

FILE

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**Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio**

Memo

To: Docketing Division
From: George Martin, Grade Crossing Planner, Rail Division
Re: PUCO Case No. 10-46-RR-RCP
Date: January 25, 2010

GM

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
2010 JAN 25 PM 1:17
PUCO

Please docket the attached staff report.

C: Legal Department

Please serve the following parties of record.



The Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio

A report by the Staff of the
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

January 25, 2010



INTRODUCTION

Rail Division

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) works with local highway authorities and communities to provide safety for the citizens of Ohio at highway-railroad grade crossings.

The PUCO has the statutory authority to regulate and promote the welfare and safety of railroad employees and the traveling public pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 4905.471; and

The PUCO has the authority to close public at grade crossings pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections 4907.474 and 4907.475. The sections set forth a variety of factors to be considered by the Commission in determining whether there is a demonstrable need for any public grade crossing to exist and whether any such crossing could be closed to vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic, or both and the travel over the grade crossing diverted to other grade crossings.

The PUCO is responsible for evaluating public highway-railroad grade crossings to determine the need for upgrading the warning devices and apportioning the cost thereof pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 4907.471.

The PUCO has the authority under Ohio Revised Code Section 4511.63 (B) to declare a grade crossing exempt, whereby vehicles normally required to stop at a grade crossing under that title and Code of Federal Regulations Title 49, 392.10 would be able to proceed through the crossing without stopping.

The PUCO enforces all aspects of the Federal Railroad Administration regulations through inspections and evaluations of Ohio's public highway-railroad grade crossings.

I. DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT

Norfolk Southern Railway (NS), a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern Corporation, operates approximately 22,000 miles of track in 22 states and the District of Columbia. Serving every major container port on the east coast, it provides connections to western rail carriers. NS is the largest rail carrier of metals and automotive products in North America.

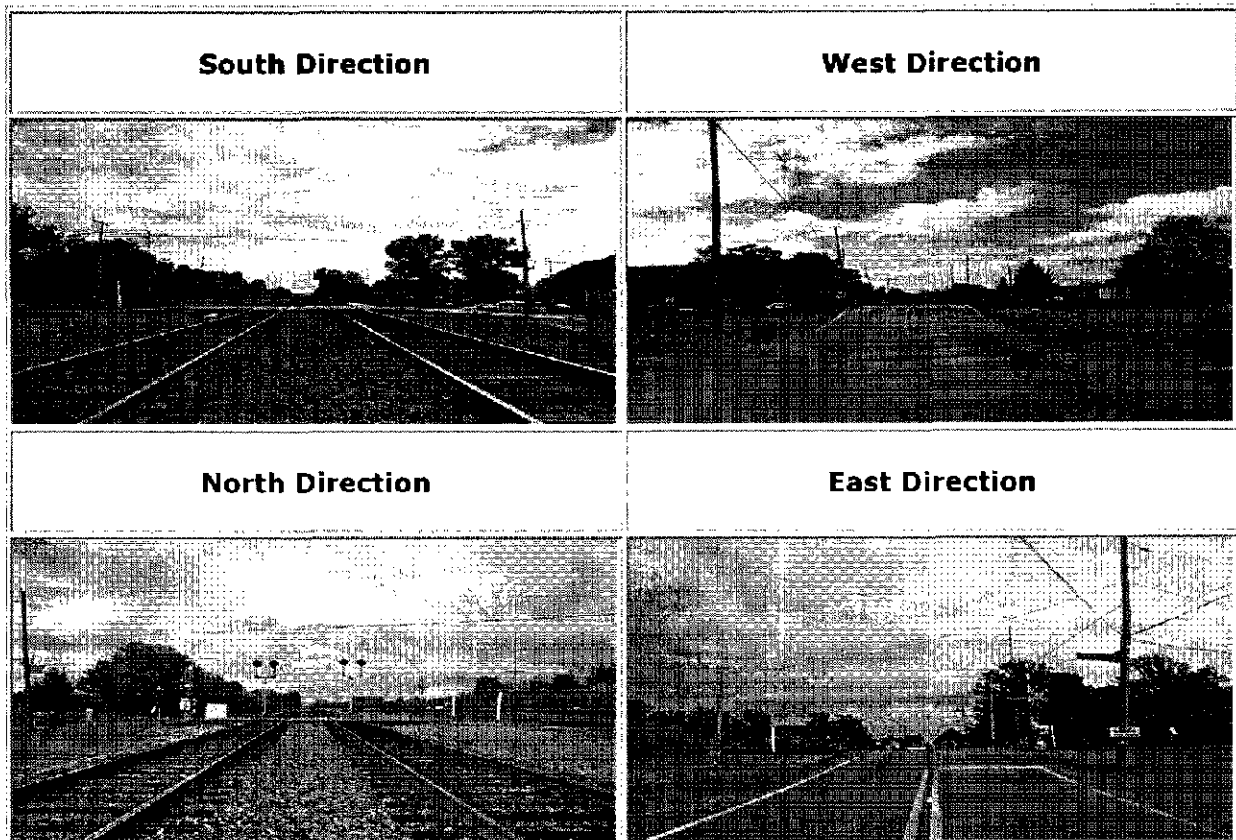
II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On January 13, 2010, Norfolk Southern Railway (NS), filed under Case No. 10-46-RR-RCP, a request to modify the existing warning devices at Franklin County, City of Columbus, Park Road, DOT# 481-479N. NS seeks to remove a stand-alone flasher assembly with a train activated "No right turn" sign facing oncoming traffic at the intersection of Park Road and Station Street, and replace it with a standard mast-mounted flasher assembly.

