



City of Tualatin

CITY OF TUALATIN Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

FROM: Mike McCarthy, Principal Transportation Engineer
Kim McMillan, Community Development Director

DATE: November 22, 2021

SUBJECT:

Consideration of Resolution Number 5585-21 Authorizing The City Manager To Apply For And Agree To Alterations To The Tualatin Road Crossing Of The Portland And Western Railroad.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Council adopt the attached resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Tualatin Moving Forward Program Team is designing a project to improve safety and access along Tualatin Road from Sweek Drive to Community Park. Phase 1 of this project is currently under construction along the south side of Tualatin Road in front of the Police Station and at the crosswalk east of the Police Station. The second phase of this project is planned to widen the sidewalk on the north side of Tualatin Road from the crosswalk across the rail crossing to the park.

Any construction affecting the road and/or sidewalk within a couple hundred feet of the railroad requires the approval of the railroad, those using the rails (TriMet WES), and rail regulators. The railroad and regulators have raised safety and operational concerns about the existing crossing and expect this and/or any future project to address those concerns. Staff and the program team have worked with the railroad, regulators, and TriMet to develop the changes presented here as ways to address these concerns while minimizing impacts to City residents and facilities, and allowing the Tualatin Road project to move forward.

The required changes are listed in the attached Notice of Proposed Alteration (NPA) and shown on the attached plan as an amendment to the NPA. The changes include additional signage and pavement markings for improved safety at the crossings. The NPA would also require the City to reimburse the railroad for their cost to install a pedestrian gate arm that would cross the sidewalk on the east side of the tracks, and extend the pedestrian gate arm on the west side of the tracks.

In particular, the railroad and regulators are requiring 'No Left Turn' signage telling eastbound drivers on Tualatin Road that they are not allowed to turn left into the northern park driveway (which goes to the boat ramp, dog park, and other northern areas of Community Park). They raise the safety concern of a vehicle stopped on the tracks (or causing queuing on the tracks) as they wait for a gap in oncoming traffic so they can turn left into the driveway, so they are requiring the 'No Left Turn' signs. When the City team pushed back on this requirement because of its effects on park access, the railroad and regulators replied that this is a safety issue and they have the authority to require left turn prohibition and/or full driveway closure at any time.

Staff believes that the Tualatin Road railroad crossing changes and park access changes in the Notice of Proposed Action (NPA) are the most appropriate way to address the railroad and regulators' safety concerns about the crossing at the lowest feasible level of impact to Tualatin's citizens and parks.

OUTCOMES OF DECISION:

Approval of attached Resolution 5585-21 would authorize changes to the Tualatin Road railroad crossing near Community Park, including gate arm changes, markings, and signage including 'No Left Turn' signage for eastbound traffic at the northern park access.

ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION:

Council could decide not to authorize approval of these crossing changes. If this is the case, the Tualatin Road sidewalk would likely not be able to move forward, and the railroad and regulators may seek to force these changes through legal channels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The costs of the proposed crossing changes are budgeted as part of the Tualatin Road (Sweek Drive to Community Park) project in the Tualatin Moving Forward project fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution 5585-21 for Tualatin Road railroad crossing revisions