

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CROSSING REPAIRS (DUFF AVENUE)

BACKGROUND:

At a previous meeting, the City Council directed staff to meet with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) officials in an attempt to convince them to improve the Duff Avenue crossing. On March 23, 2012, City staff met on-site with maintenance crews from the UPRR. The UPRR staff who attended the meeting indicated that in addition to previous installation issues with the asphalt at the crossing, the precast panels at the crossing have settled resulting in an unacceptable amount of deflection in the rails through the crossing. **Due to these findings, the UPRR has identified the need for total replacement of the crossing, from the surface through to the sub-grade below.**

The Municipal Code requires City Council to approve temporary closures of those streets that are classified as Arterials, or are active CyRide routes, which is the case with Duff Avenue. **The UPRR identified the weeks of May 7 and May 14 as potential dates to schedule the replacement of the crossing.**

Staff was informed that the replacement of the crossing would require approximately one week to complete, during which Duff Avenue will need to be closed to vehicular traffic. 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. Recent experience with similar coordination efforts has resulted in the need for flexibility on the part of staff to be able to administratively change the date of the closure, as needed.

Since the Duff Avenue crossing has a Quad-Gate system, the replacement of the detection system associated with the gates will require special fabrication of vehicle detection loops that must be made specifically for this crossing. This special fabrication contributes to the inability to specify a certain date of closure at this time. **Therefore, it is recommended that City Council delegate to staff the ability to administratively close the Duff Avenue railroad crossing.** Staff will coordinate the placement of all appropriate temporary traffic control measures, and will also work with the City's Public Relations Officer to notify the public throughout the duration of the project.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Delegate to staff the ability to administratively approve the closure of the Duff Avenue railroad crossing to facilitate the UPRR replacement of the crossing.
2. Direct staff to work with UPRR in finding an alternate date to conduct the repairs.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

By granting staff the ability to administratively close the Duff Avenue railroad crossing, City Council would be facilitating the best possible coordination between the City and the UPRR for the project. It will provide the flexibility needed to minimize the potential impacts to the citizens of Ames through up-to-date, accurate traffic information during the closure.

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 the Duff Avenue railroad crossing to facilitate the UPRR replacement of the crossing.