

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: 2007/08 & 2008/09 RAILROAD CROSSING SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS  
(9<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 16<sup>TH</sup> STREET RAILROAD CROSSING SIGNALS)**

**BACKGROUND:**

This program is to provide for safety and surface improvements at railroad crossings along the north-south railroad corridor. Basic safety features desired at each crossing include two-quadrant vehicle gates, mounted flashing lights, and constant warning time detection. Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) has confirmed that these features are in place at the 13th Street, 20th Street, and 24th Street crossings. The first two years of this program provide for installation of these improvements at 16th Street (budgeted in 2007/08) and 9th Street (budgeted in 2008/09).

The UPRR recently drafted agreements for the installation of two-quadrant gates at the 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Street railroad crossings. Estimated costs for all labor and materials are \$200,494 and \$196,200, respectively. Funding for these projects was included in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 Capital Improvements Plans, with each project showing \$137,500 of Local Option Sales Tax and \$112,500 from a UPRR grant.

Unfortunately, the \$112,500 is now not eligible for a UPRR grant due to their focus on at-grade surface crossing improvements. Savings from the Railroad Crossing Improvements (20<sup>th</sup> Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Street railroad surface improvements) in an amount totaling \$53,900 in Road Use Tax funds are available for this project. In addition, savings from the US 69 Intersection Improvements Program (13<sup>th</sup> Street/Grand Ave.), in the amount of \$33,717 from Road Use Tax, is available to use on this project. This brings the total available funding to \$362,617, leaving the City \$34,077 short. That amount could be funded from the City's Local Option Sales Tax fund balance.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1 a) Approve the agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad for installation of lights, gates, and constant warning time devices at the 9<sup>th</sup> Street railroad crossing, and
- b) Approve the agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad for installation of lights, gates, and constant warning time devices at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street railroad crossing.
2. Approve an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad for **only one** of the railroad crossings, either 9<sup>th</sup> Street or 16<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. Do not approve either agreement.

## **MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

By installing lights, gates, and constant warning time devices at both the 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Street railroad crossings, the City will be taking significant steps to improve safety along the north-south railroad line. This is especially the case in those areas that are frequently traveled by students going to and from Ames High School.

It is unfortunate that the UPRR's criteria for crossing improvements will not now support these two projects. However, most of the shortfall can be covered from unspent funds in the 20<sup>th</sup> Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Street railroad surface improvements project and the US 69 Intersection Improvements Program (13<sup>th</sup> Street/Grand Avenue). The remainder is available from the balance in the Local Option Sales Tax fund.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the agreements with the Union Pacific Railroad for installation of lights, gates, and constant warning time devices at the 9th Street and 16th Street railroad crossings.

**It should be noted that past projects involving work by the UPRR have been completed at approximately 75 percent of the railroad's original cost estimate. If this trend is repeated, the City will not need to use the savings from the 13<sup>th</sup> and Grand Avenue project nor monies from the Local Option Sales Tax fund to complete these improvements.**