



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

621 Woodland Square Loop S.E. • Lacey, Washington 98503

P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY (360) 586-8203

April 7, 2022

Sent by email and First Class mail

Rob Brown, P.E.
Transportation Engineering Manager
City of Kent, Public Works Department
220 Fourth Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032

Re: TR-220065 – Notice of Intent to Establish a Quiet Zone on the Union Pacific Railroad Seattle Subdivision in Kent

Dear Rob Brown:

On January 31, 2022, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) received notification from the City of Kent (City) of its intent to establish a railroad quiet zone at five public crossings on the Union Pacific Railroad (Union Pacific) Seattle Subdivision in Kent. The affected crossings include:

USDOT Crossing Number	Road Name
396581U	SR-516/Willis Street
396580M	Meeker Street
396579T	Smith Street
396578L	James Street
396575R	South 212 th Street

UTC Staff (Staff) participated in quiet zone reviews conducted at each crossing on June 23, 2021. The proposed quiet zone will be in effect 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and will be 2.37 miles in length. While the notice provided did not specify, Staff assumes that the proposed quiet zone will extend one-quarter mile on each side of the crossings, which is the minimum length required by Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 222 – Use of Locomotive Horns at Public Highway-Rail Grade Crossings.

The five crossings within the proposed quiet zone are currently equipped with active warning devices which include flashing lights, gates, pedestrian warning bells, constant warning time train detection, and power-off indicators.

According to its notice, the City intends to install supplemental safety measures (SSMs) at SR-516/Willis Street, and alternative safety measures (ASMs) at James Street and South 212th Street. These proposed enhancements incorporate all of Staff's recommendations in comments submitted to the City on Nov. 7, 2018, in docket TR-180776. According to the calculations provided by the City, these enhancements will reduce the crossing average risk index from 30,664 to 24,440, qualifying for designation as a quiet zone.

Under current federal rules, the UTC may comment on quiet zones but it does not have the authority to approve or deny them. Staff acknowledges that, based on implementation of the proposed SSMs and ASMs, the City believes these crossings will qualify for designation as a quiet zone. Staff supports the proposed modifications, as they will improve safety and reduce the possibility of motorists driving around downed crossing gates when a train is approaching.

Under state law¹, the City must petition the UTC prior to making the proposed crossing modifications. Information on the UTC petition process is available on the UTC website here: [Rail Crossing Changes \(wa.gov\)](https://www.utc.wa.gov/rail-crossing-changes).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact Mike Turcott, Transportation Planning Specialist, at (360) 664-1119 or by email at mike.turcott@utc.wa.gov if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Amanda Maxwell
Executive Director and Secretary

cc: Jeffrey Stewart, Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety, Washington DC
Peggy Ygbuhay, Union Pacific Railroad
Patrick Sullivan, AMTRAK

¹ See RCW 81.53.060, WAC 480-62-150