

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

THE CITY OF KENNEWICK,)	DOCKET NO. TR-050759
WASHINGTON)	
)	ORDER NO. 01
Petitioner,)	
)	
v.)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
)	GRADE SEPARATE A RAILROAD-
THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN)	HIGHWAY GRADE CROSSING AT
SANTA FE RAILWAY)	COLUMBIA CENTER BOULEVARD
COMPANY,)	
)	USDOT: 104567U
Respondent.)	WUTC: 1C 8.30
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On May 19, 2005, the city of Kennewick, Washington filed a petition with the Commission, seeking approval to grade separate a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of Columbia Center Boulevard and tracks of the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF), in the NE ¼ of Section 6, Township 8 N., Range 29 E., W.M., in Kennewick, Washington.
- 2 Respondent has consented to an entry of an order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 On May 26, 2004, the Commission entered a related order in TR-040638. That order granted another petition by the city of Kennewick to temporarily relocate the Columbia Center Boulevard at-grade crossing 120-feet to the east to allow for initial construction of the grade separated crossing. The temporary crossing has since been deconstructed and traffic has reverted to the original at-grade crossing on Columbia Center Boulevard.
- 4 In the vicinity of the crossing, Columbia Center Boulevard is classified as a principal arterial road with two lanes for each direction of traffic, and a vehicle speed limit of 30 mph. The roadway crosses the BNSF tracks at a 90-degree angle

and intersects with Clearwater Avenue approximately 300 feet south of the railroad-highway grade crossing. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 28,000 vehicles. It is estimated that daily traffic volumes will reach 41,500 by 2024.

- 5 Respondent maintains one main track across Columbia Center Boulevard. Train traffic averages seven freight trains each day, traveling at maximum speeds of 49 mph.
- 6 At the current grade crossing location, BNSF has constructed an alternate rail corridor located below the plane of the roadway. When trains are redirected to this new grade separated corridor, the existing track segment crossing Columbia Center Boulevard at-grade will be removed. The grade separation of the crossing is entirely a result of the railroad being reconstructed below its original elevation. As a result, there is no change to Columbia Center Boulevard other than the planned addition of one lane for each direction of travel.
- 7 Warning devices at the current at-grade crossing include cantilever-mounted flashing lights with gates. When the grade separated track is open to trains, railroad warning devices will be removed, along with the tracks across the roadway. It is expected that the transition to the new track will occur by October, 2005.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the state of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington. *Chapter 81.53 RCW.*
- 9 (2) The Columbia Center Boulevard grade crossing, identified as USDOT 104567U, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.

- 10 (3) RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to reconstructing a public railroad-highway grade crossing as a grade separated crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 12 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 15, 2005.
- 13 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the City of Kennewick on May 19, 2005, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 14 The petition of the city of Kennewick to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing as a railroad over-crossing at the intersection of Columbia Center Boulevard and the tracks of the BNSF Railway Company, in Kennewick, Washington, is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The reconstruction must conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
 - (2) Upon the redirection of train traffic to the grade separated tracks, the BNSF Railway Company must remove the crossing surface and warning devices from Columbia Center Boulevard, and the city of Kennewick must remove all advance warning signs and markings related to the at-grade crossing.
 - (3) The parties must notify the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, in writing, when the existing BNSF

tracks crossing Columbia Center Boulevard at-grade are no longer in service.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.060, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 15th day of June, 2005.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary