

Village of Franklin Park

Train Horn Quiet Zone Update



April 29, 2016

The Village of Franklin Park, jointly with the Village of River Grove, has successfully completed an application for review to the agencies charged with the authority to approve a quiet zone designation from the Scott Street grade crossing to Thatcher Avenue.

A quiet zone is a designated section of railroad where train horns are not used. Metra passenger trains will continue to sound their horn when approaching the station. This designation requires specific steps be met, including completion of safety measures mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to stop the requirement for trains to use their horns as they approach the grade crossings. It is estimated that it will entail approximately one million dollars in repairs and changes be made to satisfy the federal requirements, most of which would be needed at the Metra Station pedestrian crossing and pedestrian crossing gates at Calwagner Street. The Village is looking at ways to complete these improvements in order to meet the requirements and obtain approval.

Please watch our website and newsletter for additional updates.

February 1, 2015

The Village of Franklin Park, in partnership with the Village of River Grove, is moving forward with establishing a quiet zone from the Scott Street grade crossing to Thatcher Avenue. A quiet zone is a designated section of railroad where train horns are not used. This designation requires specific steps to attain a quiet zone, including completion of safety measures mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to stop the requirement for trains to use their horns as they approach the grade crossings.

Franklin Park and River Grove Partner to Move the Process Forward

In 2013, the Village met with the Regional Director of the FRA, to discuss the possibility of both villages attaining a quiet zone designation. Signal improvements have begun at the Ruby Street crossing to reduce the potential for entrapment on the railroad tracks and should be completed later this year. Last October, a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) was established to assist in developing safety measures that would best work for the Village. Additionally, the Village hired Hancock Engineering to develop the quiet zone program.

In December, the CAB met to discuss safety improvements necessary to obtain quiet zone designation from Scott Street to Thatcher Avenue. Engineers provided data on the current risk index of all the crossings and which improvements would bring the risk down to an approvable level. The CAB agreed that placing the most effort on the three highest risk crossings (Thatcher, Des Plaines River Road, and 25th Avenue) would make the most sense. The CAB also recommended that the Village initiate the lowest cost option of channelization to present to the approving agencies.

The CAB also recommended that the option of installing additional signal gates, or quad gates at Thatcher and 25th be presented to the approving agencies should they not approve the channelization devices. The cost difference between the installation of channelization devices and quad gates is significant. The input from the CAB has been invaluable and will be used in meetings with the approving agencies.

Village Meets with Agencies to Seek Approval

On January 22nd, the Village met with the approving agencies, or Diagnostic Team, comprised of representatives from the FRA, Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois Department of Transportation, METRA and Canadian Pacific, Canadian National and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroads. The Diagnostic Team reviewed proposed improvements and will determine if they are appropriate and if any additional safety measures may be required. They also provided several additional safety measures (ASM) that would be required to attain Quiet Zone status. The Village's Engineer and consultant are evaluating this new information and will present options to the CAB at their February meeting. Because additional safety measures are required to comply with current rules, the length of time necessary to attain approval will be extended into the 4th quarter of 2016.

Once a quiet zone plan is approved by the Village, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will be filed with the Diagnostic Team and it will evaluate the proposed ASM and determine if they meet current Federal Guidelines and this review will take 8 months or more. Once any issues with the NOI are resolved the Village will design and construct the approved safety measures. Upon completion of the improvements the crossing data will be updated and the quiet zone will go into effect. The target date of implementation of the quiet zone is now late 2016. Watch the Village website and this newsletter for more updates.