

Washington Highway- Rail Grade Crossing State Action Plan

2024 Progress Report

December 2024



Summary

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) of 2015, Section 11401, mandated that all states develop and implement a State Action Plan (SAP). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a rule and a series of requirements for the development of SAPs.

The FRA rule required that each SAP:

- A. Identify highway-rail grade crossings that have experienced recent highway-rail crossing accidents or incidents or multiple highway-rail at-grade crossing accidents or incidents or are at higher-risk for accidents or incidents.
- B. Identify specific strategies for improving safety at highway-rail grade crossings, including highway-rail grade crossing closure or grade separations.
- C. Cover a period of at least four years.

In 2022, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) developed the Washington SAP with a focus on safety improvement efforts at higher-risk highway-railroad grade crossings in the state to reduce accidents and incidents. The SAP identified the top 58 higher-risk crossings and includes data gathered on the crossings during 2016-2020.

The goals of the UTC SAP include:

1. Implementing the SAP.
2. Strengthening coordination and cooperation between the UTC and key partners.
3. Enhancing grade crossing safety education and outreach activities.
4. Supporting enforcement efforts to address dangerous behavior at or near crossings.
5. Improving and modernizing UTC's rail data collection, storage, and analysis system.
6. Monitoring SAP progress and reporting annually.

The UTC published its first progress report in November 2023 and provided information on UTC staff's progress toward each of these goals to date.

This second progress report describes progress UTC staff made toward the remaining goals in 2024. UTC staff will continue to provide annual updates on the status of the SAP until all goals are complete.

Status of Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

The UTC SAP project team established specific goals, objectives, and strategies for the SAP implementation grouped by goal. The following provides information on UTC staff's progress on completing the remaining SAP goals since the last progress report.

Goal 1: Implement the UTC Highway-Rail Grade Crossing State Action Plan	
Objective/Implementation Strategy	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with railroads and public agencies to improve highway-rail safety at the priority higher-risk crossings. <p>UTC staff's work with railroads and local agency road authorities on the priority higher-risk crossings identified in the SAP is ongoing.</p> <p>Status and project information for each identified higher-risk crossing is included in Appendix A.</p>	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly monitor and document SAP implementation <p>UTC staff continues to monitor and document the ongoing goals and implementation strategies in the SAP.</p>	Ongoing
Goal 2: Strengthen coordination and cooperation between the UTC and key partners to advance grade crossing safety	
Objective/Implementation Strategy	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform key interested parties about the status and progress of grade crossing improvement projects within Washington to generate awareness of highway-rail safety efforts. <p>To generate awareness of highway-rail safety efforts in the state, UTC staff is considering utilizing the UTC's website and social media to highlight UTC-approved grade crossing improvement projects around the state.</p>	Ongoing

Goal 3: Enhance grade crossing safety education and outreach activities

Objective/Implementation Strategy	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct outreach to professional drivers (trucking companies/transit/delivery firms) and safety officers with information to increase awareness of highway-rail safety. <p>In January 2024, UTC staff updated its passenger carrier training to include highway-rail safety information for commercial drivers, produced by Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), to new entrants in UTC-regulated industries such as household goods movers and passenger charter companies.</p> <p>In May 2024, through Washington Operation Lifesaver, UTC staff purchased 4,887 OLI professional driver safety brochures and distributed them to motor carriers registered with the UTC.</p>	Complete

Goal 4: Support enforcement efforts to address dangerous behavior at or near railroad crossings

Objective/Implementation Strategy	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through WAOL, conduct outreach to law enforcement associations about grade crossing safety to increase awareness of the WAOL program and its impact on highway-rail crossing safety. Encourage eligible law enforcement agencies to apply for FRA grants to enhance highway-rail crossing safety and enforcement activities in Washington. Support law enforcement agencies seeking funding by facilitating connections with appropriate funding agencies and resources. <p>UTC staff's completed outreach to law enforcement agencies about grade crossing safety and grant opportunities.</p>	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate with Amtrak and OLI to facilitate and support an Operation Clear Track event in Washington. <p>UTC staff and WAOL supported 2023 and 2024 Operation Clear Track efforts by reaching out to state law enforcement organizations to encourage participation in the event and by posting information on the UTC website and WAOL social media.</p>	Complete

Goal 4: Support enforcement efforts to address dangerous behavior at or near railroad crossings

In September 2023, Operation Clear Track took place in partnership with law enforcement agencies nationwide to share the rail safety message in communities. During this event, OLI encouraged all first responders, including firefighters, emergency medical services and Offices of Emergency Management, to post lifesaving grade crossing safety and trespass prevention information for drivers and pedestrians on their websites and share on social media.

In September 2024, UTC staff encouraged the Washington State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies to participate in Operation Clear Track.

Goal 5: Monitor SAP progress and report annually

Objective/Implementation Strategy

Status

- Provide a report on the progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the SAP and updates on the status of the priority higher-risk crossings.
- Collect information regularly for inclusion in the progress report.
- Utilize information from various implementation strategies in compiling the report.
- Share the SAP progress report with key interested persons and public officials.

Ongoing

UTC staff will continue to provide annual updates on the status of the SAP until all goals are complete.

Goal 6: Improve and modernize the UTC’s rail data collection, storage, and analysis system

Objective/Implementation Strategy

Status

- Work with UTC information technology staff to determine the feasibility of deploying a new data system. If a new data system is deemed feasible:
 - Research alternative data systems.
 - Study the data systems of other State Grade Crossing programs to gather information on system capabilities and shortcomings.
 - Develop a detailed list of requirements. Consider how data is collected, analyzed, and reported by UTC staff and how that will change in the future to develop a data strategy for the UTC.
 - If a new data system is deemed feasible and preferable to the current system:
 - Develop cost estimates and identify potential revenue sources to fund a new data system purchase, deployment, and ongoing maintenance.
 - Develop a business case for the new data system and demonstrate the merits of system replacement.

Complete

The UTC Rail Safety program’s data management staff researched the feasibility of alternative data systems. Staff found that the UTC’s current database system has a high degree of functionality compared to systems used in other states, especially for a small rail safety program. UTC information technology staff is transitioning UTC’s rail database to Azure, a cloud-based system. Staff will continue to make improvements and increase system functionality.

Appendix A

Completed Projects

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
16	085414L	Seattle	Broad St.	2020 - City of Seattle made crossing modifications, including installation of upgraded advance warning signs and markings, new guardrails, and replacing missing flex posts on the roadway median. 2021 – City updated signage to required sizes.
17	085647H	Auburn	37th St. NW	2017 - City of Auburn constructed a pre-signal and coordinated with BNSF to have advance preemption installed.
20	085650R	Auburn	29th St. NW	2017 - City of Auburn coordinated with BNSF to install advance preemption.
21	104520Y	Toppenish	State Hwy. 223	2019 – WSDOT installed four-quadrant gates, upgraded crossing circuitry, installed active advance warning signs intertied with the railroad warning system, and added guardrails.
34	085652E	Auburn	3rd St. NW	2017 - City of Auburn coordinated with BNSF to install advance preemption.
45	099180B	Wapato	Donald Rd.	2024 - County informed UTC staff that new crossing pavement markings and crossing signs were added.
47	085655A	Auburn	W Main St.	2017 - City of Auburn coordinated with BNSF to install advance preemption.
50	084805C	Bellingham	Bayview Drive	2022 - City of Bellingham installed four-quadrant gates and pedestrian gates.
58	808728J	Tacoma	E 15th St./E J St.	2019 - City of Tacoma installed new advance warning signs on both approaches to the crossing.

Projects Planned or In Process

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
1	927461X	Seattle	Holgate St.	June 2023 - City of Seattle was awarded FRA Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) funding to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the effect of closing the two S. Holgate St. crossings and determine appropriate safety improvements at three nearby crossings also identified in the SAP (Eastbound and Westbound Spokane St. and Horton St.). The City is providing a 20 percent non-Federal match.
2	085587B	Seattle	Eastbound Spokane St.	June 2023 - City of Seattle awarded FRA RCE funding to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the effect of closing the two S. Holgate St. crossings and determine appropriate safety improvements at three nearby crossings also identified in the SAP (Eastbound and Westbound Spokane St. and Horton St.). The City is providing a 20 percent non-Federal match.
3	085640K	Kent	State Route 516/ Willis St.	May 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs and upgrading all warning lights to LED. 2024 - City of Kent applied for but was not awarded WSDOT Section 130 funding for the project. In September, the City applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.
4	085625H	Kent	S 212th St.	April 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs and non-traversable medians on crossing approaches, and adding signage. September 2024 - The City applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.
5	084764A	Burlington	Greenleaf St.	June 2023 - City of Burlington was awarded FRA RCE funding for a proposed project that will support planning and project development work to identify one crossing to grade separate (overcrossing). The City will provide a 20 percent non-Federal match. 2024 - The City is in the process of accepting the grant.
7	085629K	Kent	James St.	April 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs and non-traversable median curbs on crossing approaches and adding signage. September 2024 - The city applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.

Projects Planned or In Process (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
11	089775E	Othello	Lee Rd.	2023 - WSDOT awarded Section 130 funding to Adams County to upgrade this crossing from passive protection (Yield sign) to active (lights and gates). The project is currently in the design phase. Construction is planned for spring/summer of 2026.
12	085586U	Seattle	Westbound Spokane St.	Included in SDOT's RCE grant application for study.
22	085585M	Seattle	Horton St.	Included in SDOT's RCE grant application for study.
23	085633A	Kent	Smith St.	April 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs and non-traversable median curbs on crossing approaches, sidewalk modifications, and adding signage. September 2024 - The city applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.
29	084765G	Burlington	Fairhaven St. (1)	June 2023 – City of Burlington was awarded FRA RCE funding for a proposed project that will support planning and project development work to identify one crossing to grade separate via an overcrossing. The City will provide a 20 percent non-Federal match. 2024 - The City is in the process of accepting the grant.
30	085637C	Kent	Gowe St.	April 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs and non-traversable median curbs on crossing approaches, roadway channelization changes, sidewalk modifications, and adding signage. September 2024 - The City applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.
31	092421N	Vancouver	NW 122nd St.	County informed UTC staff that it has plans to apply to the FRA to establish a quiet zone. May 2024 - The County petitioned the UTC to add median barriers at the crossing. BNSF objected to the project. Administrative hearing scheduled for Sept. 2025.
32	066367E	Spokane Valley	Pines Rd.	2022 - City received Federal and state funding to replace the existing at-grade crossing with a grade separation (undercrossing). December 2024 – The UTC approved the City's petition to construct the grade separation. Estimated completion: 2026.

Projects Planned or In Process (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
33	085642Y	Kent	S 259th St.	April 2023 - UTC approved the City of Kent's petition to modify warning devices at the crossing. Modifications include installing flashing "Do Not Stop on Tracks" signs, non-traversable median curbs on crossing approaches, and detectable warning surfaces, adding signage, and upgrading all warning lights to LED. September 2024 - The City applied for an FRA RCE grant related to a BNSF Railway Corridor Crossing Safety Study.
37	084664V	Marysville	136th St. NE	November 2024 - City of Marysville filed a notice of intent to establish a quiet zone at this crossing. Plans include adding medians, replacing gates, and installing a new bungalow and constant warning train detection.
48	065839V	Wenatchee	Miller St.	2021 - City of Wenatchee was awarded Federal INFRA grant funding for the Apple Capital Loop Infra Project – Confluence Parkway to close the Miller St. at grade crossing and construct a grade separation December 2024 – City filed petition with UTC for approval to construct the grade separation.
55	096029N	Aberdeen	S Tyler St./Wishkah Mall	2023 - City of Aberdeen's US-12 Highway-Rail Separation project to grade separate this crossing is funded and in the design stage.
40	092259B	Burlington	Walnut St.	June 2023 – City of Burlington was awarded FRA RCE funding for a proposed project that will support planning and project development work to identify one crossing to grade separate via an overcrossing. The City of Burlington will provide a 20 percent non-Federal match. 2024 - The city is in the process of accepting the grant.
41	092261C	Burlington	Fairhaven St. (2)	June 2023 – City of Burlington awarded FRA RCE funding for a proposed project that will support planning and project development work to identify one crossing to grade separate via an overcrossing. The City of Burlington will provide a 20 percent non-Federal match. 2024 - The city is in the process of accepting the grant.
43	932777T	Tacoma	Lincoln Ave.	2020 - WSDOT awarded Section 130 funding to the City of Tacoma for a project to install active warning devices at this crossing. 2024 - The project is currently in the design phase with a plan for installation in late 2026.

Projects Planned or In Process (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
49	084644J	Marysville	8th St.	November 2024 - City of Marysville filed a notice of intent to establish a quiet zone at this crossing. Plans include upgrading to four-quadrant gates, replacing/updating the bungalow, and installing constant warning train detection.

Projects Seeking Funding

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
28	104572R	Kennewick	N Fruitland St.	2022 - City of Kennewick applied to WSDOT for Section 130 funding to complete a corridor study. Project was not selected for funding. 2024 - City of Kennewick informed UTC it has no current plans for the crossing and will continue to submit for funding a crossing study.

Projects Under Consideration

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
6	085695X	Puyallup	3rd St. NE	2022 - City of Puyallup included railroad crossing safety improvements and train noise reduction in its Downtown and Meridian Streetscape Project – Recommended Projects report. The project involves eight crossings, including 3 rd St. NE.
9	085696E	Puyallup	Meridian St.	

Projects Under Consideration (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
13	090110F	Washougal	3rd St. NW	2022 - City of Washougal has preliminary plans to repair the existing crossing protection and upgrade signage to current standards.
19	065984U	Spokane	E Mission Ave.	2020 - City of Spokane applied to WSDOT for Section 130 funds for improvements at this crossing, but due to unforeseen issues with railroad coordination, the City declined the grant award. The city stated that it intends to reapply for future Section 130 funds.
24	090115P	Washougal	24th St.	2022 - City of Washougal has preliminary plans to repair the existing crossing protection and upgrade signage to current standards.
38	085382H	Tacoma	Pine St.	2022 - City of Tacoma plans to review and assess the crossing for possible updates or improvements as part of Phase 2 of the city's project along the Cedar-Pine corridor and is working with Sound Transit.

No Current Project Plans

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
8	085439G	Edmonds	Dayton St.	2022 - City of Edmonds informed UTC staff that the city has no projects identified for this crossing in its six-year transportation improvement plan based on its review of crossing conditions.
10	085706H	Puyallup	52nd St. E	2022 - Pierce County informed UTC staff that it does not currently have plans for upgrades at this crossing based on its review of crossing conditions. BNSF has targeted this crossing for elimination if another Puyallup project (Canyon Blvd. Extension) moves forward.

No Current Project Plans (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
14	085703M	Puyallup	Stewart Ave./66th St	2022 - Pierce County informed UTC staff that it does not currently have plans for upgrades at this crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
15	092523G	Centralia	Hanford Valley Rd.	2022 - Lewis County informed UTC staff that it does not currently have plans for upgrades at this crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
18	852612Y	Tacoma	Milwaukee Sim	2022 - City of Tacoma informed UTC staff that it has no current plans to request funding for this crossing as the future of the roadway is uncertain, based on discussions with the Port of Tacoma.
25	092484T	Vader	State Route 506	2022 - WSDOT staff informed UTC staff that it is unaware of any additional measures that can be taken at this crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
26	092504C	Napavine	Washington St.	2022 - City of Napavine informed UTC staff that it has no plans for the crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
27	099165Y	Yakima	Yakima Ave.	2022 - City of Yakima informed UTC staff that it has no upcoming projects at the crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
36	059152N	Colville	1st Ave.	2022 - City of Colville informed UTC staff that, based on its review, the existing level of crossing protective devices is adequate.
39	089695L	Mesa	Sheffield Rd.	2022 - City of Mesa informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, no improvements at the crossing are warranted.
42	099168U	Yakima	E Mead Ave.	2022 - City of Yakima applied to WSDOT for Section 130 for pedestrian improvements, including adding pedestrian gates, curb ramps, and channelization. Due to unforeseen cost the project was not funded. 2024 - City of Yakima informed UTC staff that the City has no planned projects for the crossing.
44	084753M	Mount Vernon	Fir St.	2022 - City of Mount Vernon informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, the existing level of crossing protection is adequate, and the city has no proposed improvements.
46	396578L	Kent	W James St.	2022 - City of Kent informed UTC staff that the City has no planned projects for the crossing.
51	085196G	Selah	Pomona Rd.	2022 - Yakima County informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, the county supports the existing level of crossing protection.

No Current Project Plans (cont.)

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
52	089682K	Hatton	Hampton Rd.	2022 - Adams County informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, it disagrees with the view that this is a high-risk crossing. No county improvements are planned.
53	090036D	Kennewick	Perkins Rd. 7572	2022 - Benton County informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, the county has no plans for the crossing as it has found no issues present.
54	092505J	Napavine	Somerville Rd.	2022 - Lewis County informed UTC staff that it does not currently have plans for upgrades at this crossing based on its review of crossing conditions.
56	104537C	Mabton	Phillips Rd.	2022 - Yakima County informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, the county supports the existing level of crossing protection.
57	396593N	Auburn	15th St. SW	2022 - City of Auburn informed UTC staff that, based on its review of crossing conditions, it has no plans to modify the existing level of protection at the crossing.

Under Review

Top 58 Ranking	USDOT Crossing Number	City	Highway	Status
35	090051F	Kennewick	Cushman Rd.	2022 - Benton County informed UTC staff that the county roadway ends before the crossing. 2024 - UTC staff is in discussions with the railroad and the county to gather additional information.

Contact Information

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