

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

In the Matter of a Request by Norfolk Southern Railway Company to Relocate
the Existing Warning Devices at the Wilkins Road/CR 108 Grade Crossing
(DOT#509-474W) in Lucas County, Ohio.

Case Number 17-1210-RR-RCP

June 20, 2017

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 (ORC) §4905.471.

The PUCO has the authority to close public at grade crossings pursuant to ORC §§4907.474 and 4907.475. These 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 and/or pedestrian traffic 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 ORC §4907.471.

The PUCO has the authority under ORC §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.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT

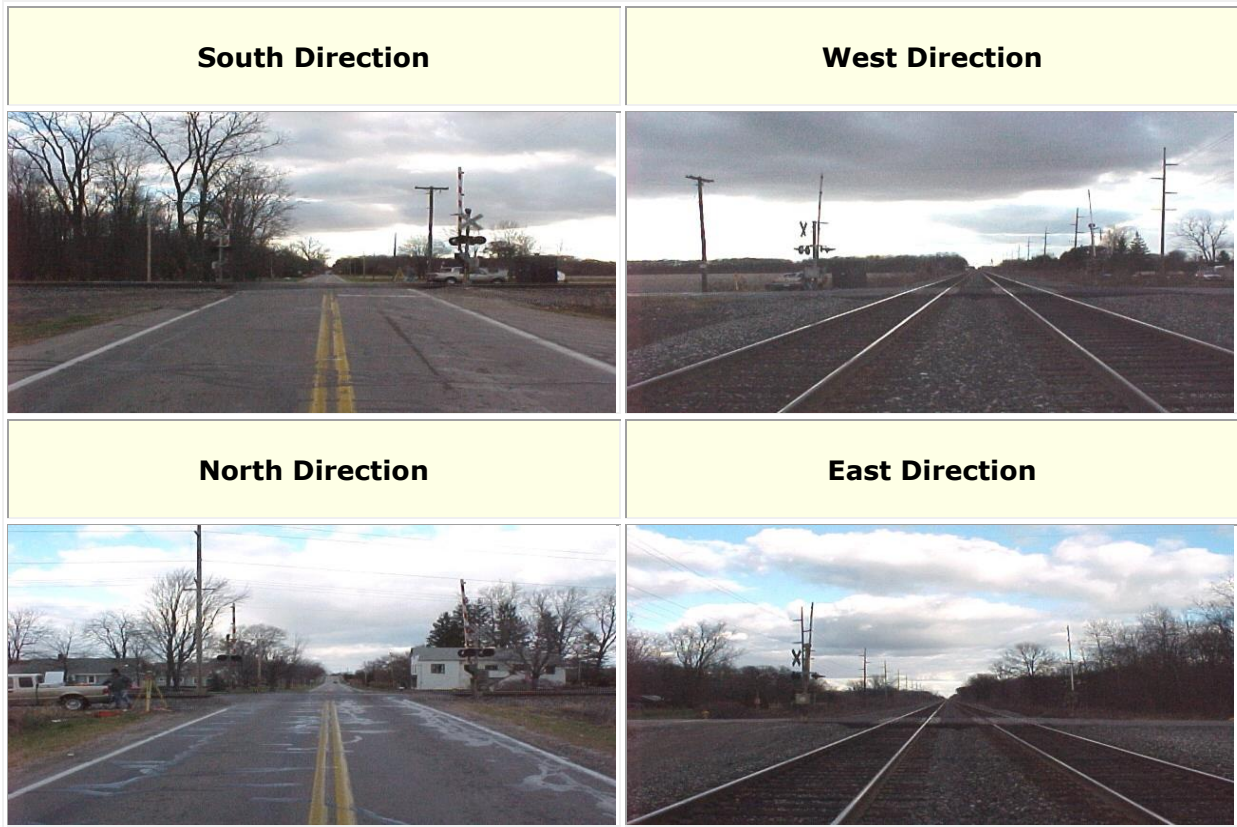
Norfolk Southern Railroad is owned by Norfolk Southern Corporation, based in Norfolk, Va., They operate approximately 19,500 miles of tracks and serve [22 states](#) in the Eastern United States.

Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) is primarily engaged in the transportation of raw materials, intermediate products, and finished goods primarily in the Southeast, East, and Midwest via interchange with other rail carriers to and from the rest of the United States. They offer the most extensive intermodal network in the eastern United States.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On May 8, 2017, NS filed a request to relocate warning devices at Wilkins Road (DOT#509-474W) in Lucas County, Ohio. In the request, NS explained that the addition of a third track to the crossing mandates the movement of the warning devices on North side of the tracks. The third track is being installed as part of the Swanton Yard Construction project that is located about 1 mile west of the Wilkins Road crossing. NS states that the placement of the warning devices will conform to the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) requirements. In the request, NS stipulated that they will pay for all costs associated with the warning device relocation and anticipates completion of the project within 3 months of Commission authorization.

Wilkins Road
Record ID: **2860**



(Click on any Image to Enlarge View)

Site Information	
AARDOT:	509474W
AARDOT Source:	Field
Adj. AARDOT:	
Adj. AARDOT Source:	Field
Survey Site ID:	LUC003
Init. Agency for Change:	State
Reason for Change:	Updated Record
Effective Date:	Nov 4 2010 12:00AM
Railroad Information	
Operating RR:	Norfolk Southern Corp
Division:	DEARBORN
Sub-Division:	503600

Branch/Line Name:	CHICAGO LINE
Milepost:	304.37
Railroad ID:	
Nearest Time Table Station:	SWANTON
Parent RR Company:	NS
Crossing Owner:	NS
Location and Classification Information	
County:	LUCAS
(Nearest) City:	HOLLAND
Street:	WILKINS RD
Highway and SLM:	CR108
High Speed Corridor:	
County Map Ref. Number:	48
ODOT NLF ID:	CLUCCR00108**C
Latitude:	41.5960460
Longitude:	-83.8444841
Elevation (ft):	679.7718
Crossing Type:	Public
Position:	At-Grade
Emergency Contact:	
Railroad Contact:	
State Contact:	
LHA:	LUCAS COUNTY
LHA2:	
Dev. Type:	Residential
Crossing Angle:	60-90 Degrees
Main Tracks:	2
Other Tracks:	0
Lanes:	2
Warning Devices	
Crossbucks, Standard:	2
Crossbucks, Buckeye:	0
Lights, Mast Mounted:	2

Lights, Cantilevered:	0
Lights, Other:	0
Gates:	2
Traffic Information	
Day Thru Trains:	46
Day Switching Trains:	2
Night Thru Trains:	46
Night Switch Trains:	0
Date of Train Count:	
Highway AADT:	1092
Date of AADT:	2008

Highway Information	
Distance to Nearest Intersection:	20
Type of Intersection:	Unknown
Number of HW-HW Intersections:	0

Site Comments	
No comments.	

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

Date of Assignment: May 30, 2017

Date of Inspection: June 1, 2017

Subject: 17-1210-RR-RCP Consent Request to Relocate Warning Devices,
Wilkins Rd. Swanton, Lucas County, Norfolk Southern Railroad

