

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS,	)	DOCKET TR-143416
	)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER 01
	)	
PORTLAND VANCOUVER JUNCTION RAILROAD,	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO RECONSTRUCT AND
	)	INTERCONNECT THE RAILROAD
Respondent.	)	WARNING AND HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
	)	SIGNALS AT A PUBLIC RAILROAD-
	)	HIGHWAY GRADE CROSSING AT
	)	NE 78 <sup>TH</sup> STREET IN CLARK COUNTY
	)	
	)	
	)	USDOT: #852429T
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1     On September 18, 2014, Clark County (County or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), a petition seeking approval to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing and interconnect the railroad signals with a proposed traffic signal. The crossing is identified as USDOT #852429T and is located at the intersection of Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street and the railroad tracks in Clark county.
- 2     On October 23, 2014, the Respondent and operator of the line, Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad (PVJR) consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing. Clark County owns the railroad line and leases it to PVJR.
- 3     Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street is classified as an urban principal arterial with five lanes and a posted vehicle speed limit of 45 miles per hour. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 33,200 vehicles. As a designated truck route, two and one-half percent of the vehicles are commercial motor vehicles. Up to 35 school buses travel over this crossing on week days.
- 4     PVJR operates six freight train per day at up to 10 miles per hour over the two-track crossing. The two tracks are classified as a main and spur track. No passenger trains operate over the crossing.

- 5 Warning devices at the Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street crossing include cantilever mounted lights and gates, cross-bucks, pavement markings, “Do Not Stop on Tracks,” signs, “Multiple Tracks” signs and advance warning signs. Northeast 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersects Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street and forms a “T” intersection. Northeast 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue is located between the two tracks and is protected by shoulder-mounted flashing lights. All railroad warning signals operate off of a single warning system.
- 6 The County proposes to modify the “T” intersection by widening Northeast 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue to current county road standards and extending it thru Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street. As part of the extension the roadway located on the north leg will be realigned to create a symmetrical four-legged intersection. Currently, the fourth leg is identified as the Clark County Public Works Operations Center driveway and is located 80 feet from centerline to centerline of the proposed relocation. In addition, other roadway improvements include sidewalks, median barriers and traffic signals on all roadway approaches to the intersection.
- 7 Proposed railroad warning device upgrades include: cantilever and/or shoulder mounted lights and gates on all approaches to the crossing; two pedestrian signal masts in the unprotected quadrants; constant warning train detection; and interconnection of the traffic signals with the railroad warning devices. The County proposes 12 seconds advance preemption time to ensure that all vehicle traffic and pedestrians are cleared before arrival of the train at the crossing.
- 8 Currently, there are numerous false activations of the railroad signal system due to train operations in the yard south of the crossing. Upgraded constant warning train detection will minimize the frequency of the false activations and improve traffic flow and safety.
- 9 “Do Not Stop on Tracks” signs and advance warning signs are proposed on all approaches to the crossing. “Look” signs will be mounted on each pedestrian crossing signal mast and tactile strips imbedded in the sidewalks to provide pedestrians a visual indication of the tracks and a distinction of where to stand when a train is approaching or occupying the crossing.

### **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. *Chapter 81.53 RCW.*

- 11 (2) The Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street grade crossing, identified as USDOT #852429T, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150 require that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing or upgrading active crossing warning signals or devices within the state of Washington.
- 13 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted with conditions.
- 14 (5) After examination of the petition filed by Clark County on September 18, 2014, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

### **ORDER**

#### **THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 15 The petition of Clark County to modify a railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of Northeast 78<sup>th</sup> Street and the Respondent's tracks in Clark county is granted. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described and attached to 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) Upon completion of the authorized construction of each phase, Petitioner must notify the Commission within 30 days. 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 set forth in this order

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 03 in Docket A-090485. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective October 27, 2014.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**STEVEN V. KING, 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).