



# City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Study Session

## Item -3

**Discussion Concerning Closing the Elm Street/Union Pacific  
Railroad Crossing**

Staff Contact: Scott Gripenstroh

# Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Scott Griepenstroh, Public Works Project Manager

**Meeting:** March 1, 2011

**Subject:** Discussion Concerning Closing the Elm Street / Union Pacific Railroad Crossing

**Item #'s:** 3

**Presenter(s):** Gary R. Mader, Interim Public Works Director  
Scott Griepenstroh, Public Works Project Manager

## Background

The Elm Street crossing at the Union Pacific Railway is a two-lane, two-way facility, approximately 50 feet wide with a speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph), carrying approximately 795 vehicles per day. This crossing is equipped with flashers/gates, bells, and power-off indicators, but not constant warning circuitry. In the Railroad Corridor Safety Study performed by Kirkham Michael in 2006 three alternatives to improve this crossing were offered; total closure, raised medians, or wayside horns. The primary issue with this crossing is the proximity to the existing Eddy Street grade separation just two blocks west. This crossing is part of Phase I of the Quiet Zone Improvements in the Downtown area.

At an on-site diagnostic team meeting, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) requested that the quiet zone project at Walnut and Elm Streets upgrade the sidewalk crossing panels on the siding tracks that serve the Peavey Elevator. The UPRR also requested that the project at Walnut and Elm Streets fill in the area between the existing street surfacing and the sidewalks with crossing panels. The additional crossing panels would increase the Phase I Quiet Zone cost by over \$250,000.

In working with the consultant, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, it was suggested that the pavement be narrowed at the Walnut and Elm Street crossings similar to the currently designed pavement narrowing at the Oak and Pine Street crossings. The revision of the design to narrow the crossings is the most cost effective solution for establishing a quiet zone.

## **Discussion**

When looking at the vehicle use of the Elm Street/UPRR crossing compared to the cost of installing the wayside horns, of \$219,486, it would be more cost effective to close this crossing. The total cost involved with this closure is estimated at \$46,454, with the possibility of the City receiving up to \$40,000 from the UPRR and NDOR for the closure. The City would possibly be looking at a total cost of \$6,454 to close this crossing.

City Staff have visited with Emergency Personnel to gather their input on potential conflicts if this crossing were to be closed. The Fire Department stated this closing would not affect their response time, as they plan to use the Eddy or Sycamore underpass. This closing is also supported by the Fire Department, because it will eliminate a location where there is risk of a vehicle-train collision. In talking with the Police Department they had no objections to the closing and said their operations would not be impacted by the closure.

City Administration is recommending total closure of the Elm Street / UPRR crossing based on the cost involved for the wayside horn installation compared to the vehicular use.

## **Conclusion**

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting for the approval of a resolution to close the Elm Street/UPRR crossing.