

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

In the Matter of the Petition of	)	DOCKET TR-081051
)	
	)	ORDER 01
CITY OF AUBURN,)	
	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
Petitioner,	)	INTERCONNECT AND MODIFY
	)	RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE
v.	)	CROSSING ACTIVE WARNING
	)	DEVICES, WITH CONDITIONS AT
Union Pacific Railroad,	)	THE 15 TH STREET SW RAILROAD
	)	CROSSINGS
Respondent.)	
	)	USDOT: 396593N (Main Line)
	)	UTC: 6R160.99
)	
	)	USDOT: 922992C (Spur Line)
.....	)	UTC: 6RSD161.003.00

BACKGROUND

- 1 On June 11, 2008, the City of Auburn (City or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition seeking approval to modify, and interconnect with traffic signals, active warning devices at two railroad-highway grade crossings which are owned and operated by Union Pacific Railroad. The crossings are identified as USDOT 39653N, which is the main line track, and USDOT 922992C, which is an industrial spur track. The crossings are located near each other at the intersection of 15th Street SW and the Respondent’s tracks within the City of Auburn. In addition to the intersection with 15th Street SW, both crossings are affected by Perimeter Road, a heavily used, private access road for two major facilities, Boeing and the YMCA. Perimeter Road intersects 15th Street SW and ends just east of the main-line crossing and just west of the spur track crossing.
- 2 Railroad warning devices at the main line crossing (USDOT 39653N) consist of shoulder-mounted gates with lights and cantilever-mounted flashing lights. There are approximately eight freight trains that travel over the main line crossing each day and an additional eight freight trains at night. Trains travel at a maximum speed of 40 miles per hour. Passenger trains do not use the crossing.

- 3 Railroad warning devices at the spur track crossing (USDOT 922992C) consist of crossbucks and advance warning signs. Current train operations over the spur crossing include one train a month that is protected by a flagger who manually controls traffic when the train crosses the road at this location.
- 4 15th Street SW is classified as a six-lane urban arterial. Vehicle traffic over both crossings consists of approximately 18,400 vehicles each day. Of these vehicles, approximately 440 are commercial vehicles and 35 are school buses.
- 5 This petition is prompted by a new industrial development in the area which will increase activity on the spur track to five trains per week.
- 6 In its petition, the City proposes modifying the active warning devices at both crossings to accommodate the increased train traffic on the spur track. The main line track will continue to be protected by existing equipment, but the bungalow and circuitry will be upgraded to accommodate expanded and enhanced interconnection and preemption with associated traffic signals. The upgrades will also provide additional advanced warning time of an approaching train.
- 7 The City proposes modifying warning devices in several ways:
- 1) The spur track crossing will be protected by the main line lights and gates for 15th Street SW eastbound traffic.
 - 2) There will be a new 'No Right Turn – Train' blackout sign for northbound traffic turning east off Perimeter Road onto 15th Street SW.
 - 3) There will be new traffic signals east of the spur track for westbound traffic on 15th Street SW. The sole purpose of these signals is to protect the spur track crossing when in use. The traffic lights are proposed to serve in lieu of traditional grade crossing active warning devices and equipment.
 - 4) Crews operating trains at the spur track will use manual pushbuttons located on both sides of 15th Street SW to control the crossing. When engaged the pushbuttons will activate the interconnected active warning devices, including advance preemption of traffic signals. A wayside track signal will also notify the train crew when it is safe to enter the roadway.

- 8 Modifying and interconnecting the active warning devices in this way will create a traffic-free zone from west of the main line crossing and east of the spur track crossing on 15th Street SW and south of the intersection of 15th Street SW and Perimeter Road, when a train travels over the spur track crossing.
- 9 On June 18, 2008, the Respondent, Union Pacific Railroad consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10 (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. *RCW 81.53*
- 11 (2) The grade crossings at 15th Street SW in Auburn, identified as USDOT 39653N, which is the main line railroad track, and USDOT 922992C, which is an industrial spur railroad track, are public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 12 (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.
- 13 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to certain conditions.
- 14 (5) After reviewing the petition filed on June 11, 2008, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition, subject to certain conditions.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 15 The City of Auburn's petition to modify active warning devices at two railroad-highway grade crossings which involve tracks owned and operated by Union Pacific Railroad, identified as USDOT 39653N, which is the main line railroad track, and USDOT 922992C, which is an industrial spur railroad track., is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The new traffic signals proposed to be located east of the spur track crossing on 15th Street SW westbound lanes must be modified to protect motorists exiting the nearby commercial driveway, westbound.

- (2) The stop bar proposed to be located on the 15th Street SW eastbound lanes, just west of the spur track crossing must be replaced with standard rail crossing pavement markings.
- (3) Emergency notification signs (1-13a) must be installed at the 15th Street SW spur track crossing.
- (4) Retroreflective tape must be installed on the posts of the crossbucks at the 15th Street SW spur track crossing.
- (5) All construction and installations must substantially conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
- (6) Traffic control devices, advance warning signs, and pavement markings must comply with applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (7) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances for both rail and vehicular traffic.
- (8) Upon completion of the reconstruction authorized herein, Petitioner must notify the Commission.
- (9) Any changes to the purpose and use of these crossings as described in the petition and this Order require Commission approval before implementation.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of WAC 480-62-150(1) (g) and RCW 81.53.030, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective July 1, 2008.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Executive Director