

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

BURLINGTON NORTHERN	)	DOCKET NO. TR-030575
SANTA FE RAILWAY	)	
COMPANY,	)	ORDER NO. 01
	)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
	)	INTERCONNECT RAILROAD
v.	)	WARNING SIGNALS AND
	)	HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SIGNALS
CITY OF MOUNT VERNON,	)	
	)	USDOT: 084741T
Respondent.	)	WUTC: 2B 67.60
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1     On April 24, 2003, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company filed a petition with the Commission, seeking approval to interconnect railroad warning signals and highway traffic signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of the petitioner’s tracks and Blackburn Road, in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of Section 30, Township 34 N., Range 4 E., W.M., in Mount Vernon, Washington.
- 2     Respondent has consented to an entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3     In the vicinity of the crossing, Blackburn Road, which runs east-west, intersects 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, which runs northwest-southeast. The petitioner’s tracks, which run north-south, cross both roads at grade in the center of the Blackburn Road/2<sup>nd</sup> Street roadway intersection. Currently, the roadway intersection is controlled by stop signs. Because of this configuration, there are four roadway approaches crossing the tracks: north and south-bound Blackburn Road, and northwest and southeast-bound 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Each roadway has one lane for each direction of

traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. Average daily traffic through the crossing exceeds 2,000 vehicles.

- 4 Petitioner maintains two mainline tracks through the crossing. Average daily train traffic includes ten freight trains and four passenger trains, traveling at maximum speeds of 45 mph and 50 mph respectively.
- 5 Warning devices at the crossing consist of cantilever-mounted flashing light signals with gates, located on each of the four roadway approaches to the crossing. When a train is occupying or approaching the crossing, access to the roadway intersection is blocked by the signals and gates.
- 6 The proposal is related to a plan of the city of Mount Vernon to replace the stop signs at the intersection with highway traffic signals. The plans submitted in this proceeding indicate that the highway traffic signals will be located on the far side of the intersection relative to each roadway approach that is being controlled. Because the potential exists for the highway traffic signals and the railroad warning signals to display conflicting indications, it is necessary to interconnect the two systems so that they operate in a complementary fashion. The petition specifies that simultaneous preemption will be provided when highway traffic signals are installed. After interconnection, an approaching train will activate the railroad warning signals while simultaneously preempting the highway traffic signals. When preemption occurs, the highway traffic signals will all cycle to red, thereby shutting down the roadway intersection for the arrival of the train. Because of the intersection configuration, "Do Not Stop On Tracks" (R8-8) or "Do Not Block Intersection" (R10-7) signs should be installed at locations determined by Mount Vernon traffic engineers to be the most effective.

## 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 Blackburn Road grade crossing, identified as USDOT 084741T, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing 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, subject to specified conditions.
- 11 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 14, 2003.
- 12 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company on April 24, 2003, 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 Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company to interconnect railroad warning signals and highway traffic signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at the intersection of Blackburn Road/2<sup>nd</sup> Street and the petitioner's tracks, in Mount Vernon, Washington, is granted, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) All installations and operations must conform to the plans and specifications filed in this proceeding.
- (2) During preemption, the highway traffic signals must not conflict with the railroad warning signals, except to the extent necessary for signal right-of-way change and compliance with minimum time requirements.
- (3) The city of Mount Vernon must install R8-8 or R10-7 signs at locations within or in approach of the intersection, as determined by Mount Vernon's traffic engineer.
- (4) Upon completion of the signal interconnection, 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 this 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2003.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary