

## STAFF REPORT

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**Date:** April 12, 2023

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Thru:** Doug Thornley, City Manager

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): Approval of Cooperative Agreement with the Nevada Department of Transportation to construct railroad at-grade crossing safety improvements on Highland Avenue within the City Right-of-Way. [Ward 4]

**From:** Kurt Dietrich, Traffic Engineer

**Department:** Public Works

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**Summary:**

This is a cooperative agreement that allows for the construction of railroad safety improvements at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) at-grade crossing on Highland Avenue. Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) has prioritized this location based on the 2017 Nevada Hazard Index Model, funding available, proximity to the University of Nevada, high volume of vulnerable road users (pedestrians & bicyclists), and proximity to community parks and recreational facilities. NDOT will fund the design and improvements. Staff recommends Council approve the Cooperative Agreement with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to allow for the safety improvements to be constructed within the City right-of-way.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

Public Safety

**Previous Council Action:**

There is no recent Council action relevant to this item.

**Background:**

NDOT identified this safety improvement project through the Federal Highway Administration Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) Program. The purpose of this program is to reduce the number and severity of highway crashes by eliminating hazards to vehicles and pedestrians at existing at-grade railroad crossings on all state and local roads. The program is authorized by Title 23, United States Code, Section 130 (23 U.S.C. 130), and addresses the development of railroad-highway at-grade crossing improvement projects at the state level.

**Discussion:**

NDOT has identified the need for safety improvements at the UPRR at-grade crossing on Highland Avenue, based on the 2017 Nevada Hazard Index Model. NDOT has selected this location based on available funding, and the following additional considerations not reflected within the hazard index model:

- Proximity to the University of Nevada.
- High volume of vulnerable road users (pedestrians & bicyclists).
- Proximity to Dick Taylor Memorial Park.
- Proximity to Evelyn Mount Community Center

The 2017 Nevada Hazard Index Model is currently being revised. NDOT will seek stakeholder input for future project locations once the next revision is complete.

Upon field review with City, NDOT and UPRR staff, the following proposed scope of work is recommended:

- Extend concrete sidewalks on northside and southside of crossing.
- Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) compliant features consisting of curb, curb ramp, gutter, sidewalk, and pedestrian ramps improvements.
- Install truncated domes on sidewalk appropriate locations.
- Install pedestrian gate, pedestrian railing, and relocate signal cabinet if required.
- Drainage improvements to minimize potential water surface runoff ponding.
- Upgrade vehicle gates.
- Railroad cabinet replacement and circuitry upgrades.
- Concrete crossing panel extension and existing panel replacement.
- Removal, relocation, replacement, and or installation of new traffic and railroad signs.
- Removal and replacement of cantilevers with complete vehicle assembly gates.
- Relocate existing railroad signals to allow safe and adequate distance for sidewalk and adhere to current Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Standards.

If approved by Council, the City would agree to allow NDOT to construct safety improvements within the City right-of-way. Additionally, the City would agree to maintain the safety improvements in its right-of-way once constructed.

NDOT staff presented a project overview at the Ward 4 Neighborhood Advisory Board as an informational item on March 16, 2023. Construction is anticipated Spring/Summer 2024.

**Financial Implications:**

No City matching funds are requested to complete the project.

**Legal Implications:**

The agreement with NDOT allows for the safety improvements to be constructed within the City right-of-way.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends Council approval of the Cooperative Agreement with NDOT to construct railroad at-grade crossing safety improvements on Highland Avenue within the City right-of-way and authorize the Mayor to sign.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move to approve staff recommendation.

**Attachments:**

Cooperative Agreement

Vicinity Map

Complete Ranking of Nevada Crossings