City of **JOPLIN** City Council Agenda Item

Requested Council Meeting Date: June 6, 2016
Council Bill No. 2016-126

Item: Agreement to Acquire Property for the Closure of the 10th and Sergeant Railroad Crossing
Originating Department: Public Works – Engineering

Attachments: 1) Location Map
2) Agreement
3) Quit Claim Deeds
3) Council Bill 2016-126

Department Head: Nicholas A. Heatherly	Date:
Engineering: Dan Salisbury	Date:
Finance Department: Leslie Haase	Date:
City Attorney: Peter C. Edwards	Date:
City Manager: Samuel L. Anselm	Date:

Recommended Action: Approval of an Agreement with Joplin Area Habitat for Humanity Inc., for the acquisition of property necessary for the closure of the at-grade railroad crossing near 10th Street and Sergeant Avenue.

Background: Engineering staff conducted several neighborhood meetings with citizens owning property near the railroad crossings along 10th Street from Porter to Byers. During the meetings the condition of the existing crossings and overall railroad crossing safety were issues. Since there were nine railroad crossings in a nine block distance, the concept of removing some of the crossings and improving the remaining was discussed. This reduces long term maintenance cost of the city and the railroad and allows more attention to be placed on the remaining crossings.

After much discussion the only crossing we can support closing at this time is at Sergeant Avenue. Residents along Sergeant Avenue unanimously support the closure. Emergency Services support the closing. In a related matter, the nearby crossing at Jackson Avenue will be improved.

Discussion: In conjunction with the closing of the crossing, a cul-de-sac will be constructed to serve as a turnaround for emergency vehicles. Funding for the improvement will be from the Capital Improvement Sales Tax passed by voters in August 2014, as part of the focus on improving rideability. Property to be utilized as right of way will be needed from two adjacent properties, leaving the remainder of the two lots under the desirable building size. One lot was given to the city by the Jasper County Commission, and the other lot is currently owned by Habitat for Humanity. In lieu of a cash payment to Habitat for the acquisition of their property, staff has reached an agreement to exchange a comparable city owned property located at 2125

Empire. Staff determined that the value of each lot was comparable based upon recent appraisal information of similar residential lots. The project will be constructed when all utilities are moved. The likely construction will begin in the spring 2017, and the vacation of Sergeant Avenue will be completed upon receipt and execution of an agreement with Missouri Northern Arkansas Railroad.

Recommendation: Approval of the Agreement to acquire property for the closure of the 10th Street and Sergeant Avenue crossing on an emergency basis per Section 2.12 (6) of the Charter of the City of Joplin.