



16.1

# TOWN OF NEWMARKET

Community Services  
Public Works and Environmental Services Department  
publicworks@newmarket.ca

March 22, 2007

## COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT – PWES 2007 - 23

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: Train Whistles at the Pedestrian Crossing opposite London Road  
Noise Mitigation Options

ORIGIN: Director of Public Works and Environmental Services

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**THAT Community Services Report – PWES 2007- 23 dated March 22, 2007 regarding train whistles at the Pedestrian Crossing opposite London Road - Noise Mitigation Options be received for information and the following recommendation(s) be adopted;**

- 1. THAT Council maintain the existing pedestrian crossing design and location as per status quo;**
- 2. AND THAT staff continue to monitor and report any local train whistle concerns directly to GO Transit to ensure that train whistles are employed in accordance with the requirements of Transport Canada.**

### BACKGROUND

At the regular meeting on November 22, 2004, Town Council adopted recommendations of Public Works report 2004-84. The recommendations focused on moving the GO Transit pedestrian crossing into the 2005 budget, and commenced the necessary studies and approvals.

At the regular meeting of July 18, 2005, Town Council adopted the recommendations of the Holland River Improvement Committee with the direct to begin the tender process, and the public consultation process.

A public information session was held on Wednesday October 5, 2005 at the Town Hall. Notification of the meeting was listed in the Town Page of the Era Banner as per the Town's public notification policy. At the meeting, members of Town Council and Town staff were present to field any questions, however, no one from the public attended the public information session.

**Newmarket's vision: A community well beyond the ordinary**

395 MULOCK DR., P.O. BOX 328, STN MAIN NEWMARKET, ON L3Y 4X7  
Direct Dial: 905-953-5300 ext. 2500 General Information: 905-895-5193 Fax: 905-953-5138

www.newmarket.ca

In staff's memorandums dated October 23, 2006 and January 2, 2007, we summarized various options that council could consider in response to local resident concerns about the number of train whistles which sound between the Green Lane GO Station and the Tannery Station in Newmarket.

Residents in the vicinity of London Road and Main Street have also expressed concerns about the number of train whistles emanating from the GO Train's providing service between Bradford and Toronto, especially in the early morning hours.

As we suggested in our January 7, 2007 memorandum, there are at least six options that Council could consider in the future if this continues to be an ongoing concern of the local residents in the area. Council must recognize that not all options will eliminate the noise which some residents are concerned about and some options will be costly with capital budget implications. For easy reference, the six options are listed below followed by a detailed analysis of each.

The issue of pedestrians crossing Main Street at London Road in order to use the GO Transit crossing will be a subject of another detailed and separate report due to the required further pedestrian count information and warrant analysis required.

#### **Option 1 – Maintain current situation (newly constructed pedestrian crossing)**

This option was a joint effort between the Town and GO Transit to provide a safe access for pedestrians living in the area west of the track. It became apparent over the years that pedestrian access was at this location and therefore the Town and GO Transit proceeded to construct a safe pedestrian access crossing. The total cost to construct the crossing was approximately \$100,000.00 including engineering and the cost for a flag person during construction.

Although this option provides a safer access for pedestrians there is an ongoing noise issue with the introduction of an additional required train whistle between the Green Lane and the Tannery Station.

#### **Option 2 – Remove the pedestrian crossing and re-instate**

This option, although it eliminates the additional train whistle noise issue that residents are concerned about reverts the area to it's original condition and again creates an unsafe crossing for those residents that cross at this location.

Since the construction of this access approximately six months ago, pedestrians have now become accustomed to this access as an opportunity to cross the tracks with access to George Richardson Park and areas east. Eliminating this access will now create some confusion in the minds of pedestrians who use it on a frequent basis. The cost to remove and re-instate is approximately \$50,000.00. This option is least desirable.

#### **Option 3 – Invoke a whistle ban**

To implement a whistle ban, gates would have to be installed at an approximate cost of \$200,000.00. The gates would be regulated by Transport Canada under guidelines for eliminating whistles. It usually takes about one year to adopt a whistle ban and can only be

pursued after the crossing has been in operation for six months. This process can begin at any time. UMA, a consulting firm working on behalf of GO Transit, conducts safety assessments at all crossings to evaluate the effect of whistles and certain criteria must be met in order to implement a whistle ban. With this process, all stakeholders will have to approve the whistle ban, those being GO Transit, Transport Canada, the Town and finally CN. Other municipalities are considering whistle bans in York Region; however, along regional roads it is problematic since the Region is not receptive to this whistle ban implementation on their road system due to liability concerns. It takes about one year to fully evaluate a location for imposing a whistle ban.

#### **Option 4 - Consider a wayside horn**

Subsequent to our January 7, 2007 memorandum, we received a copy of a report from Transport Canada on wayside horn evaluation project. A wayside horn system is an auditory warning system equivalent to a locomotive horn; however, the locomotive horn does not sound at the designated location. There are no standards or guidelines for wayside horns in Canada and both Transport Canada and Canadian Railways need to be in a position to identify the characteristic wayside site horns that are necessary to make them an effective or at least safety neutral in comparison with the locomotive horns they are replacing. There appears to be no ability with the fixed on/off pattern of the wayside horn to adjust to circumstances and it is therefore suggested in the report, that the repeating pattern be 3.5 seconds on and 1 second off. In this way, there are no intervals exceeding one second without warning. At the time of preparing this memorandum, there have been no costs available to implement the wayside horn system as studies have just been completed.

#### **Option 5 - Consideration of a pedestrian bridge and eliminate the level crossing**

This option would involve eliminating the level crossing and constructing a pedestrian bridge across the tracks eliminating the need for any warning system and an additional locomotive horn which would effectively satisfy the noise concern of the residents while maintaining a safe access across the track.

To meet all code requirements and provide access, a zig-zag pattern would be required for ramping to meet the requirements and would cost approximately \$500,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 including all engineering and contingencies. This option, although costly, allows for safe pedestrian access and eliminates the addition of the train whistle and the need of a wayside horn.

#### **Option 6 - Consider a combined pedestrian and vehicular bridge**

This option is by far the most elaborate of all the options reviewed and one which is the most costly.

A combined pedestrian and vehicular structural bridge spanning not only the tracks but also the Holland River, will not only provide safe access for pedestrians eliminating one train whistle and the need for a wayside horn, but will also provide vehicular access from the existing residential development to the area east of the Holland River without using either Davis Drive or Green Lane. The total cost including engineering and contingencies to provide the structure would be approximately \$6,000,000.00.

