

# Los Angeles Terminal Plan

Designed by Railroad Men who Handle  
Terminals

---

Submitted to the Public for its Approval

**BY THE PRESIDENTS OF THE FOUR  
RAILROADS SERVING  
LOS ANGELES**

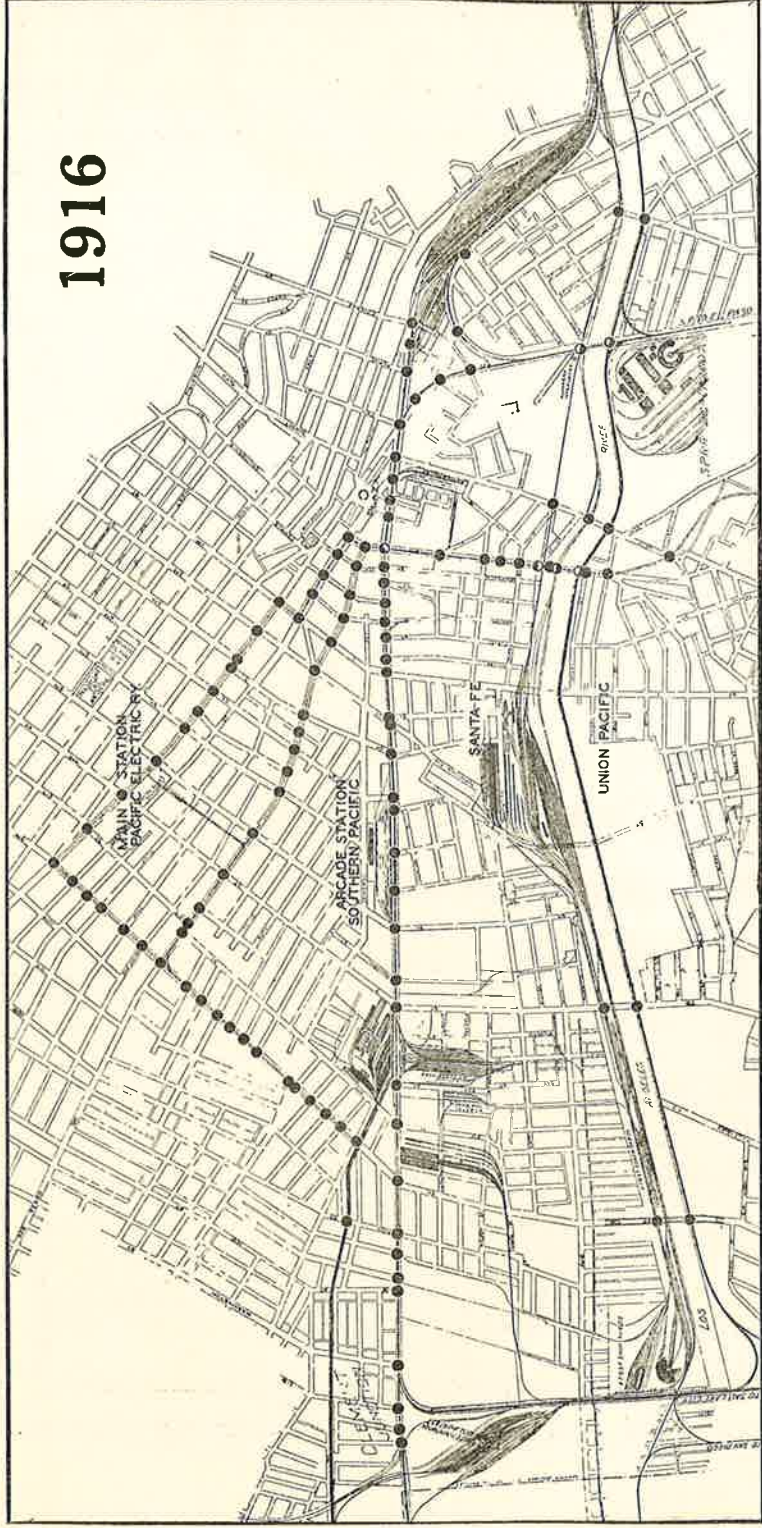
---

**Statement of**  
**WILLIAM SPROULE**  
*President, Southern Pacific Company*



