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## **Staff Report**

**Item # 6**

**To: Lemoore City Council**  
**From: Lauren Apone, Administrative Analyst**  
**Date: August 30, 2012**  
**Subject: Daphne Lane Railroad Crossing and Associated Improvements**

### **Discussion:**

At the study session on August 21, 2012, staff presented the history of the Daphne Lane railroad crossing and the progress we have made with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVR). As it stands today, the SJVR is opposed to any new crossing without the closure of an existing crossing. The City offered to make safety improvements at the existing crossings at Fox, Follett, and Lemoore Avenue instead of closing a crossing, in exchange for the Daphne Lane crossing addition. The PUC is supportive of this idea but the SJVR is not.

The Daphne Lane crossing has been in every General Plan since 1990, and was identified as a project of interest in the 2003 Citizen's summit. The advantages of having the crossing are that it will improve traffic flow on the east side of Lemoore and relieve congestion on Lemoore Avenue. The crossing will also help decrease emergency response times. In addition, it will bring more traffic to the businesses located in the area of D Street and Bush Street, which have historically struggled. If Council is interested in the Daphne Lane crossing at all, the timing now would be ideal with the current residential development in the area.

Also, since the safety improvements to the other crossings will be made as a condition of the Daphne Lane crossing, the City can use impact fees to pay for these improvements. If Council wishes to make these improvements without the Daphne Lane crossing, they would be ineligible for impact fees since the improvements do not, by themselves, increase capacity.

A downside to constructing the Daphne Lane crossing now is that it will make a potential new crossing on the west side more difficult to get without closing an existing crossing. However, if the time comes when development has necessitated another crossing, safety improvements can be proposed for 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19 ½ Avenue in exchange for a new crossing. The cost of the Daphne Lane crossing and the associated safety improvements is as follows:

Crossing	Railroad Improvements	City Improvements	Total
Daphne Lane	\$405,461.68	\$360,000	\$765,461.58
Lemoore Avenue	\$75,214.04	\$9,500	\$ 84,714.04
Fox Street	\$316,632.84	\$14,000	\$330,632.84
Follett Street	\$358,749.81	\$24,000	<u>\$382,749.81</u>
			\$1,563,558.27

If Council wishes to move forward with the Daphne lane crossing, staff would prepare an application to the PUC. The application process would likely take over a year because the SJVR will likely protest the application. It may require legal fees as we go before an administrative law judge for a final decision on our application.

The Council also has the option to abandon the future Daphne Lane crossing and amend the General Plan to reflect that. A revised traffic analysis would be required to support the circulation change. Staff would recommend that if Council has any future wishes to construct the Daphne Lane crossing, that they do not move forward with any other rail crossing safety improvements on our own because those may be our only way we are able to get a crossing at Daphne Lane approved. Any future crossings in Lemoore will be very challenging to get approved without closing an existing crossing, although staff feels somewhat encouraged by the PUC staff's support of our current proposal.

**Budget Impact:**

The projected cost for the Daphne Lane crossing and the associated safety improvements to the other crossings is \$1,563,558.27. The projected balance in the CIP Budget for the "Streets Capital- East" fund on June 30, 2013 is \$1,547,114, but increased revenues bring the figure to about \$1,950,000 with an additional \$150,000 per year thereafter.

**Recommendation:**

That Council approve a budget amendment for \$1,563,558.27 from the Streets Capital – East impact fee account and authorize staff to proceed with an application to the Public Utilities Commission for the Daphne Lane Crossing offering safety improvements to Fox, Follett, and Lemoore Avenue in exchange for the approval. The estimated amount of \$20,000 in engineering costs is required to submit the application to the PUC for approval.