

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of	DOCKET TR-260190
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY,	ORDER 01
Petitioner,	GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY WARNING DEVICES AT A PUBLIC HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING AT 8 <sup>TH</sup> AVENUE SOUTHEAST, OLYMPIA
CITY OF OLYMPIA,	
Respondent.	USDOT: 807846H

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On March 23, 2026, Union Pacific Railroad Company (Union Pacific or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition (Petition) seeking approval to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast and its track in Olympia, identified as USDOT 807846H. On March 25, 2026, Union Pacific filed additional documents in support of its Petition.
- 2 Respondent City of Olympia consented to entry of a Commission order without hearing.
- 3 8th Avenue Southeast is a two-lane urban minor collector roadway with a posted vehicle speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The estimated average annual daily traffic at this location is 2,100 vehicles. 8th Avenue Southeast is neither part of an established commercial vehicle route nor part of an established school bus route. Up to three freight trains operate over this crossing daily at up to 10 miles per hour.
- 4 Warning devices at the crossing consist of advance warning signs, pavement markings, reflectorized crossbucks, Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs, two warning bells, mast and cantilever-mounted LED warning lights.
- 5 According to its Petition, Union Pacific intends to replace the existing constant warning time train detection circuitry with an island detection circuit. The existing train detection system relies on wire bonds connecting the rails to form long track circuits extending in both directions from the crossing. Union Pacific reports that these rail bonds have been

stolen and vandalized, resulting in false activations of the crossing signals. False activations are a detriment to public safety because they desensitize crossing users to the signals and increase the potential for train-vehicle collisions. They also create an unnecessary maintenance burden for the Petitioner. The change to island train detection circuitry will require trains to stop at the island and proceed once crossing lights are flashing and the crossing is clear.

6 According to the Petition and its supporting documents, Union Pacific will be responsible for the cost of the project, therefore, it is not necessary for the Commission to apportion costs between the parties.

7 Commission staff (Staff) has investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the modifications must conform to those described in 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) Union Pacific must complete the proposed modifications within three years, and (4) Union Pacific must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.

### **DISCUSSION**

8 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. When the Commission directs the installation of warning devices, it will apportion installation and maintenance costs in accordance with the applicable statutes.<sup>1</sup> RCW 81.53.261 provides that the parties may enter into an agreement providing for the installation of signals or other warning devices or for the apportionment of the cost of installation and maintenance. Union Pacific has indicated it will bear the cost of the proposed modifications. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

9 (1) The Commission is an agency of the state of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.

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<sup>1</sup> See RCW 81.53.261–295.

- 10 (2) The 8th Avenue Southeast crossing, identified as USDOT 807846H, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. See also Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-62-150.
- 12 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 7, above.
- 13 (5) After examining the Petition filed by Union Pacific on March 23, 2026, and the Petition attachments filed on March 25, 2026, and considering all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

**ORDER**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 14 Union Pacific Railway Company's Petition to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at 8th Avenue Southeast is granted, and the parties are directed to proceed with the modifications described in the Petition, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in 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) Union Pacific Railway Company must complete the modifications within three years of the effective date of this Order.
- (4) Union Pacific Railway Company must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein.
- (5) Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.
- 15 The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-180762. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective March 27, 2026.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**JEFF KILLIP**

Executive Director and Secretary

By: /s/ Evan Gaffey

Operations Director

Executive Director's Designee

**NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904(3), you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.**