

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

BNSF RAILWAY CO.,	)	DOCKET TR-140479
)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER 01
)	
	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
	)	RECONSTRUCT AND
WHATCOM COUNTY,	)	INTERCONNECT THE RAILROAD
	)	WARNING AND HIGHWAY
Respondent.	)	TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT A PUBLIC
	)	RAILROAD HIGHWAY-GRADE
	)	CROSSING AT GRANDVIEW
	)	ROAD/STATE ROUTE 548 IN
	)	WHATCOM COUNTY
)	
.....	)	USDOT: 084841X

BACKGROUND

- 1 On March 25, 2014, BNSF Railway Co. (BNSF or Petitioner) filed a petition with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) seeking approval to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Grandview Road/State Route 548 (SR-548) in Whatcom county. BNSF filed several revisions to the original petition with the last revision filed on December 29, 2014. The crossing is identified as USDOT 084841X and is located at the intersection of SR-548 and BNSF’s tracks. BNSF proposes to connect two sidings, Custer and Ferndale and create a five mile double-track segment along this corridor. The new track will be located on the east side of the existing mainline track.

- 2 On August 18, 2014, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing. The last revision to the petition included an additional statement of consent by WSDOT.

- 3 SR-548 is a two lane rural major collector road with one lane in each direction. Average daily vehicle traffic over the crossing is estimated at 10,296. As a designated truck route, 13 percent of the vehicles are commercial motor vehicles. Up to 10 school buses travel over this crossing each weekday. The posted legal speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

- 4 BNSF currently maintains one mainline track at this location. The authorized and operating speed limit for freight trains is 60 and passenger trains is 79 miles per hour. Up to 17 freight trains and four passenger trains operate over the crossing on a daily basis.

- 5 Railroad warning devices at the SR-548 crossing consist of cantilever-mounted lights and gates, crossbucks and constant warning train detection. Currently, the nearby traffic signals are interconnected with the railroad signals with 21 seconds of advance preemption.
- 6 By connecting the two sidings, a five mile double-track segment of track will be created. The expanded siding will allow BNSF to transition two freight trains on this siding without impacting public crossings and reduces the meet-and-pass waiting distance between the existing sidings. As part of the crossing reconstruction, BNSF will reduce the two percent grade on the approaches to the crossing which will provide for a smooth ride for motorists.
- 7 There will be no change to the type of railroad warning devices at the crossing. However, the existing equipment will be replaced with new equipment, concrete crossing panels will be installed for the new track crossing surface and constant warning train detection will be added to the new track. "2 Tracks" signs will also be posted on both approaches to the crossing and an interconnected, activated "No Right Turn" blank-out sign will be installed to warn southbound Portal Way vehicle traffic of an approaching train. This blank-out sign will illuminate when preemption is activated by an approaching train. In addition, WSDOT has recalculated the advance preemption time and will extend it from 21 to 22 seconds.
- 8 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving safety and convenience for roadway users.

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 proposed reconstruction of a crossing involves a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150 require that the Commission grant approval prior to reconstructing or upgrading active crossing warning signals or devices at public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (4) Commission staff investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted. All traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*

- 13 (5) After examination of the petition and revised petitions filed by BNSF Railway Co. on March 25, 2014, and subsequent dates, 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 reconstruct and interconnect the traffic and railroad signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing at SR-548 and the Respondent's tracks in Whatcom county is granted, as follows:

- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in the petition.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (3) Petitioner must notify Commission Staff within 30 days upon completion of this modification project.

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 January 16, 2015.

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).