Memorandum

To:	Mayor Johnstone & Members of Council	Date:	October 16, 2026
From:	Kwaku Agyare-Manu Acting Director, Engineering and Public Works	File No:	1860.40.05

Subject: Train Whistle Cessation Update – 2026 – Q3 Update

PURPOSE

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

SUMMARY

This is the 2026 third-quarter update on Citywide train whistle cessation progress.

BACKGROUND

Staff provide quarterly reports to the public in response to a Motion of Council on December 12, 2022. The last report was the 2026–Q2 update, provided on July 24, 2026. Staff have continued advancing projects that improve rail safety and upgrade crossings to meet whistle-cessation requirements.

DISCUSSION

The City-led Railway Technical Committee (RTC) had its fifteenth meeting (2026-Q3) on September 8, 2026. The agenda included technical rail updates and ongoing and upcoming rail projects as follows:

1. Land acknowledgement
2. Introductions
3. Review / approve agenda

4. Review / approve June 9th meeting minutes
5. Council update
6. Safety Items
    a. Twentieth Street crossing
7. Rail project updates
    a. Cumberland Street
    b. Braid Street
    c. Fourth Avenue
    d. Spruce Street
    e. Westminster Pier Park retaining wall rehabilitation
8. Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project

Staff have received 54 rail-related communications from the public since January 1, 2026. These communications came 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:

2026 – Q1: 15 communications:
- 12 – whistle related
- 1 – rail safety
- 1 – vibrations
- 1 – wait times

2026 – Q2: 20 communications:
- 13 – whistle related
- 4 – operational noise / emissions
- 2 – rail safety
- 1 – vibrations

2026 – Q3: 19 communications:
- 13 – whistle related
- 3 – operational noise / emissions
- 2 – crossing wait times
- 1 – funding

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

The estimated dates by which whistle cessation is proposed to 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 completed by third parties, including the rail companies. While we strive to remain connected and

aligned, and collaborate on project management, the schedule for work 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 or changes.

Short and Medium-Term Opportunities

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

Sapperton Neighbourhood

1. Cumberland Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q1
    a. City rail crossing upgrades have been completed. The City is waiting for CPKC to install the warning system equipment for the new MUP East approach. Delays in installing this warning system stem from the CPKC's commercial processes. CPKC has applied for funding for this equipment and is awaiting the outcome. The City continues to encourage and work with the railway to resolve the final details.

2. Braid Street crossings (CN/BNSF - Brunette) EWC: COMPLETE
    a. Both CN and BNSF have issued special instructions to their operators not to whistle at this crossing.

3. Braid Street crossings (CPKC - Vulcan) EWC: 2026 – Q4
    a. CPKC has agreed that the crossing meets whistle cessation requirements and is working to issue their special instruction to train operators. CPKC told the City it would issue the instructions by October 16th, 2026, but it has not done so to date.

4. Spruce Street crossing EWC: 2027 – Q4
    a. Detailed design for the crossing upgrades is progressing and expected to be complete in 2027-Q2. 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 to achieve GCR/GCS and whistle cessation compliance.

2. Fourth (4th) Avenue crossing EWC: TBD
   a. Underground utility assessments are scheduled for 2026-Q4. Conceptual design will continue following the results of the assessments.

Queensborough Neighbourhood

1. Furness Street (@ Ewen Ave) EWC: 2028 – Q4
2. Mercer Street (@ Ewen Ave) EWC: 2028 – Q4
3. Ewen Avenue (@ Stanley St) EWC: 2028 – Q4

The City is moving forward with detailed design in collaboration with Southern Railway.

4. 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. Staff will use this information to update the At-Grade Public Crossing Whistle Cessation Summary, which will remain part of the quarterly update process.

Staff will continue to update the City's website quarterly with information on whistle cessation progress 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 2026-2030 Five Year Financial Plan includes $5.5M to support rail crossing upgrades and whistle cessation projects, including $0.6M to assess the Queensborough crossings. The 2026 Capital Budget allocates $0.8M to safety upgrades and whistle cessation initiatives to advance stakeholder engagement, conceptual and detailed design, installations, and, where appropriate, service and equipment procurement. This work will identify the scope, risks, and constraints to advance safety works and provide information on total funding requirements.

The City of New Westminster has applied for RSIP funding through Transport Canada for both the Spruce Street upgrades and the Ewen Avenue corridor upgrades. Through RSIP, municipalities are eligible to receive up to an 80% financial contribution per eligible project.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Engineering and Public Works will continue working with the City's Finance and Legal Departments to minimize the financial impacts and risk exposure to the City. Additionally, staff will work with Communications to share information on major milestone progress or impactful phases of the work.

CONCLUSION

Whistle cessation is a complex, expensive and lengthy process. Implementing Citywide train whistle cessation on time will require dedicated staff resources, external consultant support, continued collaborative stakeholder relationships, and adequate capital funding from the City.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – At-Grade Public Crossing Whistle Cessation 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	Ewen Avenue @ Stanley Street	SRY	SRY	Road re-alignment required and railway warning system equipment.	$18.0 M	Detailed Design	2028 – Q4
3	QB	Mercer Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Road re-alignment required and railway warning system equipment.	Included in #2	Detailed Design	2028 – Q4
4	QB	Furness Street @ Ewen Avenue	SRY	SRY	Road re-alignment required and railway warning system equipment.	Included in #2	Detailed Design	2028 – Q4
5	QB	Boundary Road @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
6	QB	Gifford Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
7	QB	Queensborough Landing Pedestrian Crossing	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
8	QB	Wood Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
9	QB	Boyne Street @ Boyd Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
10	QB	Stanley Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	Further analysis required.	TBD	Reviewing Information	TBD
11	QB	Furness Street @ Duncan Street	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
12	QB	Pedestrian Crossing @ Brookes Street	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
13	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
14	ML	Fourth Avenue @ Fourteenth Street	SRY, CP, CN	SRY, CP, CN	Underground utility assessments to be completed in Fall 2026.	TBD	Conceptual Design	TBD

QB = Queensborough / ML = Mainland
TBD = To Be Determined / N/A = Not Applicable
EWC = Estimated Date of Whistle Cessation

Updated to end of: 2026 – Q3
Costs do not consider grant funding
Yellow highlight – revised information

No.	Area	Crossing	Owner	Users	Required Work	Estimated City Cost	Status	EWC
15	ML	Quayside Drive @ Laguna Court	SRY	SRY	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
16	ML	Begbie Street @ Front Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
17	ML	Front Street @ Fourth Street	CN	SRY, CN, CP, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
18	ML	Cumberland Street @ Columbia Street	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Waiting for CPKC to install an MUP East approach warning system gate and lights.	$1.4 M	Deficiencies	2027 – Q1
19	ML	Spruce Street @ Brunette Avenue	CP, BNSF	CN, CP, BNSF	Detailed design is ongoing. Pedestrian facilities and railway warning equipment required.	$2.5 M	Detailed Design	2027 – Q4
20	ML	Capilano Way @ Edworthy Way	BNSF	BNSF	Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation is not being pursued at this crossing.	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	ML	Braid Street @ Brunette Avenue	CN	CN, BNSF	None – whistle cessation has been implemented	N/A	Complete	Complete
22	ML	Braid Street @ Vulcan Street	CP	CP	CPKC has agreed the crossing meets whistle cessation requirements and is working towards issuing special instruction to operators	N/A	Implementation	2027 – Q4
23	ML	Braid Skytrain Station access road	CN	CN, BNSF	Due to low rail activity, whistle cessation is not being pursued at this crossing.	N/A	N/A	N/A

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