



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
COMMONWEALTH KEYSTONE BUILDING  
400 NORTH STREET  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120

December 24, 2025

A-2024-3050051

**TO ALL PARTIES OF RECORD**

Application of Montgomery County for approval to alter the public crossing (DOT 532 108 D) by the replacement of the existing bridge where West Ridge Pike crosses, above grade, the tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company, in Plymouth Township Montgomery County, and a temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum side clearances required by 52 Pa. Code, Section 33.122.

To Whom It May Concern:

By application received by the Commission on July 9, 2024, Montgomery County (County) is seeking approval to replace the existing bridge where West Ridge Pike crosses, above grade, tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS) (DOT 532 108 D), in Plymouth Township, Montgomery County.

A field investigation and conference was arranged by a Commission staff engineer and held at the site of the crossing on September 11, 2024. Representatives of the County, Plymouth Township, NS, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission were in attendance. Although notified by letter dated August 16, 2024, there were no representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Department), Comcast Cable Communications Management, Crown Castle, Lumen, PECO energy Company, Sunoco Pipeline, LP, Verizon Business, Windstream Communications, or Zayo bandwidth in attendance.

At the field conference it was noted that the subject bridge carries a four (4) lane bidirectional paved highway with sidewalks over tracks of NS. The existing single span steel thru-girder-floorbeam-stringer bridge is generally oriented northwest/southeast with a span length of 90 feet as measured along the centerline of existing roadway. The thru-girders with attached guiderail are located between the roadway and sidewalks. An additional metal safety fence is located on either side of the structure, over the tracks. In the application, the existing structure is described as having a curb to curb width of 49 feet, with an out to out of 64 feet 6 inches. The lane configuration of the structure consists of two (2) 12-foot wide travel lanes, two (2) 12.5-foot travel lanes, two (2) 1.5-foot protective barriers, and two (2) raised curbed 8-foot concrete sidewalks. A Department online database lists the structure as being constructed in 1937 and being in overall poor condition. The current average daily traffic (ADT) is reported in the application as 35,252 with 2,820 being trucks.

The minimum overhead (vertical) clearance of the existing structure is 22 feet as measured from the top of rail to the underside of the structure. The side (horizontal) clearances are listed as 21 feet 7 inches as measured from the centerline of the northernmost track to abutment 1 and 7 feet 9.25 inches measured from the centerline of the southernmost track to the abutment 2. The existing side (horizontal) clearance of 7 feet 9.25 inches is less than the Commission's minimum requirement of 12 feet. Since this clearance has not been memorialized in a previous Commission Order and/or Secretarial Letter this Secretarial Letter will serve as a temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum side clearance required by 52 Pa. Code, Section 33.122 until the point in time when the existing structure is demolished as part of the subject proceeding.

The County plans to replace the entire superstructure and substructure of the existing bridge and construct a single span pre-stressed concrete adjacent box beam structure having a center-to-center bearing span of 112 feet 3 inches. The bridge typical roadway section will consist of four (4) 11-foot travel lanes, an 11-foot center turning lane, one (1) variable width ramp lane, two outside varying width shoulders, and two (2) 8-foot wide raised curbed concrete sidewalks. Additionally, the proposed structure will have 1-foot wide vertical concrete bridge barriers with mounted protective fencing on both sides of structure. The proposed out to out width of the structure varies to accommodate the transitioning ramp lane from 108 feet 9.5 inches at abutment 1 to 100 feet 8.5 inches at abutment 2. The curb to curb varies from 93 feet 3.25 inches to 82 feet 8.5 inches. The proposed minimum vertical (overhead) clearance will be increased to 23-feet 7.25-inch from the top of the northernmost track to the underside of the structure, and the horizontal (side) clearances will be 28 feet 5 inches from the northernmost track to the proposed abutment 1 and 23 feet 1.25 inches from the southernmost track to the to the proposed abutment 2.

The installation of the proposed structure will be phased, maintaining vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout construction. There will be no temporary railroad crossings required to construct this structure. Preliminary design drawings were included with the application; however, the Commission will order detailed, final signed, sealed construction and structural plans be submitted to all parties for review and to this Commission for approval.

The bridge replacement project is estimated to cost approximately \$20,800,000 and will be funded by 80% state and 20% county funding.

