

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN
SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

Petitioner,

v.

ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON

Respondent

DOCKET NO. TR-021320

ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
UPGRADE AND INTER-CONNECT
RAILROAD WARNING SIGNALS
AT THE UMPTANUM ROAD
HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
CROSSING

USDOT: 085187H

WUTC: 33C 126.00

BACKGROUND

1 On October 14, 2002, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company filed a petition with the Commission to upgrade the warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing and interconnect the warning devices with highway traffic signals. The crossing is located at the intersection of Umptanum Road and the petitioner's tracks, in the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 11, Township 17 N., Range 18 E., W.M., in Ellensburg, Washington.

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

DISCUSSION

2 In the vicinity of the crossing, Umptanum Road is classified as a minor arterial road with one lane for each direction of traffic, and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. The Umptanum Road/Canyon Road intersection is located approximately 100 feet to the east of the highway-rail crossing. Average daily traffic (ADT) through the crossing consists of 3,743 vehicles, including heavy truck and school bus traffic. ADT is expected to reach 5,562 by 2020.

3 Respondent maintains one main track through the crossing. Average daily train traffic includes 6 freight trains traveling at a maximum speed of 35 mph.

4 Warning devices at the crossing consist of shoulder-mounted flashing light signals. The Umptanum Road/Canyon Road intersection is controlled by a highway traffic signal. Petitioner proposes to replace the existing "antiquated" signals at the crossing

with new cantilever-mounted signals with gates. The new signals will be interconnected with the highway traffic signals at the Umptanum Road/Canyon Road intersection. When the signals are interconnected, an approaching train will preempt the highway traffic signals, causing them to display a green light to clear vehicle queues originating from the roadway intersection that extend back over the tracks. Petitioner and Respondent have jointly determined the extent of preemption needed to clear vehicular queues from the crossing prior to the arrival of a train. Although the roadway consists of two lanes across the tracks, cantilever-mounted signals are proposed in anticipation of an additional lane that will be constructed at a later date. The upgrade and interconnection are being proposed in the interest of improving safety for highway users at the crossing.

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

6 This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on October 30, 2002. The Commissioners have reviewed the petition and have been advised in the matter. They believe that granting the request is in the public interest, and direct the Secretary to issue the order.

O R D E R

7 THE COMMISSION GRANTS the petition of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company to upgrade and interconnect warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing, designated as USDOT 085187H, 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) The City of Ellensburg must ensure that the phasing of the highway traffic signal is sufficient to clear vehicle queues that may extend from the Umptanum Road/Canyon Road intersection back over the railroad tracks, prior to the arrival of a train at the crossing.
- (5) 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 30th of October, 2002.

THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN
Secretary