Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

REPORT
Engineering Department

To:	Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council	**Date**:	June 26, 2023
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director of Engineering Services	**File**:	05.3510.10 (Doc#2272012)
		Item #:	2023-417

Subject: **Train Whistle Cessation – Q2 Update**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives this report for information.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with an update on the progress of train whistle cessation in the City of New Westminster.

SUMMARY

This is the Q2 2023 update to Council (through this report) and the Public (through our website) on the progress of Citywide whistle cessation.

BACKGROUND

On April 3rd, 2023, Staff provided the first quarterly update on the progress made on train whistle cessation at public grade rail crossings in the City of New Westminster. Staff have continued to advance projects and strengthen relationships with the railways and regulators through meaningful conversation, shared goals and participation in the Railway Technical Committee (RTC).

DISCUSSION

The City-led RTC held its second meeting on May 23rd, 2023. The meeting was chaired by City staff, and was attended by representatives from the Engineering Department, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services, the four Railway companies operating in New Westminster, and the Provincial and Federal regulators. The topics discussed included rail-related Council updates, the community's interest in achieving whistle cessation, current and future rail-related projects, and information to be included on the City's website.

To date in 2023, Staff have received 20 pieces of communication related to rail. These communications have come via public delegations to Council, email, SeeClickFix, Engineering counter walk-ups and phone calls. They are categorized as follows:

2023 – Q1: 12 communications
- 11 – train whistling related
- 1 – train exhaust related

2023 – Q2: 9 communications
- 5 – train whistling related
- 4 – rail operational concerns

The updated *At-Grade Public Crossing Whistle Cessation Summary* is included in Attachment 1.

Short and Mid-Term Opportunities

The estimated date of whistle cessation (EWC) and updates to the Short and Mid Term opportunities are as follows:

Queensborough Neighbourhood

1. Furness Street @ Duncan Street EWC: 2023 – Q4
    a. Construction deficiency to be completed this summer, followed by engineering sign-off, completion of the crossing agreement, acquisition of the necessary insurance and then completion of the whistle cessation agreement.

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: 2024 – Q4
    a. Re-assignment from a public crossing to a private crossing is in the early engagement phase. Property owners have been contacted and advised of the City's interest in re-assigning the crossing. We are currently reviewing crossing agreement documents to ensure we are following proper process.

2. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: 2024 – Q4
    a. Re-assignment from a public crossing to a private crossing is in the early engagement phase. Property owners have been contacted and advised of the City's interest in re-assigning the crossing. We are currently reviewing crossing agreement documents to ensure we are following proper process.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Spruce Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q3
    b. Conceptual drawings are being finalized. Upon approval of conceptual design, we will start the detailed design phase. Subject to approval of detailed design by TransLink and rail companies, and procurement of equipment and construction constractor, it may be possible for construction to occur in 2024 and whistle cessation administrative requirements completed in 2025.
2. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q3
    a. Conceptual drawings are being finalized. Upon approval of conceptual design, we will start the detailed design phase. Subject to approval of detailed design by rail companies, and procurement of equipment and construction contractor, it may be possible for construction to occur in 2024 and whistle cessation administrative requirements completed in 2025.

Long Term Projects

The following crossings are in the early stages of design analysis and will likely require comprehensive structural modifications or road/rail re-alignments, and significant capital investment, to achieve whistle cessation:

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Braid Street crossing (@ Brunette Ave) EWC: TBD
2. Braid Street (@ Vulcan St) EWC: TBD

Queensborough Neighbourhood

1. Furness Street (@ Ewen Ave) EWC: TBD
3. Mercer Street (@ Ewen Ave) EWC: TBD
4. Ewen Avenue (@ Stanley St) EWC: TBD
5. Ewen Avenue MUP (@ Stanley St) EWC: TBD
6. Salter Street (@ Derwent Way) EWC: TBD

The above crossings are considered highly complex and resource intensive (both City and railway companies) projects that will require further examination to better understand the technical implications, resource and capital expenditure impacts, as well as

implementation timeframes. Additional information will be shared with Council, and direction will be sought, as the analysis progresses.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue working directly with stakeholders and through the RTC to better understand the costs and timelines for upgrading the Queensborough and Sapperton public crossings and implementing whistle cessation. This information will be used to update the At-Grade Public Crossing Whistle Cessation Summary, which will continue to be presented to Council as a part of a quarterly update process.

Staff will update the City's website on a quarterly basis with up to date information regarding progress on whistle cessation at individual crossings. Staff will continue to work with railway companies and regulators to advance the implementation of whistle cessation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2023-2027 Proposed Five Year Financial Plan includes $1.89M to support rail crossing upgrades and whistle cessation projects, of which $0.89M has been allocated to the 2023 approved Capital Budget. The 2023 capital budget aims to advance stakeholder engagement, conceptual and detailed design works and to advance service and equipment procurement where appropriate. This work will inform and identify the scope, risk and constraints to advance the safety works and provide information on total funding requirements.

Funding Source	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
General Fund	$0.89M	$0.5M	$0.5M	-	-

Third-party grant funding opportunities for safety upgrades through Transport Canada's Railway Safety Improvement Program (RSIP) are not currently available as the call is closed. City staff are committed to staying informed about the specific timeframes for grant application openings within the closed call system to ensure we can maximize grant funding.

Through RSIP, municipalities are eligible to receive up to an 80% financial contribution per eligible project.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Engineering Services will continue working with the the City's Finance and Legal Departments to minimize the financial impacts and risk exposure to the City. Additionally, the Communications Department will be updated with advancements in major milestone progress or impactful phases of the work. The Fire Department is a member of the RTC.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That Council receive this report for information;
2. That Council provides alternative direction to Staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION

Whistle cessation is a complex, expensive and lengthy process. Implementing Citywide train whistle cessation will require dedicated staff resources, the continuation of collaborative stakeholder relationships and adequate capital funding from the City.

Staff will provide quarterly updates to Council (through reports) and to the public (through our website) on the progress of whistle cessation in 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – At-Grade Public Crossing Summary

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Garey Carlson, Engineering Technologist

This report was reviewed by:
Christy Mereigh, Manager, Strategic Projects
Kwaku Agyare-Manu, Senior Manager, Engineering Services

This report was approved by:
Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering Services
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

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Attachment # 1

At-Grade Public Crossing Summary

AT - GRADE PUBLIC CROSSING WHISTLE CESSATION SUMMARY

No.	Area	Crossing	Owner	Users	Required Work	Estimated Cost	Status	EWC
1	QB	Salter Street @ Derwent Way	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Possible road re-alignment of Derwent may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
2	QB	Stanley St / 400 Ewen Ave Access (MUP)	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Possible rail or road re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
3	QB	Ewen Avenue @ Stanley Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Possible rail or road re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
4	QB	Mercer Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Possible rail or road re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
5	QB	Furness Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Possible rail or road re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
6	QB	Boundary Road @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
7	QB	Gifford Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
8	QB	Howes Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
9	QB	Queensborough Landing Pedestrian Crossing	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
10	QB	Queensborough Landing Vehicle Crossing West	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
11	QB	Queensborough Landing Vehicle Crossing East	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
12	QB	Wood Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
13	QB	Boyne Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD

QB = Queensborough / ML = Mainland
TBD = To Be Determined
EWC = Estimated Date of Whistle Cessation

Updated to end of: 2023 – Q2
Costs do not consider grant funding
Yellow highlight – revised information

No.	Area	Crossing	Owner	Users	Required Work	Estimated Cost	Status	EWC
14	QB	Stanley Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
15	QB	Furness Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Construction deficiencies to be completed.	TBD	Construction In Progress	2023 – Q4
16	QB	Pedestrian Crossing @ Brookes Street	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
17	ML	Twentieth Street @ River Drive	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	Re-assign crossing from public to private. Retrieving historical crossing agreements.	TBD	Reviewing Information	2024 – Q4
18	ML	Fourth Avenue @ Fourteenth Street	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	Re-assign crossing from public to private. Retrieving historical crossing agreements.	TBD	Reviewing Information	2024 – Q4
19	ML	Quayside Drive @ Laguna Court	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
20	ML	Begbie Street @ Front Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
21	ML	Front Street @ Fourth Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
22	ML	Cumberland Street @ Columbia Street	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Flashing Lights, Bells and Gates plus pedestrian facility upgrades.	$1.0 M	Conceptual Design	2025 – Q3
23	ML	Spruce Street @ Brunette Avenue	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Flashing Lights, Bells and Gates plus pedestrian facility upgrades.	$1.2 M	Conceptual Design	2025 – Q3
24	ML	Capilano Way @ Edworthy Way	BNSF	BNSF	Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation has not been pursued at this crossing.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
25	ML	Braid Street @ Brunette Avenue	CN	CN, BNSF	Safety re-assessment underway.	TBD	Waiting for Report	TBD
26	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	Safety re-assessment underway.	TBD	Waiting for Report	TBD
27	ML	Braid Skytrain Station access road	CN	CN, BNSF	Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation has not been pursued at this crossing.	TBD	TBD	TBD

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