Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

REPORT
Engineering Department

To:	Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council	**Date**:	April 22, 2024
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director of Engineering Services	**File**:	05.3510.10 (Doc#2462885v2)
		Item #:	2024-220

Subject: **Train Whistle Cessation – 2024 – Q1 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 Q1 2024 update to Council and the Public on the progress of Citywide whistle cessation.

BACKGROUND

Quarterly reports are provided to Council in response to direction received from a Motion of Council on December 12, 2022. The last report to Council was the Q4 2023 update, which was provided on January 8th, 2024. 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 fifth meeting on March 5th, 2024. The meeting was chaired by city staff and attended by representatives from the Engineering Department, three railway

companies and a representative from Transport Canada, the federal regulator. The topics discussed included rail-related Council updates, safety concerns, current and future rail-related projects, and developing a process to repair damaged fencing at crossings and along corridors.

Staff have received 45 rail-related communications since January 2023. These communications have come via public delegations to Council, website contact form, 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: 11 communications:
- 11 – whistle related

2023 – Q4: 7 communications:
- 7 – whistle related

2024 – Q1: 5 communications:
- 4 – whistle related
- 1 – wait times

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: 2024 – Q2
    a. The crossing has received final sign-off by Southern Railway of BC's (SRY) engineer of record. The whistle cessation resolution is being prepared for presentation to Council at a future meeting. Following the adoption of the resolution, the application package will be finalized and submitted to Technical Safety BC. This will be followed by a whistle cessation agreement between the City and SRY and acquisition of the

necessary insurance by the City. The timeline on this crossing has been updated due to staffing constraints and competing priorities.

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: TBD
    a. The City of New Westminster's consultant solicitor is currently preparing a position paper on the recommended steps to achieve whistle cessation at this crossing.

2. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: TBD
    a. The City of New Westminster's consultant solicitor is currently preparing a position paper on the recommended steps to achieve whistle cessation at this crossing.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Spruce Street crossing EWC: TBD
    a. City staff are preparing an application to Transport Canada requesting a decision on the upgrades required to implement whistle cessation. The timeline for a decision is expected to take 3 to 6 months after submission, which is currently targeted for June 28.

2. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q3
    a. The conceptual design has been revised to include input from the rail companies and is now ready to move to detailed design. An approved short list of design consultants has recently been completed, which allows staff to complete design work more expediently. Staff are also continuing to review the proposed Construction and Maintenance agreements and associated cost apportionments for the work.

Long Term Projects

The following crossings will likely require extensive 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, as it becomes available, and direction will be sought at that time.

NEXT STEPS

Staff resources continue to focus on advancing rail crossing improvements on the mainland of New Westminster. Advancing safety upgrades and whistle cessation initiatives on the crossings in Queensborough will require significant additional time and resources, including a consultant to manage this work.

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

Staff will continue to update the City's website quarterly with information on the progress of whistle cessation at individual crossings.

The City of New Westminster continues to work with the consultant solicitor to advance contracts and legal agreements with the railways.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2024-2028 Five Year Financial Plan includes $3.6M to support rail crossing upgrades and whistle cessation projects, inclusive of an additional $0.5M directed towards assessing the crossings in Queensborough. The 2024 Capital Budget allocates $1.5M of funding towards safety upgrades and whistle cessation initiatives, which 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.

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 have been 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.

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 in a timely manner will require dedicated staff resources, external consultant support, the continuation of collaborative stakeholder relationships and adequate capital funding from the City.

Future train whistle cessation quarterly updates will be posted to the City's website in lieu of reports to Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – At-Grade Public Crossing Summary

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Garey Carlson, Engineering Technologist

This report was reviewed by:
Gwenda Sulem, Acting Senior Manager, Engineering Services

This report was approved by:
Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering
Lisa Leblanc, Acting 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. Road re-alignment of Derwent is likely required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
2	QB	Stanley St / 400 Ewen Ave Access (MUP)	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Road or rail re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
3	QB	Ewen Avenue @ Stanley Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Road or rail re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
4	QB	Mercer Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Road or rail re-alignment may be required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
5	QB	Furness Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required. Road or rail 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	Queensborough Landing Pedestrian Crossing	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	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
11	QB	Stanley Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
12	QB	Furness Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Whistle cessation submission package being completed.	TBD	Application in progress	2024 – Q2
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	Reviewing options with legal consultant.	TBD	Legal Review underway	TBD

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

Updated to end of: 2024 – Q1
Costs do not consider grant funding
Yellow highlight – revised information

No.	Area	Crossing	Owner	Users	Required Work	Estimated City Cost	Status	EWC
15	ML	Fourth Avenue @ Fourteenth Street	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	Reviewing options with legal consultant.	TBD	Legal Review underway	TBD
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.	$1.4 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	Requesting decision from Transport Canada	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	Signalization Review to be completed by June. Once reviewed, a decision will be made on next steps.	TBD	Signalization Review underway	TBD
23	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	Signalization Review to be completed by June. Once reviewed, a decision will be made on next steps.	TBD	Signalization Review underway	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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