DOT No: 509-474W

FINDINGS

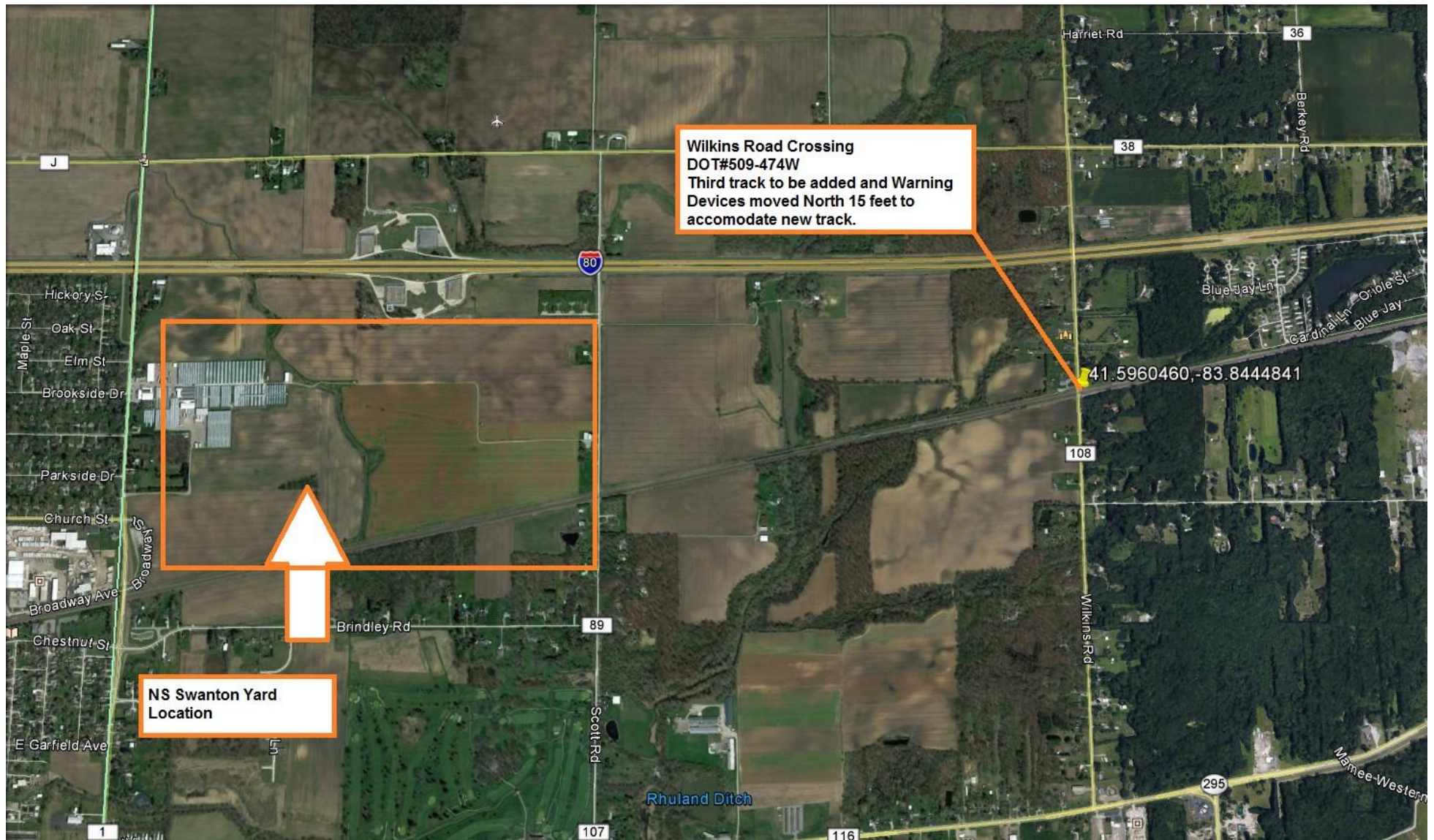
Wilkins Rd is a two lane township road that runs north and south, and has a posted speed limit of 55 MPH. It is located near Swanton, Lucas County, Ohio, and it crosses a Norfolk Southern Railroad double main line track. The crossing warning devices are active with crossbucks, gates and flashing lights installed. There are Manual of Uniform Traffic Control pavement markings and advanced warning signs present.

Norfolk Southern will be installing a third-track (lead track) at Wilkins Rd within its existing right-of-way. As a result of adding a third-track Norfolk Southern has requested to move the existing warning devices at the crossing. Specifically moving the signal masts in both the northeast and northwest quadrants approximately 15 feet north.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently the crossing is a double-main line track with active warning devices installed. However with the addition of a third track and the need to move the warning devices north approximately 15 feet I have inspected the crossing. During my inspection I witnessed that there are not any driveways, streets, utility poles or any other obstructions present that would cause an issue with the visibility of the newly placed warning devices. As a result, I recommend the commission grant the relocation of the warning devices under the conditions of the proposed plans.

Nathan Niner
PUCO Rail Inspector
June 15, 2017



Map of Wilkins Road Location and Swanton Yard Location on the NS system in Lucas County, Ohio East of Swanton, Ohio.



Crossing from the North Side looking South.



Crossing from the South Side looking North.



West of the crossing looking East on the tracks.

V STAFF RECOMENDATIONS

PUCO Rail Staff recommends the following actions be taken:

- 1) Approve the warning device modifications since the new placement will conform to OMUTCD standards and will not create any visual hazards for motorists using the crossing.
- 2) NS should complete this work within 6 months of the Commission authorization.

VI OTHER INFORMATION

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 5,300 miles of track and 5,800 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 obstructions, fencing and drainage concerns. Additionally, inspections are conducted on railroad equipment at rail yards and other facilities and they review safety concerns of both the PUCO and railroad employees.

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 15 years, the PUCO has participated in the installation of lights and gates at more than 1,900 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
Asim Z. Haque, Chairman

180 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793
(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

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Case No(s). 17-1210-RR-RCP

Summary: Staff Report Filed In the Matter of a Request by Norfolk Southern Railway Company to Relocate the Existing Warning Devices at the Wilkins Road/CR 108 Grade Crossing (DOT#509-474W) in Lucas County, Ohio. electronically filed by Mrs. Jill A Henry on behalf of PUCO/Rail Division