

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

CITY OF WALLA WALLA,

Petitioner,

CWW LLC,

Respondent.

DOCKET TR-240946

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY
A RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE
CROSSING AT POPLAR STREET IN
WALLA WALLA

USDOT: 808487X

BACKGROUND

- 1 On December 11, 2024, the City of Walla Walla (City or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition (Petition) seeking approval to modify a public railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of Poplar Street and a CWW LLC track in Walla Walla, identified as USDOT 808487X.
- 2 Respondent CWW LLC consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 Poplar Street is a four-lane minor arterial city street with a posted vehicle speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic through the crossing is 9,500 vehicles. Poplar Street is not part of an established commercial vehicle route or school bus route.
- 4 Warning devices at the Poplar Street crossing consist of advance warning signs, roadway markings, reflectorized crossbucks, Emergency Notification System signs, pedestrian warning bells, gates, and mast and cantilever mounted LED warning lights. One freight train per week operates at up to 10 miles per hour through this crossing. No passenger trains operate at this location.
- 5 The City proposes to reduce the traffic lanes on Poplar Street from four to two, add bicycle lanes, install roadway medians with delineators on both approaches to the crossing, and update roadway markings and signage. CWW LLC will remove and replace crossing panels. Rail will be removed and upgraded to continuously welded rail through the crossing. No changes to the crossing active warning devices are proposed. These changes will improve safety for users of the crossing.

6 Pursuant to the procedure specified in RCW 81.53.060, Commission Staff (Staff) arranged for publication of a legal notice in the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, a newspaper of general circulation in the Walla Walla area. The notice directed any person wishing to comment on the petition to respond in writing to the Commission. The Commission did not receive comments or objections regarding the proposed crossing modifications within the comment period.

7 According to the Petition, the parties have reached an agreement related to apportionment of costs.

8 Staff have investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the project must conform to the description in the Petition, (2) the City must complete the proposed modifications within three years, and (3) upon completion of the project authorized herein, the City must notify the Commission within 60 days. Acceptance is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

DISCUSSION

9 RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modification of a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. We find that the proposed modifications will improve safety, mobility, and convenience for crossing users. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 11 (2) The Poplar Street crossing, identified as USDOT 808487X, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (3) RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. See also WAC 480-62-150.
- 13 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 8, above.

- 14 (5) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on February 13, 2025.
- 15 (6) After examination of the Petition filed by the City on December 11, 2024, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

16 The City of Walla Walla's Petition to modify a public railroad-highway grade crossing located at the intersection of Poplar Street and CWW LLC's tracks is granted. Approval of the Petition is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The project must conform to the description in the Petition.
- (2) The City of Walla Walla must complete the proposed modifications within three years.
- (3) Upon completion of the project authorized herein, the City of Walla Walla must notify the Commission within 60 days. Acceptance is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective February 13, 2025.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JEFF KILLIP,
Executive Director and Secretary