

October 2, 2019

Maggie Cawley
Executive Director
OpenStreetMap US

Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Mr. DeFazio & Mr. Lipinski:

Thank you for reaching out to OpenStreetMap US. We are a nonprofit organization based in Washington D.C. that supports the OpenStreetMap project in the United States. Our work focuses on education, advocacy and supporting the OpenStreetMap mapping community within the US. I believe your letter was intended to reach geolocation companies and service providers with commercial applications and interests. OpenStreetMap is something very different, but I am glad to have the opportunity to share more about the project.

OpenStreetMap (www.openstreetmap.org) is a free, collaboratively edited map of the entire world that is being built by volunteers largely from scratch and released with an open-content license. Created by Steve Coast in the UK in 2004, OpenStreetMap was inspired by the success of Wikipedia and the predominance of proprietary map data in the UK and elsewhere. The global map database is edited by a community of over two million contributors from all over the world, in part by importing data from public domain sources. In places of the world where there are no open data sources, contributors start with a blank map and head outside to survey the streets themselves using GPS, mobile applications, or paper maps. This crowdsourced data is then made available under the Open Database License.

No one *owns* OpenStreetMap; rather, it is an online collaboration among tens of thousands of individual volunteers and companies. The site is supported by the OpenStreetMap Foundation, a nonprofit organisation registered in England and Wales. Our nonprofit organization, OpenStreetMap US, holds events, supports mappers, and advocates for OpenStreetMap and open data specifically within the US.

Despite the decentralized nature of the project, the global mapping community has taken steps to add railroad crossing data to OpenStreetMap in the US and worldwide. As of writing, OpenStreetMap contains the locations of well over 200,000 road-rail crossings in the US and many additional pedestrian rail crossings. OpenStreetMap's coverage of road and railroad infrastructure is constantly improving, alongside the tools to enable the addition of detailed data.

OpenStreetMap is a dataset rather than an application. We cannot legally require third-party navigation applications to highlight railroad crossings in their user interfaces. However, at least one mobile application, OSMAnd, does announce grade crossings based on OpenStreetMap data.

Moving forward, OpenStreetMap US will continue to promote the need for accuracy and completeness to mappers in the US, especially in matters related to public safety. We also seek continued collaboration with US government agencies to enable OpenStreetMap to verify rail crossing data between both data sets and update data through collaborative mapping efforts at an institutional level.

Thank you for your inquiry. I would be more than happy to meet with you or someone from your committee if you are interested in learning more about OpenStreetMap.

Sincerely,



Maggie Cawley
Executive Director
OpenStreetMap US
maggie@openstreetmap.us