NEW WESTMINSTER
Engineering Services

# Memorandum

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| To: | Mayor Johnstone & Members of Council | Date: | July 26, 2024 |
| From: | Lisa Leblanc<br>Director of Engineering Services | File No: | 1860.40.05 |
| Subject: | **Train Whistle Cessation Update – 2024 – Q2 Update** | | |

## PURPOSE

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

## SUMMARY

This is the 2024 second quarter update on the progress of Citywide train whistle cessation.

## BACKGROUND

Quarterly reports are provided to the public in response to direction received from a Motion of Council on December 12, 2022. The last report was the 2024 – Q1 update, which was provided on April 22, 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 sixth meeting on June 4th, 2024. The meeting was chaired by city staff and attended by representatives from the Engineering Department, one railway company, Transport Canada (federal regulator) and Technical Safety BC (provincial regulator). The topics discussed included rail-related Council updates, safety concerns and current and future rail-related projects.

Staff have received 54 rail-related communications from the public 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 to Q4): 40 communications:
- 35 – whistle related
- 4 – operational concerns
- 1 – exhaust related

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

2024 – Q2: 9 communications:
- 8 – whistle related
- 1 – vibrations

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 – Q3
    a. New Westminster City Council has passed a resolution to stop whistling at the crossing. The resolution was sent to the applicable rail company on May 31. We are waiting for confirmation that an anti-whistling directive has been issued to the operators or other feedback from the rail company.

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q2
    a. The City of New Westminster's external legal counsel is preparing a position paper on the recommended steps to achieve whistle cessation.

2. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: 2026 – Q2
    a. The City of New Westminster's external legal counsel is preparing a position paper on the recommended steps to achieve whistle cessation.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Spruce Street crossing EWC: 2026 – Q4
    a. We will be requesting a decision on the necessary upgrades from Transport Canada. Due to resource availability, the submission has been delayed and

staff now anticipate submitting the application to Transport Canada by September 6. A decision from Transport Canada could take 3 to 6 months.

2. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q3
    a. A request for detailed design proposals has been issued and submissions are due back August 9. After an evaluation, the successful candidate will be complete the detailed design work. We are planning to begin construction in early 2025.

**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
2. Mercer Street (@ Ewen Ave) EWC: TBD
3. Ewen Avenue (@ Stanley St) EWC: TBD
4. Ewen Avenue MUP (@ Stanley St) EWC: TBD
5. 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 Queensborough crossings will require significant additional time and resources, including consultants to study and 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 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.

## 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

# 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 or rail re-alignment may be 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 | Waiting for Southern Railway to confirm whistles have been ceased. | TBD | Application in progress | 2024 – Q3 |
| 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 external legal counsel. | TBD | Legal Review underway | 2027 – Q2 |

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



Updated to end of: 2024 – Q2
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 external legal counsel. | TBD | Legal Review underway | 2026 – Q2 |
| 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 | Detailed design proposals due back August 9. Construction planned to start early 2025. | $1.4 M | Detailed 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 | 2027 – Q2 |
| 21 | ML | Capilano Way @ Edworthy Way | BNSF | BNSF | Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation is not being pursued at this crossing. | TBD | Reviewing Information | TBD |
| 22 | ML | Braid Street @ Brunette Avenue | CN | CN, BNSF | Signalization Review to be finalized in August, which will inform the next steps. | TBD | Signalization Review underway | TBD |
| 23 | ML | Braid Street @ Vulcan Street | CP | CP | Signalization Review to be finalized in August, which will inform the next steps. | TBD | Signalization Review underway | TBD |
| 24 | ML | Braid Skytrain Station access road | CN | CN, BNSF | Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation is not being pursued at this crossing. | TBD | TBD | TBD |

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