

Section 7 – Description of Proposed Changes

The City of Richland has a road project that proposes to change this existing 5 lane road-rail crossing to a 4-legged roadway intersection with the rail crossing running diagonally through the roadway intersection. In 2009, the City of Richland received a favorable decision to construct intersection improvements at the proposed location under Docket TR-090912 Order 01. The proposed improvement at the time was a four-legged roundabout. The Class 1 railroads operating on Port of Benton's railroad tracks were opposed to a roundabout. So in good faith, the City of Richland conferred with the railroads, produced an at-grade rail crossing intersection study (attached), and convened a diagnostics meeting (minutes attached) that ultimately created conditions for intersection elements that would meet the railroads' approval. This process was completed in 2017. The proposed design incorporates all of those elements. In preparation for this petition, the City of Richland withdrew the 2009 petition with the understanding that the proposed design meets the Class 1 railroads' requirements. Beginning in October 2024, the City of Richland began an additional diagnostics process to accommodate the Class 1 railroads comments when reengaged with the project. In September 2025, the City of Richland in conjunction with the Port of Benton, City of Kennewick, BNSF, UPRR, and Columbia Rail finalized the diagnostics and plan review process between the agencies and railroads. The process resulted in minor plan changes and pre-emption calculation edits. All agencies and railroad have signed waivers of hearing indicating their approval of the final plans.

The rail crossing will be controlled with 6 automatic crossing gates 28-30 ft in length. The crossing will be re-constructed with ties and concrete crossing panels. Advance warning signs, pavement markings, cross-bucks, roadside and median mast mounted gates and 12-inch flashing lights will also be constructed. Due to vision obstructions with the traffic lights, no rail signal cantilevers will be used. All components of crossing warning devices (masts, lights, and gates) shall meet Union Pacific standards. Rail contractor to produce the detailed design.

Steptoe, Tapteal, and Pedestrian signals will be controlled from the signal house. Pre-emption will be used for coordination with traffic signals.

The new roadway intersection will be a 4-legged road intersection of Steptoe Street and Tapteal Drive. Tapteal Drive currently intersects Steptoe Street approximately 170 ft north of the rail crossing. All four new approaches to the intersection will have raised concrete medians ranging in length between 100-400 ft long.

Median dimensions are:

- Steptoe south side – Height = 6 inch, Width varies = 10 feet at stop bar and gate location and tapers to 1 foot wide, Length = 400 feet
- Steptoe north side – Height = 6 inch, Width varies = 10 feet at stop bar and gate location and tapers to 1 foot wide, Length = 240 feet
- Tapteal west side – Height = 6 inch, Width = 1 foot, Length = 100 feet
- Tapteal east side – Height = 6 inch, Width = 1 foot, Length = 100 feet
- Right-turn lane medians (“porkchops”) – Height = 6 inch, Width varies = 20 feet to 4 foot, Length = 90 feet

The Steptoe Street approaches have median mast mounted gates for a total gate coverage across both travel lanes. Both approaches on Tapteal Drive have a single gate but with total gate coverage across the through and left turn lane from a concrete island mast mounted gate. The Tapteal Drive to Steptoe Street right turns are separated by a raised concrete “pork chop” island allowing free rights turns but completely separated from the rail crossing.

The pedestrian walkways change directions prior to the rail crossing so that they cross the tracks at a 90-degree angle. Bikes are diverted from the roadway prior to the rail signal onto the sidewalk so that they also cross the tracks at a 90-degree angle. The crossing will be equipped with flashing lights and bells for pedestrians and bikes.

Flashing lights vehicle crossings:

- Steptoe south side – 2 railroad crossing light masts – 8 lights plus gate lights
- Steptoe north side – 2 railroad crossing light masts – 8 lights plus gate lights
- Tapteal west side – 1 railroad crossing light masts – 4 lights plus gate lights
- Tapteal east side – 1 railroad crossing light masts – 4 lights plus gate lights
- SE Pedestrian crossing – 2 railroad crossing light masts – 4 lights total
- NW Pedestrian crossing – 2 railroad crossing light masts – 4 lights total

City of Richland to maintain sidewalks.