



There were two Western Pacific railroads, both of which pass through Livermore, California, and are visible in this photo. The first WP was formed in December 1862 by a group associated with the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad (1864) to build a railroad connecting San Jose to Sacramento with the plan that the first transcontinental railroad would follow the WP from Sacramento to San Jose, where passengers and freight would continue to San Francisco on the SF&SJ. In October 1864, the Central Pacific Railroad assigned all its rights under the Pacific Railway Act to the WP for the route between Sacramento and San Jose, including land grants. In 1866, the first 20 miles from San Jose had been completed when funding problems halted construction. Part of the difficulty was that federal land grants were not available where Mexican land grants had previously been made.

By 1867 the CP determined that the route via San Jose to San Francisco was too long and that it would be better to change to a route to Oakland and from there use ferries from the CP's Oakland Pier to San Francisco. The CP bought the WP and construction started again in the spring of 1867. The railroad was completed through this location and in 1869 arrived at San Leandro (on San Francisco Bay), where it joined the local San Francisco & Alameda Railroad (not shown separately on the map). The first transcontinental train to reach San Francisco Bay arrived at the SF&A's Alameda Pier on September 6, 1869, and the passengers took the SF&A ferry to San Francisco. Two months later the rail connection to the local San Francisco & Oakland Railroad (not shown separately on the map) was in place and the transcontinental trains now ran through Oakland instead of Alameda. In 1870, the WP was absorbed into the CP. By 1879, the CP had built shorter routes from Sacramento to the north San Francisco Bay and the WP's route (including this location) became a secondary route between the East Bay and the San Joaquin Valley.

In 1903, a second Western Pacific Railroad was formed by Union Pacific interests to build a line between Oakland and Salt Lake City, Utah, which was completed in 1909. The WP (1909) route from Sacramento to Oakland with a branch to San Jose closely parallels and in a few places crosses the original WP (1869) alignment. In 1979, the Southern Pacific Railroad (successor to the CP) obtained trackage rights over the WP (1909) and abandoned its parallel WP (1869) track over Altamont Pass, including this location. As of 2016, the abandoned section of the WP (1869) grade extends eastward from Verona, California (about 10 miles west of this location at Livermore), through Pleasanton, Livermore, and Altamont Pass, to a location about 6 miles east of the pass. Other sections of the WP (1869) route, to Stockton and Sacramento, to Oakland, and to San Jose remained as part of the SP (now UP) system.

Westward view of the abandoned WP (1869) grade, which is the fill grade topped with gravel ballast in the foreground, and the WP (1909) fill grade and tracks in the right distance.



A few steps from the previous location, a small bridge carries the abandoned WP (1869) grade over Arroyo Mocho. The WP (1909) tracks are barely visible in the distance above the far end of the bridge.