

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

CITY OF PALOUSE,	)	DOCKET TR-081389
	)	
Petitioner.	)	ORDER 01
	)	
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and WASHINGTON IDAHO RAILWAY INC.,	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO RECONSTRUCT A PUBLIC HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING AT HALL STREET IN THE CITY OF PALOUSE
	)	
Respondents.	)	USDOT: 857871C
	)	UTC: 52A.30
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On July 25, 2008, the City of Palouse (City or Petitioner) filed a petition with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) seeking approval to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Hall Street in the city of Palouse. The reconstruction of Whitman Street is part of a larger infrastructure renewal project by the City.
  
- 2 Respondents Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington Idaho Railway Inc. (Washington Idaho Railway) have consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
  
- 3 Hall Street is a two-lane local collector roadway with one lane in each direction. The City estimates average daily vehicle traffic over the crossing at 150, which includes four school bus trips per week day. The posted legal speed limit is 25 miles per hour.
  
- 4 The railroad tracks are designated as mainline, with two trains using the crossing each week. Current speed limit for the trains is 10 miles per hour or less. No passenger trains operate on these tracks at this time.
  
- 5 The Whitman Street Reconstruction and Revitalization Project will replace the road bed; install new sidewalks, lighting, and landscape along Whitman Street between Bridge and Hall Streets. The project will also replace the crossing surface and separate vehicle traffic from train traffic. Currently, vehicles drive on top of the tracks in both directions and there's no distinct separation for train and vehicle traffic. Once the project is complete, distinct

travel lanes will be established for roadway users and sidewalks and cross walks will be installed to provide pedestrians with safer travel options.

- 6 The reconstruction will separate motor vehicles and trains to some extent but there will continue to be at-grade conflict between vehicles and trains when vehicles cross the tracks to access businesses and other facilities.
- 7 Railroad warning devices at the Hall Street crossing consist of crossbucks on the north approach only. The City proposes to install new crossbucks, YIELD signs and retroreflective tape to the sign posts on both approaches to the crossing. See Attachment A, a model endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation for design and placement of YIELD and STOP signs in conjunction with crossbucks.
- 8 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving safety and convenience for roadway users.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 9 (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.*
- 10 (2) The proposed reconstruction of a crossing involves a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to reconstructing a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (4) Commission staff investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions identified below.
- On the street approaches to the Hall Street crossing, the city must install crossbucks, YIELD signs and retroreflective tape to the sign posts. See Attachment A, a model endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation for design and placement of YIELD and STOP signs in conjunction with crossbucks.
  - On the street approaches to the Hall Street crossing, the city must install emergency notification sign I-13 or I-13a to provide emergency notification information.

- 13 (5) After examination of the petition filed by the City of Palouse on July 25, 2008, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 14 The petition of the City of Palouse to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Hall Street and the Respondent's tracks in Whitman 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) On the street approaches to the Hall Street crossing, the city must install crossbucks, YIELD signs and retroreflective tape to the sign posts. See Attachment A, a model endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation for design and placement of YIELD and STOP signs in conjunction with crossbucks.
- (4) On the street approaches to the Hall Street crossing, the city must install emergency notification sign I-13 or I-13a to provide emergency notification information.
- (5) Petitioner must notify Commission Staff within 30 days upon completion of this modification project.

The Commissioners have delegated authority to the Secretary to enter this Order pursuant to RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904((1)(b)).

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective October 17, 2008.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Executive Director and Secretary

**NOTICE:** This is an order delegated to the Secretary for decision. In addition to serving you a copy of the decision, the Commission will post on its Internet Web site for at least fourteen (14) days a listing of all matters delegated to the Secretary for decision. You may seek Commission review of this decision. You must file a request for Commission review of this order no later than fourteen (14) days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's Web site. The Commission will schedule your request for review for consideration at a regularly scheduled open meeting. The Commission will notify you of the time and place of the open meeting at which the Commission will review the order.

The Commission will grant a late-filed request for review only on a showing of good cause, including a satisfactory explanation of why the person did not timely file the request. A form for late-filed requests is available on the Commission's Web site.

This notice and review process is pursuant to the provisions of RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904(2) and (3).