

ATTACHMENT A

Recommended disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund for projects not related to improving warning devices at public at-grade crossings (2003-2004 Biennium)

Applications for Trespass Prevention Projects

TR-040017 - Application of Washington Operation Lifesaver Inc. to install “Danger/No Trespassing” signs at identified frequent trespass locations in Kelso and along the Columbia River Gorge.

Estimated project cost: \$2,600 Recommended disbursement: \$2,600

Discussion: Operation Lifesaver and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company Police have identified multiple locations along the BNSF Fallbridge subdivision that are frequently used by trespassers. Trespass inducements along the corridor include fishing, windsurfing, swimming, and hiking. BNSF averages 12 reports of near misses along this corridor each week.

The project involves installing 60 “Danger/No Trespassing” signs at high trespass locations along the corridor to warn and educate would-be trespassers of the illegality and hazards associated with the railroad trespassing.

TR-040080 – Application of the Pend Oreille Valley Railroad to install 3,000 feet of fencing along a frequent trespass corridor in Newport, Washington.

Estimated project cost: \$30,000 Recommended disbursement: \$15,000

Discussion: The project proposes fencing in two separate areas within the Town of Newport. One of the areas, identified in the application as “area A” was determined to be more hazardous than the other and involves frequent trespass activity by children crawling through stopped trains. Staff observed at least three prominent trespass trails along area A.

Although “area B” appears to experience some level of trespass activity, there are several factors that mitigate the hazards, including clear visibility, relatively slow train movements, and the presence of a signalized public railroad crossing

located less than 500 feet west of the trespass location (*i.e.* trains sound horns approaching the crossing and signals activate).

Staff recommended funding \$15,000 of the project related to fencing area A (2,500 feet). Any remaining costs will be paid for by the Port of Pend Oreille.

TR-040280 – Application of the City of Puyallup to install fencing along a frequent trespass corridor in Puyallup.

Estimated project cost: \$20,000 Recommended disbursement: \$15,000

Discussion: Trespass activity in the project area is related to schools and city parks on the south side of the BNSF main line, and a residential area on the north side. Puyallup conducted a trespass study on this area, which documented that there is a problem with trespassing - especially among children under 14. The trespass area spans 2,000 feet along a section of track that averages 46 trains per day, traveling at speeds of 50 mph for freight trains and 79 mph for passenger trains. The project involves installing fencing to block access across the tracks.

Staff determined that limiting disbursements for a single project to \$15,000 allowed for funding the greatest number of projects (either partially or totally), while still contributing a significant amount to those projects where the costs exceeded \$15,000. The City of Puyallup, BNSF, and a private party will cover the balance of the project costs.

TR-040284 – Application of the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company to install fencing to block access to a railroad trestle # 59 in Grays Harbor County.

Estimated project cost: \$2,800 Recommended disbursement: \$2,800

Discussion: Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad trestle # 59, over the Wynoochee River, is frequently used by individuals to access a popular swimming area along the river's bank. Trespassers on the trestle are exposed to the possibility of being trapped on the trestle if a train were to enter its limits. The railroad has documented several near misses at this location. The project involves installing fencing to block access to the railroad trestle.

Fencing costs for Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad projects are significantly less than all other fencing projects due to PSAP's capability to install the fencing themselves.

TR-040285 – Application of the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company to install fencing at a frequent trespass area along Aberdeen's Waterfront Park.

Estimated project cost: \$5,000 Recommended disbursement: \$5,000

Discussion: The tracks in the vicinity of Aberdeen's Waterfront Park are frequently used to access the river or as a walking trail. Reports of close calls and limited sight distance of approaching trains due to rail curves and heavy vegetation make this an area of particular concern.

Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company (PSAP) proposes to install ½ mile of fence along the Waterfront Park to block access to the tracks. Fencing costs for PSAP projects are significantly less than all other fencing projects due to PSAP's capability to install the fencing themselves.

TR-040287 – Application of the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company to install "Danger/No Trespassing" signs at identified frequent trespass locations between Omak and Pateros.

Estimated project cost: \$1,200 Recommended disbursement: \$800

Discussion: The Cascade and Columbia River Railroad has identified five areas between Omak and Pateros, where they feel that warning signs would help to deter trespassers. Primary areas are the CCRR railroad yard in Omak (see TR-040290); a city park abutting the railroad tracks in Omak, and at least three other locations where prominent trails cross the CCRR tracks.

The original estimate was based on funding 30 signs. During the field review, the applicant verified that 20 signs would be sufficient, and would allow for an appropriate number of replacement signs.

TR-040289 - Application of the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company to install fencing along a frequent trespass location in Omak, within the rail yard.

Estimated project cost: \$20,800 Recommended disbursement: \$15,000

Discussion: The Cascade and Columbia River Railroad yard in Omak divides a residential area and the city center. Children frequently use the rail yard as a short cut – especially in the morning when switching occurs. The project involves installing 1,300 feet of fencing to block access across to the rail yard.

The cost estimate for this project was \$16/ft. The most critical portion of the project involves fencing off 700 feet of the rail corridor. The recommended disbursement will allow the applicant to fence the most hazardous portion of the rail yard, and pay for 40% of the remaining lower priority section of fencing. Applicant will fund the balance.

TR-040290 – Application of the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company to install fencing along a frequent trespass location in Pateros.

Estimated project cost: \$24,000 Not recommended for funding during this Biennium

Discussion: In the Town of Pateros, the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad tracks divide the main residential portion of town from the riverfront area. Although trespassing does occur along the 1200-foot rail corridor between Lake Shore Drive and Dawson Street, there are several mitigating factors, including clear visibility of approaching trains, relatively slow train speeds, and the presence of two signalized at-grade crossings 600 feet on either side of the trespass location (*i.e.* trains sound horns and warning bells are activate).

Applicant was advised to use some of the signs approved in TR-040287 at this location, and to encourage law enforcement officials to cite trespassers, who would be in clear view of SR-97.

TR-040291 – Application of Washington Operation Lifesaver Inc. to install fencing at a frequent trespass location in Kelso.

Estimated project cost: \$24,000 Not recommended for funding during this Biennium

Discussion: After the closure of the Allen Street grade crossing in the late 1990s, the vicinity of the old crossing has become a regular trespass site for pedestrians. The project involves installing fencing to block access across the tracks. City of Kelso officials stated that they oppose implementation of this project. The City prefers to explore re-establishing a legal pedestrian grade crossing rather than eliminating access across the tracks at this location.

TR-040292 - Application of Washington Operation Lifesaver Inc. to install a guardrail along a 50-foot portion of SR-14, in the Columbia River Gorge.

Estimated project cost: \$4,000 Recommended disbursement: \$4,000

Discussion: The extra guardrail would close a 50-foot gap in the existing guardrail that is accessed by trespassers to illegally cross the tracks on their way to the Columbia River. Trespass activity includes trucks and off-road recreation vehicles driving through the break in the guardrail and over the railroad tracks. Trucks driving over tracks without any crossing surface may result in the vehicles becoming high centered on the tracks in an area with high volumes and speeds of trains.

TR-040294 - Application of Washington Operation Lifesaver Inc. to install fencing to block access to a railroad trestle near the City of White Salmon.

Estimated project cost: \$7,730 Recommended disbursement: \$7,730

Discussion: The BNSF trestle near White Salmon is frequently used by fishermen to gain access to the Columbia River. BNSF averages four near misses in the vicinity of the trestle each week. In addition, there have been several trespass-related deaths at this location (the latest being 10/10/03). The project involves installing 750 feet of fencing to block access to the trestle.

Applications for Private Crossing Improvements

TR-040282 – Application of the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company to construct a vehicle turnout lane at a private crossing.

Estimated project cost: \$20,000 Not recommended for funding during this Biennium

Discussion: The short distance between the tracks and a parallel roadway presents a potential hazard with respect to long wheelbase vehicles stopped at a Stop sign at the roadway intersection while not being able to sufficiently clear the tracks. The proposed roadway improvements are intended to create more room for long trucks to make the required stop without hanging over the tracks behind them.

The proposal's conceptual design was presented by the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company. Although Grays Harbor County representatives agree that something should be done at the crossing, they feel that a more in-depth engineering analysis is required to properly design any changes to the existing roadway intersection.

