

Staff Report

File #: 16-304**Version:** 1**Date:** 10/24/2016**Item #:** 3.3e.

TO: Mayor and City Council**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager**FROM:** Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director**SUBJECT:**

Railroad quiet zone along the Portland and Western Railroad at Minto Island Road S, State Street, and Court Street NE.

Ward(s): 1, 7

Councilor(s): Bennett, Bednarz

Neighborhood(s): CAN-DO, SWAN

ISSUE:

Shall City Council approve the construction of, and funding for, improvements at the railroad crossings of Minto Island Road S, State Street, and Court Street NE to establish a railroad quiet zone along the Portland and Western Railroad (a.k.a. Burlington Northern Santa-Fe Railroad)?

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council approve the construction of, and funding for, improvements at the railroad crossings of Minto Island Road S, State Street, and Court Street NE to establish a railroad quiet zone along the Portland and Western Railroad (a.k.a. Burlington Northern Santa-Fe Railroad).

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

On February 8, 2016, Council directed staff to initiate establishment of a railroad quiet zone (Quiet Zone) along the Portland and Western Railroad (P&W) at River Road S, Minto Island Road S, and State Street railroad crossings. This direction originated from a request from residents of the Rivers Condominiums.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) allows local jurisdictions to request and establish Quiet Zones within their community. A Quiet Zone prohibits locomotives from the routine sounding of their horns at public crossings unless an impending danger is identified at a crossing. The critical requirement of a Quiet Zone is that every public crossing within the Quiet Zone must be equipped

with adequate warning devices comprised of both flashing lights and gates. If any at-grade highway crossing does not have the requisite warning devices, it cannot be included in a proposed Quiet Zone. The minimum length of a Quiet Zone is one-half mile (one-quarter mile on each side of the crossing).

Public Works staff established a Diagnostic Review Team consisting of representatives from P&W, Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Division, Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad, the FRA, and City of Salem staff. The team met on July 8, 2016, as required by FRA rules, and reviewed the following crossings: Minto Island Road S, State Street, Court Street NE, and Union Street NE.

As a result of the meeting, the Diagnostic Review Team determined that Minto Island Road S, State Street, and Court Street NE are prime candidates for establishment of a Quiet Zone. These intersections have the requisite rail safety devices and require minimal work to qualify for a Quiet Zone. Union Street NE cannot be included because of its proximity to Division Street NE which is not fully equipped with gates, lights, and bells, and is within one-quarter mile of Union Street NE. River Road S was also considered for inclusion in the Quiet Zone. It, however, is outside of the Salem city limits and controlled by Marion County. County staff informed us that they are not interested in establishing a Quiet Zone at that location at this time.

The improvement project will consist of installing the proper appurtenances to improve safety at each of the subject crossings. The estimated total cost of the improvements and work required to establish the Quiet Zone is \$150,000.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. Residents have requested that the City consider creating a Quiet Zone along Front Street NE. On February 8, 2016, Council directed staff to initiate the establishment of a Quiet Zone at the River Road S, Minto Island Road S, and State Street railroad crossings.
2. Public Works staff established a Diagnostic Review team and all members agreed that Minto Island Road S, State Street, and Court Street NE are prime candidates for a Quiet Zone. The crossing at River Road S is in Marion County and they are not interested in pursuing a Quiet Zone at this time.
3. The Quiet Zone establishment process consists of the following steps: making application to ODOT Rail, issuance of a Final Crossing Order, execution of an agreement between P&W and the City, construction of improvements, notice of intent to establish Quiet Zone, notice of establishment of the Quiet Zone, and final approval by the FRA.
4. The estimated cost for design and construction of this project is \$150,000. The project will be funded by savings from the 2008 Streets and Bridges Bond program, which has sufficient savings to cover the cost of the project. The improvements are consistent with the bond covenants.

5. Staff have determined that upon Council approval of this project, the Quiet Zone could be established by early-2018 predicated on the timeliness of the P&W, ODOT Rail, and the FRA during the formal establishment process as described above.

James L. Bonnet, PE
City Engineer

Attachment:

1. Project Location Map

10/07/2016