**EVERY DOT A GRADE CROSSING**

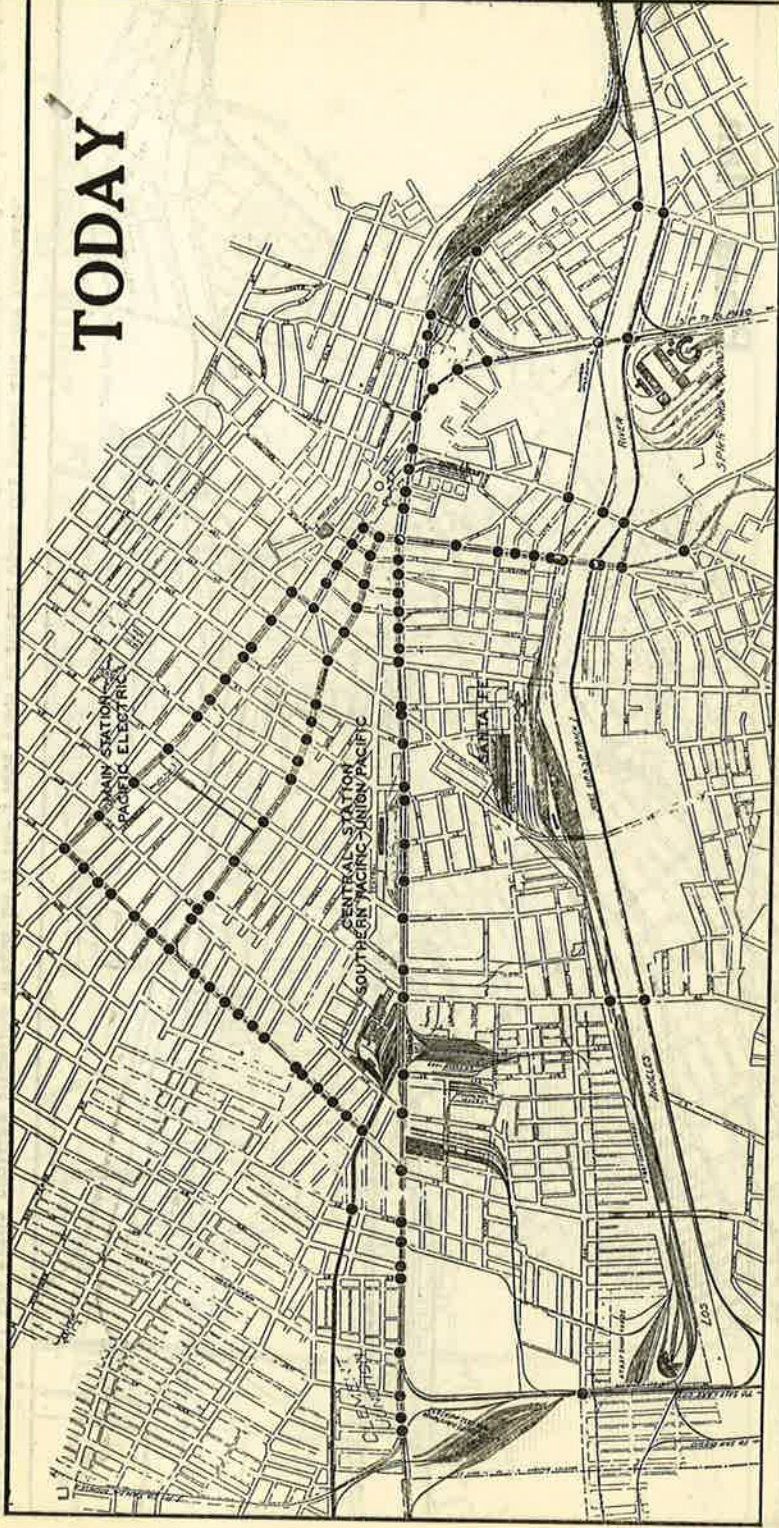
**1916**



This map depicts the grade crossing situation of the Santa Fe, Southern Pacific and Union Pacific along the Los Angeles River, as well as that of the Pacific Electric Interurban trains on the downtown streets of Los Angeles in April, 1916, at the time the grade crossing agitation started.

