

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

CITY OF LAKEWOOD,	)	DOCKET TR-143846
)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER 01
)	
CENTRAL PUGET SOUND	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION	)	RECONSTRUCT AND
AUTHORITY (SOUND TRANSIT),	)	INTERCONNECT THE RAILROAD
BNSF RAILWAY CO., TACOMA	)	WARNING AND HIGHWAY
RAIL, WASHINGTON STATE	)	TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT A PUBLIC
DEPARTMENT OF	)	RAILROAD HIGHWAY-GRADE
TRANSPORTATION,	)	CROSSING AT BERKELEY STREET
	)	SOUTHWEST IN LAKEWOOD
Respondents.)	
	)	USDOT: #085829U
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On November 10, 2014, the City of Lakewood (City or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), a petition seeking approval to modify a railroad highway-grade crossing and interconnect the railroad signals with an existing traffic signal. The crossing is identified as USDOT #085829U and is located at the intersection of Berkeley Street Southwest and the Respondents’ railroad tracks in Lakewood.
- 2 Tacoma Rail and BNSF Railway Co., (BNSF) operate freight trains on this corridor of track which is owned by the Central Puget Sound Regional Transportation Authority (Sound Transit). The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is responsible for maintaining the traffic signal located near the crossing which is currently interconnected with the existing railroad warning devices. All Respondents have consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 Berkeley Street Southwest is classified as an arterial with three lanes and a posted vehicle speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 6,800 vehicles. As a designated truck route, three percent of the vehicles are commercial motor vehicles. Up to 16 school buses travel over this crossing on week days.
- 4 Tacoma Rail and BNSF operate up to two freight trains per day at up to 10 miles per hour over the single mainline track crossing. Currently no passenger trains operate over the

crossing, but this will change when WSDOT and Sound Transit expand passenger service on this line in the future.

- 5 The Berkeley Street Southwest crossing is one of several railroad crossings located along the WSDOT Point Defiance bypass corridor which proposes to reroute passenger trains to an existing inland rail line along the west side of I-5 through Tacoma, Lakewood and DuPont. Sound Transit currently uses a portion of this route for Sounder commuter rail service to Lakewood. The upgrades proposed by the City to the Berkeley Street Southwest crossing are consistent with WSDOT's plans for upgrades at this location.
- 6 Warning devices at the Berkeley Street Southwest crossing include cantilever (westbound) and shoulder (eastbound) mounted lights, crossbucks, pavement markings, and advance warning signs. The existing nearby traffic signal is interconnected with the railroad warning signals in simultaneous preemption mode. In addition, the traffic light located west of the highway-rail grade crossing on the east side of the Interstate 5 (I-5) highway ramp is also interconnected with the railroad and traffic signal located at the crossing. The nearby traffic signal located west of the crossing at Union Avenue is not interconnected with the Berkeley Street Southwest railroad warning signals.
- 7 Improvements to the Berkeley Street Southwest crossing are part of the City's I-5 Madigan Access Improvements (Madigan Access) project. The Madigan Access project will improve access to Madigan Hospital by reducing congestion at the Berkeley Street interchange by adding an additional left turn lane on the southbound I-5 ramp and an additional eastbound lane over the Berkeley Street Southwest overcrossing of I-5. In addition, Berkeley Street Southwest will be widened west of I-5 through its intersection with Union Avenue from three to four lanes.
- 8 The Madigan Access project will be completed in two phases: phase one involves reconstruction of the intersection of Berkeley Street with Union Avenue and phase two involves reconstruction of the bridge, on and off-ramps and the highway rail-grade crossing.
- 9 The City proposes to install cantilever-mounted lights and gates to replace the existing outdated warning devices. New sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the railroad crossing and all pedestrian approaches to the crossing will be protected with pedestrian lights and gates. Median barriers will be installed on both approaches to the crossing to deter motorists from driving around downed gates. An interconnected,

activated “No Right Turn” blank-out sign will be installed at the intersection of Berkeley Street Southwest and the southbound off-ramp from I-5. This blank-out sign will illuminate when preemption is activated by an approaching train. In addition, the City proposes to interconnect the Union Avenue traffic signal with the railroad warning devices, as well as maintain preemption with the two traffic signals located on Berkeley Street Southwest. The preemption will be changed from simultaneous to 41 seconds of advance preemption time to ensure that all vehicle and pedestrian traffic is cleared before arrival of the train at the crossing. Constant warning train detection will also be installed as part of the upgrades to the crossing.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10 (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.*
- 11 (2) The Berkeley Street Southwest grade crossing, identified as USDOT #085829U, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150 require that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing or upgrading active crossing warning signals or devices within the state of Washington.
- 13 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted with conditions.
- 14 (5) After examination of the petition filed by the City of Lakewood on November 10, 2014, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 15 The petition of the City of Lakewood to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of Berkeley Street Southwest and the Respondents’ tracks in the city of Lakewood, is granted. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The modifications must conform to those described and attached to 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) Upon completion of the authorized construction of each phase, Petitioner must notify the Commission within 30 days. 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 set forth in this order

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 03 in Docket A-090485. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective December 30, 2014.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

STEVEN V. KING, 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).