



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

IN REPLY PLEASE  
REFER TO OUR FILE

March 23, 2026

A-2025-3058381

**TO ALL PARTIES OF RECORD**

Application of Norfolk Southern Railway Company for approval to rehabilitate two (2) highway bridges where Franklin Street (DOT 589 324 G) and Evans Street (DOT 589 325 N) cross, above grade, the tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company located in Pottstown Borough, Montgomery County.

To Whom It May Concern:

By application filed with the Commission on November 5, 2025, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Norfolk Southern) seeks Commission approval to rehabilitate two (2) highway bridges where Franklin St. (DOT 589 324 G) and Evans St. (DOT 589 325 N) cross, above grade, two (2) tracks of Norfolk Southern located in Pottstown Borough (Pottstown), Montgomery County (County).

Upon receipt of the application, a field investigation and conference was arranged by a Commission staff engineer and held on January 21, 2026, at the site of the subject crossings with representatives of the County, Pottstown, TPD (consultant engineer for Pottstown), Norfolk Southern, AECOM (consultant engineer for Norfolk Southern), and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Department) in attendance. Although notified by letter sent via electronic mail dated December 16, 2025, there were no representatives from Comcast, Lumen, PECO, or Verizon in attendance.

The Franklin St. crossing, identified as NBI Structure Number/Bridge Key 28232, is situated approximately 153-feet south of the Apple St. intersection and 120-feet north of the New St. intersection within Pottstown. Constructed in the 1920s, the bridge consists of a single-span riveted steel through-girder and floorbeam system supported by two stone masonry abutments. The portion of the superstructure located below the top of deck has been encased in concrete.

The bridge is currently posted for a maximum vehicular weight limit of twelve (12) tons for single vehicles and fifteen (15) tons for combination vehicles. According to publicly available records the structure is in overall poor condition and has received an overall condition appraisal rating of 3. Under the guidelines of the Department's Publication 100A, an appraisal rating of 3 signifies an *intolerable* condition requiring *high-priority* corrective action.

Key dimensions of the Franklin St. bridge include a structure length of 87-feet and a curb-to-curb roadway width of 24-feet. Reinforced concrete sidewalks, each 8-feet wide and equipped with lattice-patterned pedestrian railings with concrete posts, run along both outer edges of the structure. Franklin St. carries a single lane of southbound one-way traffic over the public crossing.

The Evans St. crossing, identified as NBI Structure Number/Bridge Key 28231, is located immediately south of the Queen St. intersection and approximately 140-feet north of the New St. intersection in Pottstown. Constructed in 1928, the structure consists of a single-span riveted steel through-girder and floorbeam system supported by two stone masonry abutments. The portion of the superstructure below the top of deck is encased in concrete.

The bridge is currently not load posted according to publicly available records and is listed as being in overall poor condition having been assigned an overall condition appraisal rating of 4. Under the guidelines of the Department's Publication 100A, an appraisal rating of 4 indicates that the structure meets minimum tolerable limits and may remain in service without immediate corrective action.

Key dimensions of the Evans St. bridge include a structure length of 81-feet and a curb-to-curb roadway width of 24-feet. Reinforced concrete sidewalks, each approximately 6.5-feet wide and equipped with steel pedestrian railings with concrete posts, run along both outer edges of the structure. Evans St. carries a single lane of northbound one-way traffic over the public crossing.

Exemptions from the Commission's minimum vertical underclearance requirements, as set forth in 52 Pa. Code § 33.121, were granted for each structure by Commission Orders at Docket No. A-00111236. The Commission approved a reduced minimum overhead (vertical) underclearance of 21-feet with respect to the tracks for the Franklin Street bridge by Order adopted May 4, 1994, and the Evans Street bridge by Order adopted December 5, 1996.

The existing side (horizontal) clearances as measured from the centerline of track to the faces of the adjacent abutments of both the Franklin and Evans St. bridges exceed the Commission's minimum horizontal clearance requirements as set forth in 52 Pa. Code § 33.122.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration's Grade Crossing Inventory database the Franklin St. crossing (DOT 589 324 G) and Evans St. crossing (DOT 589 325 N) are located at mileposts 40.12 and 40.21 respectively on Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Line. The line experiences 14 train movements per day a maximum timetable speed of 50 miles per hour.

Norfolk Southern proposes to rehabilitate the Franklin and Evans St. bridges by installing 0.5-inch-thick AASHTO A709 Grade 50 steel repair plates on the exterior faces of the girder webs, positioned between each riveted vertical stiffener. The plates will be fastened using 7/8-inch-diameter ASTM F3125 Grade A325 high-strength bolts and will cover deteriorated sections of the girder webs located at the existing gutter lines. Zone painting will be performed at each repair location on both sides of the girder webs.

