossing be denied and that if a crossing is constructed, it be at separated grades.

The Commission finds that:

1. Los Angeles County's Master Plan of Highways includes Cerritos Avenue as a secondary highway extending from Arrow Highway on the south to Foothill Boulevard in Azusa on the north. Portions of Cerritos Avenue in this area have been developed to secondary highway standards, 64 feet from curb to curb with two lanes for vehicles in each direction, and other portions have not. The City of Azusa is preparing to develop that portion of Cerritos Avenue

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south of Foothill Boulevard to 5th Street to secondary highway standards and to extend Cerritos Avenue above Foothill Boulevard to Sierra Madre Avenue approximately 4800 feet north of Foothill Boulevard. This extension is also to be to secondary highway standards with the exception of a stretch approximately 1200 feet long between Foothill Boulevard on the south and the Santa Fe on the north. This portion of proposed Cerritos Avenue will pass through a partially developed shopping center, and to reduce acquisition to a minimum, the highway is to be only 70 feet in width including two 6-foot sidewalks.

2. The Santa Fe right of way extends in an east-west direction through Azusa. Near the western city limits of Azusa the right of way crosses from the south to the north side of Foothill Boulevard at separated grades. Proceeding easterly it curves so that at the site of the proposed crossing it is approximately 1200 feet between the center of the track and Foothill Boulevard.

3. Foothill Boulevard is the principal east-west highway in Azusa. The principal north-south streets, going from west to east, are San Gabriel Avenue, Azusa Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Dalton Avenue and Pasadena Avenue, each of which crosses the Santa Fe at grade. Angeleno Avenue and Soldano Avenue, north-south streets in Azusa west of Pasadena Avenue, deadend on each side of the Santa Fe. The Pasadena Avenue crossing is approximately 945 feet west of the center of the proposed Cerritos Avenue crossing. East of Pasadena Avenue the Santa Fe has a single line of track. West of Pasadena Avenue there are two or more tracks.

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4. The San Gabriel Avenue, Azusa Avenue and Pasadena Avenue crossings are protected by Standard No. 8 flashing lights with gates. The Alameda Avenue and Dalton Avenue crossings are protected with Standard No. 8 flashing light signals only.

5. East of Pasadena Avenue there is no public crossing until Ben Lomond Avenue, a distance of approximately one mile. There are two private crossings between Pasadena Avenue and Ben Lomond Avenue. One of these crossings is approximately 930 feet east of the proposed crossing site. It is approximately 800 feet between Pasadena Avenue and Dalton Avenue, approximately 400 feet between Dalton Avenue and Alameda Avenue, approximately 400 feet between Alameda Avenue and Azusa Avenue, and approximately 400 feet between Azusa Avenue and San Gabriel Avenue. Sixth Street is the first street south of Foothill Boulevard. Eighth Street is the first street south of the Santa Fe. Ninth Street is north of the Santa Fe and terminates approximately 400 feet west of the proposed Cerritos Avenue extension.

6. As part of the development of Azusa, Sierra Madre Avenue will be extended east and west of Azusa. Cerritos Avenue is to terminate on the north thereat.

7. The Foothill Freeway is under construction and will be through Azusa in 1969. It will be immediately south of and parallel to 1st Street. It will have interchanges at San Gabriel Avenue which handles southbound traffic only, Azusa Avenue which handles northbound traffic only, and Citrus Avenue which is a two-way street but does not cross the Santa Fe and is approximately 3900 feet east of Pasadena Avenue. On completion of the freeway, traffic on the streets between Azusa Avenue and Citrus Avenue, including Cerritos Avenue, will be required to travel to one of said streets to get on

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or off the Foothill Freeway. There will be connections so that the streets between the freeway access streets will have access to the freeway.

8. Portions of the shopping center through which Cerritos Avenue will pass between Foothill Boulevard and the Santa Fe have been constructed. East of the proposed Cerritos Avenue there is a drivein theatre. Between the theatre and Cerritos Avenue there is a bowling alley. This bowling alley is approximately 200 feet south of the Santa Fe and 21 feet east of the east curb of the proposed road. If Cerritos Avenue is built as proposed at grade, the bowling alley will be approximately at the road level.

9. Ninth Street is a secondary highway on the Master Plan of Streets and Highways. It presently terminates 400 feet east of Pasadena Avenue, at which point it is approximately 100 feet north of the Santa Fe. This street is to be extended east parallel to the Santa Fe and in close proximity thereto.

10. Pasadena Avenue extends north to a residential area in the northwest quadrant of Azusa and provides access for local traffic and for traffic going to and from points available by using Foothill Boulevard. The northeast portion of Azusa now zoned R-1 is separated from the northwest portion by an abrupt bluff. The proposed Cerritos Avenue will provide access to a portion of the city not now available by existing streets. Neither 8th Street, which is south of the Santa Fe, nor 9th Street, which is north of the Santa Fe, extends to the proposed street. Either one or both could be extended to Cerritos Avenue if there is a grade crossing. If there is a separation of grades, 8th Street could be extended with slight changes. Ninth Street would require either a bridge parallel to the Santa Fe and access ramps or a depressed crossing of Cerritos Avenue.

