

SEP 27 1999

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

KITSAP COUNTY)	DOCKET NO. TR-980407
)	
Petitioner,)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
)	UPGRADE CROSSING AT
)	NEWBERRY HILL ROAD
PUGET SOUND & PACIFIC)	
RAILROAD COMPANY)	
)	
Respondent,)	W.U.T.C. 18B 40.10
.....))	D.O.T. 096627C

By petition filed with the Commission on March 11, 1998, Kitsap County seeks approval for the reconstruction and signal upgrade of a grade crossing, located at the intersection of Newberry Hill Road and the tracks of the Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad Company, located in the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 29, Township 25 N, Range 1E, W.M. Since the crossing borders two adjacent sections, it is also considered to be located in the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 20 in the same township and range.

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

Newberry Hill is a principal arterial with a speed limit of 35 mph and one lane for each direction of traffic. Daily traffic through the crossing reaches an average of 15,590 motor vehicles, including 470 trucks and 37 school bus trips. In the vicinity of the crossing, the westbound approach consists of a sharp, upward curve within a forested area which hides the crossing from view until approximately 200 feet from the tracks. Newberry Hill Road also intersects with Provost Road 73 feet west of the crossing. A stop light is proposed to be installed at that intersection at an undetermined date.

The Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad Company maintains a single mainline track through the crossing. Approximately two freight trains use the crossing daily. The maximum speed is 30 mph for trains using this line.

The reconstruction of this grade crossing is associated with road construction that will widen Newberry Hill to accommodate an additional lane of traffic in each direction for left turns, and provide 8 ft. wide shoulders on both sides of the road. The widening of the road will, in effect, increase the length of the crossing surface by approximately 28 feet. Additional construction in the vicinity will diminish the upward grade of the westbound approach, thereby slightly improving sight distance.

The current traffic control devices in use at the crossing consist of shoulder mounted flashing lights. The petitioner's proposed signal upgrade includes the addition of automatic gates only. After an investigation of the crossing, Commission staff proposed additional upgrades. These have been approved by Kitsap County for inclusion in the petition, which all consider to be amended accordingly. Additions include cantilever-mounted flashing lights that will provide a signal for each lane of traffic, the inclusion of a conduit for preemption of the future traffic light at Provost Road, and the installation of an active advanced warning sign for the westbound approach that will serve to alert motorists who cannot see the crossing due to a sharp curve. The purpose of the upgrades is to compensate for diminished safety resulting from the widening of Newberry Hill Road grade crossing.

Commission staff, having investigated the petition, recommends that the petition be approved, subject to specified conditions.

The Commissioners having reviewed the petition and being fully advised in the matter, believe that granting the petition, subject to the conditions set forth below, is in the public interest.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION GRANTS the petition of Kitsap County, as amended, for authority to reconstruct the grade crossing and upgrade traffic control signals at the intersection of Newberry Hill Road and the tracks of the Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad Company, subject to the following minimum conditions:

1. The crossing shall be hard-surfaced between the rails and for a distance of at least one foot outside each rail for the full width of the traveled roadway, including the shoulders.
2. Reconstruction of the crossing shall conform to the plans filed in this proceeding, as modified by the agreement of the parties noted in the text of this order.
3. The signal upgrade shall include the installation of cantilever-mounted flashing lights and the installation of an active advanced warning system for the westbound approach.
4. All devices shall be erected in such a manner as to provide required clearances for both rail and vehicular traffic.

5. Traffic control devices, pavement markings, and advanced warning signs shall comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

6. Reconstruction of the crossing shall include the installation of a conduit to provide capability of traffic light preemption as needed in the future.


7. Respondent shall add an enhancement panel overlay to the railroad tracks to assist train detection equipment.

8. Upon completing the reconstruction and installation herein authorized, petitioner shall report completion to the Commission. Acceptance of the reconstruction and installation is subject to a compliance inspection and report by Commission staff verifying that the changes to the crossing are in full compliance with law and regulation and the conditions specified herein.

Dated at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 23rd day of September, 1999

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION


MARILYN SHOWALTER, Chairwoman


WILLIAM R. GILLIS, Commissioner