
Whistle Cessation South of Stonebridge Neighbourhood

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:
That the Administration partner with the Rural Municipality of Corman Park to complete an at-grade crossing safety assessment at the Range Road 3051 rail crossing.

Topic and Purpose

This report provides a response to an inquiry regarding whistle cessation south of the Stonebridge neighbourhood in the Rural Municipality (RM) of Corman Park.

Report Highlights

1. The Administration and the RM of Corman Park will cost share the completion of an at-grade crossing safety assessment for the Range Road 3051 and Canadian National Railway (CN) in the RM of Corman Park, immediately south of the Stonebridge neighbourhood.
2. This assessment will determine if the crossing meets Transport Canada criteria for whistle cessation, or if further crossing upgrades are required to permit whistle cessation; as well as the estimated cost of those upgrades.
3. The Administration will collaborate with the RM of Corman Park to develop a strategy on implementing the recommendations to mitigate the train noise concerns.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the Strategic Goal of Quality of Life by reducing the noise pollution for residents, notably during the evening.

Background

The Standing Policy Committee on Transportation, at its meeting held on August 13, 2018, received a presentation from Mr. Ted Hansen requesting the City eliminate train whistles in the southeast corner of the Stonebridge neighbourhood, and resolved:

“That the Administration report back regarding information with respect to train whistle cessation in this area; looking at the issues and possible solutions to appease the noise concerns of the residents.”

Report

The primary source of whistling identified by Mr. Hansen is from where the Canadian National Railway (CN) main line intersects Range Road 3051, southeast of the Stonebridge neighbourhood across Highway 11, and to a lesser extent at Range Road 3050 further southeast. Both of these public at-grade crossings are within the jurisdiction of the RM of Corman Park.

The prescribed requirements for whistling cessation at public at-grade crossings are outlined in the *Railway Safety Act and Transport Canada's Grade Crossing Standards (Appendix D)*. The criteria is primarily based on the existing level of crossing protection and presence of required warning devices (such as flashing lights, bells, and gates) for the given train speed, the cross-product of vehicle-train volumes, and number of tracks in order to ensure public safety. Other factors such as road condition, approach gradients and sight distances provide input to the engineering application review process.

Range Road 3051 at-grade crossing is equipped with the highest level of protection including flashing warning lights and gates. However, it is suspected that it still does not meet the requirements for whistle cessation due to the existing crossing surface and approach gradients.

Range Road 3051 is a seasonal road, and not maintained in winter. As such, further upgrades may be required to bring it up to required standard for whistle cessation. In addition, the RM of Corman Park may have to change both maintenance and operation of the road to meet additional Transport Canada guidance. Under Transport Canada's regulations, a road that is not maintained or even used for parts of the year does not qualify for temporary exemption from whistling unless it is permanently and physically closed.

The first step in the process of seeking a whistle cessation order is to conduct a grade crossing safety assessment, as outlined in the Transport Canada guidelines, and prepare a report with study findings and recommendation for submission to the railway authority.

The Administration and the RM of Corman Park have agreed to cost share the contracting of an engineering consultant to complete the assessment and determine if the crossing meets the requirements for whistle cessation. The consultant will identify what further upgrades are required and develop the corresponding cost estimates. Based on the findings and report recommendations, the Administration will work with the RM of Corman Park to develop a strategy on implementing the recommendations to mitigate the train noise concerns.

Options to the Recommendation

The at-grade crossing is outside the City's jurisdiction and the option to not proceed with the study is available. The Administration does not recommend this as the noise associated with train whistles at this crossing significantly impacts Saskatoon residents.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

The commissioning of the grade crossing assessment was discussed and agreed upon with the RM of Corman Park.

Financial Implications

The City and RM of Corman Park will share the cost of the grade assessment study. It is estimated that the total cost will be approximately \$10,000, of which the City portion will be \$5,000. Funding is available in Capital Project #1456 – Railway Crossing Safety Improvements.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no communication, policy, environmental, privacy or CPTED implications, or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Upon completion of the grade crossing safety assessment, the City and the RM of Corman Park will jointly review the findings and recommendations and discuss next steps.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Report Approval

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