

CITY OF OIL CITY

CITY PLAZA • 21 SENECA STREET
OIL CITY, PENNSYLVANIA 16301

October 1, 2015

RECEIVED

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Secretary's Bureau
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
PO Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

Re: Docket Number A-2015-2471360
Rt 62/Petroleum Street Railroad Crossing Upgrade Project
Petition

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

The City is in receipt of your Secretarial Letter dated September 17, 2015 regarding the Application of the Department of Transportation for approval of the installation of automatic flashing-light signals at the crossing (DOT 262 844 J) where Petroleum Street (S.R. 0062) crosses, at grade, the track of Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad, located in Oil City, Venango County. Your Letter states "WNYP will remove the portion of the existing concrete sidewalk and curbing along the northbound lane of Petroleum Street (S.R. 62) from the crossing area." This sidewalk and curb were physically removed at the crossing area during the week of September 21, 2015, as the railroad crossing materials were replaced. The City of Oil City disagrees with the removal of the sidewalk at the railroad crossing, and hereby petitions the Commission to order the sidewalk to be reinstalled with Oil City not incurring any expenses.

City Engineer Christina Sporer attended the PUC field conference on March 18, 2015, when PennDOT representatives suggested the sidewalk could be removed at the crossing in order to avoid having to provide an ADA-compliant sidewalk there, and that pedestrians could instead use a nearby recreational trail. PennDOT instructed the City to do an evaluation of the pedestrian crossing, including completion of a Pedestrian Accommodations at Intersections Checklist, to determine whether the sidewalk could be justifiably removed at the crossing.

While Ms. Sporer was researching the matter, she contacted the two adjacent property owners at the crossing. PennDOT stated they would need copies of such correspondence with the property owners, along with the required PennDOT forms; and the District Safety Engineer would review the matter. Ms. Sporer began to complete the Pedestrian Accommodations at Intersections Checklist, and to write a narrative including existing conditions and proposed conditions with recommendations. Ms. Sporer had been waiting to hear back from property owners. Then in early September, the City was notified that the crossing replacement would take place the week of September 21, 2015.

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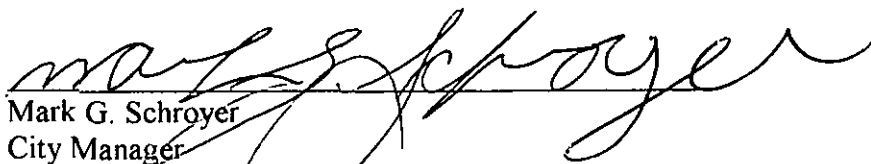
Upon inquiry with the PennDOT District 1-0 office, the City learned that a decision had been made to eliminate the sidewalk at the crossing, and to post signs for no trespassing. The remaining sidewalk along the southeast corner of Petroleum & Main Streets would be left for the City to deal with.

The consequences of eliminating the sidewalk at the railroad crossing have not been addressed. The sidewalk crossing the tracks had existed for many decades, and its elimination is detrimental to the safety and accommodation of pedestrians using that area, including the currently vacant property north of the railroad tracks between Petroleum and Relief Streets, and the residential neighborhood to the north. In addition, the City has a sidewalk ordinance that prohibits the elimination of existing sidewalk in the Central Business District zoning; the area north of the railroad tracks is this zone. Furthermore, we question the right of anyone to eliminate an existing sidewalk such as this without approval of the local municipality.

The City has met with PennDOT District 1-0 representatives to discuss this matter, and they agree the PUC must be petitioned. The City is not in agreement that the sidewalk at the tracks should be eliminated. We believe it is in the best interests of the citizens of our community that an ADA-compliant sidewalk be reinstalled at the crossing. Enclosed please find a narrative description of existing conditions and uses of the sidewalk crossing the tracks.

I will appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, especially since the sidewalk has already been removed. I may be contacted at 814-678-3012.

