NEW WESTMINSTER
Engineering Services

Memorandum

To:	Mayor Johnstone & Members of Council	Date:	July 18, 2025
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director of Engineering Services	File No:	1860.40.05
Subject:	**Train Whistle Cessation Update – 2025 – Q2 Update**		

PURPOSE

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

SUMMARY

This is the 2025 second quarter update on Citywide train whistle cessation progress.

BACKGROUND

Quarterly reports are provided to the public in response to a Motion of Council on December 12, 2022. The last report was the 2025 – Q1 update, which was provided on April 15, 2025. 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 had its tenth meeting (2025-Q2) on June 3, 2025. The agenda topics included rail-related Council updates, safety concerns at the 20th Street crossing, conducting a new safety assessment at Spruce Street crossing and ongoing and upcoming rail-related projects.

Staff have received 99 rail-related communications from the public since January 2023. These communications have come via public delegations to Council, website contact forms, email, Be Heard, SeeClickFix, Engineering counter walk-ups and phone calls.

These communications are categorized as follows:

2023 & 2024: 71 communications:
- 57 – whistle related
- 9 – operational concerns
- 3 – wait times
- 1 – vibrations
- 1 – exhaust related

2025 – Q1: 14 communications:
- 9 – whistle related
- 3 – train operations noise / fumes
- 1 – wait times
- 1 – crossing condition

2025 – Q2: 14 communications:
- 9 – whistle related
- 3 – train operations noise / fumes
- 1 – wait times
- 1 – vibrations

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

The estimated dates by which whistle cessation will be achieved (EWC) are shown below and in attachment 1. The EWC depends on a variety of work, some that is within the City's control and some that needs to be done by third parties, including the rail companies. While we strive to remain connected and aligned, and collaborate on project management, the schedule for works done by third parties is outside of the City's control. Elements of work such as equipment procurement and installation are typically more susceptible to delay.

Short and Medium-Term Opportunities

Updates to the Short and Medium Term opportunities are as follows:

West End Neighbourhood

1. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: 2026 – Q4
    a. A consultant is currently producing conceptual design for GCR, GCS and whistle cessation compliance, which will be ready for review in August 2025.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2025 – Q4

a. Detailed design is complete. Construction is planned to start in September 2025.

2. Braid Street crossings (Brunette + Vulcan) EWC: 2026 – Q2
    a. The 100% detailed design drawings are expected to be complete by August 2025 with construction planned to start in October 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. Spruce Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q2
    a. Transport Canada has responded that they do not make decisions on planned upgrades (design drawings), only on existing conditions, and will not provide direction on the requirements to achieve whistle cessation at this crossing. The City is currently performing an updated safety assessment of the crossing to inform the next steps. Staff continue to work with the rail companies and Translink to advance safety improvements at this crossing.

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q2
    a. The City of New Westminster continues to engage stakeholders at this crossing to develop a plan for achieving GCR/GCS and whistle cessation compliance.

Queensborough Neighbourhood

The City is currently undertaking a Whistle Cessation Options Assessment Study for the Ewen Avenue corridor. The study is expected to be completed in Q3 2025 and will provide options to achieve whistle cessation, taking into account all of the constraints of the area (transportation, utility, development, etc.).

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 and city-wide whistle cessation initiatives.

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 external legal counsel to advance contracts and legal agreements with the railways.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025-2029 Five Year Financial Plan includes $4.4M to support rail crossing upgrades and whistle cessation projects, of which $0.7M is allocated to assess the Queensborough crossings. The 2025 Capital Budget allocates $1.0M of funding towards safety upgrades and whistle cessation initiatives, which aim to advance stakeholder engagement, conceptual and detailed design works, installations, and 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.

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	Options Assessment Study of the corridor. Conceptual options review by end of Q3.	TBD	Consultant under contract	TBD
3	QB	Ewen Avenue @ Stanley Street	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor. Conceptual options review by end of Q3.	TBD	Consultant under contract	TBD
4	QB	Mercer Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor. Conceptual options review by end of Q3.	TBD	Consultant under contract	TBD
5	QB	Furness Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor. Conceptual options review by end of Q3.	TBD	Consultant under contract	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	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
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	Maintain the crossing as public and review upgrade options.	TBD	Reviewing Next Steps	TBD

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

Updated to end of: 2025 – 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	Conceptual design is being prepared and will be available for review in Q3.	TBD	Conceptual Design	2026 – 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	RFP for installation contractor to be issued in July. Construction planned for Fall 2025.	$1.4 M	Installation RFP	2025 – Q4
20	ML	Spruce Street @ Brunette Avenue	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Active warning system upgrades, installation of pedestrian facilities and skytrain access overpass.	TBD	Undergoing crossing safety re-assessment	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	TBD	TBD
22	ML	Braid Street @ Brunette Avenue	CN	CN, BNSF	Detailed design for upgrades is underway. Construction planned to start in 2025-Q4.	TBD	Detailed Design	2026 – Q2
23	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	Detailed design for upgrades is underway. Construction planned to start in 2025-Q4.	TBD	Detailed Design	2026 – Q2
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