

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

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN)	DOCKET TR-060838
SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY,)	
)	ORDER 01
Petitioner,)	
)	
v.)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
KENT, WASHINGTON)	MODIFY RAILROAD WARNING
)	DEVICES AT JAMES, MEEKER, AND
Respondent)	GOWE STREETS
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On May 2, 2006, The BNSF Railway filed a petition with the Commission seeking approval to modify warning devices at three railroad-highway grade crossings in Kent, Washington, as follows.
- 2 James Street is a two-way, four-lane urban minor arterial road with a maximum vehicle speed of 35 miles per hour. The crossing at James Street, USDOT 085629K, UTC 1E15.95, consists of two main-line railroad tracks owned by BNSF Railway. An average of 17,000 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing is limited to a maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights, as well as shoulder-mounted lights.
- 3 Meeker Street is a two-way, two-lane urban minor arterial road with a maximum vehicle speed of 25 miles per hour. The crossing at Meeker Street, USDOT 085636V, UTC 1E16.29, consists of one main-line railroad track owned by BNSF Railway. An average of 3,500 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing is limited to a maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights.
- 4 Gowe Street is a two-way, two-lane urban local road with a maximum vehicle speed of 25 miles per hour. The crossing at Gowe Street, USDOT 085637C, UTC 1E16.40, consists of one main-line railroad track owned by BNSF Railway. An average of 5,200 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing is limited to a

maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights.

- 5 BNSF proposes to modify train activation circuitry on these three crossings to impact crossing gate operation when Sound Transit commuter trains are stopped at the Kent station platform. Currently, when a Sound Transit commuter train is stopped at the Kent station, the crossing gates are activated. When the train clears the station, the gates go up and then are re-activated as the train approaches the James Street crossing on northbound moves, and the Meeker and Gowe Street crossings on southbound moves. The proposed modification would hold the gates down from the time the train is stopped at the station until it clears the crossing. BNSF estimates this would add only one minute to gate activation at each crossing, but would eliminate confusion for drivers when the gates activate; go back up; and then reactivate a minute later.
- 6 The proposed modifications comply with Federal Railroad Administration requirements for gate operations.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (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.*
- 8 (2) The James, Meeker, and Gowe Street crossings are public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 9 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to making changes in the method and manner of traffic control at public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 10 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted.
- 11 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 14, 2006.

- 12 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company on May 5, 2006, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 The petition of the BNSF Railway to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at the intersections of James, Meeker, and Gowe Streets and the petitioner's tracks in Kent, Washington, is granted, as follows:

- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in the petition.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with all 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 from both the roadway and railroad tracks.
- (4) Upon completion of the modifications authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.261, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective June 14, 2006.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Executive Secretary