



1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
PO Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250
(360)664-1257 or (360)664-1100
Fax: (360)586-1150
Web: www.wutc.wa.gov
E-mail: records@utc.wa.gov

**GRADE CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
2009 – 2011 GRANT APPLICATION
OPEN CALL FOR PROJECTS**

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission), through its Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF), provides grants for projects that eliminate or mitigate public safety hazards at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way in Washington State. Any public, private or non-profit entity may submit an application to the commission for a GCPF grant.

To apply for a grant to eliminate or mitigate a public safety hazard at a railroad crossing or along a railroad right-of-way, complete the following information and submit it and attachments to the commission.

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: Steve Worley, Sr. Engineer – Capital Projects
Organization: City of Spokane Valley
Address: 11707 E. Sprague, Suite 106, Spokane Valley, WA 99206
Phone: 509-720-5014
E-mail: sworley@spokanevalley.org
Fax: 509-921-1008

Project Information

Attach additional sheets as necessary to the application that provide the following:

1. A detailed summary of the hazard being addressed. Include any information about accidents or incidents at the site and photographs, drawings or other materials that support the application.

Background: There are two public railroad crossings located within 100 feet on Park Road:

USDOT #066378S – Park Road at Trent

USDOT #066377K – Park Road

The railroad crossings at Park Road and Trent Ave (SR290) consist of two mainline tracks and one “other” track. Both crossings are equipped with cantilever mounted gates and eight inch lights. The mainline tracks are a primary east-west corridor for BNSF between Seattle and Chicago, IL. According to BNSF, up to 50 trains travel across both crossings on a daily basis, at speeds up to 79 miles per hour. Both freight and passenger (AMTRAK) trains utilize the tracks. A BNSF yard is located just west of the crossing and activities at the yard increase the amount of time that the crossing gates are down. Trains are often moving slower than normal at the crossing because they are either slowly speeding up as they leave the yard and or slowing down as they enter the yard.

Park Road at the crossings is a paved principal arterial with two northbound lanes and one southbound lane that carries approximately 5,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day. Trent Avenue (SR290) is located directly north of the crossings and parallel to the railroad tracks. It carries approximately 20,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day. Both Park Road and Trent Ave. serve the Yardley industrial area and carry high volumes of truck traffic. School buses frequently use the crossing while serving the West Valley School District. One elementary school is located ¼ mile south of the crossings and another elementary school is located ½ mile north of the crossings.

Park Road does not have a center median, curbs or channelization at the crossings to prevent drivers from crossing in the opposing travel lane to drive around a closed gate. BNSF crews have reported four incidents in the past two years of motorists driving around the crossing gates. This is extremely risky behavior that can easily lead to a fatal vehicle-train collision. The frequent delays at the crossings contribute to driver frustration and impatience and increase the likelihood of this risky behavior.

Records show that there have been 3 accidents at the crossings since 2004. One accident involved a crossing arm coming down on a slow moving truck, while the other two accidents involved rear-end collisions from drivers queuing up behind the closed gates.

GCPF Application Form – Stop/Yield Signs at Crossings

2. A detailed summary of the proposed project and how it will eliminate or mitigate the hazard. Include any drawings or construction plans for the proposed project.

The proposed project would install a median barrier along the centerline of Park Road where it intersects the BNSF rail lines on each side of the crossings to prevent vehicles from driving around the closed gates. The barrier would be composed of a raised concrete traffic curb with delineators. The curb would extend approximately 100 -feet south of the crossing gates, 100-feet between the crossings (with a 12-ft gap for BNSF maintenance personnel access) and 90-ft north of the crossing gates.

The 12-ft gap for access to the BNSF railroad right-of-way was requested by BNSF because their crews frequently access the adjacent rail yard to the west of the project from Park Road. "No U-Turn" signs would be posted at the access gap to discourage motorists from improperly turning at this location.

The placement of the barrier will prevent drivers from crossing into the opposing travel lane to drive around a closed gate.

3. A list all other companies, organizations, state agencies or local governments that may be involved in implementing this proposal and the contact name, address and phone number for each (if known).

BNSF Railway Company:

*Todd Kuhn 206-625-6146
2454 Occidental Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98134*

*John Shurson, 909-386-4470
740 E Carnegie Dr.,
San Bernadino, CA 92408*

*Scott Byrd, 509-536-2310
5302 E. Trent Ave,
Spokane, WA 99212*

*Washington State Department of Transportation
Eastern Regional Office
Highways & Locals Programs
2714 N. Mayfair St.
Spokane, WA 99207
509-324-6000*

GCPF Application Form – Stop/Yield Signs at Crossings

4. A cost estimate, including:
a. An itemized list of the total costs of the project.

The estimated cost to prepare the necessary construction documents, coordinate with the railroad and construct the project, including traffic control and construction management and observation is approximately \$44,000. A detailed cost estimate has been attached for supporting documentation.

The City does not have in-house staff capable of performing the proposed safety improvements. The City contracts with a private contractor for most its street maintenance and has limited in-house maintenance personnel. This project will be contracted out to a private contractor to perform the work. Additional costs have been included in the cost estimate for preparing design and contract documents to bid the construction work, inspection of the construction for compliance with the contract documents and administration of the construction contract.

- b. Names of parties contributing to the project, including the applicant, and the amount each is contributing.

The City of Spokane Valley is the lead agency for this project. BNSF will not be contributing funds. Because there are two distinct public crossings located within 100 feet of each other on Park Road, the City is requesting \$40,000 for this GCPF grant. It is the City's understanding that typically up to \$20,000 may be awarded per public crossing. Any costs in excess of the available grant amount will be covered with City funds.

5. The name of the party responsible for long-term maintenance, such as repair of fencing.

Long term maintenance costs attributed to the proposed improvements are expected to be minimal and rolled into the routine street maintenance costs. The only potential costs are for periodic replacement of damaged delineators mounted on the top of the barrier curb.

6. An estimated timeline of the project.

The median barrier will be constructed within 6 months of receiving the grant funds.

7. A description of how the project's success would be measured.

The project's success will be measured in the prevention of vehicle/train accidents caused by drivers disregarding the crossing gates. While these accidents are rare, they have a very high potential for fatalities.

GCPF Application Form – Stop/Yield Signs at Crossings

8. Any other information the applicant believes would be useful to the commission in considering the project.

The Park Road crossings are proposed for a future grade separation as part of the Bridging the Valley program. This project is not funded and a timeframe for funding is unknown. In discussions with WUTC and BNSF staff, it was agreed that these safety improvements should not be delayed due to the potential grade separation planned for the future.

Park Rd south of the crossing is currently under design for reconstruction and widening to a 3-lane road section with curb and sidewalk to better accommodate the increasing vehicle and pedestrian traffic volumes. However, the construction is not funded and may be several years away from completion. The completion of this project will encourage additional vehicle traffic along this route.

Railroad Commitment

If the applicant is not the railroad owning the crossing or on the tracks, the applicant must submit the attached completed Railroad Commitment form, completed by the railroad owning the crossing.

Submitting the Application

After completing the application, please send the original to:
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
Attention: Grade Crossing Protective Fund
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
PO Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

A signed application may be filed electronically at records@utc.wa.gov. When filing electronically, please specify “Grade Crossing Protective Fund” in the subject line.

Assistance

For questions or assistance, please contact:

- Kathy Hunter at (360)664-1257 or by e-mail at khunter@utc.wa.gov
- David Pratt at (360)664-1100 or by e-mail at dpratt@utc.wa.gov

Railroad Commitment

The undersigned represents the Railroad Company in the accompanying GCPF application.

We have reviewed the application and are satisfied the conditions are the same as described by the applicant in this matter. We agree to allow construction, modification or demolition on a railroad right-of-way as described in the application. *

Todd M. Kuhn

Printed name of Railroad Representative

Todd M. Kuhn

Signature of Railroad Representative

Manager Public Projects

Title

206-625-6146

Phone

todd.kuhn@bnsf.com

E-mail

Date: 1/27/2010

* Note: The City's contractor will need to apply for and receive a BNSF right-of-entry permit to perform this construction. This permit outlines safety training, insurance and BNSF flagman requirements.