



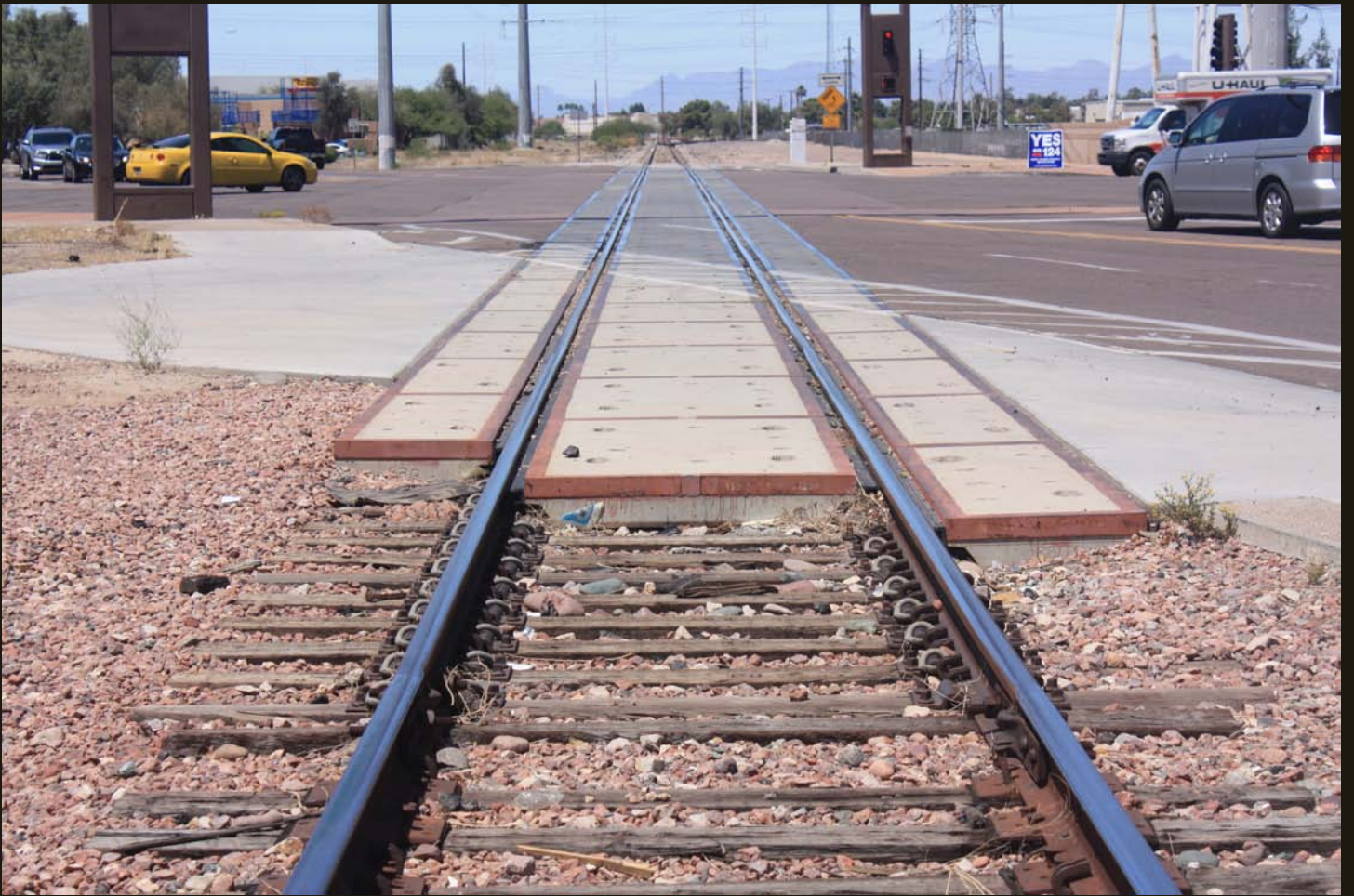
In the 1880's, the people of Phoenix were seeking a connection with the Southern Pacific's Sunset Route (1881), which passed about 25 miles to the south. The Maricopa & Phoenix Railroad was organized in 1886 with SP backing to build from the SP's main line at Maricopa Wells, Arizona (aka Phoenix Junction and now the current town of Maricopa) northward through the farming community of Tempe to Phoenix. Once receiving authorization from Congress to build through the Gila River Indian Reservation, the M&P commenced construction in 1886 with mainly Mexican immigrants. Bridges for the Gila and Salt rivers were built in San Francisco and shipped to the sites for final assembly. By January 10, 1887, the construction crews reached the Gila River (8 miles north of Maricopa) and work on the bridge began. However, the right-of-way through the Indian reservation hadn't been resolved and the Secretary of Interior suspended work and ordered the crews off the reservation. Negotiations lasted six weeks and by the end of April the line was extended 9 miles north of the Gila River and railroad stations were being built at Tempe and Phoenix. On July 3, 1887, the last of the rails was laid and Captain William Hancock, the man who surveyed the original Phoenix town site 17 years earlier, drove in the last spike. The next day, July 4, brass bands played, politicians spoke, an honor guard fired a grand salute, and a gala celebration the arrival of rail service in Phoenix.

The M&P continued under that name until 1895, when it was consolidated with the Phoenix, Tempe & Mesa Railway, built 1894-1895 from Phoenix eastward 8 miles to Mesa (not shown separately on the map). The new company bore the name Maricopa & Phoenix & Salt River Valley Railroad. In January 1908, this company was sold and was taken over by the second Maricopa & Phoenix Railroad, a subsidiary of the SP. In 1910, the M&P became a part of another SP company, the Arizona Eastern Railroad.

The M&P was abandoned in the 1940's following the SP's construction in the middle 1920's of a line parallel to the Sunset Route through Phoenix and joining the SP Sunset Route (1881) southwest and southeast of Phoenix. The M&P roadbed north from Maricopa to the location of this photo in West Chandler, a M&P railroad town, was re-graded and became Arizona Highway 347. From this location north, the rails were upgraded to the current welded rail and became a 10-mile branch to access industries between Tempe (on the SP 1920's route) and West Chandler, the southernmost of which here at the current end-of-track.



Southward view 5 miles north of the current end-of-track (previous location) and 5 miles south of Tempe on the M&P (1887) grade.



Northward view at same location as previous, where the M&P (now Union Pacific, I believe) crosses a street at Kyrene, another M&P town.