



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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October 29, 2020

Sent via Email

Chad Schulhauser, City Engineer
Public Works Department
104 West Magnolia, Suite 109
Bellingham, WA 98225

Re: TR-144162 – Revised Notice of Intent to Establish a Railroad Quiet Zone – City of Bellingham Quiet Zone – Fairhaven

Dear Mr. Schulhauser:

On Dec. 16, 2014, the City of Bellingham (City) notified the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) of its intent to establish a railroad quiet zone at several crossings in the Fairhaven area. The UTC provided comments to the City on Feb. 15, 2015. On Sept. 16, 2020, the City provided a revised Notice of Intent to Establish a Railroad Quiet Zone at the same crossings, due to the original notice being five years old, and the change in status at several crossings the UTC supplements its comments. The crossings included in the proposed quiet zone are:

1. Harris Avenue – USDOT 084798U
2. Alaska Ferry access on 6th Street – USDOT 084800T
3. Private crossing – USDOT 084801A
4. Bayview Drive – USDOT 084805C
5. Boulevard Park pedestrian crossing – USDOT 919108C

Since the 2014 notice, the City and the Port of Bellingham (Port) completed installation of supplemental safety measures (SSM) at two of the crossings:

- Harris Avenue: Gates with medians/channelization devices and pedestrian improvements/pedestrian gates.
- Boulevard Park: Pedestrian gate system.

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10/28/20 14:44

Received
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Chad Schulhauser

October 29, 2020

Page 2

The City and the Port propose installation of the following SSMs at the two remaining public crossings:

- Alaska Ferry: Four-quadrant gate system.
- Bayview Drive: Four-quadrant gate system, pedestrian improvements/pedestrian gates.

The City does not reference any modifications to the private crossing.

The proposed quiet zone will be in effect 24 hours per day, seven days per week. While the notice provided did not specify length, UTC Staff assumes that the proposed quiet zone will extend one-quarter mile on each side of the crossing, which is the minimum length required by Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 222.

According to 49 CFR Part 222, if a public authority implements one or more SSMs at every public crossing within a quiet zone, and complies with the required information and notification provisions, the public authority may designate a quiet zone without the necessity for FRA review and approval. (49 CFR Part 222.39)

UTC Staff supports the proposed SSM upgrades as they will eliminate the possibility of motorists driving around downed crossing gates when a train is approaching. Under current federal rules, the UTC may comment on quiet zones but it does not have the authority to approve or deny them. When the quiet zone is implemented, "NO TRAIN HORN" signs must be added to the advance warning signs on each approach to the crossing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact Betty Young, Rail Safety Program Advisor, at (360) 292-5470 or by email at betty.young@utc.wa.gov, if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Mark L. Johnson

Executive Director and Secretary

cc: Jeffrey Stewart, Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety, Washington DC
Stephen Semenick, BNSF
Alvin Richardson, AMTRAK