

Priorities Committee Meeting_Nov17_2020**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

CN Rail Crossings between Highway 14 and Township Road 510**Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee an evaluation of at-grade CN Rail crossings between Highway 14 and Township Road 510 in the southwest corner of Strathcona County to estimate the cost of improvements required to achieve train whistle cessation according to Federal regulations.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 2 - Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

Goal 8 - Foster an environment for safe communities

Report

Administration has reviewed seven rail crossing locations in the southwest area of Strathcona County for the requirements of implementing train whistle cessation upon Strathcona County Council request. The six CN Rail crossings include:

- CN Mile 10.02 at Township Road 515, west of Range Road 233
- CN Mile 11.08 at Township Road 514, west of Range Road 233
- CN Mile 11.92 at Range Road 233, south of Township Road 514
- CN Mile 13.47 at Township Road 512, west of Range Road 232
- CN Mile 14.12 at Range Road 232, south of Township Road 512
- CN Mile 15.95 at Township Road 510, west of Range Road 231

The train whistle cessation process follows the federally-controlled Railway Safety Act, where a municipality, as the road authority, can request the cessation of train whistles at an at-grade rail crossing. Whistle cessation is achieved through the municipal Council 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 which outlines the required steps to achieve whistle cessation within Strathcona County.

The policy outlines the process for residents to request whistle cessation as well as defining a benefitting area for each at grade crossing. The benefitting area is defined as 3.4 km along the track in each direction and 3 km perpendicular to the track (on each side). Where the benefitting area encompasses at least 50 households, Council may consider, on a priority and availability-of-funds basis, the construction of such advanced warning measures required by Transport Canada. Under the existing policy, all seven proposed crossings meet the minimum benefitting area threshold for whistle cessation as outlined in the policy.

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. The outcome of the safety assessments includes safety upgrades that are required to be fulfilled prior to the approved implementation of whistle cessation.

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The approximate estimated cost of implementing the required safety measures are as follows:

CN Mile 10.02 at Township Road 515	= \$ 500,000.00
CN Mile 11.08 at Township Road 514	= \$ 500,000.00
CN Mile 11.92 at Range Road 233	= \$ 600,000.00
CN Mile 13.47 at Township Road 512	= \$ 500,000.00
CN Mile 14.12 at Range Road 232	= \$ 510,000.00
CN Mile 15.95 at Township Road 510	= \$ 500,000.00
Total estimated cost	= \$3,110,000.00

The required safety measures include adjusting the gate arm clearance times and the addition of CN Rail crossing controls, which can only be completed by CN Rail. Administration has received noise concerns from residents in this area. Should whistle cessation be desired, Strathcona County would contact and inform residents prior to the whistle cessation resolution at Council. All CN Rail work relies on CN Rail forces, programs, and priorities and Strathcona County retains no control over the implementation of these works.

Council and Committee History

June 9, 2020	Council approved the cessation of railway whistling at CN Mile 245.02 – Range Road 214; CN Mile 245.63 – Township Road 524 and CN Mile 246.26 – Highway 830.
Nov. 26, 2019	Council approved the cessation of railway whistling at CN Mile 243.74 – RR 213; CN Mile 242.06 – Range Road 211A; CN Mile 240.06 – Range Road 210; CN Mile 238.71 – Range Road 205 and CP Mile 168.38 – 34 th Street.
Sept. 10, 2019	Council approved an amendment to the 2019 Capital Budget to increase the 2019 Train Whistle Cessation project in the amount of \$293,000 (from \$100,000 to \$393,000) to be funded through internal financing.
Dec. 6, 2018	Council approved the 2019 Consolidated Capital Budget which included the train whistle cessation project in the amount \$100,000 to be funded through internal financing for the cessation of seven additional crossings.
Sept. 25, 2018	Council approved the cessation of railway whistling at CN Mile 255.97 Range Road 231.
July 3, 2018	Council approved the cessation of railway whistling at the crossings at CN Mile 251.43 - Range Road 223 and CN Mile 247.45 – Range Road 220.
July 11, 2017	Train Whistle Cessation Update was referred to the September 5, 2017 Council meeting for debate and discussion.
March 8, 2016	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.
Jan. 19, 2016	Council approved the cessation of railway whistling at the at-grade crossing at CN Mile 250.25 - Highway 824.
Dec. 11, 2012	Council approved the 2013 Capital Budget which included the 2013 Ardrossan Train Whistle Cessation project.
July 12, 2012	Council approved Municipal Policy SER-013-004: Train Whistle

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Jan. 11, 2011 Cessation.
Council directed administration to bring back criteria for, and establish a policy to, minimize train whistles in Strathcona County.

Other Impacts

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

Legislative/Legal: Transport Canada – *Railway Safety Act* (section 23.1) provides that the government of a municipality may by resolution declare that it agrees that a train whistle within the municipality should not be used. The municipal government is required to 1) consult the railway company that operates the relevant line of railway; 2) notify each relevant association or organization; and 3) give public notice of its intention to pass the resolution.

Interdepartmental: Transportation and Agriculture Services is required to maintain all required line marking and signs.

Master Plan/Framework: Traffic Safety Strategic Plan 2020, Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Communication Plan

As per the *Railway Safety Act* and in accordance with the advertising requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*, should whistle cessation proceed, notice of the proposed whistle cessation will be advertised in the Sherwood Park and Strathcona County newspaper as well as on the Strathcona County website.

Enclosures

- 1 CN Rail Safety Assessment Report
- 2 Whistle Cessation Railway Crossings Location Map