

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA)	
FE RAILROAD COMPANY)	DOCKET NO. TR-011618
)	
Petitioner,)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION
)	TO UPGRADE WARNING
v.)	DEVICES AT NORTH THORP
)	HIGHWAY
)	
KITTITAS COUNTY)	D.O.T. 085221M
)	
Respondent)	W.U.T.C. 1D 9.20
.....)	

BACKGROUND

1 On December 6, 2001, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) filed a petition with the Commission, seeking authority to upgrade warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of the petitioner's tracks and North Thorp Highway, in Lot 1 of Section 3, Township 18 N, Range 17 E., W.M., in Kittitas County, Washington. Funding for the upgrades is pursuant to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

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

DISCUSSION

3 North Thorp Highway, in the vicinity of the crossing, is classified as a major collector road. The roadway consists of one lane for each direction of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 50 mph. A roadway curve, south of the crossing, along with trees and brush in the crossing's southeast quadrant limit sight distance ahead to the crossing for north-bound motorists. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 558 vehicles, including 6 school bus trips.

4 BNSF maintains one main track through the crossing. Average daily train traffic includes 6 freight trains, operating at a maximum timetable speed of 40 MPH.

5 Warning devices at the crossing include old-style cantilever-mounted flashing light signals. Petitioner seeks to upgrade the warning devices through the installation of new cantilever-mounted flashing light signals with gates. The plans filed with the Commission for this proposal indicate that the new signals will be installed approximately 8 feet back from the location of the existing signals (i.e. the proposed southern signal will be located slightly south of the current southern signal, and the proposed northern signal will be located slightly north of the existing northern

signal). The signal relocation is necessary to accommodate the installation gates. The upgrades are proposed in the interest of improving safety for highway users.

6 Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.

7 This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on February 15, 2002. The Commissioners have reviewed the petition and have been advised in the matter. They believe that granting the petition, subject to the conditions set forth below, is in the public interest, and direct the Secretary to issue the Order.

ORDER

8 THE COMMISSION GRANTS the petition of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company to upgrade warning devices at the highway-rail grade crossing designated as WUTC 1D 9.20, and located at the intersection of North Thorp Highway and the petitioner's tracks in Kittitas County, Washington, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The upgrades must conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with 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 for both rail and vehicular traffic.
- (4) Upon completion of the installations authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the installations is subject to a compliance inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the changes are in full compliance with law, regulation, and the conditions specified herein.

DATED at Olympia, Washington and effective this 15th of February, 2002.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary