

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

THURSTON COUNTY,

Petitioner,

BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY,

Respondent.

DOCKET TR-161227

ORDER 01

ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
MODIFY A PUBLIC HIGHWAY-RAIL
GRADE CROSSING AT RICH ROAD
SE IN THURSTON COUNTY

USDOT: 085773C

BACKGROUND

- 1 On November 18, 2016, Thurston County (County or Petitioner) filed a petition with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) seeking approval to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at Rich Road SE in Thurston County. The County proposes to modify the active warning devices.
- 2 Respondent BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 Rich Road SE is a two-lane urban minor arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 6,300 vehicles. Rich Road SE is an established truck route with 11 percent commercial motor vehicle traffic. In addition, Rich Road SE is a designated school bus route with 10 school buses traveling over the crossing each day.
- 4 The Rich Road SE crossing consists of three tracks: two mainline and one siding. The authorized speed limit for freight trains is 59 miles per hour and 51 freight trains operate over the crossing on a daily basis. The authorized speed limit for passenger trains is 79 miles per hour and one passenger train operates over the crossing per day.
- 5 Railroad warning devices at the Rich Road SE crossing consist of shoulder-mounted flashing lights, gates, a pedestrian bell, and advance warning signs.

- 6 The crossing reconstruction is part of a larger project to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety on Rich Road SE by providing wider vehicle travel lanes and paved shoulders. The 36-foot-wide roadway will include two 12-foot travel lanes and two six-foot paved shoulders. Thurston County proposes to replace the existing crossing surfaces with 40-foot-wide concrete panels and pave both approaches to the crossing. Because of the wider roadway and crossing surfaces, the crossing signals will be relocated and guardrail will be installed to protect the railroad signals. The bungalow will also be relocated and replaced. The paved shoulders on both approaches will include fog lines and truncated domes to warn pedestrians of the crossing, and an additional pedestrian bell will be installed to provide additional audible warning. Existing median barriers and delineators will be replaced on both approaches to the crossing. All flashing lights will be upgraded to LEDs to improve visibility for crossing users. Pavement markings will be updated and advance warning signs will be replaced.
- 7 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving the overall safety and convenience for roadway and pedestrian users.

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 proposed modification of a crossing involves a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 10 (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.
- 11 (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.*

- 12 (5) After examination of the petition filed by Thurston County on November 18, 2016, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 The petition of Thurston County to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at Rich Road SE and the Respondent's tracks in Thurston 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 project.

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-151775. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective December 5, 2016.

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).