Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

REPORT
Engineering Department

To:	Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council	**Date**:	September 25, 2023
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director of Engineering Services	**File**:	05.3510.10 (Doc#2319197v2)
		Item #:	2023-596

Subject: **Train Whistle Cessation – Q3 Update**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive 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 Q3 2023 update to Council (through this report) and the Public (through our website) on the progress of Citywide whistle cessation.

BACKGROUND

On June 26th, 2023, staff provided the second 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 third meeting on August 29th, 2023. The meeting was chaired by City staff, and was attended by representatives from the Engineering Department and

the four Railway companies operating in New Westminster. The topics discussed included rail-related Council updates, locations of required whistling, a grade crossing inventory, current and future rail-related projects, and the City of New Westminster's public website updates.

Staff have received 32 rail-related communications from residents in 2023. These communications have come via public delegations to Council, email, Be Heard, SeeClickFix, Engineering counter walk-ups and phone calls. They are categorized as follows:

2023 – Q1: 12 communications:
- 11 – whistle related
- 1 – exhaust related

2023 – Q2: 10 communications:
- 6 – whistle related
- 4 – operational concerns

2023 – Q3: 10 communications:
- 10 – whistle related

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 deficiencies have been completed and we are waiting for the final sign off by the engineer of record. Following receipt of the completion letter, a request to Technical Safety BC is required as well as execution of a crossing and whistle cessation agreement and acquisition of the necessary insurance.

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: 2024 – Q4
    a. We are continuing to review options for this crossing, including re-assigning it from a Public crossing to a private crossing. We have been in discussions with the associated rail operators and property owner to understand the concerns and necessary steps required to achieve

whistle cessation while minimizing the costs and negative impacts to the business owner and the public.

2. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: 2024 – Q4
    a. We are continuing to review options for this crossing, including either closing it permanently or replacing it with a private crossing in close proximity. We have been in discussions with the associated rail operators and property owner to understand the concerns and necessary steps required to achieve whistle cessation while minimizing the costs and negative impacts to the business owners and the public.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Spruce Street crossing EWC: TBD
    a. The conceptual design is underway. Through the most recent RTC meeting, some design concerns have been brought up that require further investigation. Once the conceptual design has been finalized, the detailed design phase will begin.

2. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q3
    a. Conceptual drawings are being finalized, which will be followed by the detailed design phase. Subject to budget allocations, approval of designs and procurement of equipment and construction contractor, it may be possible for construction to occur in 2024 with whistle cessation implemented in late 2025.

Long Term Projects

The following crossings are undergoing preliminary design investigations 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

Additional information will be shared with Council, and direction will be sought, as the preliminary designs progress.

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 the quarterly update process.

Staff will continue to update the City's website on a quarterly basis with information on the progress of whistle cessation at individual crossings and also 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 provide alternative direction to Staff.

Staff recommend 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.

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:
Kwaku Agyare-Manu, Acting Director, 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 City 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
	~~QB~~	~~Howes Street @ Boyd Street~~	~~SRY~~	~~SRY~~	This crossing was incorrectly classified as Public by Southern Railway. Changed to Private and removed from this list.	~~TBD~~	~~Reviewing Information~~	~~TBD~~
8	QB	Queensborough Landing Pedestrian Crossing	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
	~~QB~~	~~Queensborough Landing Vehicle Crossing West~~	~~SRY~~	~~SRY~~	This crossing was incorrectly classified as Public by Southern Railway. Changed to Private and removed from this list.	~~TBD~~	~~Reviewing Information~~	~~TBD~~
	~~QB~~	~~Queensborough Landing Vehicle Crossing East~~	~~SRY~~	~~SRY~~	This crossing was incorrectly classified as Public by Southern Railway. Changed to Private and removed from this list.	~~TBD~~	~~Reviewing Information~~	~~TBD~~
9	QB	Wood Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
10	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 – Q3
Costs do not consider grant funding
Yellow highlight – revised information

No.	Area	Crossing	Owner	Users	Required Work	Estimated City Cost	Status	EWC
11	QB	Stanley Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
12	QB	Furness Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Construction deficiencies complete. Waiting for final sign off by engineer.	TBD	Construction In Progress	2023 – Q4
13	QB	Pedestrian Crossing @ Brookes Street	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
14	ML	Twentieth Street @ River Drive	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	To re-assign crossing from public to private. Reviewing options with stakeholders.	TBD	Reviewing Information	2024 – Q4
15	ML	Fourth Avenue @ Fourteenth Street	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	To re-assign crossing from public to private. Reviewing options with stakeholders.	TBD	Reviewing Information	2024 – Q4
16	ML	Quayside Drive @ Laguna Court	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
17	ML	Begbie Street @ Front Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
18	ML	Front Street @ Fourth Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
19	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
20	ML	Spruce Street @ Brunette Avenue	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Flashing Lights, Bells and Gates plus pedestrian facility upgrades.	TBD	Conceptual Design	TBD
21	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
22	ML	Braid Street @ Brunette Avenue	CN	CN, BNSF	Safety re-assessment underway.	TBD	Waiting for Report	TBD
23	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	Safety re-assessment underway.	TBD	Waiting for Report	TBD
24	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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