



STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY (360) 586-8203

August 9, 2013

Steve Stuart, Chair
Tom Mielke, Commissioner
David Madore, Commissioner
Clark County Board of Commissioners
1300 Franklin Street
Post Office Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666-5000

Re: TR-131158, Proposed Quiet Zone, Northwest 122nd Street

Dear Chairman Stuart, Commissioner Mielke and Commissioner Madore:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northwest 122nd Street proposed quiet zone, as described in Docket TR-131158.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) received notice on June 17, 2013, from Clark County (County) of its intent to establish a railroad quiet zone at the Northwest 122nd Street highway-rail grade crossing, DOT #092421N. The County is proposing a quiet zone at the crossing which will be in effect 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The notice provided to the commission does not specify the length of the proposed quiet zone, so commission staff assumes that the County is proposing a quiet zone extending one-quarter mile on each side of the crossing, which is the minimum length required per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, §2.36(a)(1)(i)22.

Commission staff previously filed comments on a similar proposal by the county in March 2012, see attached. After reviewing the County's most recent proposal, commission staff provides the following comments.

Crossing inventory data contained in the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) database has been updated and thus calculations from Quiet Zone Risk Index for this crossing will be accurate. Commission staff entered information about this crossing into the Quiet Zone Calculator and received an unofficial risk index of 5,475.03, see attached. This risk index calculation assumes the inclusion of Supplemental Safety Measure No.13, non-traversable curb medians on both approaches to the crossing. The current Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT) is 13,722.00. The Northwest 122nd Street crossing is

Chairman Stuart
Commissioner Mielke
Commissioner Madore
August 9, 2013
Page 2

well below the current threshold, as calculated and eligible to be designated as a quiet zone.

As you know, under current federal rules, the commission may comment on quiet zone proposals, but does not approve or disapprove them. Based on the on-site evaluation of the crossing, commission staff continues to be very concerned about the limited sight for drivers eastbound to the crossing, specifically the restricted sight distances of 40 feet in the northeast and 300 feet in the southeast quadrants. The minimum required sight distance based on the speed of the train and vehicles is approximately 700 feet. As you know, the earth embankment in the northeast quadrant significantly impairs the driver's view of any oncoming train.

In addition, the steep grade changes on both approaches to the crossing present additional challenges for vehicle drivers especially those pulling boats or other recreational equipment over the crossing. These vehicles traverse the crossing at a slower speed because of the increased weight and length of the load and thus need adequate time to clear the crossing.

In conclusion, Commission staff acknowledges that the Northwest 122nd Street railroad crossing qualifies for designation as a quiet zone under its NSRT rating; however staff has significant concerns about the limited sight distance and steep grades near the crossing particularly in the event of a signal activation failure. If train horns are silenced at this crossing, motorists would likely be unable to appropriately react to an on-coming train before it occupied the crossing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please feel free to contact Kathy Hunter at (360) 664-1257 or by email at khunter@utc.wa.gov if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Steven V. King
Executive Director and Secretary

Enclosures

cc: John Shurson and Richard Wagner, BNSF Railway
FRA Associate Administrator for Safety
Kurt Laird, AMTRAK
Ahmer Nizam, WSDOT
Christine Adams, FRA
Axel Swanson, Clark County



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March 23, 2012

Axel Swanson, Senior Policy Analyst
Clark County Board of Commissioners
Clark County
1300 Franklin Street
Post Office Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666-5000

Re: TR-120143, Proposed Quiet Zone, Northwest 122nd Street

Dear Mr. Swanson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northwest 122nd Street proposed quiet zone, as described in Docket TR-120143.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) received notice on January 30, 2012, from Clark County (County) of its intent to establish a railroad quiet zone at the Northwest 122nd Street highway rail grade crossing, DOT #092421N. The County is proposing a quiet zone at the crossing which will be in effect 24 hours, seven day per week. The notice provided to UTC does not specific the length of the proposed quiet zone, so UTC assumes that the County is proposing a quiet zone extending one-quarter mile on each side of the crossing, which is the minimum length required per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, §2.36(a)(1)(i)22.

No formal diagnostic review was scheduled by the County, so UTC staff performed an informal on-site evaluation of the crossing on March 19, 2012.

UTC staff entered information about this crossing into the Quiet Zone Calculator and received an unofficial risk index of 5,870.99. This risk index calculation assumes the inclusion of Supplemental Safety Measure No.12, mountable medians with reflective traffic channelization devices at the crossing. Addition of this Supplemental Safety Measure is described in the city's Notice of Intent.

UTC staff is concerned that the current inventory on file at the FRA and used to calculate the Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) for this crossing is inaccurate. CFR 49 §222.39(b)(1)(i) requires that the quiet zone application to the FRA, "Contains an

accurate, complete and current Grade Crossing Inventory Form for each public, private and pedestrian grade crossing within the quiet zone.” It is critical that the inventory is up-to-date when utilizing the calculator otherwise the QZRI may not be accurate. Specifically, the following inventory data points appear to be inaccurate or out-of-date:

- Train Movements
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Year - 1993
- Type of Train Detection
- Advanced Warning Signs
- Pavement Markings

As you know, under current federal rules, the UTC may comment on quiet zone proposals, but does not approve or disapprove them. UTC recommends that the County consider withdrawing its Notice of Intent to Establish a Railroad Quiet Zone and work with BNSF Railway Co. and UTC Staff to update the FRA inventory record for the Northwest 122nd crossing prior to designating a quiet zone at this crossing. Once the inventory is fully updated, the County can re-run the calculator to ensure that the QZRT is accurate.

If the County is unwilling to withdraw its Notice of Intent to Establish a Railroad Quiet Zone at the Northwest 122nd Street crossing, UTC offers the following comments. The current Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT) is 13,722.00. The Northwest 122nd Street crossing is well below the current threshold, as calculated and eligible to be designated as a quiet zone.

Based on the on-site evaluation of the crossing, UTC staff is very concerned about the limited sight for drivers eastbound to the crossing, specifically the restricted sight distances of 40 feet in the northeast and 300 feet in the southeast quadrants. The minimum required sight distance based on the speed of the train and vehicles is approximately 700 feet. As you know, the earth embankment in the northeast quadrant significantly impairs the driver's view of any oncoming train.

In addition, Felida Moorage is located on the east side of the crossing which requires drivers pulling boats or other recreational equipment to cross-over the tracks to reach this facility and again when exiting the facility. Vehicles pulling boats and other recreational type equipment traverse the crossing at a slower speed because of the increased weight and length of the load and thus need adequate time to clear the crossing.

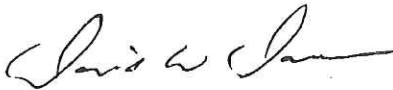
The UTC acknowledges that the Northwest 122nd Street railroad crossing qualifies for designation as a quiet zone under its NSRT rating; however staff has significant concerns about the limited sight distance at the crossing particularly in the event of a signal

Axel Swanson
March 23, 2012
Page 3

activation failure. If train horns are silenced at this crossing, motorists would likely be unable to visually detect an on-coming train.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please feel free to contact Kathy Hunter at (360) 664-1257 or by email at khunter@utc.wa.gov if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



David W. Danner
Executive Director and Secretary

Enclosures

cc: John Shurson and Richard Wagner, BNSF Railway
FRA Associate Administrator for Safety
Kurt Laird, AMTRAK
Ahmer Nizam, WSDOT
Christine Adams, FRA

Print This Page

Home | Help | Contact | **logoff** khunter@utc.wa.gov

Cancel Change Scenario: NORTHWEST_37460 Continue

Crossing	Street	Traffic Warning Device	Pre-SSM	SSM	Risk	
092421N	122ND ST. NW	120 Gates	0	12	5,870.99	MODIFY

Create New Zone
Manage Existing Zones

Log Off * Only Public At Grade Crossings are listed.

ALERT: Quiet Zone qualifies because SSM has been applied in each crossing.

Step by Step Instructions:

Step 1: To specify New Warning Device (For Pre-Rule Quiet Zone Only) and/or SSM, click the **MODIFY** button

Step 2: Select proposed warning device or SSM. Then click the **UPDATE** button. To generate a spreadsheet of the values on this page, click on **ASM** button—This spreadsheet can then be used for ASM calculations.

Step 3: Repeat Step (2) until the **SELECT** button is shown at the bottom right side of this page. Note that the **SELECT** button is shown **ONLY** when the Quiet Zone Risk Index falls below the NSRT or the Risk Index with Horn.

Step 4: To save the scenario and continue, click the **SELECT** button

Summary

Proposed Quiet Zone:	NORTHWEST 122ND STREET - CLARK COUNTY
Type:	New 24-hour QZ
Scenario:	NORTHWEST_37460
Estimated Total Cost:	\$13,000.00
Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold:	13722 .00
Risk Index with Horns:	14079.11
Quiet Zone Risk Index:	5870.99
	Select

U.S. DOT - CROSSING INVENTORY INFORMATION
AS OF 3/22/2012

Crossing No.: **092421N** Update Reason: **Changed Crossing** Effective Begin-Date of Record: **08/17/06**
 Railroad: **BNSF BNSF Rwy Co. [BNSF]** End-Date of Record:
 Initiating Agency **Railroad** Type and Position: **Public At Grade**

