

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

THE CITY OF PUYALLUP,)	DOCKET NO. TR-040391
WASHINGTON,)	
)	ORDER NO. 01
Petitioner,)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
v.)	INTERCONNECT WARNING
)	SIGNALS AND AUTHORIZING
THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN)	EXPENDITURE FROM THE GRADE
SANTA FE RAILWAY)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
COMPANY,)	
)	USDOT: 085695X
Respondent.)	WUTC: 1E 31.60
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On February 25, 2004, the city of Puyallup, Washington filed a petition with the Commission, seeking approval to interconnect railroad crossing warning signals with highway traffic signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT 085695X and located at the intersection of 3rd Street SE and the tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), in Puyallup, Washington. The petitioner further requests the Commission to authorize expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to pay for the upgrade.

- 2 Respondent has consented to an entry of an order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.

- 3 In the vicinity of the crossing, 3rd Street SE is classified as a one-way principal arterial roadway, with two northbound lanes of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 30 mph. The crossing is located approximately 300 feet south of the 3rd Street/East Stewart Avenue roadway intersection. The roadway intersection is controlled by a highway traffic signal. Average daily traffic over the 3rd Street SE crossing is estimated at 13,500.

- 4 BNSF maintains two main tracks through the crossing. Daily train traffic averages 32 freight trains and 14 passenger trains traveling at maximum speeds of 50 mph and 65 mph respectively. Railroad warning devices at the 3rd Street SE grade crossing consist of cantilever-mounted flashing light signals with gates.
- 5 Because of the high average daily traffic volume on 3rd Street SE, it is not uncommon for vehicle queues originating from red traffic signal indications at the 3rd Street SE/East Stewart Avenue intersection to extend back over the BNSF tracks. This scenario includes the possibility that motorists may become trapped on the tracks when a train is approaching. To address this hazard, the city of Puyallup has proposed interconnecting the railroad warning signals and the highway traffic signals at the 3rd Street SE/East Stewart Avenue intersection. When the signals are interconnected, an approaching train will preempt the highway traffic signals, causing them to display a green light to clear any vehicle queues from the BNSF tracks prior to the arrival of a train at the crossing.
- 6 Petitioner requests that Grade Crossing Protective Fund monies be allocated to pay for the interconnection. The total approximate cost of the project is \$10,000. An expenditure of \$10,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is available to pay for the interconnection.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (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.*
- 8 (2) The 3rd Street SE grade crossing, identified as USDOT 085695X, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.

- 9 (3) WAC 480-62-150 (2)(e) requires that the Commission grant approval prior to any interconnection of railroad and highway signals at public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 10 (4) RCW 81.53.271 allows the Commission to disburse up to \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to pay for the installation of a grade crossing protective device, without requiring a cost-share by the petitioner.
- 11 (5) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 12 (6) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 24, 2004.
- 13 (7) After examination of the petition filed by the city of Puyallup on February 25, 2004, 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 Puyallup to interconnect railroad-warning signals with highway traffic signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at the intersection 3rd Street SE and the tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company, in Puyallup, Washington, is granted. The cost of this interconnection shall be paid from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$10,000.

- (2) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and labor, and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
- (3) The operation of traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (4) The city of Puyallup must ensure that the timing of each railroad preemption phase for the highway traffic signal is sufficient to clear any vehicle queues that may extend from the 3rd Street SE/Stewart Avenue roadway intersection back over the BNSF tracks, as determined by an engineering analysis.
- (5) The project must be completed, and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be on file with the Commission no later than May 31, 2005.
- (6) Upon completion of the upgrades authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. 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 specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of WAC 480-62-150, RCW 81.53.060, and RCW 81.53.271 directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DOCKET NO. TR-040391
ORDER NO. 01

PAGE 5

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 24th day of November, 2004.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary