NEW WESTMINSTER
Engineering Services

Memorandum

To:	Mayor Johnstone & Members of Council	Date:	January 30, 2026
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director of Engineering Services	File No:	1860.40.05
Subject:	**Train Whistle Cessation Update – 2025 – Q4 Update**		

PURPOSE

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

SUMMARY

This is the 2025 fourth 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 – Q3 update, which was provided on November 5, 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 twelfth meeting (2025-Q4) on November 25, 2025. The agenda topics included rail-related Council updates and ongoing and upcoming rail-related projects.

Staff have received 47 rail-related communications from the public since January 2025. 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:

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

2025 – Q3: 12 communications:
- 7 – whistle related
- 3 – train operations noise / fumes
- 1 – wait times
- 1 – vibrations

2025 – Q4: 7 communications:
- 5 – whistle related
- 1 – rail safety
- 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 relies on a variety of work, some of which 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 completed by third parties is outside of the City's control. Elements of work, such as equipment procurement and installation, are typically more susceptible to delays.

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. During the conceptual design process, it was discovered that there may be track equipment within the road right-of-way. A survey is being completed in Q1 to verify property lines and equipment locations, prior to advancing to detailed design.

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2026 – Q1
    a. Rail crossing upgrades have been completed. We are waiting for the railways to install the warning system equipment for the new MUP.

2. Braid Street crossings (Brunette + Vulcan) EWC: 2026 – Q2
    a. The construction contract has been awarded and the construction will start in February 2026.

3. Spruce Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q2
    a. The City has received the updated safety assessment and is moving to the detailed design phase. Staff continue to work with the rail companies and Translink to advance safety improvements at this crossing.

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:

West End Neighbourhood

1. Twentieth (20th) Street crossing EWC: TBD
    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

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
    a. The City has received the final Whistle Cessation Options Assessment Study for the Ewen Avenue corridor. We are reviewing the study and corridor constraints (transportation, utilities, etc.) prior to developing an implementation plan.

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 reduce risk and costs to the City and advance any necessary agreements with the railways.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025-2029 Five Year Financial Plan includes $4.5M 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 $1.1M to safety upgrades and whistle cessation initiatives, which aim to advance stakeholder engagement, conceptual and detailed design, installations, and service and equipment procurement where appropriate. This work will identify the scope, risks, and constraints to advance 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 has been completed and received.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
3	QB	Ewen Avenue @ Stanley Street	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor has been completed and received.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
4	QB	Mercer Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor has been completed and received.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
5	QB	Furness Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Options Assessment Study of the corridor has been completed and received.	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	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 – Q4
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	The conceptual design requires a survey to be completed to confirm the property lines and location of track equipment that may be in the road right of way. Survey scheduled for 2026-Q1.	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	Rail crossing upgrades complete. Waiting for the rail companies to install warning system equipment for the new MUP.	$1.4 M	Construction	2026 – Q1
20	ML	Spruce Street @ Brunette Avenue	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Updated safety assessment received. Proceeding with detailed design.	TBD	Detailed Design	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	Construction contract award. Construction will start in February 2026.	$0.8 M	Construction	2026 – Q2
23	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	Construction contract award. Construction will start in February 2026.	Included in #22	Construction	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