

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY	DOCKET NO. TR-020347
Petitioner,	ORDER GRANTING PETITION UPGRADE WARNING DEVICES AT A HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING
v.	D.O.T.            092531Y
CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON	W.U.T.C.        1KSD 68.60
Respondent	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1        On March 18, 2002, 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 Parkland Drive and the petitioner's tracks, in the SE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 30, Township 13 N., Range 2 W., W.M., in Chehalis, 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        Parkland Drive (also known as 13<sup>th</sup> Street), in the vicinity of the crossing, is classified as an arterial roadway. The roadway consists of one lane for each direction of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. The roadway intersection of Pacific Avenue and Parkland Drive is located approximately 40 feet west of the crossing, and a service road which runs immediately parallel to the tracks intersects Parkland Drive in the crossing's northeast quadrant. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 3,000 vehicles, including 200 trucks and several school bus trips.
- 4        BNSF maintains one spur track through the crossing. Daily train traffic includes two freight trains operating at a maximum timetable speed of 10 MPH.
- 5        Warning devices at the crossing include standard crossbuck signs and railroad advance warning signs. The petitioner originally sought to upgrade warning devices by installing shoulder-mounted flashing light signals and gates. During an investigation of the petition, Commission Staff observed that the west-bound

roadway approach to the crossing is 22 feet wide and a 5 foot sidewalk runs along the northern edge of the roadway. The east-bound approach was measured at 12 feet. Because of the wide west-bound approach, Staff recommended that the proposal be amended to install cantilever-mounted signals rather than shoulder-mounted signals. Cantilever-mounted signals would improve visibility of the signals due to the flashing lights being directly over the roadway instead of far off to the right. Staff met with representatives of BNSF and the City of Chehalis, who both concurred with the recommendation. BNSF subsequently filed new plans that reflect the change. The installations are being proposed in the interest of improving safety for highway users.

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

7 This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on August 14, 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 a highway-rail grade crossing, designated as WUTC 1KSD 68.60 and located at the intersection of Parkland Drive and the petitioner's tracks, in Chehalis, 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 upgrades authorized herein, Petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the changes is subject to a compliance inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with law, regulation, and the conditions specified herein.

DATED at Olympia, Washington and effective this 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 2002.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary