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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. 11-5436-RR-RCP  
**Date:** October 20, 2011

Please docket the attached staff report in the above referenced case.

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PUCO



The Public Utilities  
Commission of Ohio

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

October 20, 2011



## 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 Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) is a Class I railroad headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia. NS operates over 21,500 route miles in 22 eastern and parts of Canada. The most common commodity transported is coal. NS also handles an extensive amount of intermodal freight.

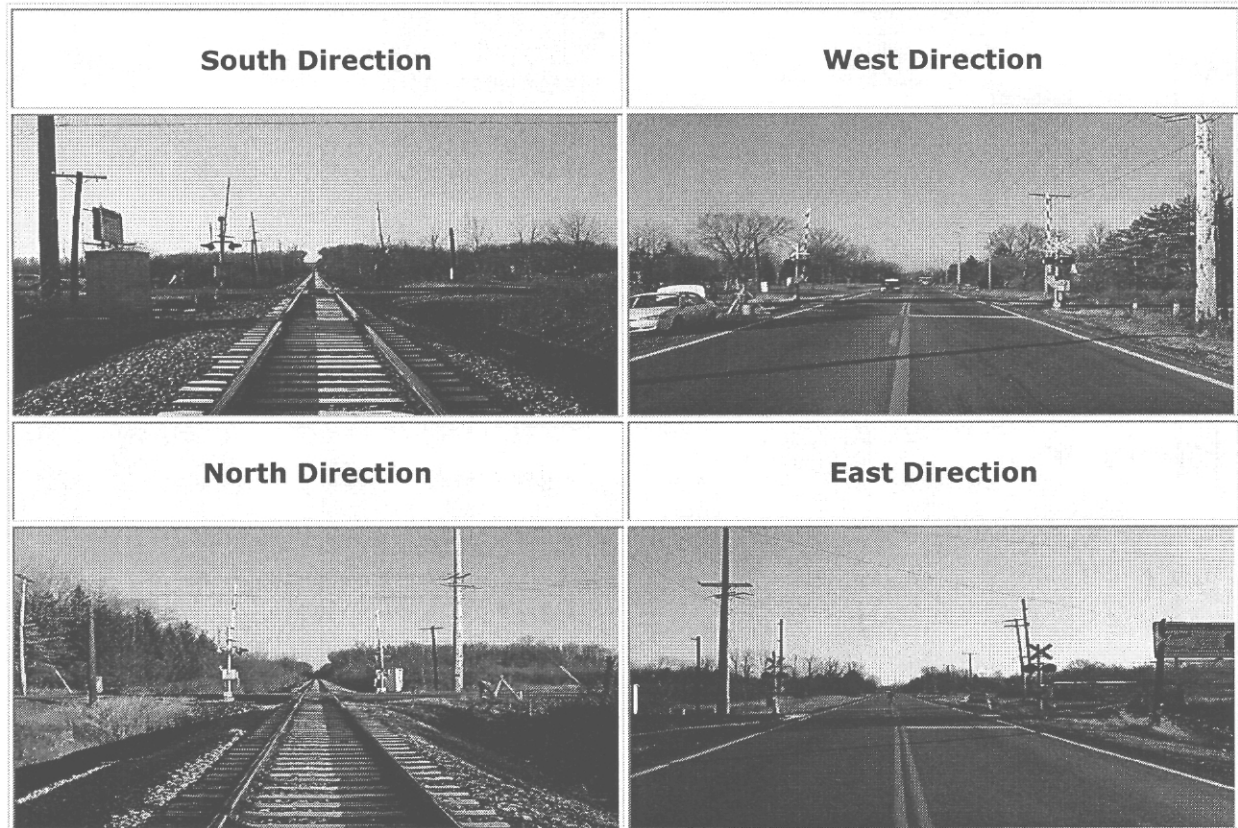
## **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

On October 12, 2011, under Case No. 11-5436-RR-RCP, Norfolk Southern Railway filed a request to relocate the warning devices and install longer gate arms at the Colorado Ave./SR 611 grade crossing located in Lorain County, Village of Sheffield, DOT# 472275K, due to roadway widening.

III. Photo's from RRIS Database



**Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**



Site Information	
AARDOT:	472275K
AARDOT Source:	Field
Adj. AARDOT:	
Adj. AARDOT Source:	Field
Survey Site ID:	LOR850
Init. Agency for Change:	State

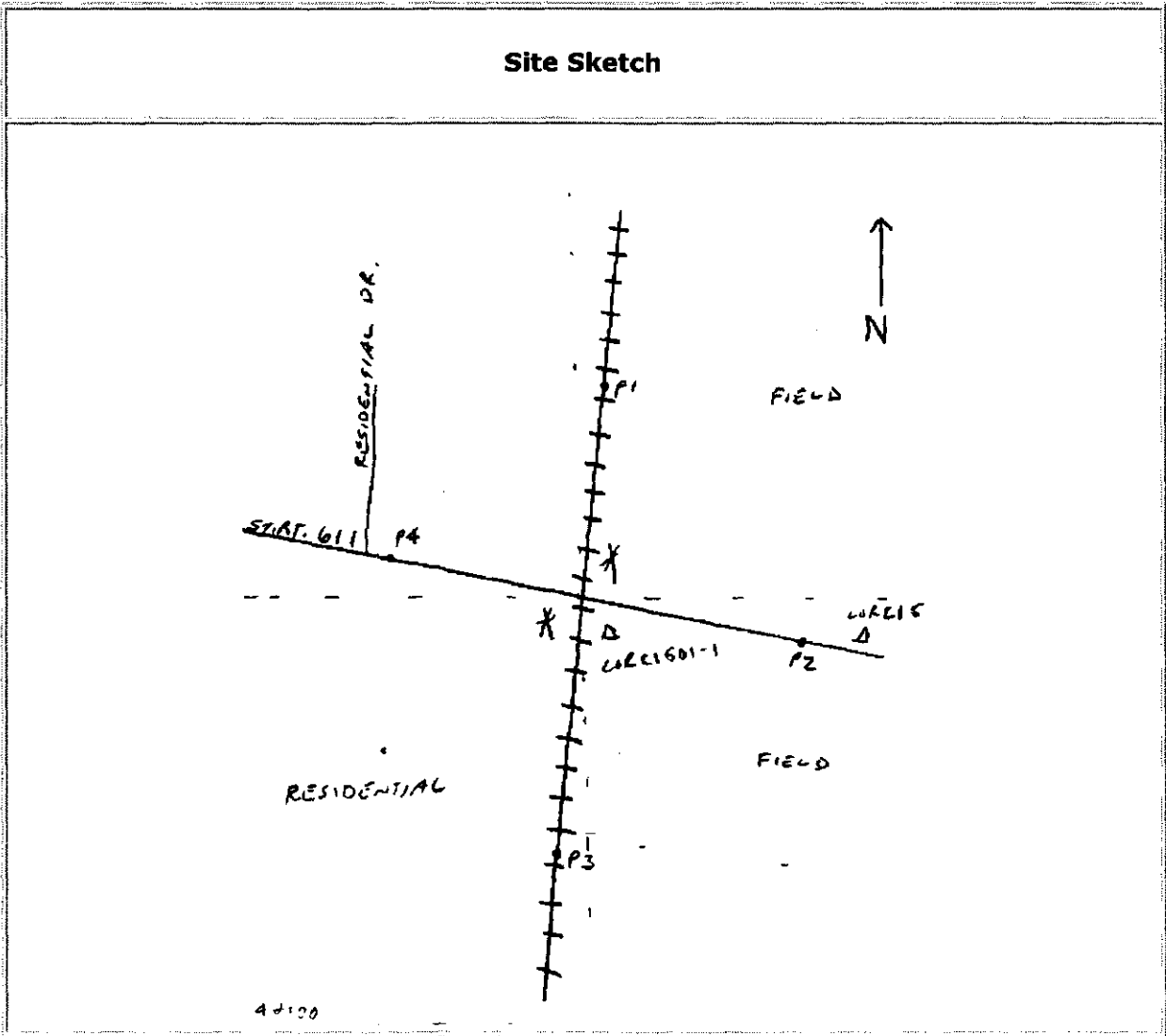
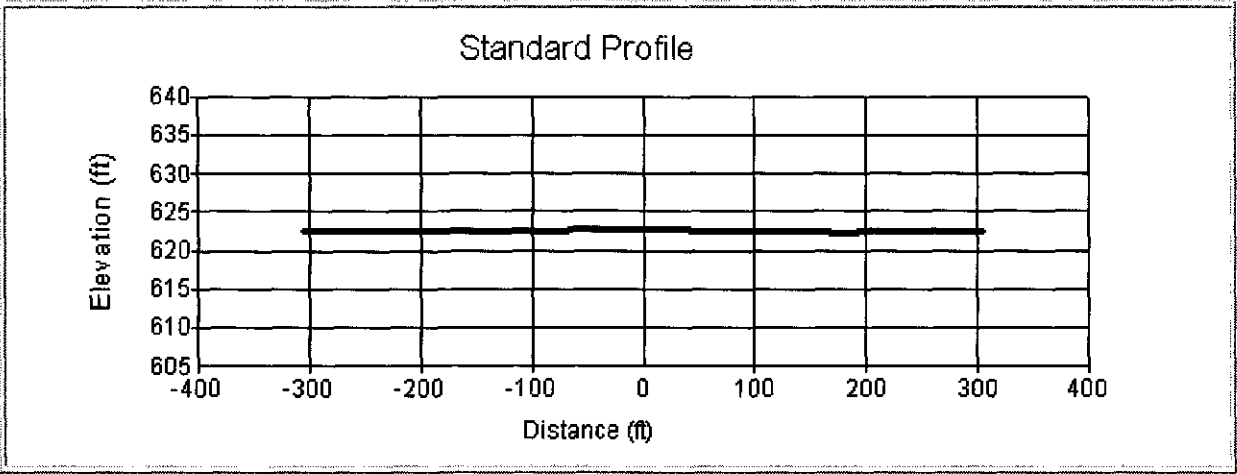
<b>Reason for Change:</b>	Updated Record
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Jul 16 2009 12:00AM
<b>Railroad Information</b>	
<b>Operating RR:</b>	Norfolk Southern Corp
<b>Division:</b>	LAKE
<b>Sub-Division:</b>	NW
<b>Branch/Line Name:</b>	SOUTH LORAIN
<b>Milepost:</b>	2.05
<b>Railroad ID:</b>	
<b>Nearest Time Table Station:</b>	LORAIN
<b>Parent RR Company:</b>	
<b>Crossing Owner:</b>	NS
<b>Location and Classification Information</b>	
<b>County:</b>	LORAIN
<b>(Nearest) City:</b>	SHEFFIELD
<b>Street:</b>	COLORADO AVE
<b>Highway and SLM:</b>	SR611-8.23
<b>High Speed Corridor:</b>	
<b>County Map Ref. Number:</b>	
<b>ODOT NLF ID:</b>	SLORSR00611**C
<b>Latitude:</b>	41.4652851
<b>Longitude:</b>	-82.0856288
<b>Elevation (ft):</b>	622.7815
<b>Crossing Type:</b>	Public
<b>Position:</b>	At-Grade
<b>Emergency Contact:</b>	
<b>Railroad Contact:</b>	
<b>State Contact:</b>	
<b>LHA:</b>	VILLAGE OF SHEFFIELD
<b>LHA2:</b>	

<b>Dev. Type:</b>	Residential
<b>Crossing Angle:</b>	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>	
<b>Gates:</b>	2
<b>Traffic Information</b>	
<b>Day Thru Trains:</b>	3
<b>Day Switching Trains:</b>	2
<b>Night Thru Trains:</b>	2
<b>Night Switch Trains:</b>	3
<b>Date of Train Count:</b>	
<b>Highway AADT:</b>	12890
<b>Date of AADT:</b>	2005

<b>Highway Information</b>	
<b>Distance to Nearest Intersection:</b>	172
<b>Type of Intersection:</b>	Residential Drive
<b>Number of HW-HW Intersections:</b>	0

<b>Site Comments</b>	
No comments.	





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**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT  
RAIL DIVISION**

**Date of Assignment:** October 12, 2011

**Date of Inspection:** October 18, 2011

**Subject:** PUCO Case No. 11-5436-RR-RCP, Request of Norfolk Southern Railway to relocate warning devices and install longer gates arms at Lorain County, Village of Sheffield, Colorado Ave./SR 611

**DOT No:** 472275K

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**FINDINGS**

On October 18, 2011, I reviewed the Colorado Ave./SR 611, DOT# 472275K, grade crossing in response to the request filed by Norfolk Southern Railway for the relocation of the warning devices and the installation of longer gate arms due to roadway widening.

The crossing consists of a single track, running roughly north to south, which is crossed by a two-lane state route, not including a turning lane, running east and west, at approximately a 90 degree angle. The state route has been widened to a point roughly 300 feet from the crossing, where it begins to taper inward, resulting in an hour glass shape at the crossing. The warning devices consist of a pair of operating flashing lights, two lights to a pair, for each direction of traffic, as well as roadway gates on each side of the highway lanes as well as advance warning signs and pavement markings in the approach lanes. The highway speed at the crossing is 50 mph and the maximum train speed over this crossing is 10 miles per hour; however, typical speed is 5 miles per hour. The average train count at the crossing is 10 trains per day, and the average daily traffic, as measured in 2005, was 12,890.

NS states in their petition that they would be able to complete this project within six months of Commission approval.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

I recommend that the Commission proceed with the necessary actions to grant Norfolk Southern Railway's request in regard to this grade crossing.

George Martin  
Grade Crossing Planner  
PUCO Rail Division

## **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 5,900 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.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
John Kasich, Governor • Todd Snitchler, Chairman  
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