**EVERY DOT A GRADE CROSSING**

**TODAY**

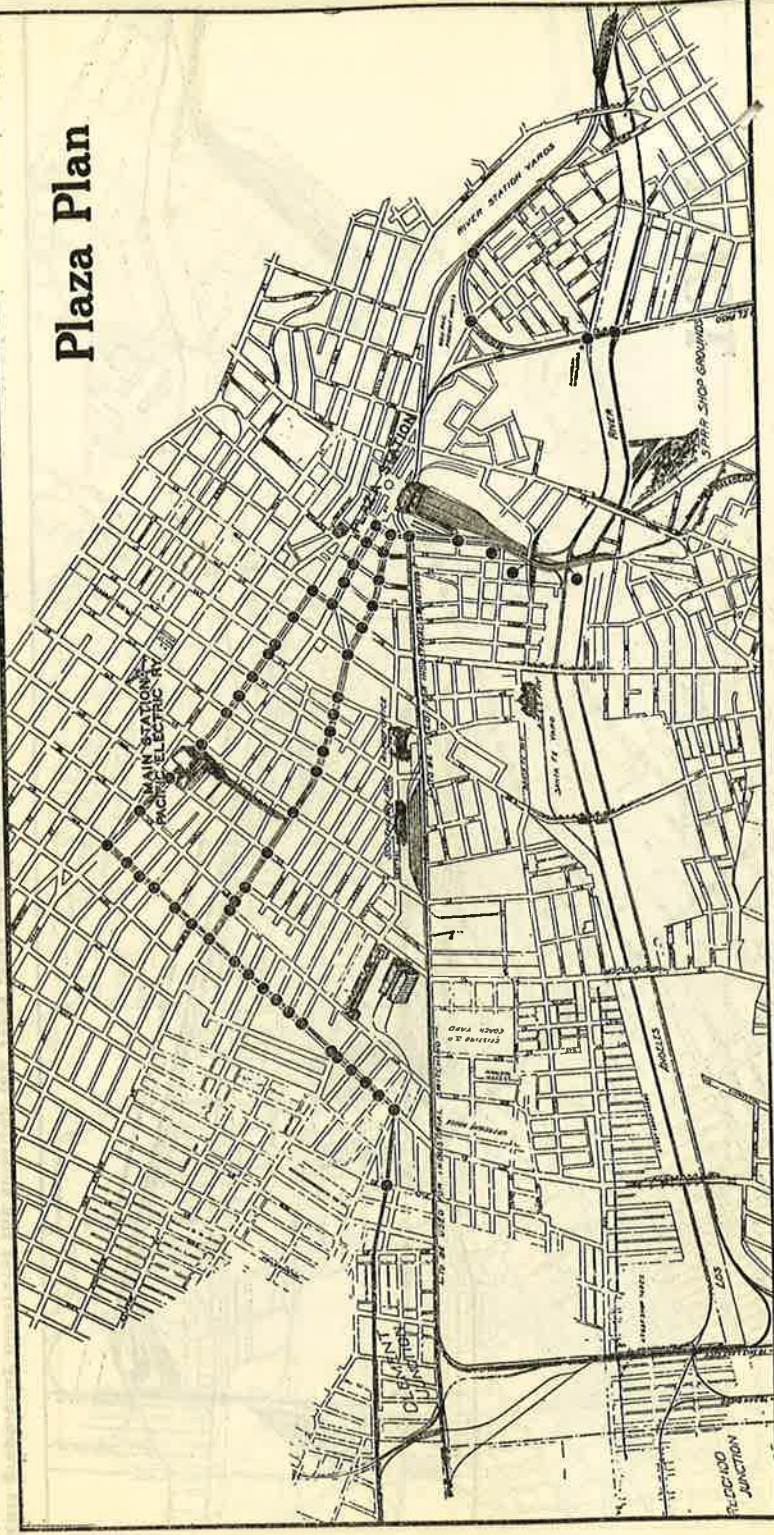


This graphically illustrates the situation ten years later and shows how the matter of grade crossing relief has been held up by injection of the Union Station controversy into the matter.



