

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

WASHINGTON STATE	)	DOCKET TR-061745
DEPARTMENT OF)	
TRANSPORTATION,	)	ORDER 01
)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
	)	RECONSTRUCT A HIGHWAY-RAIL
v.	)	GRADE CROSSING AND
	)	INTERCONNECT RAILROAD
BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY,	)	WARNING SIGNALS AND
	)	HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT
Respondent	)	HIGGINS AIRPORT WAY
)	
	)	USDOT: 092246A
.....	)	UTC: 2C12.38

BACKGROUND

- 1 On November 16, 2006, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) filed a petition with the Commission seeking approval to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing, upgrade the signals and gates and interconnect a proposed highway traffic signal on SR-20 with the railroad crossing signal. The crossing is located at Higgins Airport Way and BNSF Railway Company’s (BNSF) tracks in Skagit County. The crossing is located within WSDOT limited access right-of-way for SR-20. WSDOT is therefore the designated road authority for this project. After completion of the project, the portion of Higgins Airport Way encompassing the grade crossing will revert to Skagit County.
- 2 On November 29, 2006, Respondent consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 WSDOT estimates average daily vehicle traffic over the crossing at 2,600, which includes commercial motor vehicles. The posted vehicle speed is 50 miles per hour. Average daily train traffic includes two trains per day, traveling at 25 miles per hour.
- 4 Current warning devices at the crossing include shoulder-mounted signals and pavement markings.

5 The proposal is related to a plan by WSDOT to widen SR-20, which includes adding an additional southbound lane across the tracks and a sidewalk in both directions. The project will also replace the crossing surface with concrete materials, upgrade the railroad warning devices to cantilever-mounted signals with gates, upgrade the train detection circuitry to SCS-1 type, and interconnect the railroad signals with the new highway traffic signal that will be installed at the SR-20, Higgins Airport Way intersection.

6 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving safety for roadway and pedestrian users. The proposed interconnection of the new traffic signal and the railroad crossing signals will ensure that all vehicles will clear off the tracks when trains approach.

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 Higgins Airport Way crossing, identified as USDOT 092246A 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.

11 (5) After examination of the petition filed by the Washington State Department of Transportation on November 16, 2006, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

12 The petition of the Washington State Department of Transportation to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at Higgins Airport Way and the respondent's tracks in Skagit county, is granted, as follows:

(1) The modifications must conform to those described in 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) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances from both the roadway and railroad tracks.
- (4) Upon completion of the modifications authorized herein, 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 January 18, 2007.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Executive Secretary