



Thorne Lane SW in the City of Lakewood; and TR-100131, Barksdale Avenue, in the City of DuPont.

- 4 Respondents Tacoma Rail, Sound Transit and the United States Army have consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 5 41<sup>st</sup> Division Drive is an arterial connecting United States military installations on both sides of Interstate 5. There are two northbound lanes (one off ramp and one through) and two and one-half southbound lanes (an exit lane begins diverging from the through lanes within the crossing). WSDOT reports average annual daily vehicle traffic over the crossing at 13,090 in 2006, with one percent of the traffic involving commercial motor vehicles at the afternoon peak. The crossing is part of an established school bus route involving 60 buses per weekday. The average annual daily vehicle traffic is expected to increase to 18,020 by 2020. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour.
- 6 The current crossing has a single active main line track. BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) and Tacoma Rail currently operate two freight trains over the crossing, four or five days per week. Current speed limit for the trains is 10 miles per hour. No passenger trains operate over the crossing at this time. Train traffic and train speeds are expected to increase substantially in the future. Freight trains operated by BNSF and Tacoma Rail will continue at two per day but authorized train speeds will increase to 40 mph. Amtrak will initiate passenger service over this crossing upon completion of the project. Average daily passenger train traffic is expected to be 16 per day. Some passenger trains will operate at the authorized speed of 79 mph and others will operate at lower speeds.
- 7 Current warning devices at the crossing include cross-bucks and cantilever-mounted flashing lights on each approach. The existing train detection circuitry is either “C Style” or “Ring 10”.
- 8 The future proposed use of this crossing presents a number of significant challenges. In order to address public safety concerns and other issues, WSDOT and Sound Transit organized a diagnostic team consisting of representatives of all major stakeholder groups. The diagnostic team met on-site in September 2006, and provided valuable input and specific recommendations to WSDOT, Sound Transit and the contracted design engineers. A smaller team including WSDOT, Sound Transit, HDR Engineering and Commission Staff met again on-site in 2008, to review the proposed design plans in

detail. The resulting construction design is consistent in all major components to the recommendations of both diagnostic team meetings.

- 9 Modifications to the existing warning devices include replacement of the existing cantilevers with shoulder and median mounted gates and lights; new traffic signals; queue-detector loops; interconnection of traffic signals and railroad warning devices with simultaneous preemption; and installation of a “Signal Ahead” sign to warn motorists on the southbound Interstate 5 off-ramp.
- 10 The control equipment for the railroad warning devices will be upgraded to modern constant warning time units, including replacing the existing bungalow and hardware. The interconnection between the rail crossing and traffic signals will be upgraded to a six-wire supervisory configuration.
- 11 A median barrier will be installed on the south side of the crossing to discourage driving around the gates and other illegal or risky motorist behavior. An existing median will be extended on the north side of the crossing to accommodate a new crossing gate in the median.
- 12 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving passenger train service in Washington and providing for the safety and convenience of roadway users.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 13 (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.*
- 14 (2) The proposed modifications of this crossing involve a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 15 (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 within the state of Washington.
- 16 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions identified below.

- 17 (5) After examination of the petition filed by the Washington State Department of Transportation on January 19, 2010, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 18 The petition of the Washington State Department of Transportation to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of 41<sup>st</sup> Division Drive and Sound Transit's tracks at Joint Base Lewis-McChord is granted, as follows:

- (1) The modifications must substantially conform to those described in the petition, traffic signal preemption worksheet, and detailed in the design drawings. Due to the complexity of this project, design changes are inevitable. Petitioner is authorized to make minor changes as necessary for successful completion of the project on the condition that Commission Staff is consulted on any safety-related changes.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (3) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances from both the roadway and railroad tracks.
- (4) Petitioner must notify Commission Staff within 30 days upon completion of this modification project.

The Commissioners have delegated authority to the Secretary to enter this Order pursuant to RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904((1)(b)).

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective March 10, 2010.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**DAVID W. DANNER, 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).