

FILE

Public Utilities  
Commission of Ohio

# Memo

**To:** Docketing Division  
**From:** George Martin, Grade Crossing Planner, Rail Division  
**Re:** PUCO Case No. 10-87-RR-RCP  
**Date:** March 10, 2010

PUCO

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV  
MAR 10 PM 3:01

Please docket the attached Staff Report.

C: Legal Department

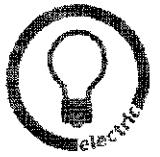
Please serve the following parties of record.



The Public Utilities  
Commission of Ohio

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

March 10, 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**

The Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway (WE) operates over a network of roughly 950 miles of track between the Ohio River and Lake Erie. The company's system links West Virginia coal fields with Cleveland and its docks. In addition to coal, the company hauls aggregates, iron ore, steel products, agricultural products, and plastic resins.

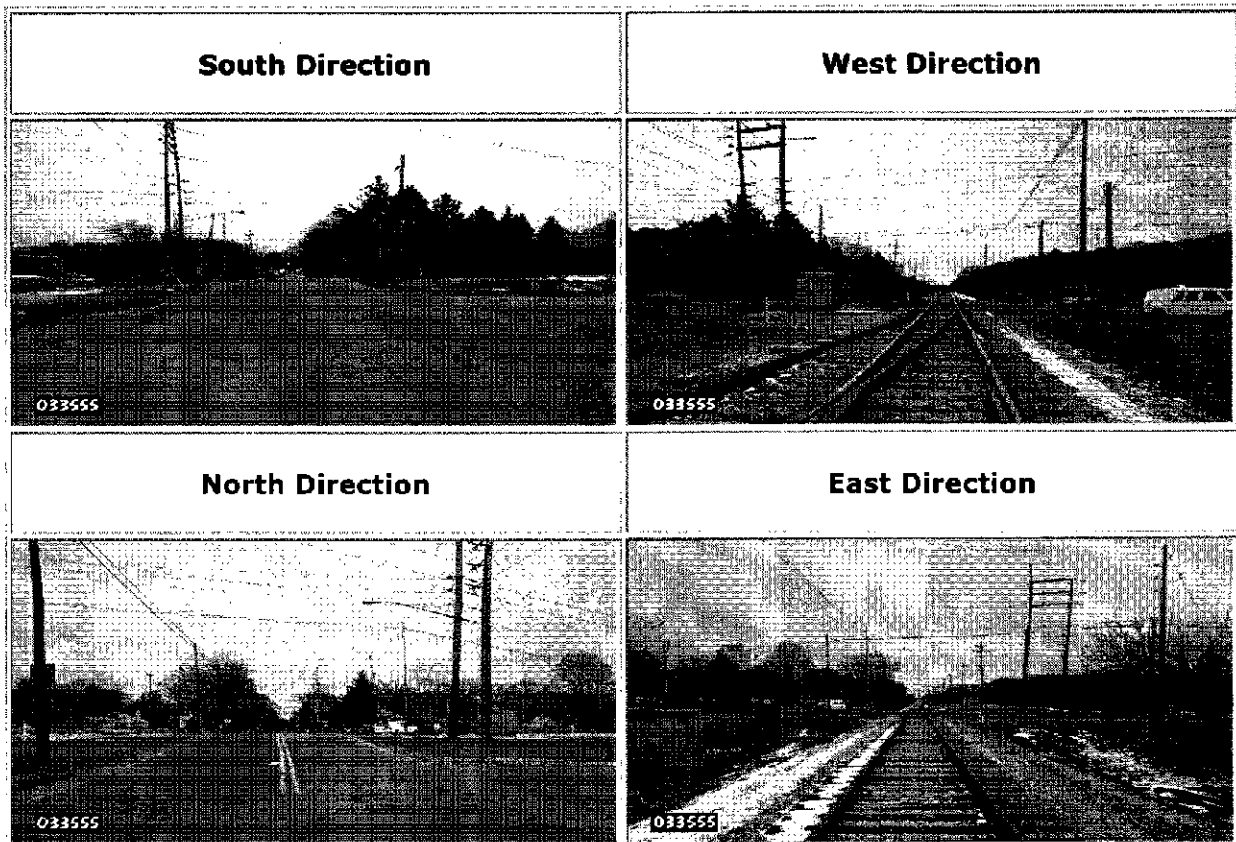
## **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

On January 26, 2010, under PUCO Case No. 10-87-RR-RCP, the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway (WE) filed a request to reconstruct the grade crossing at Summit County, City of Akron, White Pond Dr., DOT# 002-119D. The project includes roadway widening, signal relocation, the addition of cantilevered flashing lights and traffic light interconnection and preemption. The City of Akron is funding the project.

III. Photo's from PUCO Database



**Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**



Site Information	
AARDOT:	002119D
AARDOT Source:	Field
Adj. AARDOT:	
Adj. AARDOT Source:	Field
Survey Site ID:	SUM220
Init. Agency for Change:	State
Reason for Change:	Updated Record
Effective Date:	Feb 3 2010 12:00AM

Railroad Information	
Operating RR:	Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway Co
Division:	
Sub-Division:	AKRON
Branch/Line Name:	
Milepost:	156.42
Railroad ID:	
Nearest Time Table Station:	FAIRLAWN
Parent RR Company:	WLE
Crossing Owner:	WLE
Location and Classification Information	
County:	SUMMIT
(Nearest) City:	AKRON
Street:	S WHITE POND DR
Highway and SLM:	
High Speed Corridor:	
County Map Ref. Number:	G-20
ODOT NLF ID:	MSUMMR01865**C
Latitude:	41.1097261
Longitude:	-81.5847617
Elevation (ft):	995.832
Crossing Type:	Public
Position:	At-Grade
Emergency Contact:	
Railroad Contact:	
State Contact:	
LHA:	CITY OF AKRON
LHA2:	
Dev. Type:	Commercial
Crossing Angle:	60-90 Degrees

<b>Tracks:</b>	1
<b>Lanes:</b>	2
<b>Warning Devices</b>	
<b>Crossbucks, Standard:</b>	2
<b>Crossbucks, Buckeye:</b>	0
<b>Lights, Mast Mounted:</b>	2
<b>Lights, Cantilevered:</b>	0
<b>Lights, Other:</b>	3
<b>Gates:</b>	2
<b>Traffic Information</b>	
<b>Day Thru Trains:</b>	2
<b>Day Switching Trains:</b>	3
<b>Night Thru Trains:</b>	1
<b>Night Switch Trains:</b>	1
<b>Date of Train Count:</b>	
<b>Highway AADT:</b>	7246
<b>Date of AADT:</b>	2006

<b>Highway Information</b>	
<b>Distance to Nearest Intersection:</b>	62
<b>Type of Intersection:</b>	Highway
<b>Number of HW-HW Intersections:</b>	1

<b>Highway 1:</b>	
<b>Traffic Light:</b>	NO
<b>Flashing Light:</b>	NO
<b>Stop Sign:</b>	YES
<b>Yield Sign:</b>	NO