III. Photo's from PUCO Database



Public Utilities Commission of Ohio



Site Information	
AARDOT:	481478N
AARDOT Source:	Field
Adj. AARDOT:	518253T
Adj. AARDOT Source:	Field
Survey Site ID:	FRA003
Init. Agency for Change:	State
Reason for Change:	Updated Record
Effective Date:	Jan 2 2003 12:00AM

Railroad Information	
Operating RR:	Norfolk Southern Corp
Division:	LAKE
Sub-Division:	NW
Branch/Line Name:	SANDUSKY
Milepost:	11.49
Railroad ID:	
Nearest Time Table Station:	WORTHINGTON
Parent RR Company:	NS
Crossing Owner:	NS
Location and Classification Information	
County:	FRANKLIN
(Nearest) City:	COLUMBUS
Street:	PARK RD
Highway and SLM:	CR19
High Speed Corridor:	
County Map Ref. Number:	25
ODOT NLF ID:	CFRACR00019**C
Latitude:	40.1272882
Longitude:	-83.0048384
Elevation (ft):	935.71
Crossing Type:	Public
Position:	At-Grade
Emergency Contact:	
Railroad Contact:	
State Contact:	
LHA:	FRANKLIN COUNTY
LHA2:	
Dev. Type:	Residential
Crossing Angle:	60-90 Degrees

Tracks:	3
Lanes:	2
Warning Devices	
Crossbucks, Standard:	2
Crossbucks, Buckeye:	0
Lights, Mast Mounted:	2
Lights, Cantilevered:	0
Lights, Other:	1
Gates:	1
Traffic Information	
Day Thru Trains:	12
Day Switching Trains:	2
Night Thru Trains:	15
Night Switch Trains:	2
Date of Train Count:	
Highway AADT:	005400
Date of AADT:	2001

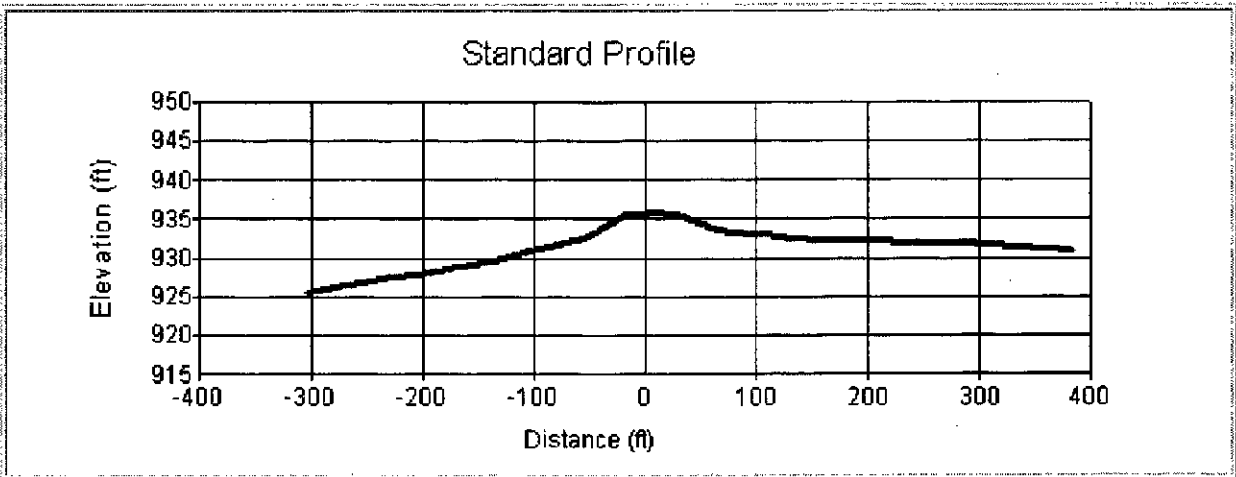
Highway Information	
Distance to Nearest Intersection:	25
Type of Intersection:	Highway
Number of HW-HW Intersections:	1

