

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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| BNSF RAILWAY CO., |) | DOCKET TR-143272 |
| |) | |
| Petitioner, |) | ORDER 01 |
| |) | |
| CITY OF RENTON, |) | ORDER GRANTING PETITION FOR |
| |) | RECONSTRUCTION AND |
| Respondent. |) | INTERCONNECTION OF RAILROAD |
| |) | WARNING AND HIGHWAY TRAFFIC |
| |) | SIGNALS AT OLD GENE COULON |
| |) | DRIVE/SOUTHPORT BOULEVARD |
| |) | |
| |) | USDOT: #091725B |
| |) | |

BACKGROUND

- 1 On September 5, 2014, BNSF Railway Co. (BNSF or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), a petition seeking approval to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT #091725B and is located at the intersection of Old Gene Coulon Drive/Southport Boulevard (Southport Boulevard) and BNSF's tracks in the city of Renton.
- 2 BNSF filed a separate petition on August 20, 2014, in Docket TR-01031 related to a crossing at Lake Washington Boulevard. The Lake Washington Boulevard petition is related to the petition filed in this docket because Southport Boulevard intersects with Lake Washington Boulevard about 60 feet east of the crossing, creating a "T" intersection. The proposed modifications to the roadway and installation of a new traffic signal impact both crossings and should be considered simultaneously. The Respondent, City of Renton (City) consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 Southport Boulevard is classified as a two-lane urban local road with a posted vehicle speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 4,500 vehicles which includes four percent commercial motor vehicles. The vehicle traffic is expected to increase to 8,100 within four years. One school bus travels over this crossing daily. BNSF operates one freight train per day at up to ten miles per hour over the single spur track crossing. No passenger trains operate over the crossing. Warning

devices at the Southport Boulevard crossing include shoulder mounted lights and gates and crossbucks.

- 4 The City proposes to move ahead with roadway modifications and pedestrian upgrades at the Southport Boulevard crossing prior to the signal modifications being made. The roadway modifications are related to the redevelopment of the "Southport Project," located near the crossing, which was previously delayed due to unfavorable economic conditions. The Southport Project proposes to redevelop property from industrial to a mixed-use development, including residential, commercial and office facilities. Current economic conditions are now favorable and redevelopment is ready to move forward.
- 5 The Southport Project will have a significant impact on increasing the daily traffic over the crossing by 3,600 vehicles within the next four years. Gene Coulon Park is located near the Southport property and has seasonal restrictions from June through August when no significant roadway projects can occur nearby, thus complicating the timing of the project.
- 6 The City proposes to complete the pedestrian, roadway and traffic signal modifications by 2014. BNSF does not anticipate completing the signal/pre-emption upgrades at the crossing until second quarter 2015. As a result of the timing of the crossing and roadway improvements, BNSF and the City propose and support an interim Phase 1 and 2 approach to accomplish the work while still maintaining safety for the traveling public.
- 7 Phase 1, the interim plan, will be completed by the City and involves a new traffic signal, roadway reconfiguration to four lanes, new signage, pavement markings, protective barriers around signal equipment, new sidewalks on both sides of the crossing, and illumination. The traffic sign will operate in flashing-red "All Way Stop" mode until Phase 2 is complete. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will be in place for approximately one year.
- 8 Phase 2, the permanent plan, will be completed by BNSF and involves upgrading the railroad signal equipment to include a cantilever structure with gates on the approach to Lake Washington Boulevard and interconnecting the railroad signal with the new traffic signal. Advance preemption time of 35 seconds is proposed which will allow adequate time to clear vehicles and pedestrians utilizing the crossing. The new traffic signal will be located on Lake Washington Boulevard but given the close proximity of the Southport Boulevard crossing, the railroad signals will be interconnected with the traffic light.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9 (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.*
- 10 (2) The Old Gene Coulon Drive/Southport Boulevard grade crossing, identified as USDOT #091725B, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150 require that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing or upgrading active crossing warning signals or devices within the state of Washington.
- 12 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted with conditions.
- 13 (5) After examination of the petition filed by BNSF Railway Co. on September 5, 2014, 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 BNSF Railway Co. to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of Old Gene Coulon Drive/Southport Boulevard and the Petitioner's tracks in the city of Renton is granted. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described and attached to the petition.
 - (2) The City of Renton must implement Phase 1/interim plan within one year from the effective date of this order.

- (3) BNSF Railway Co. must implement Phase 2/permanent plan within one year from completion of Phase 1/interim plan.
- (4) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- (5) Upon completion of the authorized construction of each phase, Petitioner must notify the Commission within 30 days. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions set forth in this order

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 03 in Docket A-090485. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective September 12, 2014.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



STEVEN V. KING, Executive Director and Secretary

NOTICE: This is an order delegated to the Secretary for decision. In addition to serving you a copy of the decision, the Commission will post on its Internet Web site for at least

fourteen (14) days a listing of all matters delegated to the Secretary for decision. You may seek Commission review of this decision. You must file a request for Commission review of this order no later than fourteen (14) days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's Web site. The Commission will schedule your request for review for consideration at a regularly scheduled open meeting. The Commission will notify you of the time and place of the open meeting at which the Commission will review the order.

The Commission will grant a late-filed request for review only on a showing of good cause, including a satisfactory explanation of why the person did not timely file the request. A form for late-filed requests is available on the Commission's Web site.

This notice and review process is pursuant to the provisions of RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904(2) and (3).