EVERY DOT A GRADE CROSSING

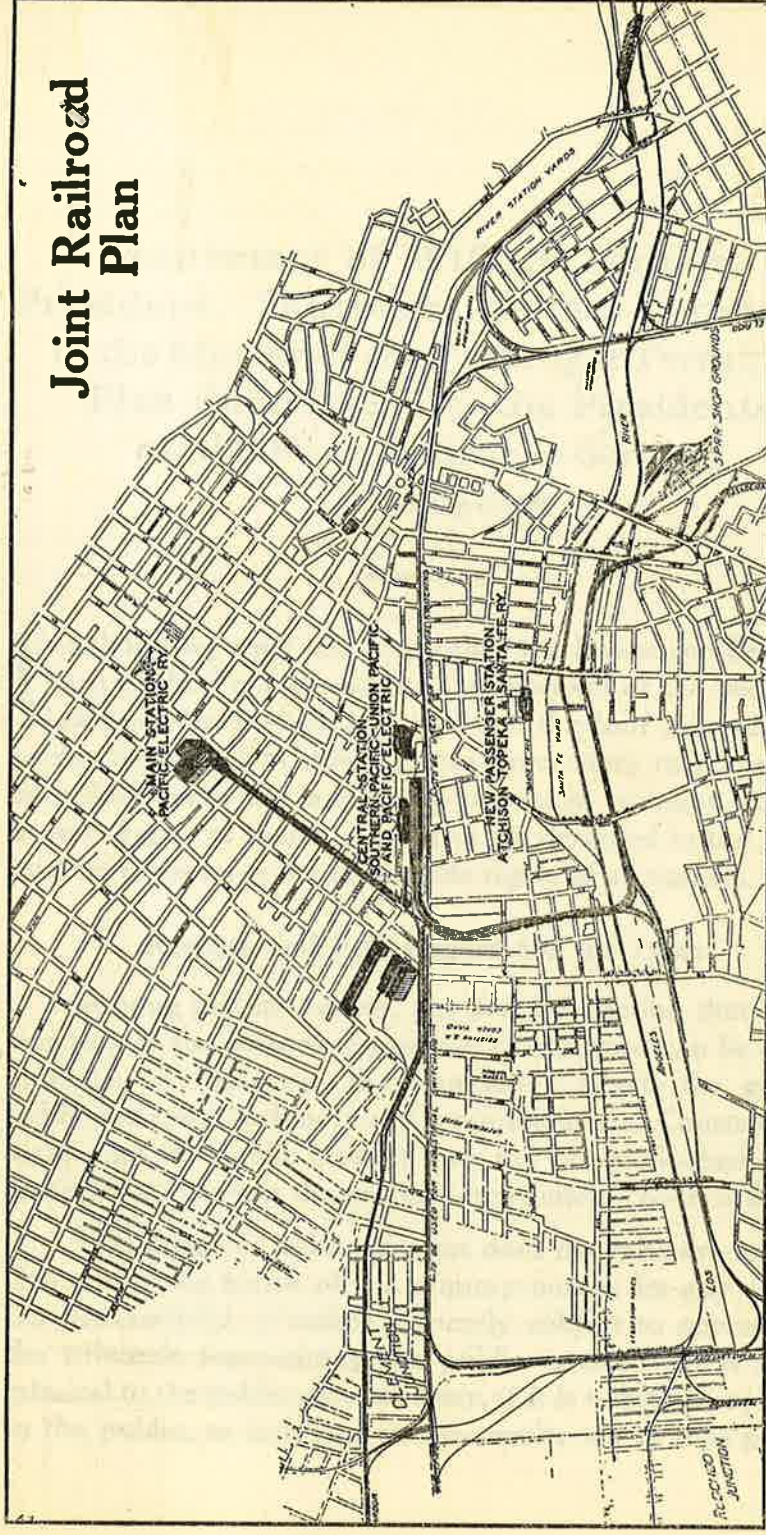
## Plaza Plan



This shows what the grade crossing situation would be if the Plaza Plan is forced upon the public and the railroads. Note particularly that no relief is given 50,000 passengers using the 1200 interurban trains of the Pacific Electric daily into and out of Main Street Station, involving 18,000 grade crossing movements.

NO STEAM OR ELECTRIC INTERURBAN GRADE CROSSINGS

## Joint Railroad Plan



This map shows what the Railroads propose. They will finance and complete the work within eighteen months from the time necessary approval is received from the regulatory bodies. Direct connection is offered Pacific Electric passengers with all the steam lines. Santa Fe will build a fine new station at its present site. The Union Pacific will have the benefit of the use of Southern Pacific passenger terminal facilities. The Southern Pacific will remove all of its passenger and through freight trains from Alameda Street, leaving nothing on that street except industrial switching. All of the steam line grade crossings are eliminated on this plan that can be eliminated by any other plan, and in addition all of the Pacific Electric interurban trains east of Main are removed from the downtown streets.



Statement of William Sproule,  
President, Southern Pacific Company,  
in the Matter of the Passenger Terminal  
Plan Submitted by the Presidents  
of the Four Railroads Serving  
Los Angeles

**I**N submitting what has been called the Passenger Terminal Plan of the Four Presidents for approval of the people of Los Angeles, it should be said that the four railroad companies concerned in this case are proceeding in accordance with the laws of the land, in no respect in violation of them or in defiance of them. The laws are designed in the public interest to preserve the reasonable rights of all parties.

