

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WALLA WALLA COUNTY,)	DOCKET TR-121465
)	
Petitioner.)	ORDER 01
)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
)	RECONSTRUCT A PUBLIC
WATCO TRANSPORTATION)	HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING
SERVICES, INC. d/b/a PALOUSE)	AT PROSPECT AVENUE IN WALLA
RIVER and COULEE CITY)	WALLA COUNTY
RAILROAD LLC and UNION)	
PACIFIC RAILROAD,)	
)	USDOT: 808939F
Respondents.)	
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On September 6, 2012, Walla Walla County (County or Petitioner) filed a petition with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) seeking approval to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Prospect Avenue between 3rd Avenue and Plaza Way in Walla Walla county. The reconstruction of this crossing is part of the county’s plan to improve the Prospect Avenue roadway.
- 2 Respondents WATCO Transportation Services, Inc. d/b/a Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad (PCC) and Union Pacific Railroad consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing. PCC has operating rights to this track and Union Pacific Railroad owns the track and crossing.
- 3 Prospect Avenue is a two-lane minor arterial with one lane in each direction. The County estimates average daily vehicle traffic over the crossing at 2,550 with four school bus trips. The posted legal speed limit is 35 miles per hour.
- 4 Union Pacific Railroad maintains one mainline track at this location. PCC does not currently operate over the crossing. The authorized speed limit for trains is 10 miles per hour.
- 5 Railroad warning devices at the Prospect Avenue crossing consist of shoulder mounted lights and gates and crossbucks.

- 6 The County proposes to expand the width of the roadway and install curb and gutters. Bike lanes will be constructed on both sides of the roadway and a sidewalk will be installed on the north side of the roadway. New signals will be installed at the appropriate locations to accommodate the roadway and pedestrian improvements. The existing precast concrete crossing surface will be replaced with newer concrete panels and extended to accommodate the new bike lanes and sidewalk. The sidewalk, which will be 10 feet wide, will be located behind the signal mast. Tactile strips will be installed on the sidewalks on both approaches to the crossing to provide pedestrian users with additional warning of potential hazards. The County will also install flange way filler where the pedestrians and bicyclists will be traversing the crossing surface. The flange way filler will provide a smoother, more continuous surface over the crossing panels for both walkers and bicyclists. The County will also add pavement markings to the roadway on both approaches to the crossing.
- 7 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving safety and convenience for roadway and pedestrian users.

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 proposed reconstruction of a crossing involves a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 10 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150 require that the Commission grant approval prior to reconstructing a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (4) Commission staff investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions identified below. All traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*
- The County must install flange way fillers in the areas where pedestrians and bicyclists will be traversing the crossing surface.
 - The County must install tactile strips on the sidewalk on both approaches to the crossing.

- 12 (5) After examination of the petition filed by Walla Walla County on September 6, 2012, 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 Walla Walla County to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Prospect Avenue and the Respondents' tracks in Walla Walla county 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 *2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (3) The County must install flange way filler in the areas where pedestrians and bicyclists will be traversing the crossing surface.
- (4) The County must install tactile strips on the sidewalk on both approaches to the crossing.
- (5) Petitioner must notify Commission Staff within 30 days upon completion of this modification project.

The Commissioners have delegated authority to the Secretary to enter this Order pursuant to RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904((1)(b)).

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective March September 12, 2012.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Executive Director and Secretary

NOTICE: This is an order delegated to the Secretary for decision. In addition to serving you a copy of the decision, the Commission will post on its Internet Web site for at least fourteen (14) days a listing of all matters delegated to the Secretary for decision. You may seek Commission review of this decision. You must file a request for Commission review of this order no later than fourteen (14) days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's Web site. The Commission will schedule your request for review for consideration at a regularly scheduled open meeting. The Commission will notify you of the time and place of the open meeting at which the Commission will review the order.

The Commission will grant a late-filed request for review only on a showing of good cause, including a satisfactory explanation of why the person did not timely file the request. A form for late-filed requests is available on the Commission's Web site.

This notice and review process is pursuant to the provisions of RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904(2) and (3).