Highway 1:	
Traffic Light:	NO
Flashing Light:	NO
Stop Sign:	NO
Yield Sign:	NO

Distance from Tie to Center of Intersection:	25
DO NOT STOP ON TRACK(S) Sign:	NO

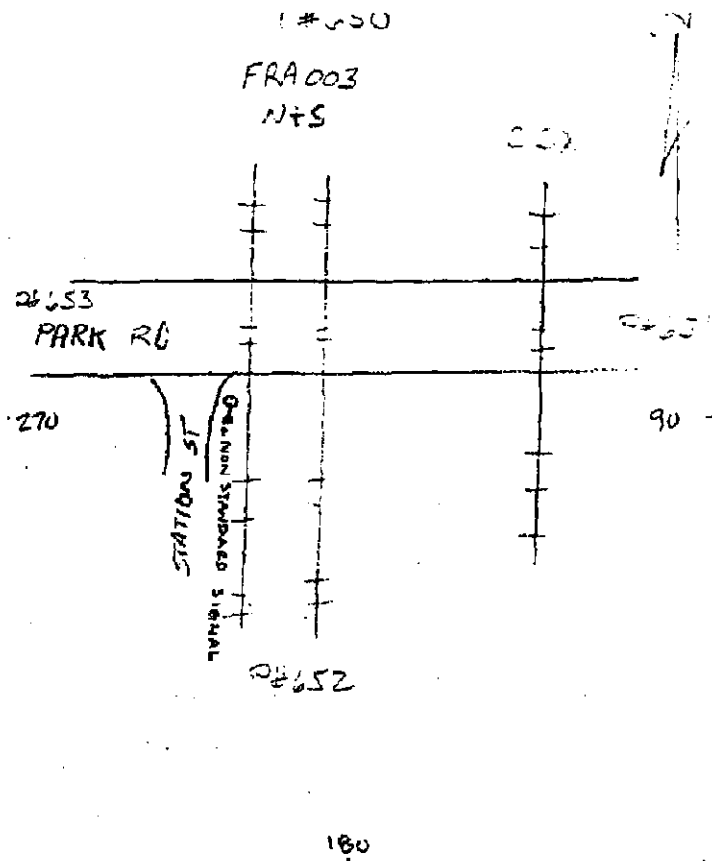
Site Comments

No comments.



The following images were scanned as received

Site Sketch



The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Transportation Department
Rail Division

Date of Assignment: 1/14/2010

Date of Inspection: 1/19/2010

Subject: Request by Norfolk Southern Railway under PUCO Case no. 10-46-RR-RCP for modification of the existing warning devices at Park Road, DOT #481-478N, Franklin County, City of Columbus

