

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Application of  
  
WALLA WALLA COUNTY PUBLIC  
WORKS,

Applicant,

Requesting Disbursement from the  
Grade Crossing Protective Fund

DOCKET TR-160186

ORDER 01

ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR  
DISBURSEMENT FROM THE GRADE  
CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND FOR  
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT PORT  
KELLY ROAD IN WALLA WALLA  
COUNTY

USDOT #844389C

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On July 15, 2015, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) sent to various interested parties a “Notice of Opportunity to Apply for Grant Monies” from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF).
- 2 On February 12, 2016, Walla Walla County Public Works (County or the Applicant) filed with the Commission an application requesting a disbursement of \$50,000 from the GCPF to pay for portion of a project related to realigning the roadway and repaving the asphalt approaches to the Port Kelly Road railroad crossing, identified as USDOT 844389C, in Walla Walla County.
- 3 In the 2014 Marine and Rail Oil Transportation Study, Commission Staff identified the Port Kelly Road crossing as an under-protected crossing along an oil route, based on identified risk factors and existing levels of protection at the crossing. Commission Staff conducted an on-site diagnostic review meeting with representatives from the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and the County. As a team, the participants generally agreed on a future course of action to improve safety at the crossing, including interim and long-term recommendations. This project addresses the recommended interim improvements at the crossing.
- 4 UPRR operates up to eight freight trains per day over this single mainline track crossing. The authorized train speed is 60 miles per hour. The crossing is currently protected by crossbucks and stop signs, and there is limited sight distance on the north approach.

5 Port Kelly Road is a two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The average annual daily traffic over the crossing is 186 vehicles, with 16 percent commercial traffic. Port Kelly Road is not part of an established school bus route.

6 The Port Kelly Road crossing provides access to a Tidewater grain barge facility on the Columbia River, as well as the Walla Walla Yacht Club. Seasonally, there are higher volumes of grain truck and recreational vehicle traffic over the crossing. The County reports that the types of trucks used to haul grain have changed over the years. The large combination truck-and-trailer vehicles now hauling grain over the crossing result in a poor approach angle and exacerbate the already limited sight distance problems in the northeast quadrant of the crossing.

7 The County seeks to widen the current approach to the crossing to better align at 90 degrees with the railroad crossing. The old asphalt will be removed and replaced with five inches of new asphalt. In addition, pavement markings will be repainted. This will improve the alignment of the large truck-and-trailer combinations and improve sight angles for drivers.

8 The proposed project will improve safety in the interim, until the crossing can be fully signalized which is the long-term recommendation.

9 The County seeks \$50,000 to pay for the cost of the improving the asphalt approaches to the crossing. There currently are funds available to pay for the project. The total estimated cost of the project is \$77,771.48. The grantee is responsible for all additional costs over the grant amount.

10 Walla Walla County Public Works must also meet the following conditions for administering the GCPF grant.

- Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$50,000.
- The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
- Walla Walla County Public Works must sign and return the attached project agreement.
- Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

- The project must be completed and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be filed with the Commission no later than April 1, 2017.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 11 (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. RCW 81.53.271; RCW 81.53.281.
- 12 (2) The project for which Walla Walla County Public Works seeks disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is eligible for funding consideration under Commission rules and complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.271, RCW 81.53.281, and WAC 480-62.
- 13 (3) Commission Staff investigated the request based on the review criteria specified in the Commission's rules and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions for administering the grant.
- Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$50,000.
  - The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
  - Walla Walla County Public Works must sign and return the attached project agreement.
  - Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
  - The project must be completed and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be filed with the Commission no later than April 1, 2017.
- 14 (4) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 10, 2016.

- 15 (5) After reviewing Walla Walla County Public Works' application filed on February 12, 2016, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the request for disbursement of funds.

**O R D E R**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 16 Walla Walla County Public Works' application for disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund for improving and repaving the asphalt approaches to the Port Kelly Road crossing, identified as USDOT 844389C, in Walla Walla County, is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$50,000.
  - (2) The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
  - (3) Walla Walla County Public Works must sign and return the attached project agreement.
  - (4) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
  - (5) The project must be completed and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be filed with the Commission no later than April 1, 2017.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective March 10, 2016.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**STEVEN V. KING, Executive Director and Secretary**