

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

THE CITY OF KENNEWICK,)	DOCKET NO. TR-040638
WASHINGTON)	
)	ORDER NO. 01
Petitioner,)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
v.)	TEMPORARILY RELOCATE A
)	RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE
THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN)	CROSSING AT COLUMBIA CENTER
SANTA FE RAILWAY)	BOULEVARD
COMPANY,)	
)	USDOT: 104567U
Respondent.)	WUTC: 1C 8.30
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On April 5, 2004, the City of Kennewick, Washington filed a petition with the Commission, seeking approval to temporarily relocate a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of Columbia Center Boulevard and tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), in the NE ¼ of Section 6, Township 8 N., Range 29 E., W.M., in Kennewick, Washington.

- 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, Columbia Center Boulevard is classified as a primary arterial road with two lanes for each direction of traffic, and a vehicle speed limit of 30 mph. The roadway crosses the BNSF tracks at a 90-degree angle and intersects with Clearwater Avenue approximately 300 feet south of the railroad-highway grade crossing. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 27,695 vehicles. It is estimated that daily traffic volumes will reach 41,500 by 2024.

- 4 Respondent maintains one main track across Columbia Center Boulevard. Train traffic averages seven freight trains each day, traveling at maximum speeds of 49 mph.
- 5 Warning devices at the crossing consist of cantilever-mounted flashing light signals with gates.
- 6 The petitioner seeks to temporarily relocate the portion of the Columbia Center Boulevard that crosses the BNSF tracks approximately 120 feet to the east. The proposal is related to the future grade separation of the Columbia Center Boulevard crossing. During the initial phases of construction related to the grade separation, it is necessary that the existing at-grade crossing be closed. The proposal involves constructing a short by-pass/detour around the vicinity of the grade separation project. The detour would begin approximately 300 feet north of the BNSF tracks, by-pass the current grade crossing about 120 feet east of the current alignment, and rejoin the existing Columbia Center Boulevard alignment at its intersection with Clearwater Avenue.
- 7 In the vicinity of the proposed crossing, the temporary section of Columbia Center Boulevard would consist of two lanes for each direction of travel, a six-foot shoulder along the east side of the roadway, and a five-foot sidewalk along the east side of the shoulder. The existing railroad warning signals at Columbia Center Boulevard would remain at their current location to serve as warning for construction crews. The temporary crossing would be equipped with cantilever-mounted flashing light signals and gates. Once the grade separated crossing is open to the public, the temporary grade crossing will be closed. It is expected that the project will last approximately 14 months.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8 (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.*
- 9 (2) The Columbia Center Boulevard grade crossing, identified as USDOT 104567U, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 10 (3) RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to relocating public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 11 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 12 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 26, 2004.
- 13 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the City of Kennewick on April 5, 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 Kennewick to temporarily relocate a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at the intersection of Columbia Center Boulevard and the tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company, in Kennewick, Washington, is granted, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The relocation must conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
- (2) The crossing must be hard-surfaced between the rails, and for a distance of one foot outside each rail for the full width of the traveled roadway, including the shoulders.
- (3) To the extent practicable, the roadway approaches should be level with the plane created by the top of the rails. If this is not possible, the roadway surface must not be more than three inches higher or six inches lower than the top of the nearest rail at a point at least 30 feet from the rail.
- (4) Traffic control devices, including passive signs and markings, must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (5) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances from both the roadway and railroad tracks.
- (6) Upon completion of the temporary at-grade crossing authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. The relocation is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that it is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.
- (7) Upon completion of the Columbia Center Boulevard grade separation at the location of the existing Columbia Center Boulevard at-grade crossing, the temporary crossing must be closed to the public.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.060, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

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DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 26th day of May, 2004.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary