

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Application of	)	DOCKET TR-060116
	)	
CITY OF AUBURN,	)	ORDER 01
	)	
Petitioner,	)	
	)	
Requesting Disbursement from the	)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR
Grade Crossing Protective Fund	)	DISBURSEMENT FROM THE GRADE
	)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1     On November 14, 2005, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) sent a “Notice of Opportunity to Apply for Grant Monies from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund” in Docket TR-051633 to various interested parties from the public and private sectors that were eligible to apply for Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) grants. On January 19, 2006, the Commission issued a notice extending the due date for grant applications to February 17, 2006.
  
- 2     On January 20, 2006, the city of Auburn (city) filed an application with the Commission, requesting a disbursement of \$20,000 from the GCPF to pay for projects related to crossing safety.
  
- 3     The city seeks to install median barriers at three BNSF Railway crossings in Auburn, Washington.
  
- 4     West Main Street is a two-way, three-lane urban collector road with a maximum vehicle speed of 25 miles per hour. The crossing at West Main Street, USDOT 085655A, UTC 1E21.25, consists of two main-line railroad tracks owned by BNSF Railway (BNSF). An average of 6,900 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing is limited to a maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights.
  
- 5     37th Street Northwest is a two-way, three-lane urban collector road with a maximum vehicle speed 40 miles per hour. The crossing at 37<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest, USDOT 085647H, UTC 1E19.16, consists of two main-line railroad tracks owned by BNSF. An average of 7,000 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing

is limited to a maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights.

- 6 3rd Street Northwest is a two-way, three-lane urban local road with a maximum vehicle speed 25 miles per hour. The crossing at 3rd Street Northwest, USDOT 085652E, UTC 1E21.20, consists of two main-line railroad tracks owned by BNSF. An average of 6,100 vehicles move over the crossing each day. Train traffic at this crossing is limited to a maximum of 40 miles per hour for both freight and passenger trains. Twenty-nine trains pass over the crossing in any given 24-hour period. Signals include cantilever-mounted gates and lights.
- 7 The city proposes to add median barriers to all three crossings. Median barriers present drivers with a strong physical barrier, preventing them from driving around active gates. The city considers these intersections very active, both in terms of train and vehicle traffic. Amtrak, Sound Transit commuter, and freight trains all travel these crossings on a daily basis.
- 8 The Commission has two documented vehicle collisions at the West Main Street crossing since 1992.
- 9 The Commission has three documented vehicle collisions at the 37<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest crossing since 1993. One collision in 1996 resulted in a double fatality.
- 10 The Commission has no documented vehicle collisions at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Northwest crossing.
- 11 A recent site visit by Commission Staff confirms the safety problems described by the city and that the proposed installation of median barriers at the crossings will limit motor vehicle access to the tracks when the gates are activated.
- 12 The city estimates the total cost of the median barriers at \$20,800. The city seeks \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund to partially pay for the cost of the median barriers. The city will pay the balance of the project, estimated at \$800, from its own funds. There are currently Grade Crossing Protection Fund monies available to pay \$20,000 toward the cost of the project.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 13 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. *Chapter 81.53.271 RCW and 81.53.281 RCW.*
- 14 (2) The project for which disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is sought is eligible for funding consideration under Commission rules and complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.271 and RCW 81.53.281.
- 15 (3) Commission staff investigated the request based on the review criteria specified in the rules and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 16 (4) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 28, 2006.
- 17 (5) After examination of the application filed by the city of Auburn on January 20, 2006, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the request for disbursement of funds.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 18 The request of the city of Auburn, seeking disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund for the installation of median barriers at West Main Street, 37<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Northwest crossings in Auburn, Washington, is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$20,000.
  - (2) The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.

- (3) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
- (4) The project must be completed and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be on file with the Commission no later than June 30, 2007.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective June 28, 2006.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**MARK H. SIDRAN, Chairman**

**PATRICK J. OSHIE, Commissioner**