Part I Location and Classification of Crossing

Division:	NORTHWEST	State:	WA
Subdivision:	SEATTLE	County:	CLARK
Branch or Line Name:	SEATTLE-VANC WA	City:	Near VANCOUVER
Railroad Milepost:	0130.45	Street or Road Name:	122ND ST. NW
RailRoad I.D. No.:	0052	Highway Type & No.:	CO14240
Nearest RR Timetable Stn:	VANCOUVER	HSR Corridor ID:	
Parent Railroad:		County Map Ref. No.:	6-1
Crossing Owner:		Latitude:	45.7076286
ENS Sign Installed:		Longitude:	-122.7209676
Passenger Service:	AMTRAK	Lat/Long Source:	Actual
Avg Passenger Train Count:	1	Quiet Zone:	No
Adjacent Crossing with Separate Number:			

Private Crossing Information:

Category:	Public Access:
Specify Signs:	Specify Signals:
ST/RR A ST/RR B ST/RR C ST/RR D	

Railroad Use:

State Use:

Narrative:

Emergency Contact: **(800)832-5452** Railroad Contact: **(913)551-4540** State Contact: **(360)664-1262**

Part II Railroad Information

Number of Daily Train Movements:	Less Than One Movement Per Day:	No
Total Trains: 57 Total Switching: 0	Day Thru:	29
Typical Speed Range Over Crossing: From 1 to 79 mph	Maximum Time Table Speed:	79
Type and Number of Tracks: Main: 2 Other 0	Specify:	
Does Another RR Operate a Separate Track at Crossing?	No	
Does Another RR Operate Over Your Track at Crossing?	Yes: UP ATK	

U.S. DOT - CROSSING INVENTORY INFORMATION

Crossing **092421N**

Continued

Effective Begin-Date of Record: **08/17/06**

End-Date of Record:

Part III: Traffic Control Device Information

Signs:

Crossbucks:	2	Highway Stop Signs:	0
Advanced Warning:	No	Hump Crossing Sign:	
Pavement Markings:	Stop Lines and RR Xing Symbols	Other Signs:	0
		Specify:	0

Train Activated Devices:

Gates:	2	4 Quad or Full Barrier:	
Mast Mounted FL:	2	Total Number FL Pairs:	0
Cantilevered FL (Over):	0	Cantilevered FL (Not over):	0
Other Flashing Lights:	0	Specify Other Flashing Lights:	
Highway Traffic Signals:	0	Wigwags:	0
Other Train Activated Warning Devices:		Bells:	1
Channelization:		Special Warning Devices Not Train Activated:	
Track Equipped with Train Signals?	Yes	Type of Train Detection:	DC/AFO
		Traffic Light Interconnection/Preemption:	

Part IV: Physical Characteristics

Type of Development:	Open Space	Smallest Crossing Angle:	60 to 90 Degrees
Number of Traffic Lanes Crossing Railroad:	2	Are Truck Pullout Lanes Present?	No
Is Highway Paved?	Yes	If Other:	
Crossing Surface:	Concrete	Is it Signalized?	
Nearby Intersecting Highway?	N/A	Is Crossing Illuminated?	
Does Track Run Down a Street?	No		
Is Commercial Power Available?	Yes		

Part V: Highway Information

Highway System:	Non-Federal-aid	Functional Classification of Road at Crossing:	Urban Local
Is Crossing on State Highway System:	No	AADT Year:	1993
Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT):	000120	Avg. No of School Buses per Day:	0
Estimated Percent Trucks:	05		
Posted Highway Speed:	0		

Print This Page

Crossing	Street	Traffic Warning Device	Pre-SSM	SSM	Risk
09242IN	122ND ST. NW	225 Gates	0	13	5,475.03
					<input type="button" value="MODIFY"/>

* Only Public At Grade Crossings are listed.

ALERT: Quiet Zone qualifies because SSM has been applied in each crossing.

Click for [Supplementary Safety Measures \[SSM\]](#)

Click for ASM spreadsheet: * Note: The use of ASMs requires an application to and approval from the FRA.

Step by Step Instructions:

Step 1: To specify New Warning Device (For Pre-Rule Quiet Zone Only) and/or SSM, click the MODIFY Button

Step 2: Select proposed warning device or SSM. Then click the UPDATE button. To generate a spreadsheet of the values on this page, click on ASM button—This spreadsheet can then be used for ASM calculations.

Step 3: Repeat Step (2) until the SELECT button is shown at the bottom right side of this page. Note that the SELECT button is shown ONLY when the Quiet Zone Risk Index falls below the NSRT or the Risk Index with Horn.

Step 4: To save the scenario and continue, click the SELECT button

Summary	
Proposed Quiet Zone:	122ND FELIDA
Type:	New 24-hour QZ
Scenario:	122ND FELI_40313
Estimated Total Cost:	\$15,000.00
Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold:	13722 .00
Risk Index with Horns:	16411.96
Quiet Zone Risk Index:	5475.03
<input type="button" value="Select"/>	