**Respect and Full Regard for the Laws**

Among private parties, any fair transaction that is satisfactory to the persons immediately concerned can be closed at once. If, however, the transaction affects the general public interest, machinery of Commissions and Courts is provided that the public interest may not be overlooked in the transaction between the parties immediately concerned.

This factor of public interest does not take the transaction out of the hands of the primary parties by any means. On the contrary, it makes it merely subject to approval of the tribunals representing the public interest. If it is not inimical to the public, that is to say, if it is not itself injurious to the public, or injurious in the results which it is proved

will follow from it, and is not wasteful or extravagant in what is proposed, then the only question that remains in the transaction is as to whether it is fair between the primary parties, which usually is not in question.

This is the position in which the four railroads in Los Angeles are placed. They have a business proposal upon which they are agreed. They seek lawful authority to put it into effect as the best solution of the problem before the people of Los Angeles, not for the railroads only, but for the public too.

Without going into the details of what has taken place prior to the present hearing, it suffices to say that all of it is in strict accordance with the laws of the land. The railroads cannot fairly be charged with attempt to flout the laws any more than would any other party be charged with impropriety in appealing from any Court below to the Court above in furtherance of what he believed to be reasonable and right. All the parties are subject to the laws of the land and all the proceedings, so talk to the contrary is mere bluster. What the laws finally decide will finally govern.

