

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of	)	DOCKET TR-160188
)	
YAKIMA COUNTY PUBLIC	)	ORDER 01
SERVICES,)	
	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
Petitioner,	)	MODIFY HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
	)	CROSSING ACTIVE WARNING
	)	DEVICES AT LATERAL A ROAD
	)	AND AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE
	)	FROM THE GRADE CROSSING
Seeking Approval to Upgrade Signals	)	PROTECTIVE FUND
at a Railroad-Highway Grade)	
Crossing	)	USDOT: 099216G
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On February 9, 2016, Yakima County Public Services (Yakima County or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), a petition seeking approval to modify active warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT 099216G and is located at the intersection of Lateral A Road and the White Swan Branch Line's tracks in Yakima county. The Petitioner further requested the Commission authorize an expenditure of \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) to pay for a portion of the upgrades.
- 2 Yakima County owns the White Swan Branch Line and Yakima Central Railroad operates on the line under contract.
- 3 Lateral A Road is a two-lane roadway with a speed limit of 50 miles per hour. Average annual daily vehicle traffic through the crossing is estimated at 1,800 vehicles. Lateral A Road is part of an established school bus route, with up to nine school buses traveling over the crossing each day. The crossing is also part of an established truck route, with trucks making up nine percent of the total daily traffic on this roadway. Freight trains are authorized to operate at 20 miles per hour over this single mainline track crossing. Two freight trains per week currently operate at 20 miles per hour. No passenger trains operate over the crossing.
- 4 Railroad warning devices at the Lateral A Road crossing consist of shoulder-mounted flashing lights, gates, crossbucks, and motion-sensor train detection. Yakima County

proposes to upgrade the existing train detection system to constant-warning train detection, which is the most current technology. Constant-warning train detection provides consistent warning of an approaching train, no matter what speed the train is traveling. Yakima County also proposes to relocate the existing bungalow that restricts sight distance for motorists near the Branch Road and Lateral A Road intersection. In addition, Yakima County proposes to replace batteries, replace wiring to the crossing gates, install a new A/C power system, replace the existing incandescent lighting with LED lighting, and update system drawings within the bungalow.

5 Commission staff reviewed the proposed upgrades and recommends approval of the project. These upgrades will improve the overall safety at the crossing by providing motorists and pedestrians with upgraded active warning devices to notify the public of an approaching train. The new batteries and power system will improve reliability if there is a power failure at the crossing. The LED flashing lights will provide greater visibility for the motoring public and pedestrians.

6 The total approximate cost of this project is \$65,500. The Petitioner is contributing \$45,500 as well as labor toward the cost of the upgrades and is responsible for any additional project costs. An expenditure of \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is available to help fund the improvements.

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, and authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. RCW 81.53; RCW 81.53.271; RCW 81.53.281.
- 8 (2) The grade crossing at Lateral A Road, identified as USDOT 099216G, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 9 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires the Commission grant approval prior to any changes to public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington. *See also* WAC 480-62-150.
- 10 (4) RCW 81.53.271 allows the Commission to disburse up to \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to pay for the installation of a grade crossing protective device, without requiring the Petitioner to share the cost.

- 11 (5) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 12 (6) After reviewing Yakima County's petition filed on February 9, 2016, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition and request for disbursement of funds.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 Yakima County Public Services' petition to upgrade warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at Lateral A Road, is granted. The cost of a portion of this upgrade shall be paid from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$20,000.
 - (2) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and labor, and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
 - (3) Yakima County must sign and return the attached project agreement.
 - (4) The project must be completed no later than December 31, 2016.
 - (5) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
 - (6) Yakima County must notify the Commission on completion of the upgrades authorized in this Order. Acceptance of the upgrades is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, and verification that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified in this Order.

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-151775. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective February 17, 2016.

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 website 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 website.

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