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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
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Date: November 16, 2016

Subject: Good Hope Road Crossing of Wisconsin Central Ltd. Tracks

My name is Judith A. Neu and I am the Village Engineer / Assistant Public Works Director for the Village of Sussex, WI. I received a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from UW-Milwaukee in May 1990, and I am a Registered Professional Engineer in the State of Wisconsin. I have been continuously employed as a Civil Engineer for municipalities since 1990.

On November 15, 2016, I visited the Good Hope Road Crossing of the Wisconsin Center Ltd. Tracks in the Village of Sussex, WI to determine its current condition. Secret Strobl, Assistant Village Engineer, accompanied me on the inspection. My observations follow:

It is my professional opinion that the railroad has failed to maintain the crossing, along with the roadway and pedestrian path extending four (4) feet on either side of the outside rails, in good condition and repair for highway travel as required under Wisconsin Statute 86.12.

**Vehicular Crossing:**

1. The sectional crossing material surrounding the tracks is broken and contains offsets with depths of up to 3 inches.
2. Many of the bolts meant to hold the crossing material in place are missing.
3. The crossing material is not stable. It shifts, moves, and rocks when driven over by passenger vehicles, even at slow speeds.
4. The asphalt edges located adjacent to the crossing material have settled and are severely broken / spalled and contain holes adjacent to the crossing material with depths of up to 10 inches.
5. The gravel shouldering material adjacent to the street is no longer level with the roadway pavement. This leaves the entire depth of the crossing material exposed adjacent to the edge of the pavement at each quadrant of the tracks. This is a safety issue.
6. The north end of the crossing material extends only about 6 – 12 inches from the edge of the roadway pavement. This could be a safety issue.
7. The north and south ends of the crossing materials are not ramped / shouldered in any way. This is a safety issue.

**Pedestrian Crossing:**

1. The crossing material at the sidewalk has gaps that are 3-4 inches wide and up to 8 inches deep.
2. The crossing material at the sidewalk is offset and broken making pedestrian travel hazardous.
3. The crossing material is not a consistent width parallel to the pedestrian path across the tracks. In addition, the edges of the pedestrian crossing do not contain any shouldering material. This is a safety issue.
4. The rubber gaskets that should be filling the gaps between the rails and the pedestrian crossing material have shifted, settled or are non-existent at the crossing. This leaves holes of at least 6 inches deep and 3-4 inches wide adjacent to the racks.
5. The asphalt path adjacent to the crossing material has settled, and is broken and spalled.

**Observations:**

1. Vehicles cannot cross the tracks at the posted roadway speed of 30 MPH. Doing so could cause vehicular damage.

2. The Village has received numerous complaints about the condition of the crossing.
3. The condition of the crossing has deteriorated since the Village Board Resolution was adopted on June 23, 2015 as Res. #15-59 and served on the railroad on June 26, 2015. The rate of deterioration appears to be accelerating.
4. While on site, I observed that drivers are slowing to well below the posted speed limit to cross the tracks. I would estimate that many are crossing at speeds of less than 5 MPH.
5. Drivers that are less familiar with the poor condition of the crossing could easily damage their vehicles by travelling at or near the posted roadway speed. I observed an eastbound pickup truck pulling a small trailer crossing the tracks at nearly the posted speed. The trailer bounced so severely that its tires left the road twice immediately after crossing the tracks.
6. The condition of the crossing is so poor that drivers are focusing their attention on finding and traversing the smoothest crossing location, rather than observing the tracks for rail traffic.

**Maintenance Requests:** It is the Village's expectation that the railroad pay for all repairs. The following repairs are requested.

1. Remove and replace crossing material at the road and pedestrian crossings.
2. Extend crossing material northerly to completely encompass the terrace area between the roadway and the pedestrian crossing. Crossing material should extend north of the northern edge of the asphalt path and be continuous across the road the pedestrian path with no gaps.
3. Provide ramping or shouldering adjacent to the north and south ends of the crossing materials.
4. Construct gravel or paved shoulders adjacent to the edge of the Good Hope Road pavement that is at least 4 feet wide, measured north and south from the edge of the Good Hope Road pavement.
5. Remove and replace asphalt roadway approach pavement within 4 feet of the outer tracks. Repair the base material under the asphalt after removal of the asphalt pavement.
6. Remove and replace the asphalt path pavement within 4 feet of the outer tracks. Repair the base material under the asphalt as necessary after removal of the asphalt pavement.

Attachments: Photos of the condition of the crossing on 11-15-16.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Judith A. Neu*

Judith A. Neu, P.E.  
Village Engineer / Assistant Public Works Director