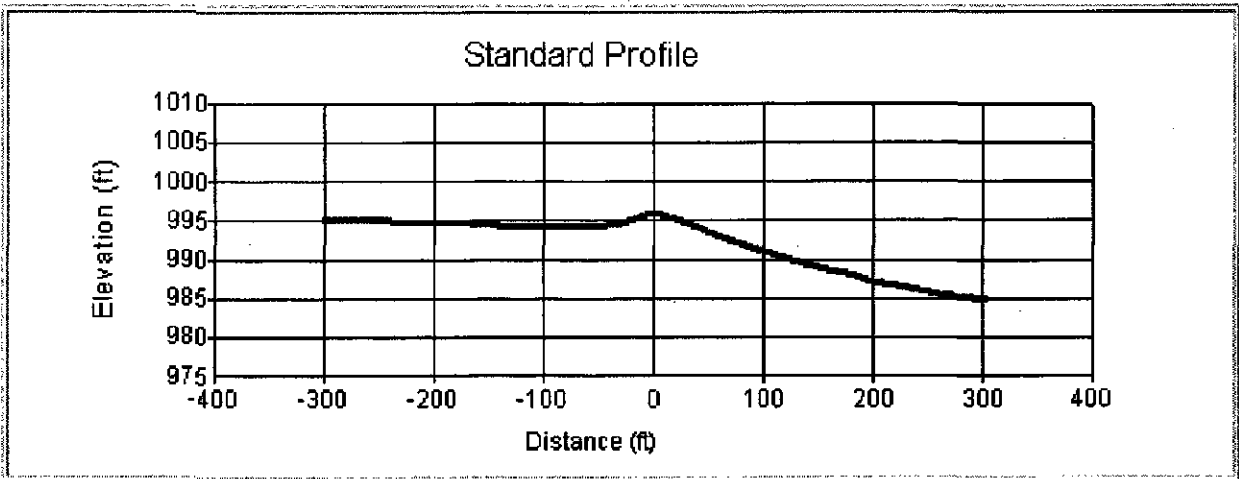


**Distance from Tie to Center of Intersection:**

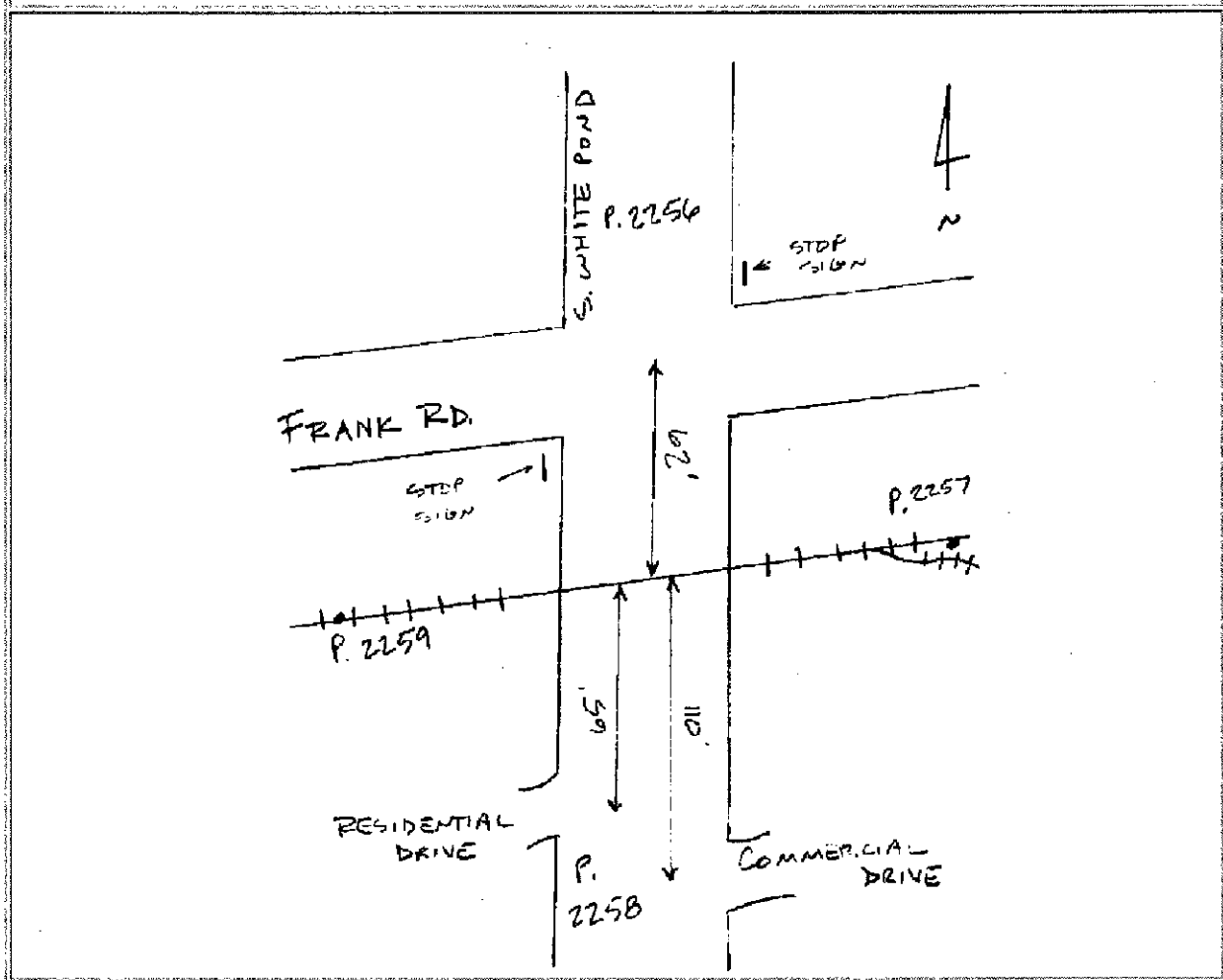
62

**DO NOT STOP ON TRACK(S) Sign:**

NO

# Site Sketch



**The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
Transportation Department  
Rail Division**

**Date of Assignment:** 3/2/2010

**Date of Inspection:** 3/4/2010

**Subject:** Request by Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway under PUCO Case No. 10-87-RR-RCP to reconstruct the grade crossing at Summit County, City of Akron, White Pond Dr.

**DOT/AAR # 002-119D**

**Findings**

On March 4, 2010 staff inspected the White Pond Drive railroad crossing of the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway with regard to a request by Wheeling and the City of Akron for upgrades to the crossing surface, warning devices, and traffic preemption.

White Pond Drive is currently a two-lane paved road in an urban/commercial area with a posted 35 mile per hour speed limit. There is heavy vehicle traffic due to the access to I-77. WE operates seven trains per day at the crossing on a single main track. Timetable speed is 35 miles per hour. The crossing is currently equipped with standard flashing lights and roadway gates.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The upgrades being proposed, including the addition of a second northbound traffic lane, overhead cantilevered flashing lights, and traffic signal preemption will add to safety at this crossing. Staff inspection (JRD-0035-000663) and review of the diagrams and description of the upgrades indicate they are in compliance with PUCO requirements.

Joseph Dunn  
Railroad Inspector 3  
PUCO

## **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](http://www.OhioRail.ohio.gov) for answers to all of your railroad crossing needs.

