

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

CITY OF SNOQUALMIE,

Petitioner,

THE NORTHWEST RAILWAY
MUSEUM,

Respondent.

DOCKET TR-250677

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY
WARNING DEVICES AT A PUBLIC
HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
CROSSING AT KING STREET,
SNOQUALMIE

USDOT: 092025X

BACKGROUND

- 1 On September 4, 2025, the City of Snoqualmie (City or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition (Petition) seeking approval to modify warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing at King Street and tracks of The Northwest Railway Museum's (Museum or Respondent) Snoqualmie Valley Railroad in Snoqualmie identified as USDOT 092025X.
- 2 Respondent, the Museum, consented to entry of a Commission order without hearing.
- 3 King Street is a two-lane rural major collector roadway with a posted vehicle speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The average annual daily traffic at this location is estimated at 500 vehicles. King Street is not part of an established truck or school bus route. No freight trains operate over this line. Approximately two passenger trains operate over the crossing daily at up to 25 miles per hour. According to the Petition, average daily passenger train traffic is expected to increase to six trains per day within the next 10 years.
- 4 Warning devices at the crossing consist of advance warning signs, pavement markings, yield signs, reflectorized cross bucks, and Emergency Notification System signs.
- 5 In its Petition, the City describes the changes proposed at the crossing to include replacing the existing asphalt crossing surface with concrete crossing panels, increasing the crossing length to accommodate a new sidewalk on the west side of the crossing, and adding tactile warning surfaces to sidewalks on both sides of the crossing. Additional proposed changes include the installation of four pairs of mast-mounted flashing LED

lights, crossbucks, R15-8 “Look” signs, constant warning time train detection, and a data recorder.

- 6 In describing the public safety need for the crossing modifications, the City states that a concrete crossing surface will eliminate issues with the existing asphalt crossing surface, including being repeatedly torn up by snowplows and pavement rolling toward the rail and getting cut by the locomotive wheels. In addition, the constant warning time train detection will improve public confidence by eliminating unnecessarily long warning times and resetting when trains stop in approach blocks.
- 7 These improvements are funded by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration, Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) program. According to the Petition, the City and the Museum have reached an agreement related to the apportionment of costs for the upgrades.
- 8 Staff has investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the modifications must conform to those described in the Petition, (2) traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, (3) the City must complete the proposed modifications within three years, (4) the City must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein, and (5) acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.

DISCUSSION

- 9 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. We find that the proposed modification will improve overall safety for crossing users. When the Commission directs the installation of warning devices, it will apportion installation and maintenance costs in accordance with the applicable statutes.¹ RCW 81.53.261 provides that the parties may enter into an agreement providing for the installation of signals or other warning devices or for the apportionment of the cost of installation and maintenance. The parties to this Petition confirmed that they have reached an agreement related to cost apportionment. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

¹ See RCW 81.53.261–.295.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10 (1) The Commission is an agency of the state of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 11 (2) The King Street grade crossing, identified as USDOT 092025X, is a public highway-rail grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. *See also* Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-62-150.
- 13 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 8 above.
- 14 (5) After examining the Petition filed by the City of Snoqualmie on September 4, 2025, and considering all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 15 The City of Snoqualmie's Petition to modify warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing located at King Street is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in 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) The City of Snoqualmie must complete the proposed modifications within three years.
- (4) The City of Snoqualmie must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein.
- (5) Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.

- 16 The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-180762. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective September 15, 2025.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



JEFF KILLIP

Executive Director and Secretary

NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904(3), you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.