TR-040283 – Application of the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad Company, seeking funding for vegetation control at private and public crossings in Grays Harbor County.

Estimated project cost: \$12,500 Not recommended for funding during this Biennium

Discussion: The project involves clearing vegetation to improve sight distance of approaching trains at three at-grade crossings. This application was ranked as a lower priority due to the fact that two of the crossings were equipped with active warning devices (thus mitigating the lack of sight distance), and that vegetation control at grade crossings is generally a standard railroad maintenance responsibility.¹

¹ Projects involving work that is considered “standard maintenance responsibility” are not excluded from GCPF funding consideration as a matter of policy. In some cases, however, the fact the improvement is required by statute or rule may be considered a mitigating factor since the improvement would be made regardless of whether GCPF funds are granted.

TR-040288 – Application of the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company to replace 50 private crossing/Stop signs in Okanogan and Chelan Counties.

Estimated project cost: \$1,200 Recommended disbursement: \$1,200

Discussion: The Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company has over 200 private at-grade crossings along its rail line. Many of the “Private Crossing/Stop” signs along the line were installed in the 1970s and have become “faded beyond legibility” or are missing. The applicant seeks funds to purchase and install the signs at locations identified as requiring new signs.

Miscellaneous Applications

TR-040196 – Application of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to close an at-grade crossing at Horsethief Lake State Park.

Estimated GCPF contribution: \$20,000 Recommended disbursement: \$15,000

Discussion: The project involves closure of a crossing that leads to a boat launch, and to establish a railroad bridge where boats may cross under the tracks after launching from a location that does not require vehicles towing boats to cross the BNSF tracks. Applicant seeks \$20,000 to supplement BNSF contributions and \$80,000 in federal grants for the project.

Staff determined that limiting disbursements for a single project to \$15,000 allowed for funding the greatest number of projects (either partially or totally), while still contributing a significant amount to those projects where the costs exceeded \$15,000. The balance will be paid for by funds from the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

TR-040279 – Application of Sound Transit to fund closure of the S. 58th Street grade crossing in Tacoma.

Estimated project cost: \$40,000 Recommended disbursement: \$10,000

Discussion: The project is related to Sound Transit's plan to establish rail service between Tacoma and Lakewood, and to safety improvements it plans to make in anticipation of this new service.

The application divides the project into design (\$10,000) and physical closure (\$40,000). Staff recommends funding the design portion of the closure.

TR-040281 – Application of the City of Stevenson to resurface a 3-track crossing at Russell Avenue.

Estimated project cost: \$63,000 Not recommended for funding during this Biennium

Discussion: The crossing is frequently used by tourist traffic and heavy truck traffic. Stevenson seeks to reconstruct the crossing to alleviate the roughness of the crossing surface.

Staff observed that the main problem contributing to the roughness of the crossing was the fact that the areas between the tracks were slightly higher than the plane created by the rails. Staff advised BNSF to grind this area to improve the crossing's profile.

The application was otherwise ranked as a lower priority due to the fact that it was prioritized against projects involving mitigating the potential for train/vehicle or train/pedestrian conflict. In addition, ensuring that crossing surfaces are safe and convenient for public use is a standard railroad maintenance responsibility under Chapter 480-62 WAC.²

TR-040293 – Application of the City of Marysville to install battery backup for 5 separate highway traffic signals interconnected to railroad warning signals.

Estimated project cost: \$50,200 Recommended disbursement: \$10,000

Discussion: In the City of Marysville, the BNSF tracks run parallel to State Avenue. The main roads crossing the tracks all intersect with State Avenue and require interconnection of the railroad signals and highway traffic signals. The

² Please see footnote #1 on page 6

interconnections serve to clear vehicle queues that result from the traffic signals and back up over the BNSF tracks.

Marysville has documented that the highway traffic signals are prone to power failure – especially during storms with high winds. The battery back up systems would allow the traffic signals to continue clearing traffic queues from the BNSF tracks when power failure occurs.

Although there are not sufficient funds to fund all five crossings, funding one of the upgrades would help to expedite completion of the project. The City of Marysville plans to install 3 (possible 4) of the battery back up systems in 2004, and the remaining projects will be completed in 2005.