Sincerely,


Mark G. Schroyer
City Manager

Cc: William G. Petit, P.E., District Executive
Brian S. Yedinak, P.E., Assistant District Executive - Design
Christina J. Sporer, P.E., City Engineer

Petroleum Street Railroad Crossing Upgrade Project
Existing Facility Description
By City of Oil City
City Engineer Christina Sporer

Pedestrian accommodation at the intersection of SR 8/Main Street, SR 62/Petroleum Street, and SR 428/Halyday Street in the City of Oil City is under consideration because of a planned upgrade to the at-grade railroad crossing at Petroleum Street near the intersection. The subject intersection is signalized, but the intersection is signed for no pedestrian crossings, and there are no pedestrian signals. Main Street is a four-lane roadway, while Petroleum Street and Halyday Street are two-lane. There is a slip-lane to Halyday Street for southbound SR 8 traffic prior to reaching the subject intersection. The existing layout is shown on the attached map.

There is an existing sidewalk along the east side of Petroleum Street (which continues across the bridge over the Allegheny River to the southside), which crosses the tracks and continues northeasterly around the corner to Main Street, then easterly along Main Street to Relief Street, and beyond. This sidewalk is the only existing sidewalk at the subject intersection. One tract of land runs between Petroleum and Relief Streets, and between Main Street and the railroad tracks. This land is grassy nearest the corner, and then there is a paved area, then a vacant building facing Main Street nearer to Relief Street. Railroad tracks run parallel with Main Street behind this parcel. The sidewalk crossing the tracks serves pedestrians along Main Street, and those crossing Main Street to and from Halyday Street and its adjoining neighborhood.

Along the south side of the railroad tracks is a ten-foot wide sidewalk/trail running from Petroleum Street to Relief Street. This trail serves as an off-road connector for local pedestrians, as well as serving as part of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (EPT) system. This trail was constructed by the City on a right-of-way obtained from National Fuel Gas Company. The trail system uses Petroleum Street bridge to access the southside trail system, and connects into Oil City's northside by way of the railroad bridge over Oil Creek east of the subject intersection. Southbound trail users cross Petroleum Street at the north end of the bridge to access the roadway shoulder labeled for trail use. There is a depressed curb and sidewalk area at that crossing location, but it is not accessible according to today's standards.

At the southwest corner of the subject intersection is property occupied by Electralloy, an industrial and office complex. Electralloy has installed an asphalt path along the railroad right-of-way from their site to Petroleum Street, apparently to allow employees access to the nearby sidewalk and trail system. There are no public sidewalks at or around this corner, and the asphalt path simply ends at a concrete curb.

There are no sidewalks on the northwest corner of the intersection. This corner is vacant land, consisting of a small mowed flat area adjacent to the roadway, then steep hillside to the north and west.

The northeast corner consists of a triangular vacant lot separating SR 428 from the northbound slip-lane off SR 8, and is the site of a flower planting by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. There is an existing sidewalk along the northeast side of the slip-lane, which connects Halyday Street neighborhood residents to other parts of Oil City. This sidewalk connects to Main Street at the signalized intersection with Relief Street, where there are existing ADA curb ramps on

either side of Main Street and pedestrian push buttons. A painted crosswalk exists there; and is the only pedestrian crossing of Main Street in the City, serving the residents of SR 428/ Halyday Street and adjoining residential neighborhood.

The City's sidewalk ordinance prohibits the elimination of existing sidewalk in a Central Business District zone. The property north of the railroad tracks between Petroleum and Relief Streets is within this zoning, and the elimination of the sidewalk at the tracks will impede pedestrian movement to and from this property along Petroleum Street. Although the property is currently vacant, and only used for parking, it could be redeveloped into a viable business that would certainly benefit from a sidewalk along Petroleum Street connecting to the southside.

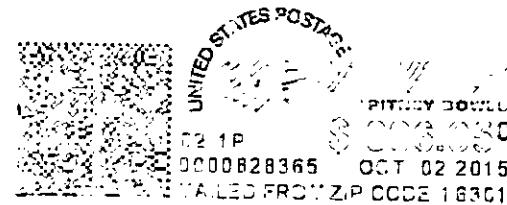
There is not a sidewalk or a safe path on the west side of Relief Street between Main Street and the recreational trail, but there is a sidewalk on the east side of Relief Street.

Google Maps Google Maps



Imagery ©2015 DigitalGlobe, U.S. Geological Survey, Map data ©2015 Google 50 ft

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21 SENECA ST.
OIL CITY, PA 16301



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