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11. When the Foothill Freeway is completed in 1969, the only north-south streets in Azusa which will extend between the north and south city limits are Azusa Avenue (southbound), San Gabriel Avenue (northbound), and Citrus Avenue. When the Foothill Freeway is completed the only streets which will have full ingress and egress to or from the freeway will be said streets. Azusa will construct streets parallel to the freeway and on each side thereof which will enable local traffic to cross the freeway by using the freeway separations. Cerritos Avenue will be connected to the parallel streets and will cross under the freeway.

12. The average daily train traffic through Azusa over the Santa Fe is five passenger trains and three freight trains. All eastbound trains are restricted to a speed of 40 miles per hour. Westbound passenger trains are restricted to 65 miles per hour and westbound freight trains are restricted to 50 miles per hour. The Pasadena Avenue crossing is approximately 945 feet west of the proposed crossing. There is a private crossing approximately 930 feet east of the proposed crossings. The crossing site is visible to a Santa Fe engineer 1,339 west thereof and 2,801 feet east thereof. The Santa Fe rail line descends going west at a grade of 1.2 percent and ascends going east at the same rate. East and westbound freight trains traveling at the authorized speeds cannot stop in emergencies in the sight distance stated. Passenger trains going east (uphill) could stop with a service application of the brakes. Westbound passenger trains traveling at 40 miles per hour could stop short of the crossing site. Westbound passenger trains traveling at the authorized speed of 65 miles per hour could not stop short of the crossing site except with an emergency application of brakes. If the

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engineer did not attempt to apply his brakes until he passed either Pasadena Avenue when eastbound or the most westerly private crossing when westbound, none of Santa Fe's regular passenger or freight trains in either direction could be stopped until past the proposed crossing site.

13. The City of Azusa and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works request that they be authorized to construct Cerritos Avenue at grade over the Santa Fe rather than at separated grades. The County will not contribute to the cost of constructing the crossing at separated grades. The City of Azusa cannot afford a separated grade crossing at the present time. It suggested a crossing other than Pasadena Avenue be closed and Cerritos Avenue be opened in its place. The City has existing alternate routes across the Santa Fe and will construct Cerritos Avenue between Ninth Street and Sierra Madre Avenue if the application is denied.

14. If the crossing is opened, the average daily traffic thereat in 1967 will be 4,960 vehicles. If the crossing is not opened this traffic will be able to cross by Pasadena Avenue or other crossings.

15. The proposed grade crossing would have an ascending grade of 3.9 percent from the south.

16. If the crossing is not opened, the proposed extension of Cerritos Avenue north of the Santa Fe can serve the same persons and areas as proposed to be served by the full project by extending 9th Street or other east-west streets north thereof to Cerritos Avenue. All property north and south of the Santa Fe can be served by alternate routes with only slight additional travel distances if the crossing is not opened.

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17. The proposed grade crossing would be hazardous due to the short distance, less than 100 feet, between it and the proposed intersection of Cerritos Avenue and 9th Street. The proposed crossing would be extremely hazardous due to the short distance between it and the existing public crossing at Pasadena Avenue 945 feet west thereof. The proposed crossing would be extremely hazardous due to the short distance between it and a private crossing 930 feet east thereof.

18. The proposed crossing would be extremely hazardous due to the fact that the engineer of a westbound train cannot see the crossing site until he is 2801 feet east thereof. At the authorized speed of 40 miles per hour, a freight train consisting of two locomotives, 30 cars and a caboose and weighing 1500 tons would require 3568 feet to stop if there were no emergency, and 2809 feet to make an emergency stop. In both instances the stop would be past the crossing site. At the authorized speed of 65 miles per hour for passenger trains, it would require 2621 feet to stop in an emergency and 3174 feet to stop with a normal coplication of brakes. The passenger train could not stop short of the crossing site except with an emergency application of the brakes. Public health and safety require that the application be denied.

19. A separation of grades at the proposed crossing is feasible and would enhance public safety and welfare.

20. Public safety requires that if the proposed crossing is opened it be at separated grades.

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<u>Conclusion</u>

We conclude that the request for authority to open Cerritos Avenue at grade across The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company at Mile Post 2-116.5 should be denied.

<u>ord</u> <u>e</u> <u>r</u>

IT IS ORDERED that authority to construct Cerritos Avenue across The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company track at Mile Post 2-116.5 is denied.

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

	Dated at	San Francisco_, California, this
day of _	APRIL	, 1968.
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		William Theman h.
		Aud P. Moniscert
		Commissioners

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