To access the work areas, Norfolk Southern will remove the full width of the existing concrete sidewalks to the tops of the cantilever support brackets and stringers, the pedestrian railings, and a 1.5-foot-wide portion of the bridge deck and curb along the interior sides of the girder webs. All exposed existing concrete surfaces that will come into contact with new concrete will receive a Type V epoxy bonding compound.

Following installation of the steel repair plates, new reinforced concrete sidewalks will be constructed, 8-feet wide typical on the Franklin St. bridge and 6.5-feet wide typical on the Evans St. bridge, with a minimum thickness of 5-inches. Each bridge will also be equipped with 10-foot-high railroad protective fencing along both outer edges.

Norfolk Southern stated in its application that the rehabilitation of both bridges is necessary and proper to improve public safety by addressing Priority 1 maintenance deficiencies identified by the Department during bridge safety inspections. The proposed work will require full roadway closures and associated traffic detours, beginning with the Franklin St. bridge, with each structure expected to require approximately two months to complete.

No changes to the existing side (horizontal) or overhead (vertical) clearances of either bridge are anticipated. Any reduction in clearances during temporary construction conditions that require an exemption from 52 Pa. Code §33.121 and/or §33.122 must be approved by the Commission prior to the start of construction, if necessary.

Unless otherwise specified, all work is to be performed at the initial cost and expense of Norfolk Southern in accordance with the Commission's Order adopted on December 5, 1996, at Docket No. A-00111236. Under this Order, Norfolk Southern's predecessor, Consolidated Rail Corporation, was assigned responsibility for repairing and maintaining the superstructure and substructure of both subject bridges, excluding the roadway wearing surfaces and sidewalks, at its initial cost and expense.

Norfolk Southern agreed to prepare and submit final detailed structure rehabilitation plans to all parties for review, and to the Commission for approval, prior to the start of construction, at its sole cost and expense. On March 2, 2026, the final structure rehabilitation plans were received by the Commission with certification that copies had been served upon all parties of record.

Norfolk Southern will be directed to furnish and maintain watchmen, flagmen, inspectors, and/or engineering services deemed necessary to protect and safeguard its railroad operations or facilities while the bridge rehabilitation work is being performed, at its sole cost and expense.

Norfolk Southern agrees to furnish all material and perform all work necessary to establish and maintain any detours or traffic control that may be required to properly accommodate highway and pedestrian traffic during the rehabilitation project, at its initial cost and expense.

Norfolk Southern will initially fund the proposed project, which has an estimated construction cost of \$1,120,000. Upon completion of the work and receipt of a detailed itemized invoice, the County and Pottstown are to reimburse Norfolk Southern ten percent (10%) and forty percent (40%), respectively, in accordance with the provisions of the Commission's Order adopted December 5, 1996, at Docket No. A-00111236.

There are numerous utility lines located in the vicinity of the project area. Norfolk Southern is to coordinate with all utilities involved to allow for the protection of their facilities as necessary to accommodate the project work. The non-carrier public utilities will be directed to alter or relocate their facilities as necessary to construct the project at their initial cost and expense.

The Commission has tentatively established jurisdictional limits at the Franklin and Evans St. grade separated crossings as encompassing the area within both the railroad right-of-way and the highway right-of-way, with an additional 100 feet extending from each end of the bridges in both directions. This jurisdictional area includes the full footprint of the bridge structures, all associated appurtenances, and the bridge embankments.

Norfolk Southern has certified that a copy of the application and plans have been served on each party of record and none have advised that they object to the issuance of a Secretarial Letter, prior to a hearing, approving the application and plans.

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 Norfolk Southern has agreed to construct the bridge rehabilitation project at its initial 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 crossings is necessary and proper for the service, accommodation, convenience, or safety of the public.

The alteration of the subject crossings as proposed by Norfolk Southern Railway Company is approved as herein directed:

1. The caption of the subject proceeding is hereby revised as shown herein.
2. The jurisdictional bridges where Franklin Street (DOT 589 324 G) and Evans Street (DOT 589 325 N) cross, above grade, two (2) tracks of Norfolk Southern Railway Company located in Pottstown Borough, Montgomery County, be altered as herein directed.
3. The plans submitted to the Commission on March 2, 2026, entitled “NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY DRAWINGS FOR REHABILITATION OF BRIDGES HP-40.12 (FRANKLIN STREET) & HP-40.21 (EVANS STREET) OVER NORFOLK SOUTHERN POTTSTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA,” consisting of nine (9) sheets of final detailed structure rehabilitation plans, are hereby approved.
4. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, and prior to the start of construction, prepare and submit complete detailed right-of-way plans and property descriptions (metes and bounds) for any property to be appropriated by the Commission to all parties for review and to the Commission for approval, if necessary.
5. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to rehabilitate the subject bridges generally in accordance with the approved plans and this Secretarial Letter.

6. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to establish and maintain any detours or traffic control that may be required to properly accommodate highway and pedestrian traffic during the time the bridge rehabilitation project is being constructed.

7. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its sole cost and expense, furnish construction engineering and inspection service as required as a result of the bridge rehabilitation project, and furnish and maintain flagmen and watchmen as required to protect its operations during the time work is being performed across, above, and adjacent to its tracks.

8. Any relocation of, changes in, and/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 this Commission's jurisdiction, which may be required as incidental to the execution of the bridge rehabilitation 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 project; and such relocated or altered facilities thereafter be maintained by said public utility or municipal authority at its sole cost and expense.

9. Any relocation of, changes in, and/or removal of any adjacent structures, equipment, or other facilities of any non-carrier public utility company or municipal authority located beyond the limits of the highway, within the Commission's jurisdiction, which may be required as incidental to the execution of the bridge rehabilitation 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 project; and such relocated or altered facilities thereafter be maintained by said public utility or municipal authority at its sole cost and expense.

10. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to complete the remainder of the bridge rehabilitation project, and any other ancillary features of the project, generally in accordance with the approved plans and this Secretarial Letter.

11. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, as soon as practicable, notify all parties in interest of the actual date on which work will begin.

12. All parties involved herein cooperate fully with each other so that during the time the work is being performed, vehicular and pedestrian traffic will not be endangered or unnecessarily inconvenienced, and so that the requirements of each of the parties will be provided for and accommodated insofar as possible.

13. All work necessary to complete the alteration of the subject crossing be done in a manner satisfactory to this Commission on or before November 30, 2026, and that on or before said date, Norfolk Southern Railway Company report to this Commission the date of actual completion of the work.

14. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, pay all compensation for damages due to owners of property taken, injured, or destroyed by reason of the bridge rehabilitation project in accordance with this Secretarial Letter.

15. This Secretarial Letter is without prejudice to the right of any party to recover part or all of any costs incurred by said party in compliance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter, in accordance with any lawful agreement between it and any other party.

16. The terms of any agreement established in accordance with this Secretarial Letter shall not preclude the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission from taking any action necessary to protect the public interest, including but not limited to the reassignment or enforcement of any costs or responsibilities assigned or transferred as a result of this Secretarial Letter.

17. Norfolk Southern Railway Company, prepare a detailed itemized invoice for all work performed to rehabilitate the Franklin and Evans Street bridges and provide copies to Montgomery County and Pottstown Borough for their review.

18. Montgomery County and Pottstown Borough reimburse Norfolk Southern Railway Company for the costs it incurs in completing the bridge rehabilitation project. Such reimbursement is to be made in accordance with the provisions of the Commission's Order adopted December 5, 1996, docketed at A-00111236.

19. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation project, Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain its railroad facilities beneath the Franklin and Evans Street bridges (including, but not limited to, its tracks, ties, ballast, and communications and signal lines), all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter. Norfolk Southern Railway Company is to provide Pottstown Borough at least ten (10) business days' advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph that may affect their facilities.

20. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation project, Norfolk Southern Railway Company, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to repair and maintain the superstructure and substructure of the Franklin and Evans Street bridges (exclusive of the roadway wearing surfaces and sidewalks), all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter. Norfolk Southern Railway Company is to provide Pottstown Borough at least ten (10) business days' advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph that may affect their facilities.

21. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation project, Pottstown Borough, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain its highway facilities in advance of the Franklin and Evans Street bridges (including, but not limited to, the approach roadways and sidewalks, fencing, railings, drainage facilities, and the removal of snow, ice, and debris from the approach roadways and sidewalks), all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter. Pottstown Borough is to provide Norfolk Southern Railway Company at least ten (10) business days' advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph that may affect their facilities.

22. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation project, Pottstown Borough, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to repair and maintain the roadway wearing surfaces and sidewalks on the Franklin and Evans Street bridges (including, but not limited to, the removal of snow, ice, and debris), all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter. Pottstown Borough is to provide Norfolk Southern Railway Company at least ten (10) business days' advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph that may affect their facilities.

23. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation project, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, at its initial cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to inspect the Franklin and Evans Street bridges in accordance with its current inspection policies and procedures, and upon completion of each inspection furnish copies of the inspection reports to Pottstown Borough, Montgomery County, Norfolk Southern Railway Company, and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter.

24. Upon completion of the bridge rehabilitation 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; all in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter.

25. 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, responsibility of future maintenance or any other matters relevant to this proceeding.

26. In all respects not inconsistent herewith, our Order adopted December 5, 1996, docketed at A-00111236, remains in full force and effect.

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 cursive script that reads "Matthew L. Homsher".

Matthew L. Homsher  
Secretary