The Commission has tentatively established jurisdiction along Ridge Pike over those portions of the project extending from station 132+00 to 135+00 and all areas necessary for the construction of the bridge, as shown on preliminary plans submitted with the application. The proposed bridge replacement is part of a larger road widening project to facilitate a proposed future interchange for the Pennsylvania Turnpike which crosses underneath Ridge Pike on an adjacent structure.

In conjunction with the subject bridge replacement project, it may be necessary for the Commission to appropriate certain portions of railroad property to accommodate construction of the project. If required, this will be accomplished in a separate Commission Order.

There are multiple utilities attached to and adjacent to the existing structure. Alterations required to public utilities in public right-of-way will be made by the utility at its initial cost and expense. Verizon telecommunications and PECO gas line facilities are proposed as prescribed to be mounted between box beams near each outside fascia beam of the structure.

Upon completion of the replacement structure, the County will maintain the entire superstructure and substructure in accordance with the agreement dated April 28, 2025, between Norfolk Southern Railway Company and Montgomery County. The County has also agreed to maintain the sidewalks and the roadway travel lanes, both structurally and for the removal of snow, ice and debris. Plymouth Township has agreed to the maintenance and electrification costs for any lighting that may be installed on the new structure.

The applicant has certified that a copy of the application has been served on each party in interest and none has advised that it objects to the issuance of a Secretarial Letter approving the application.

Upon full consideration of the matters involved, we determine that it is not necessary to schedule a hearing in this proceeding at this time and that issuance of a Secretarial Letter without hearing is proper since the County has agreed to construct the project at its sole cost and expense, and none of the parties has expressed any objections to the proposal.

The Commission issues this Secretarial Letter in accordance with Section 2702 of the Public Utility Code and finds that the alteration of the crossing is necessary and proper for the service, accommodation, convenience, or safety of the public.

The alteration of the subject crossing as proposed by Montgomery County is approved as herein directed:

1. The subject caption be revised as shown herein.
2. The public crossing (DOT 532 108 D) where West Ridge Road crosses, above grade, the tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company in Plymouth Township, Montgomery County be altered as herein directed.
3. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, prepare and submit final signed and sealed construction plans for the subject crossing to all parties for review and to the Commission for approval prior to construction.
4. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, prepare and submit final signed and sealed structural plans for the subject crossing to all parties for review and to the Commission for approval prior to construction.
5. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, and prior to the start of construction, prepare and submit final detailed right-of-way plans and property descriptions (metes and bounds) for any property for the Commission to appropriate to all parties for review and to the Commission for approval, if necessary.

6. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to establish and maintain all traffic controls that may be required to properly and safely accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic during the time the crossing project is being constructed.

7. A temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum horizontal clearance requirements of 52 Pa. Code §33.122 be and is hereby granted, in this particular instance, for a side (horizontal) clearance of 7 feet 9.25 inches from the centerline of the southernmost track to abutment 2 of the existing structure before and during construction until the point in time that the existing structure is demolished as part of the subject proceeding.

8. Any operating railroads over the subject line, issue appropriate notice warning its employees of the restrictive clearances herein, all in accordance with its standard operation practice.

9. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, demolish the existing structure where West Ridge Road crosses, above grade, tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company and construct the new structure generally in accordance with the approved plans and this Secretarial Letter.

10. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at the sole cost and expense of Montgomery County, furnish all material and perform all work relating to its facilities which may be required as incidental to the performance of the proposed work and furnish any watchmen, flagmen, inspectors and/or engineering services that may be deemed necessary to protect the railroad's operations or facilities during the time the facilities are being installed.

11. Any relocation of, changes in or removal of any adjacent structures, equipment or other facilities of any non-carrier public utility company or municipal authority located within the limits of the public right-of-way, and within the limits of this Commission's jurisdiction, which may be required as incidental to the execution of the crossing project, be made by said public utility company or municipal authority at its initial cost and expense, and in such manner as will not interfere with the construction of the project.

12. Montgomery County, at least thirty (30) days prior to the start of work, notify all parties in interest of the actual date on which work will begin.

13. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, having agreed to do so, pay Montgomery County an amount up to \$1,215,903.00 for preliminary engineering, construction engineering and construction of the bridge structure, consistent with the agreement dated April 28, 2025, between Norfolk Southern Railway Company and Montgomery County.

