

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jul11_2017

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**Train Whistle Cessation Update****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on train whistle cessation in Strathcona County.

Council History

March 8, 2016 – The Priorities Committee was provided with a summary of the Highway 824 at-grade rail crossing train whistle cessation process and information as to the review of future actions.

January 19, 2016 – 2016/8 Council moved that the cessation of railway whistling at the at-grade crossing at CN Mile 250.25 - Highway 824 be approved.

December 11, 2012 – Council approved the 2013 Capital Budget which included the 2013 Ardrossan Train Whistle Cessation project.

July 17, 2012 – 490/2012 Council approved Municipal Policy SER-013-004: Train Whistle Cessation.

April 26, 2011 – A verbal status report was provided to Council to define the progress Administration had made with respect to research and analysis of train whistle minimization.

January 11, 2011 – 02/2011 Council directed Administration to bring back criteria for, and establish a policy to, minimize train whistles in Strathcona County.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: n/a

Governance: Cooperative partnership with community, and business

Social: Helping, caring and safe community

Culture: n/a

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: SER-013-004 Train Whistle Cessation, SER-009-017 Traffic Control Devices

Legislative/Legal: Transport Canada – *Railway Safety Act*

Interdepartmental: Planning and Development Services, Transportation and Agriculture Services

Summary

Since the implementation of train whistle cessation at the Highway 824 CN Rail crossing, in Ardrossan, many residents have contacted the County and raised concerns of train whistle noise at crossings near their homes. Administration has reviewed three additional rail crossing locations for the possibility of implementing whistle cessation according to the order of priority presented in the March 2016 priority committee meeting.

- Range Road 231 at CN MILE 255.97
- Range Road 223 at CN MILE 251.43
- Range Road 220 at CN MILE 247.75

The train whistle cessation process follows the federally-controlled *Railway Safety Act*, where a municipality, as the road authority, is able to request the cessation of train whistles at an at-grade rail crossing. Whistle cessation is achieved through municipal Councils passing a resolution once any and all required safety measures are made. Transport Canada defines the standards for the required safety measures and specifies procedures consistent with the *Railway Safety Act* and grade crossing regulations. Strathcona County developed Policy SER-013-004 Train Whistle Cessation; the policy outlines the required steps to achieve whistle cessation within Strathcona County. The policy defines a benefitting area with a minimum of 50 households as being able to request and pursue train whistle cessation. Under the existing policy, all three proposed crossings qualify for whistle cessation.

Each crossing is unique and evaluated independently to ensure the required safety measures are in place and in compliance with Transport Canada's whistle cessation standards. Evaluations require engineering review and assessment to define the scope of work that may or may not be required to implement whistle cessation. At a minimum, each crossing must have bells, lights, and gates with appropriate signing, line marking and sufficient sightlines to be considered for train whistle cessation according to Transport Canada's Grade Crossing Standards. Currently, the crossings are equipped with flashing lights, bells and gates. Safety assessments for each crossing have been completed and reviewed by CN Rail. The outcome of the safety assessments includes safety upgrades that are required to be fulfilled prior to the approved implementation of whistle cessation.

The estimated cost of implementing the required safety measures are:

Range Road 231 at CN MILE 255.97	= \$ 20,000
Range Road 223 at CN MILE 251.43	= \$ 5,500
Range Road 220 at CN MILE 247.75	= \$ 21,000
Total estimated cost	= \$ 46,500

The required safety measures include adjusting the gate arm clearance times, which need to be completed by CN Rail. Residents have expressed noise concerns living nearby each of the three railway crossings. Should whistle cessation be desired, Strathcona County would contact and inform residents prior to the whistle cessation resolution at Council.

Communication Plan

Benefitting area residents to be contacted via direct mail out.
Advertised on the County website.

Enclosures

- 1 Safety Assessments of Grade Crossings
- 2 Train Whistle Cessation Powerpoint Presentation