

11/5/12

Subject - Coal Train impact
Mount Vernon - Skagit County, WA.

Purpose - To request your review of my concerns as a business owner and how the coal train and proposed increase of train traffic might affect my business and livelihoods.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Richard Carter. I currently co-own and manage the Mount Vernon Red Apple Market. My store lies west of the train lines which cross Kincaid Street in downtown Mount Vernon.

I am concerned that blockage of Kincaid Street by 18 daily train crossings will adversely affect my business financially. Each time a train blocks Kincaid Street, my store is inaccessible to approx. 60% of my market area. Customers traveling west into downtown

ARE STOPPED FOR SIGNIFICANT periods of time. THESE EPISODES already occur several times during my store operating hours. I have projected that a 10 minute delay x (18) additional crossings per day calculate to 180 minutes or 3 hours of blockage! Assuming that 1/3 of these crossings occur at night, between 10pm and 6am, I have subtracted 1 hour from the 3 hours, leaving a NET of 2 hours of blockage.

As a small grocery store, my most valuable ASSET is location and CONVENIENCE. I am only about 20% the size of a typical Safeway store or Huggens. I cannot compete with them for selection, price, or marketing power. I can only offer quick service and the CONVENIENCE by location to our neighborhoods. Blockes roads and traffic cancel out this ADVANTAGE.

Customers quickly ALTER or change shopping patterns and loyalty

In my 35 years in Retail, I have seen this happen with road work, traffic changes, and changes in access. Waiting for Francis will inevitably lead to the same for my store and all eyes in the downtown retail core. I anticipate the loss of approx 20% of my customer base and sales which will lead to job losses in my store. The impact of increased train traffic to the level proposed will definitely impact my business and employees.

Please consider the concerns I have shared with you and the impact so many train crossings will have on my business and ability to stay in business.

Respectfully,
Richard Carter
Co-owner / MGR
Mount Vernon
Red Apple Market