DOT/AAR # 481-478N

Findings

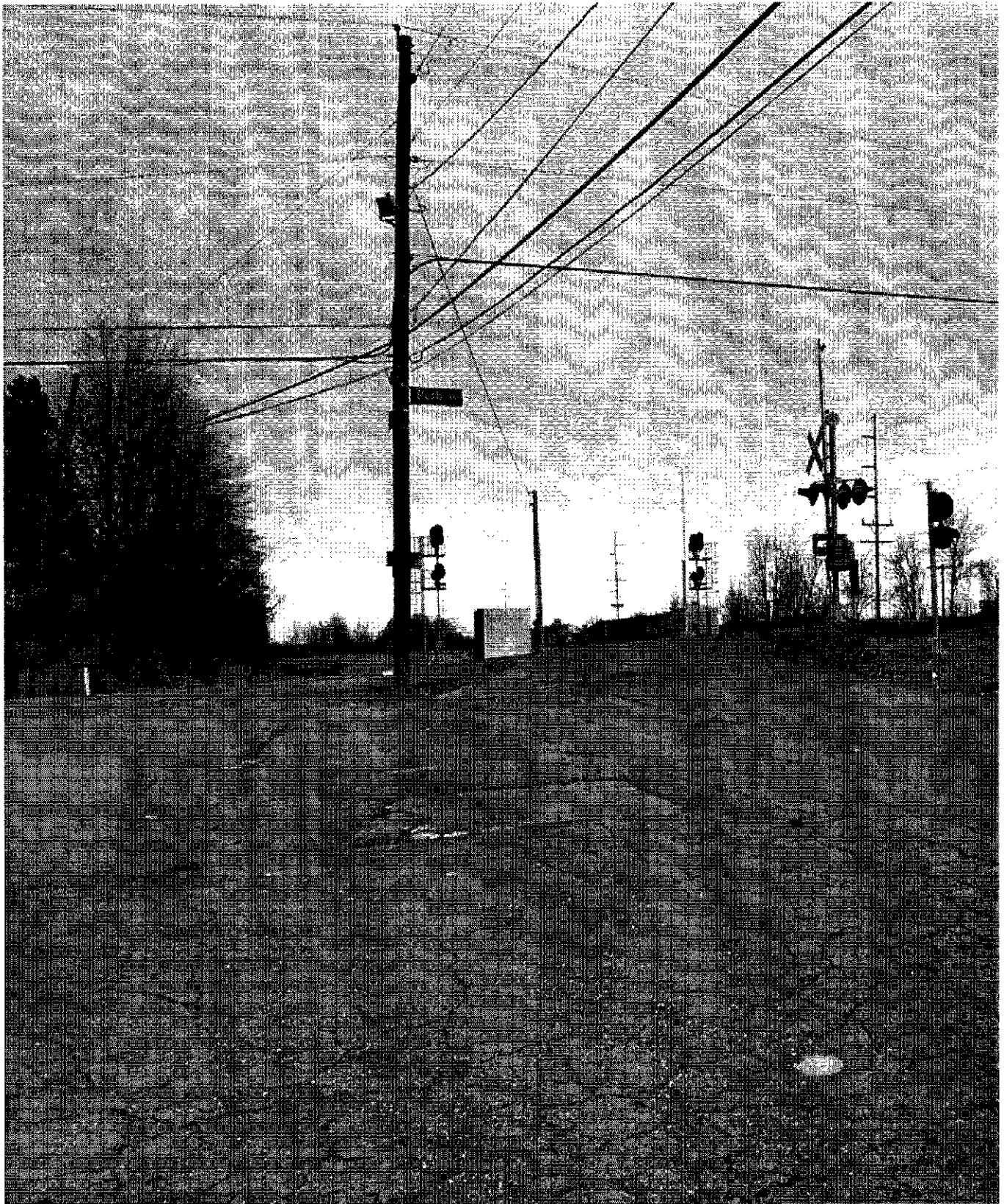
Park Road/County Road 19 is a two lane paved roadway running east to west located within an unincorporated area of the City of Columbus. Franklin County maintains the roadway at this location. The average daily traffic as recorded in 2001 is 5,400 vehicles per day. Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) operates 31 trains per day on two main tracks at this crossing. CSX Transportation operates 8 trains per day on a single main track within 100 feet of the NS tracks. The crossing is equipped with standard mast-mounted flashing lights and roadway gates.