14. Montgomery County, having agreed to do so, and in accordance with the agreement dated April 28, 2025, between Norfolk Southern Railway Company and Montgomery County, assume all future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the completed bridge substructure, superstructure, roadway on the bridge, sidewalks and approach roadways.

15. Norfolk Southern Railway Company cooperate with Montgomery County and conduct their operations in the vicinity of the crossing, in a safe manner and under control during the time project is being constructed.

16. Montgomery County cooperate with Norfolk Southern Railway Company so that during construction of the project, the operations and facilities of the railroad company will not be endangered or unnecessarily impeded.
17. All work necessary to alter the public crossing be completed in a manner satisfactory to this Commission on or before December 31, 2029, and that on or before said date, Montgomery County report to this Commission the date of actual completion of the work.
18. Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, pay all compensation for damages due to owners of property taken, injured, or destroyed by reason of the construction of the crossing in accordance with this Secretarial Letter.
19. Upon completion of construction of the proposed project, each non-carrier public utility company and municipal authority, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary thereafter to maintain its respective facilities, existing or altered, located within the limits of the improvement.
20. Upon completion of construction of the proposed project Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain its tracks and any other railroad facilities, existing or altered, located within the limits of the project, and provide Montgomery County at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph.
21. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain and inspect the entire bridge including the concrete deck, superstructure, substructure, wing walls, bearings, approach slabs, approach guiderail, protective barriers, protective fencing, structural integrity of the sidewalks and curbing, approach roadway, roadway surface, and drainage facilities of the subject bridge, and any other ancillary features of the improvement constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter, and provide Norfolk Southern Railway Company, and Plymouth Township at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph.
22. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Montgomery County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work for the removal of snow, ice and debris from the travel lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the proposed structure, as constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter.
23. Upon completion of the alteration of the subject crossing, Plymouth Township, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary thereafter to maintain the bridge lighting, including the electrical costs to energize the bridge lighting, constructed as part of the alteration.
24. Upon completion of the work herein directed, and upon a written request by any party hereto, this proceeding be scheduled for a hearing at a time and a place assigned by this Commission, upon due notice to all parties, to receive evidence relative to the allocation of initial costs incurred, if any, by any of the parties, and any other matters relevant to this proceeding.

The Parties are reminded that failure to comply with this or any Order or Secretarial Letter in this proceeding may result in an enforcement action seeking civil penalties and/or other sanctions pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 3301.

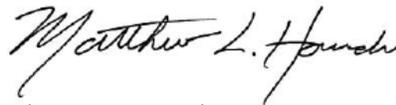
All formal documents must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission. Documents must be eFiled, mailed or hand delivered. All filings should be addressed to the Secretary, PA Public Utility Commission, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120. The Commission will not accept documents delivered by fax or by e-mail. Parties are encouraged to file formal documents by eFiling with the Secretary of the Commission by opening an eFiling account through the Commission's website (the account is free of charge) and accepting eservice at <https://www.puc.pa.gov/filing-resources/efiling/>.

If your filing contains confidential material, you are required to file by overnight delivery to ensure the timely filing of your submission. There are certain filings that cannot be eFiled, such as filings containing confidential or proprietary material. These must be submitted to the Secretary by overnight delivery, priority, or certified mail to allow tracking of your filing.

If you are dissatisfied with the resolution of this matter, you may, as set forth in 52 Pa. Code §§ 1.31 and 5.44, file a Petition for Reconsideration from Staff Action (Petition) with the Commission within twenty (20) days of the date of this letter. The Petition shall be eFiled with the Secretary of the Commission or sent to: Secretary, PA Public Utility Commission, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120, and must be filed within twenty (20) days, or if no timely request is made, the action will be deemed to be a final action of the Commission.

The Petition MUST include: (1) a written statement (divided into numbered paragraphs) outlining the reasons for the request; (2) the case docket number (it is provided for you at the top right-hand corner of this letter); (3) the party on whose behalf the petition is made; (4) a Certificate of Service on the other parties of record; and (5) a Verification with original signature in accordance with 52 Pa. Code § 1.36.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew L. Homsher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matthew L. Homsher  
Secretary