

APPROVAL TO STOP TRAIN WHISTLING AT RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Recommendation

That the Resolution to Stop Train Whistling at Railway Crossings 2025 as listed in Attachment 1 of the June 10, 2025, City Operations report CO03028, be approved.

Requested Action		Council decision required	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	LIVE.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A Rebuildable City	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community Safety and Well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>The Way We Move</i>, Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">March 13, 2017, City Operations report CR_3963, Whistle Cessation Update Report		

Executive Summary

- This report requests approval from Council to pass a Resolution to enact whistle cessation (trains do not whistle as they approach an intersection) at three Canadian National (CN) railway crossing sites in the City as outlined in Attachment 1.
- The stepsTransport Canada's procedures for enacting whistle cessation¹ are outlined in the Transport Canada *Apply to Stop Train Whistling at Public Crossing Procedure*. The final steps

¹ <https://tc.canada.ca/en/rail-transportation/grade-crossings/apply-stop-train-whistling-public-grade-crossing>

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require that a municipality pass a resolution stating that train whistling should not be used at these crossings.

- The safety improvements required to make this change have been implemented at these crossings to CN's satisfaction, but Council approval is needed to cease train whistling.
- Additional locations are being reviewed for whistle cessation in the future at Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) and CN rail crossings, pending further discussions with the rail companies and the completion of additional upgrades.
- Funding was approved previously and used for the necessary upgrades to the crossings for whistle cessation. No additional budget is required for this update.

REPORT

The recommendation from the March 13, 2017, City Operations report CR_3963, Whistle Cessation Update Report, for a revised Capital Profile CM-66-2520 (Traffic Signals - Pedestrian/Vehicle Safety) was approved by City Council on March 21, 2017. The report included eight locations still requiring varying levels of safety upgrades, including the installation of full active warning systems consisting of flashing lights, bells and gate arms. The Next Steps stated that Administration would pursue safety upgrades at the eight remaining high-priority rail crossing locations before whistle cessation can be enacted.

Two of the eight locations identified in the CR_3963 report, 34 Street north of 94 Avenue and 17 Street north of Hayter Road, both currently have whistle cessation enacted. One implemented through a Strathcona County agreement, and the other due to being a private crossing, respectively. Currently, only six locations remain. Of these remaining six locations, three have undergone the necessary safety improvements and received approval from the rail companies to meet the whistle cessation requirements, as identified in the safety review.

The *Transport Canada Apply to Stop Train Whistling at Public Crossing Procedure* is being followed to complete the whistle cessation process. As part of this process, the City completed a grade crossing safety assessment to identify the improvements required to qualify for whistle cessation. The results were briefly outlined in the CR_3963 report.

As part of the Transport Canada requirements, and prior to passing the resolution, Administration will be providing an update to the public, relevant organizations and associations on the intention to pass the resolution for whistle cessation at three locations. The public notice is being shared through social media and with community leagues in the communities benefiting from whistle cessation, who will be asked to distribute the notice to their members.

CN Rail representatives were also consulted and regular meetings were held throughout the process, as well as communications via email, to ensure the City and the railway company are in agreement on the required crossing safety upgrades to proceed with whistle cessation.

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Locations Ready for Whistle Cessation

Based on the safety review and the safety improvements that were completed, the three locations listed below are ready for whistle cessation and CN Rail is supportive of implementation at these crossings:

1. 162 Avenue East of 142 Street (Westlock, mile 2.90)

This crossing was upgraded from a stop sign control to a higher level of control with a new warning system, including gate arms, flashing lights and bells. This has been installed alongside the road widening at the rail crossing. A sidewalk on the south side of 162 Avenue has also been constructed. Maze barriers are not required here, as there is only a sidewalk connection and no shared pathways.

2. 167 Avenue East of 142 Street (Westlock, mile 3.26)

A sidewalk on the south side and a shared pathway on the north side have been constructed along 167 Avenue. Maze barriers have been installed for the shared pathway connection. The required stop line pavement marking for the westbound approach has also been installed.

3. 64 Avenue East of 30 Street (Camrose, mile 5.08)

Signal extensions and the appropriate pavement markings and signage have been installed. No maze barriers are required here as there are currently no shared pathway connections.

Locations Not Ready for Whistle Cessation

Work is in progress on the following three locations to get the crossings ready for whistle cessation in the near future.

1. 101 Street south of Ellerslie Road (CPKC)

Safety upgrades have been completed and the City is currently in discussions with CPKC to determine final steps before receiving support for whistle cessation from CPKC.

2. Meridian Street north of 178 Avenue (CN)

Currently awaiting developer road regrading to be completed along Meridian Street approaching the crossing. This work is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2025, when the City and CN will review the crossing.

3. 128 Avenue West of 136 Street (CN)

Safety upgrades have been completed. Additional discussion with CN is in progress to determine if additional measures are required prior to receiving approval for whistle cessation.

Next Steps

The next step for whistle cessation requires Council to approve this proposed resolution to enact whistle cessation at the three locations supported by CN as outlined in Attachment 1. Once the resolution is passed, CN will be informed through an official letter. The railway company will notify Transport Canada's Rail Safety Directorate of the effective date of whistle cessation at

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each of the crossings and provide a copy of its special instructions. CN Rail must also notify the City in writing of the whistle cessation no later than 30 days after the train whistling has stopped.

Following the implementation of whistle cessation, train operators retain the authority to sound the train whistle at their discretion in situations of imminent safety concerns. The City and railway companies are jointly responsible for monitoring and maintaining the conditions that support the cessation of train whistles.

Budget/Financial Implications

Railway companies and the City of Edmonton share the cost of implementing new railway crossings and upgrades in compliance with Transport Canada's Grade Crossings Regulations. Costs related to upgrades in support of whistle cessation are the responsibility of the City of Edmonton. The three locations for whistle cessation improvements identified in this report have been funded for completion. The City of Edmonton's funding of \$720,000, which was carried forward from 2022 to the 2023-2026 budget cycle, was used to address the funding required to meet the Grade Crossings Regulations, which include the upgrades needed for the three whistle cessation locations. As all the upgrades to the rail crossing sites have been completed, no further expenses are anticipated at this time for whistle cessation at these locations.

Legal Implications

Pursuant to section 23.1(1)(b) of the *Railway Safety Act*, RSC 1985, c 32 (4th Supp), the government of a municipality may, by resolution, declare that it agrees that a train whistle within a certain area should not be used. Prior to passing the resolution, the municipal government is required to:

1. Consult the railway company that operates the relevant line of railway
2. Notify each relevant association or organization
3. Give public notice of its intention to pass the resolution

Community Insight

As per the March 2017 council report, Administration was directed to assess the top priority railway crossings for consideration of whistle cessation in response to resident complaints. The concerns raised were regarding frequent train whistling near high-density residential areas, as train whistles do not fall under noise bylaw restrictions, as they are required for public safety reasons. Meetings with CN Rail representatives were also held throughout the process, as well as regular communications via email, to ensure the City and the railway company are in agreement with the required crossing safety upgrades to proceed with whistle cessation.

GBA+

The City wants people of all ages and abilities to move safely, easily and comfortably around Edmonton to support a healthy, thriving city. Whistle cessation reduces unnecessary noise pollution and improves the quality of life for residents in areas near train intersections.

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Environment and Climate Review

Whistle cessation reduces noise pollution that impacts residents and wildlife.

Attachment

1. Resolution to Stop Train Whistling at Railway Crossings 2025