

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**May 17, 2016**

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**SUBJECT: RAILROAD QUIET ZONE OPTIONS AT THE TRE AND MOSIER VALLEY CROSSING**

The purpose of this informal report is to provide an update on the options to improve the quality of life for residents who live near the TRE and Mosier Valley railroad crossing. Options to eliminate train horn noise include closing/removing the crossing altogether or to pursue the installation of a Quiet Zone.

Crossing Removal/Street Closure: Closing the street and removing the RR crossing would eliminate the need for the train to sound its horn. TPW staff has performed some preliminary research on the impacts of closing the crossing and includes reaching out to the Fire and Police departments, collecting traffic data to evaluate the street network impacts, the TRE (rail line owner), the Sanctuary on Texas Star HOA, and area businesses. The response was favorable from the residents and of negligible impact to the City street network since the road carries only 500 vehicles a day. The Fire and Police departments have indicated that while this could impact their service, adjustments can be made to accommodate the closure. However, several concerns were raised from the area businesses and utilities. In short, they were opposed to the closure and presented strong statements about the loss of the viable commercial access route to their business.

Quiet Zone: There are three separate Quiet Zone options that can be pursued. Each option will have a varying degree of cost and "quietness".

Wayside Horn System (WHS) is a roadside mounted device with a directional horn that sounds the horn towards the roadway and not in a 360° radius and is ~80 decibels loud instead of the ~110 decibels for a train horn. While the sound would be less than currently experienced, it is not the generally understood "quiet" that most residents expect. However, this is the most economical option and is estimated to cost ~\$100,000.

The Four-Quadrant Gate System uses four sets of crossing arms to block vehicle passage across the tracks. Vehicle sensors are also installed in between the gates to insure no vehicles are trapped on the tracks. This option provides for the typically understood "No Horn" train operation. The estimated cost of a Quad-Gate System is ~\$850,000 in addition to street/crossing improvements of ~\$750,000 for a total of \$1,600,000.

The final Quiet Zone option is a Median Barrier and is a raised curb that prevents drivers from accidentally driving around lowered crossing arms. These medians are typically 100-foot long on either side of the crossing. The challenge of this crossing is the roadway's narrow width, that approximately 30% of all traffic are trucks and the geometric alignment of crossing the track is at a 20 degree angle. As a result, the roadway would require extensive reconstruction and possible right-of-way. Using the current Calloway Cemetery Road RR quiet zone and reconstruction project by The T, this is estimated to cost ~\$2,700,000.

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Staff's top recommendation is to review the potential of providing the Four-Quadrant Gate System through funding from the proposed 2018 Bond Program if approved, because this option provides the most permanent solution. If a measure of relief is desired in the short term, the installation of the Wayside Horn System as a first step that could be done to reduce noise levels utilizing available funds from the 2014 Bond Program funds for railroad improvements.

Staff seeks council direction on moving forward with the interim relief measure with the idea of addressing the permanent solution through future funding opportunities. If you have any questions, please call Alonzo Linan at 817-392-7861.

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City Manager