

**Priorities Committee Meeting\_Mar08\_2016**

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**STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE****Train Whistle Cessation – Next Steps****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with a summary of the Highway 824 at-grade rail crossing train whistle cessation process and to review future actions.

**Council History**

January 11, 2011 – Council directed Administration to review developing a policy to minimize train whistles.

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.

July 12, 2011 – Council approved a motion to postpone this item to August 16, 2011 in order to research additional information.

August 16, 2011 – Council directed administration to prepare a train whistle minimizing policy.

April 24, 2012 – Council directed administration to revise the Train Whistle Cessation Policy and present at the end of June 2012.

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

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

January 19, 2016 – Council passed a whistle cessation resolution at the CN Rail crossing 250.25 at Highway 824/Range Road 222.

**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:** Capital Planning and Construction, Planning and Development Services

**Summary**

With the implementation of whistle cessation at the Highway 824 crossing, Strathcona County has acquired a sound understanding of the process and procedures for implementing whistle cessation at an at-grade crossing. Thus far there have been mixed reviews in

regards to the whistle cessation effective at the Highway 824 crossing; some reviews are positive and affirming while others have been negative, where they felt as though it was an unnecessary expense. The total cost of the required upgrades at this specific crossing was approximately \$100,000 and included the evaluation, design, and construction of the chain link fence and additional signing. As a result, for any proposed future train whistle cessation projects, administration will be conducting public engagement for the benefitting area to understand the local stakeholders' wants and needs prior to a project commencing.

The train whistle cessation process follows the federally-controlled *Railway Safety Act*, where a municipality is able to request, through resolution, the cessation of train whistles at at-grade crossings with the approved levels of safety improvements. Transport Canada defines the standards, required safety measures, and specified procedures consistent with the *Railway Safety Act* and grade crossing regulations. Strathcona County developed and approved Policy SER-013-004 Train Whistle Cessation; this policy outlines the required steps in order to achieve whistle cessation within Strathcona County. As the policy describes, a benefitting area with a minimum of 50 households is able to request and pursue train whistle cessation. With this in mind, there are 13 crossings along the CN Rail Wainwright subdivision line from Range Road 232 to Range Road 204 and 19 crossing locations along the CP Rail Josephburg line from Range Road 205 to Range Road 232 that would qualify under the existing policy.

Each crossing is unique and must be evaluated independently for whistle cessation. 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. Train whistles are a safety device that improves driver and road user safety by alerting of an oncoming train. Removing train whistles is a strictly-controlled process because of the high risk nature of train crossings, and all efforts must be made to only implement cessation where the benefits outweigh the risks.

To determine the level of effort and engineering controls required to implement train whistle cessation, administration is planning to review potential crossings in this priority order:

- The Highway 824/Range Road 222 intersection is complete (#11 – green)
- The three intersections from Range Road 231 to Range Road 220 (#10, #12 & #13 – yellow)
- The CN Rail Wainwright subdivision line crossings between Highway 830 and Range Road 211A (#5-#9 – orange)
- Those between Range Road 210 and Range Road 204 (#1-#4 – red)
- The CP line crossings near Josephburg (#26 & #27 – blue)
- The CP line crossings from Range Road 205 to Range Road 232 (#14-#25 and #27-#32 – purple)

## **Enclosure**

### **1 Train Whistle Cessation Locations Map**