### **The Railroads' Interest in Los Angeles**

In Los Angeles to a marked degree the four railroads are a part of the community and part of the public interest. They are not separated from it. They are very large owners of property in Los Angeles. The Southern Pacific interests alone are probably the largest property owners in this city, and probably have the greatest single interest in its growth in business and in beauty. Every plan we have, at present or in contemplation, has an eye to the growth of Los Angeles. It cannot be denied that the Union Pacific and the Santa Fe have great interests in this city and in furtherance of its welfare. I do not believe there is anyone who doubts the sympathetic relation that has been manifest constantly be-

tween the executive head of the Pacific Electric and all that stands for the growth and good of Los Angeles. So these railroads can fairly ask to be recognized as friends of Los Angeles, promoting its prosperity as part of their daily business. It is in this spirit the plans for terminal stations are presented.

### **Railroads' Plan is Designed by Railroad Men Who Handle Terminals**

The advice of the roads should, therefore, be taken as one of vital interest, not only to them, but to the community, and especially in a terminal question. Wrong or stupid counsel given by the railroads in this matter could only react upon them to their own injury. They are entitled to be heard as people who know the business. As the staff of all the four railroads are united in conviction that the best plan is that one which has their imprint, we believe the people of Los Angeles will not misunderstand when acceptance of that united plan is urged upon the people through the lawful tribunals.

This plan is urged, and the estimates of cost are made, by the men who have to do the work, who will be held responsible for the costs of it in the spending of the money, and who have to operate the properties with economy and efficiency after the work is done. Theirs are neither random nor theoretical estimates; the plan is the result of studies extending over years.

The Southern Pacific is charged with furthering the plans of the four Presidents, and well we may be, both because the existence of our present passenger terminal is involved, including the title to that property, and also because the Southern Pacific has the largest direct financial interest at stake, having to furnish the largest part of the money, and every plan runs into millions of dollars. Be-



cause of the nature of the title to the land used for our passenger terminals we could move from it only at great and unjustifiable hazard which no business man would assume.

It is important to us, therefore, that the right plan be the one adopted. It is natural we object to a plan that we are convinced is wrong, will be against the public interest, and would become a detriment to the city. When in this conviction all of the four carriers are united, the public can hardly afford to harbor the suggestion that these four carriers with their vast interest in Los Angeles are united in misleading the people in a matter that pertains to the railroads' own special and technical business, which they desire and intend to handle in a manner the public will commend, not only for this year but in the years to come.

### **Los Angeles Not a One Station Town**

No substantial reason has been given why Los Angeles should become a single station city. In the big eastern cities the problem has been studied and the single station theory has not prevailed.

The fact is that in a big city, a single station for all its railroad business is bound to become unwieldy.

A single station becomes a bottle-neck bound to create intolerable congestion of street traffic and make approach difficult and slow as the city grows. Instead of it, Los Angeles can well look to that plan which will most conveniently serve the greatest number of people using the facilities of travel and avoid congestion at the same time.

### **Most Important to Be Rid of Grade Crossings**

The fact is that what began as a movement to rid the general business section of Los Angeles of railroad crossings at same grade as the streets has since been deflected into a

movement that attempts to force the three steam railroads into a single station, for one thing, and for another thing, to do this upon a plan that leaves the Pacific Electric inter-urban railroad to shift for itself, although it is the principal carrier of passengers here and by reason of popularity of its service and the growth of this city, has attached to its operations greater problems in Los Angeles than all the steam railroads put together, and affecting vastly more people.

The Southern Pacific is even charged with delay in finding a way to create a union station, when the fact is we seek only to reach the main object desired by the public from the beginning. The main object of public interest is to get rid of the railroad crossings at grade. The union station has been lugged in without merit of its own.

I remember well that after we applied in November, 1913, to the California Railroad Commission for permission to build our present passenger station on Central Avenue (now known as Central Station), the Commission granted that authority with the stipulation that the erection of the new station and the relocation of the tracks should not be used as a defense against the separation of grade crossings in the State of California. We strictly complied with this condition and promptly began studies to separate grades in Los Angeles.