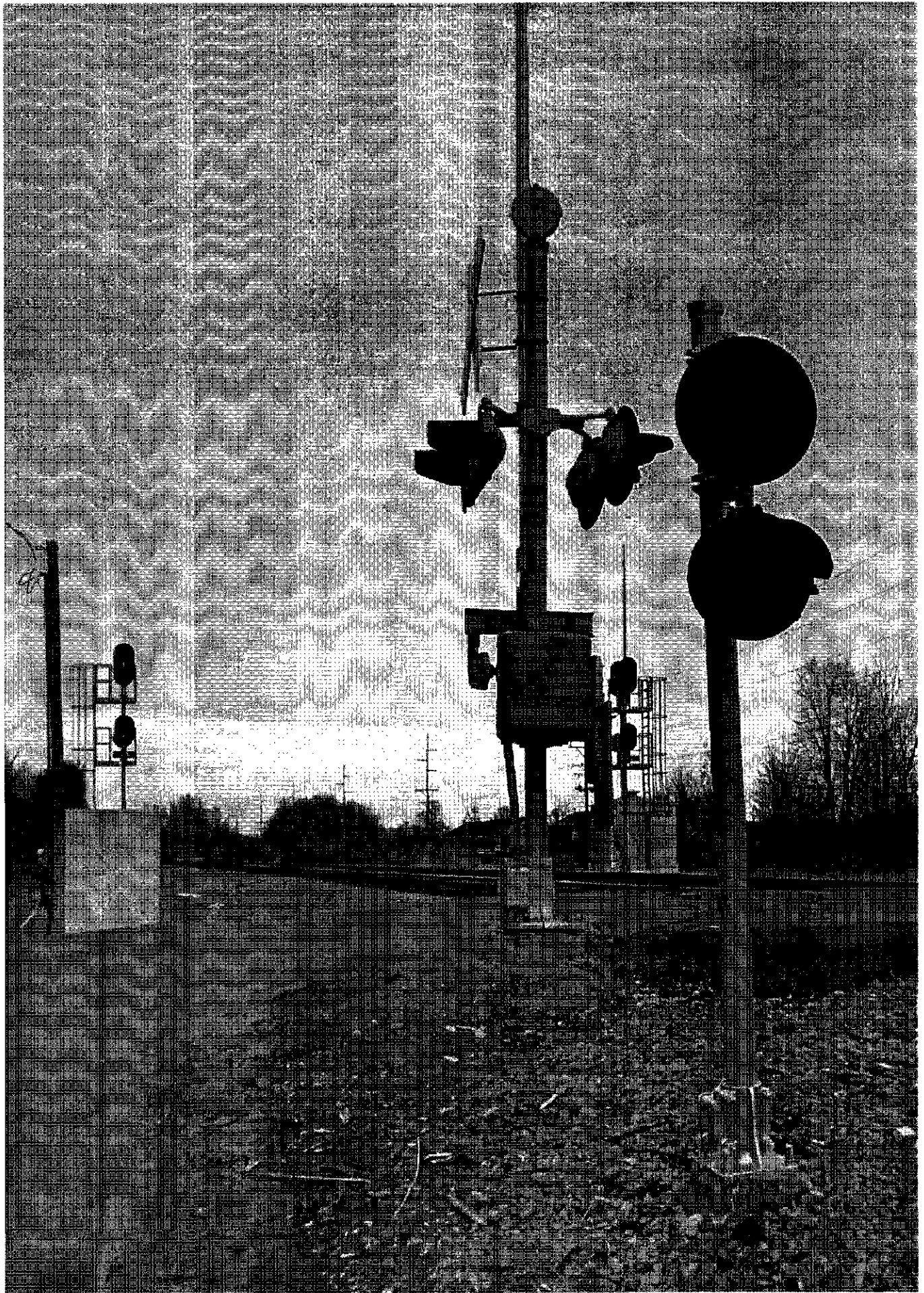
Park Road is intersected within 12 feet of the crossing by Station Street which runs north to south. Station Street serves several small businesses and dead ends within 1/8 mile. A stand-alone flasher unit with a train activated "No turn on right" signal is positioned to face oncoming traffic on Station Street (see attached photos). This type of warning device is outdated and no longer included in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Summary and Conclusion

The Franklin County Engineer's office was contacted by staff and was requested to file in this docket comments either supporting or opposing the request by NS. On January 25, 2010, the Engineer filed comments supporting the request.

Staff recommends that NS be allowed to remove the mast-mounted flashing light and no turn light assembly at Park Road and replace it with a standard mast mounted flashing light.





Ohio's Rail Grade Crossing Programs

Ohio is a national leader in terms of railroad operations. Ohio is home to nearly 40 railroads that operate thousands of trains in Ohio every day over approximately 5,200 miles of track and 6,000 public grade crossings. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is the state agency with regulatory authority over railroads operating in Ohio. The Commission works in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration to ensure that rail operations and infrastructure are safe and in compliance with federal and state regulations.

In addition to central office planners and other support staff, the PUCO employs federally certified railroad inspectors throughout Ohio. These inspectors respond to inquiries and complaints and conduct specialized inspections of railroad tracks and equipment, rail operations, hazardous material transportation, and grade crossing signal circuitry. The inspectors also monitor railroad rights-of-way and grade crossings for surface conditions, view obstruction, fencing and drainage concerns, conditions on railroad equipment and at rail yards and other facilities, and related safety concerns of both the PUCO and railroad employees.

PUCO inspectors investigate all grade crossing and railroad employee fatalities and monitor company inspections of rail bridges throughout the state.

Safety is our highest priority

Grade crossing safety is one of the PUCO's highest priorities, and we are proud of our accomplishments. Since 1990, motor vehicle/train crashes at grade crossings in Ohio have declined by 66 percent and the number of fatalities has dropped by 77 percent. This dramatic improvement has been achieved during a period of steady increase in the amount of train traffic and in the number of registered motor vehicles and licensed drivers in Ohio. Over the past 10 years, the PUCO has participated in the installation of lights and gates at more than 1,000 grade crossings across Ohio. We look forward to working with your community to help make grade crossings as safe as possible.

Questions or Concerns?

Call the Ohio Rail Hotline at (866) 814-RAIL or log on to www.OhioRail.ohio.gov for answers to all of your railroad crossing needs.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Ted Strickland, Governor • Alan R. Schriber, Chairman
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