

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

BURLINGTON NORTHERN)	DOCKET NO. TR-000644
SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION
Petitioner,)	TO UPGRADE WARNING
v.)	DEVICES AT A GRADE
)	CROSSING
AUBURN, WASHINGTON)	
)	D.O.T. 085655A
Respondent)	
.....)	W.U.T.C. 1E 21.25

BACKGROUND

- 1 On May 1, 2000, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company filed a petition with the Commission, seeking authority to upgrade warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing. The crossing is located at the intersection of the petitioner's tracks and West Main Street, in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of Section 13, Township 21N, Range 4E, W.M., in Auburn, Washington.
- 2 Respondent has consented to an entry of an order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.

DISCUSSION

- 3 In the vicinity of the crossing, West Main Street is classified as an urban collector road, with two lanes for each direction of traffic, and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 8,500 vehicles, although the recent construction of a commuter rail station in the vicinity has increased this volume to some extent.
- 4 Petitioner maintains two main-line tracks through the crossing. Daily train traffic through the crossing averages 44 trains, including freight and commuter operations. The maximum allowable speed for trains through the crossing is 40 mph, however, the speeds are expected to increase to 79 mph for passenger trains and 50 mph for freight trains.
- 5 The crossing is equipped with cantilever-mounted flashing light signals and gates. The proposed upgrades are associated with the addition of commuter rail operations and expected train speed increases through the crossing, and the construction of a commuter rail station immediately to the south of West Main Street.
- 6 Petitioner proposes replacing the "antiquated cantilevered signals and gates" with new walk-out type cantilevered signals, and a gate mechanism which includes a

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pedestrian gate. At the time the petition was filed, the signal upgrades for which approval was sought did not include the installation of a pedestrian gate. After the filing, the City of Auburn expressed concerns that the petition did not address pedestrian safety at the crossing. This concern stemmed from the increase in pedestrian traffic through the south side of the crossing caused by the new commuter rail station. When the station opened in September of 2000, petitioner installed fencing in the vicinity of the station that served to prevent pedestrians from crossing the tracks at non-designated points and channel them to the West Main Street grade crossing. In addition, petitioner has proposed to further increase pedestrian safety through the installation of a pedestrian gate in the crossing's southwest quadrant. The pedestrian gate will descend at the same time as the roadway gate, but in the opposite direction, covering the east-bound sidewalk approach on the south side (i.e. the side closest to the commuter rail station). Proposed signal upgrades also involve replacing the existing train detection circuitry with bi-directional constant warning circuitry.

- 7 Funding for the signal upgrades is pursuant to the Federal TEA-21 Railroad Crossing Program (Section 130).
- 8 Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommends that the petition be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 9 The Commissioners have reviewed the petition and have been fully advised in the matter. They believe that granting the petition, subject to the conditions set forth below, is in the public interest, and direct the Secretary to issue the Order.

ORDER


10 THE COMMISSION GRANTS the petition of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company for upgrades to warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing, located at the intersection of West Main Street and the petitioner's tracks, in Auburn, Washington, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) All upgrades must conform to the plans and documents filed in this proceeding.
- (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) All equipment must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances for both rail and vehicular traffic.
- (4) Measures must be implemented and maintained that prevent pedestrians on the south side of the crossing from crossing the tracks at non-designated points in the vicinity of the commuter rail station, by physically channeling them to the West Main Street grade crossing (e.g. fencing).

- (5) Upon Completion of the upgrades authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the changes is subject to a compliance inspection and report by Commission Staff, verifying that the grade crossing is in full compliance with law and regulation, and the conditions specified herein.

Dated at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 27th day of June, 2001.

THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION


for CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary