

ITEM # 32  
DATE: 10-09-07

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: DUFF AVENUE CLOSURE FOR FOUR-QUADRANT GATE  
INSTALLATION AT UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CROSSING**

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 19, 2006, staff presented a report summarizing the safety improvements required for the City of Ames to establish a Quiet Zone for the east/west and north/south rail lines. During the meeting, City Council approved these safety improvements necessary to apply for a Quiet Zone on the east-west mainline.

At that time, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) were in the planning stages of a project to install a four-quadrant gate at the Duff Avenue railroad crossing. Though the project does not require any financial involvement from the City, it has been identified as an essential project towards establishing a Quiet Zone along the east/west mainline.

On September 24, 2007, the UPRR contacted City staff with a confirmed date for the commencement of the four-quadrant gate installation. The weeks of October 22<sup>nd</sup> and October 29<sup>th</sup> have been identified as the timeframe in which work is to occur. As part of this project, a safety mechanism using loop detectors will need to be installed in the portion of the roadway abutting the railroad tracks. Duff Avenue will need to be closed to vehicular traffic while this work is being conducted.

Duff Avenue is classified as a Minor Arterial roadway, which in accordance with Municipal Code requires City Council approval prior to closure. Due to the heavy train traffic seen on the east-west mainline, UPRR makes their best effort to coordinate repair work with the normal train deliveries that occur. Past experience with similar efforts has resulted in the need for flexibility on the part of staff to be able to administratively change the date(s) of the closure, as needed. Staff will issue press releases, as well as utilize the electronic message boards to inform the public prior to closure of the crossing.

Therefore, it is recommended that City Council delegate to staff the ability to administratively close the Duff Avenue railroad crossing for the installation of a four-quadrant gate system.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Delegate to staff the ability to administratively approve the closure of Duff Avenue to facilitate the installation of a four-quadrant gate system.
2. Approve the closure of Duff Avenue during the weeks of October 22, 2007, and October 29, 2007, only.
3. Direct staff to work with the Union Pacific Railroad in finding an alternative date for installation.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The installation of a four-quadrant gate on Duff Avenue will provide a needed safety improvement at this railroad crossing. These improvements will also provide a significant step towards Ames establishing a Quiet Zone along the east/west mainline. Delegating the authority to staff to close Duff Avenue will provide the flexibility to limit the impacts to the motoring public.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby delegating to staff the ability to administratively approve the closure of Duff Avenue to facilitate the installation of a four-quadrant gate system.