

Exhibit No. ____ (KH-7)
Dockets TR-110157, TR-110162
TR-110159, TR-110160, TR-110161
Witness: Kathy Hunter

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**PUGET SOUND & PACIFIC
RAILROAD,**

Petitioner,

v.

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY,

Respondent.

**DOCKET TR-110157
DOCKET TR-110162**

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**PUGET SOUND & PACIFIC
RAILROAD,**

Petitioner,

v.

CITY OF ELMA,

Respondent.

**DOCKET TR-110159
DOCKET TR-110160
DOCKET TR-110161**

EXHIBIT TO TESTIMONY OF

Kathy Hunter

**STAFF OF
WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

UTC Staff Analysis of Elma N. 10th Street Crossing, September 17, 2009

November 10, 2011

CROSSING CONSOLIDATION WORKSHEET
INITIAL STAFF ANALYSIS

Employee Name Paul Curl

Date 9/17/09

Crossing Type

X Public: USDOT # 096638P Intersects Street N 10th Street

In City of Elma In County of Grays harbor

Private: General Location _____ GPS Latitude _____ Longitude _____
Railroad Owing Track PSAP

Background:

Staff identified this crossing for a potential closure because (choose one or more reasons from 1-4, below, and fill in the requested information):

1. Unused or abandoned crossing

- a. It appears the crossing is abandoned by the railroad.
- Critical pieces of track or crossing are missing.
 - Tracks are overgrown with vegetation.
 - Tracks are in poor condition due to non-use.
 - Other _____
- b. It appears the crossing is not used by the public.
- Critical pieces of road surface or crossing are missing.
 - Road surface is overgrown with vegetation.
 - Other _____

2. Lack of gates

- a. Active warning does not exist at the crossing.
- b. Active warning at the crossing consists of only flashing lights.
Type and size: _____

3. Poor crossing conditions

- a. The crossing is severely humped.
- b. The approach grade from each direction is:
North _____ South _____ East _____ West _____
- c. Sight distance is less than the minimum recommendations. Refer to Sight Distance chart.
- d. The sight distance in each quadrant is:
NE _____ NW _____ SE _____ SW _____
- e. Sight distance is limited because (please check the box and describe in 'comments'):
- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curve of track | <input type="checkbox"/> Angle of the intersection | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Man-made obstruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | Comments _____ |
- _____

4. Redundant Crossing

- a. There is a crossing with USDOT number 096639W within 2 minutes driving time and within one block driving distance of the redundant crossing. If a USDOT number does not exist, explain location of crossing (N 11th Street) _____
- b. There is a crossing with USDOT number 096640R within 4 minutes driving time and within three blocks driving distance of the redundant crossing. If a USDOT number does not exist, explain location of crossing (N 13th Street) _____
- c. There is a crossing with USDOT number _____ within _____ driving time and within _____ driving distance of the redundant crossing. If a USDOT number does not exist, explain location of crossing _____

5. Alternate Route

Describe your experience as a motorist in using the crossings named in (4), above, as an alternate route to the most common destination beyond the redundant crossing.

Analysis

1. Are the conditions as described? Yes No

Explain _____

2. What might we need to do to affect a crossing closure?

- a. Provide an access road
b. Improve the alternative crossing
c. Move a driveway
d. Move another obstruction
e. Other

Explain Remove crossing surface, erect barrier or fence, redirect traffic.

Attach crossing or vicinity photos that show the conditions at the crossing.

Attach a map or sketch of the crossing and vicinity.

Recommendation

- Continue with process to close this crossing.
 Do not continue with process to close this crossing.

Explain See attached.

Please forward completed form to the Rail Manager.
Revised September 17, 2009

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N 10th St.-Recommendation

N 10th Street in Elma was identified as a potential crossing closure based on two criteria, passive protection and redundancy. I have verified that the crossing is passively protected by advance warning signs, cross bucks, stop signs, and pavement markings. N 11th Street, one block to the west, has active protection with shoulder-mounted lights and gates. Normally, this crossing would be a good candidate for consolidation but there are circumstances which make consolidation inadvisable.

N 10th Street runs north/south and connects Main Street with the city's "10th Street Park." The park is located just south of the PSAP tracks and N 10th St. is the main entrance. At one time, there were two city parks at this location bisected by N 9th Street and accessible from N 10th Street on the west side, and Division Street on the east. All three of these streets had passively-protected grade crossings. In the late 1970s, the two parks were combined and expanded to the east. The Division Street crossing was closed at the same time leaving entrances at only N 9th Street (in about the middle of the park) and N 10th Street on the west side. In the mid 1980s, the N 9th Street grade crossing was closed leaving direct access to the park only at N 10th Street. At about this same time, lights and gates were installed at the N 11th Street crossing but I don't know if the signals were somehow connected to the closure of the N 9th Street crossing.

I think it would be an uphill battle to close the N 10th Street crossing. While PSAP would likely support the effort, the city would not. Two adjacent grade crossings have been closed in past leaving only one direct entrance/exit to the park. When the park is busy, people do use the nearby N 11th Street crossing to avoid traffic jams but it is not a direct route and somewhat inconvenient. Closing N 10th Street would leave N 11th Street as the only reasonable route to enter or leave the park. This would likely be unacceptable to the city based on emergency response times.

It is also apparent that the city is well aware of the hazard of having railroad tracks running through the middle of town. This is not a situation where there is a grade crossing every block. Within city limits, there are potentially 20 grade crossings. Of these 20, two are grade separated and eight dead-end short of the tracks. The city has managed its crossings very well relative to other small cities around the state.

Even though I don't recommend pursuing the closure/consolidation of the N 10th Street crossing, there are a couple of issues that we should address. 10th Street Park is primarily an athletic complex with two softball fields and four baseball fields but there are other amenities such as picnic shelters and playgrounds. It is heavily used in the good weather months by the general public and by little league teams for games and tournaments. Even though the AADT is relatively low at N 10th Street because of averaging in the winter months, there is heavy traffic seasonally. There are times, such as little league tournaments, where traffic is easily 3,000 cars a day, many of them from out-of-town and not familiar with the crossing. I recommend working

with PSAP and the city, possibly using surplus equipment, to signalize the N 10th Street grade crossing.

I also noted a couple of areas where there is clear evidence of frequent trespass. The entire length of the park is separated from the tracks by a relatively new, well-maintained chain-link fence, except for two locations. There appears to be an intentional gap in the fence at the site of the closed N 9th Street crossing. There is a barrier in place and no crossing surface. This prevents vehicular traffic but it is apparent that pedestrians frequently cross the tracks at this location to access the park. N 9th Street is a straight shot of about four blocks to both Elma High and Elma Middle Schools on Main Street. At the site of the closed Division Street crossing, the fence has been cut and it appears that pedestrians are crossing the tracks to access the park at this location also. I recommend an assignment for Bob Boston to work with the city on these trespass issues.