The next phase was in 1916 when the Municipal League filed complaint with the California Commission, asking for a union station as a means of obtaining relief on Alameda Street and other streets by the improvement and abolition of grade crossings. In 1916, at same time, the Central Development Association filed a complaint also calling for elimination of grade crossings.

It was not until a year later, in 1917, that this Central Development Association amended its complaint to allege

that in order to get rid of the grade crossings a union station would be necessary!

These proceedings were prompted by the serious crossing accident which had occurred at the crossing of the Pacific Electric tracks on Aliso Street and the tracks of the Santa Fe Railway. The proceedings, joined in by several cities of the San Gabriel Valley, were taken with the object of removing the dangerous railroad crossings at grade of the Pacific Electric Railway, and to separate the grade crossings along Alameda Street.

Thus you will see that the union station was brought in only because at that time those on the outside who had taken up the subject thought the separation of grade crossings could be obtained only through the creation of a union station. With this object in view, the engineers of the California Railroad Commission tried to plan a union station at the north end of town, but any matured plans of the kind proved to be so costly and uninviting as not to be practicable, and after ten years the crossings at grade still remain.

### Why a Union Station?

The public is growing curious as to why a union station. The union station has become a sort of Bogey-Man to call names and make queer pictures, but it has nothing to do with the progress or prosperity of Los Angeles. The destiny of Los Angeles does not hang upon a union station. The Southern Pacific and the Union Pacific have great and lasting interest in having suitable terminal facilities, and the traveling public approve the present Central Passenger Station.

The Santa Fe has several times stated its desire to build a modern passenger station in Los Angeles which will be satisfactory to the traveling public. No one can gainsay their interest in the matter either.

With the Pacific Electric having access to the Southern Pacific passenger station as proposed,—the Union Pacific continuing in the use of this station,—Los Angeles will have such a station as will naturally be of service, and when the Santa Fe builds its station, as it is ready to do at once, a natural facility will be added. It is true that this plan does not put all the traffic into one spot, but it does give the passenger convenient and adequate service for decades to come, without threat of congestion within a single funnel. The Central Station site will thus be preserved and not wasted, and the Santa Fe will have its own station, each rendering its own service in a proper and adequate way, which is all the public cares about.

The four Presidents' plan is the only one that will accomplish this and remove the grade crossings at the same time.

### Importance of Grade Crossing Relief

The importance of getting rid of grade crossings in the districts of Los Angeles concerned can be stated in round figures as to Pacific Electric trains alone as follows:

Number of their trains moving daily over street crossings .....	1,200
Number of train movements daily over these crossings .....	18,000
Number of people carried daily on these trains.....	50,000

That is to say, in these trains 50,000 people are affected every day by difficulties of moving over the street crossings. There are 18,000 train movements in a day over these crossings, and every movement slows down and affects the other traffic at each of these points, in addition to the hazard. In this great movement, 1,200 trains are concerned, and among these is not counted any street car line. The street car does a pick-up and set-down business for the convenience of the



local residents or local visitors. To this add the train movements of Southern Pacific, Union Pacific and Santa Fe at street crossings and along the streets.

When all is considered, it does not take much of an observer to perceive that the burning question is to get rid of the grade crossing train movements, which inconvenience people daily by the hundreds of thousands, that the union station is not an essential question and scarcely touches the public interest. The public is interested only in good service in the passenger station and on the train used on the trip.

