



STATE OF WASHINGTON

UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY (360) 586-8203

May 31, 2018

Stephen Semenick, Public Projects Manager
BNSF Railway Company
2454 Occidental Ave. S., Suite 1A
Seattle, WA 98134

Sent via email and First Class mail

RE: TR-180466 – Petition on Behalf of Whatcom County Public Works to Install Median Barriers at Cliffside Drive (USDOT 084821L)

Dear Mr. Semenick:

On May 30, 2018, Whatcom County Public Works (County) filed a petition with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) seeking approval to install median barriers at the Cliffside Drive railroad crossing, identified as USDOT 084821L, as part of a quiet zone improvement. BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) must respond with its position related to this petition within 20 days of the date of this letter.

Please review the enclosed petition and respond by June 20, 2018. Your response options include:

- **Support the petition** – Complete the Respondent's Waiver of Hearing form, which serves as BNSF's consent to the UTC to issue an order without further notice or hearing, and submit it to the UTC.
- **Do not support the petition** – Provide a response including BNSF's reasons for not supporting the petition, whether the company feels a hearing is necessary to resolve the issues, or suggestions for other courses of action, such as further discussion prior to going to hearing.

Stephen Semenick
May 31, 2018
Page 2

Please submit your written response to Betty Young, Transportation Planning Specialist, at betty.young@utc.wa.gov. If you have questions, Ms. Young can be reached at (360) 664-1202.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Kathy Hunter
Assistant Director, Transportation Safety

Enclosure

cc: James Karcher, Whatcom County Public Works (without enclosures)



WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Whatcom County)	DOCKET NO. TR- 180466
Petitioner,)	PETITION FOR INSTALLATION OF
vs.)	MEDIAN BARRIERS AT A
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway)	HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
Respondent)	CROSSING
.....)	USDOT CROSSING NO.: #084821L
)	

The Petitioner asks the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to approve installation of median barriers at a highway-rail grade crossing.

Section 1 – Petitioner’s Information

Whatcom County _____
 Petitioner

James P. Karcher 5-25-18
 Signature

322 North Commercial Street, Suite 301
 Street Address

Bellingham, WA 98225
 City, State and Zip Code

 Mailing Address, if different than the street address

James P. Karcher, P.E. – Engineering Manager
 Contact Person Name

(360)778-6271 jkarcher@co.whatcom.wa.us
 Contact Phone Number and Email Address

Section 4 – Current Crossing Traffic

1. Type of public road at the crossing State County City
 Port State Park Other _____

2. Average daily vehicle traffic over the tracks 300 Vehicle speed limit 25

3. Number of lanes 2

4. Trucks (commercial vehicles) are what percent of average daily traffic 1%

5. Number of school buses over the crossing each day 0

6. Name of railroad(s) operating at crossing BNSF, AmTrak

7. Type of railroad at crossing Common Carrier Logging Industrial
 Passenger Excursion

8. Type of tracks at crossing Main Line Siding or Spur

9. Number of tracks at crossing 1

10. Average daily train traffic, freight 17
Authorized freight train speed 50 Operated freight train speed 45

11. Average daily train traffic, passenger 2
Authorized passenger train speed 79 Operated passenger train speed 45

Section 5 – Justification

1. Provide the following information:

a. Describe in detail the why this crossing should have median barriers installed.

The Cliffside Drive is a no outlet local access road to a small community of approximately 44 residences that live on the westerly side of the crossing. These residences are the predominant users of this crossing. The current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) is 300 vehicles. There are no school or city buses that use this crossing. The medians will provide a physical deterrent in the absence of the train horn which only provides a warning to motorists. The crossing will maintain the existing warning devices consisting of: two (2) entrance gates, advanced warning signs, bells, and 8 flashing lights that will be upgraded to LED through the proposed project. A eighteen foot long precast curb will be installed at the northeast quadrant of the crossing to protect the crossing gate assembly (see attached plan). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has calculated the current risk index at this crossing to be below the Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold inferring that the current configuration meets the minimum requirements to become a quiet zone. However, Whatcom County still proposes to install Supplemental Safety Measures that will further reduce the risk index by 60%.

b. Provide a description of the type of median barriers proposed.

The mountable median will extend 100 feet both east and west of the crossing qualifying these improvements to considered Supplemental Safety Measures. The mountable median is constructed of a high strength composite material. It is 10-5/8 inches wide and has a dome shape that is 4 inches tall. The 44 inch sections fasten together and are anchored to the pavement using a nylon expansion molly and 5/8 inch by 6 inch lag screws. The reflective traffic channelization devices are attached to the curb using a rubber boot that slides into a machined groove in the curb at 80 inch intervals. These reflective traffic channelization devices are 40 inches by 8-3/4 inches with 232 square inches of type III reflective sheeting on both sides. The break away reflective traffic channelization devices provide an effective deterrent for the typical motorists while allowing for emergency apparatus to openly access and use the full width of the roadway.

c. Describe who will maintain the barriers.

The proposed barriers will be maintained by Whatcom County Public Works' Maintenance and Operations Division. The barriers will be maintained at the original installed condition and all damage compromising the functionality of the barrier will be corrected immediately. A thorough annual inspection will be conducted to ensure that there is no degradation of the material and the inspection will be documented and provided to the UTC, FRA, or BNSF upon request. After installation of the proposed barrier Whatcom County intends to monitor the site and maintain a clear line of communication to identify and address any violations that may occur during this time. If violations become an issue, Whatcom County recognizes that adjustments may need to be made.

d. Attach a proposed diagram or design of the crossing and median barriers.

Please see the attached plan of the proposed improvements.

Section 6 – Waiver of Hearing by Respondent

Waiver of Hearing

The undersigned represents the Respondent in the petition to install median barriers at the following crossing.

USDOT Crossing No. _____

We have investigated the conditions at the crossing. We are satisfied the conditions are the same as described by the Petitioner in this docket. We agree installation of median barriers should be made and consent to a decision by the commission without a hearing.

Dated at _____, Washington, on the _____ day of

_____, 20__.

Printed name of Respondent

Signature of Respondent's Representative

Title

Company Name

Phone number and email address

Mailing address