### People Want Trains Off Streets

The plan of the four Presidents, called by what name anybody pleases, is the only plan that will take the trains off the streets. It can be done in a year and a half. Then there will be no more train movements on the streets. Let me say again, eighteen months work will accomplish this great achievement. After the work is done, there will be no trains on Alameda Street, and on that street only the freight car switching will be done which industries there require, mostly at night. There will not be a Pacific Electric interurban passenger train on Main Street, on San Pedro Street, on Ninth Street, Los Angeles Street or Aliso Street. The streets will be cleared of electric interurban and steam passenger trains. Elevated trains will take the passengers swiftly into and out of Los Angeles on overhead structures of modern design. The elevation we propose is not in the streets but along private right of way through the industrial district and outlying. It is not in either the residence or retail district. It is selected with the view of not being objectionable to any reasonable citizen and so that even the overhead street crossings will give ample clearance. As to grades, curves and height, it is in accordance with good practice. Passengers will have ready means of access to the Central Station or the Santa Fe Station without having to leave their trains to

cross a street at grade, for an ample way on easy incline will be at their service, whether to or from Southern Pacific, Union Pacific or Santa Fe platforms.

The effect will be to annex to Los Angeles in 1927 a wide area in four counties through the quickened service that will bring their people into and out of Los Angeles.

All of this can be done for much less money and with greater convenience to the traveling public than by any other plan. Even more than this is done by the plan of the railroads, namely, within a year and a half from the time the work begins, there will be afforded to the citizens of Los Angeles and the visitors within her gates, whether on foot, in automobile or in street cars, the great boon of being no longer subject to the trying delays daily which are now caused by trains on the street and at the street crossings, with the crowding and jostling, the fears and the risks, that are part of the existing state of things injurious to Los Angeles.

### No Need for Passenger Station at North End

The California Railroad Commission has stated in the first portion of the hearing which adjourned recently in this city to be continued in March, that they wish to consider every plan presented and that no plan is prejudged.

As above alluded to, the Southern Pacific holds title to its station grounds under a reversion clause or what in law is known as a "condition subsequent" to the effect that the land "shall be used for a general railroad passenger station and for general baggage and express business and not otherwise;—and that the premises shall revert to the grantors or their heirs, executors, administrators or assigns upon breach of said conditions." The Southern Pacific therefore objects to any proposal that would force us from the present location and cause us to incur the great hazard of uncompensated



probable litigation) of the very valuable we now occupy, while demanding obligations to provide inferior facilities proposed that we scrap what we think of that.

thern Pacific has acquired extensive End, formerly known as the Han- is excellent city property between east of Alameda Street, from which t our own interest should now favor nat locality. But self-interest in the at vicinity does not change our relat- est, a study of which only confirms oposal to establish a station east of f Aliso Street.

### Love the Stations?

fic continued to stop its passenger until the call for stop there ceased using that end of town for getting Yet it is proposed now to force the he convenient locations where they d where their money is invested, to ortant building has been carried on would not be so convenient to the

to a department store, for both are seeking business by serving the public convenience.

### Let Passenger Stations Stay Where They Are

At their present sites there is plenty of room for decades to come and enlargements can and will be made as needed. The new Pacific Electric facilities added, give a result that serves the real convenience of the people using the station. It is service that counts in the growth of a city, and not monuments.

As said already, the north end of Los Angeles is excellent property which will have a development most assuredly, but that section is not adapted to a passenger station. It is not needed there even if the site were suitable in other ways. Shops, hotels, office buildings, as well as the population of Los Angeles are moving steadily south and west away from the Plaza and have been so moving ever since the Plaza plan was broached ten years ago. The direction in which a city steadily grows for ten years is a human factor that cannot be ignored by prudent men.

The Plaza plan first presented has been abandoned by everybody. The modified Plaza plan is worse than the first one, and its best friends have to admit that it does not rid the city of the objectionable grade crossings which are the reason alleged for the union station proposal.



growth and prosperity of the city, for we are as proud of Los Angeles as any of her citizens can be.

### The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number

This statement is not intended to present all points because that would make it too long to be read conveniently, but it aims to give the main points and guiding considerations. The Presidents of the four railroads present it in good faith and rely upon the support of the public to whom this statement is made without the slightest intention to mislead. We offer the plan that has the greatest good for the greatest number, which is sound public policy and in the public interest.



Office of the President,  
Los Angeles, January 16, 1926.