



Memorandum

Date: July 16, 2015
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Thomas C. Larsen, Traffic Operations Manager
Subject: Recommended Phasing for Potential Railroad Quiet Zone

City Council on March 9, 2015, asked for a review of all the railroad crossings in Eugene and a high-level analysis of what would be required to include all Eugene railroad crossings in a future citywide "railroad quiet zone." This memo provides detailed information about each of the rail lines in Eugene and offers recommendations for a phased approach to achieve a citywide railroad quiet zone.

OVERVIEW

Rail crossings in the Eugene area can be divided into three major groups: the Union Pacific mainline through downtown and along Northwest Expressway, the Portland & Western line running north-south parallel to Highway 99, and the combination of Union Pacific and Coos Bay Line running through the industrial portions of west Eugene. See map on page 4 for reference.

Within the Eugene urban growth boundary there are 25 mainline at-grade public rail crossings with multiple daily train crossings, 14 minor at-grade public crossings with occasional weekly or monthly train crossings and over two dozen private at-grade crossings. Of the mainline at-grade crossings 18 are under City jurisdiction and seven are Lane County's. Many of the minor or private crossings are used very little, some to the point of appearing abandoned or not having been used in years. The records for the private crossings are not well detailed. Some have been closed according to the federal data base, yet tracks appear to remain in place; others are listed yet no tracks are in evidence.

By far the majority of trains are operated on the Union Pacific mainline tracks. Together with Amtrak trains and including three Lane County crossings, the Union Pacific mainline is responsible for over 90% of the routine crossings horns within the urban growth boundary.

UNION PACIFIC MAINLINE

When first proposed in 2005, discussion of a railroad quiet zone in Eugene was focused on the most impacted corridor, the 10 Union Pacific mainline at-grade crossings in and near downtown, extending from 8th and Hilyard on the east to Van Buren on the west. The Union Pacific mainline is the busiest rail corridor in Eugene, with 19 to 23 trains per day. This 1.5-mile-long segment has the greatest number of crossings where horns are required to be sounded, the greatest percentage of train horn sounding (with almost 70% of routine train horn sounding for public crossings in Eugene is generated at these 10 crossings), and the greatest density of homes and businesses near

the tracks. The six central crossings in this segment are one block apart with crossings at Lincoln, Lawrence, Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe.

Outside the downtown segment, the Union Pacific mainline extends north along Northwest Expressway and south through Glenwood. South of 8th and Hilyard there are no at-grade crossings in the city, thus no requirement to sound train horns. The closest at-grade crossing south of Eugene is outside the urban growth boundary at 19th in Glenwood. North of Van Buren to the urban growth boundary, the Union Pacific mainline has three at-grade crossings, all under Lane County jurisdiction. These three - Irving Road, Irvington Road and Awbrey Lane - are all equipped with standard actuated entry crossing gates which close as a train approaches. Over 20% of the additional routine train horn sounding is generated at these three Lane County crossings.

The three northern Lane County crossings are more than one half mile apart and could be treated individually for quiet zone status.

PORTLAND & WESTERN MAINLINE

The Portland & Western RR operates from near 6th and Garfield to the northern urban growth boundary, with tracks just east of the Highway 99 right of way. Portland & Western operates seven major at-grade crossings; four of these - Garfield Street, Roosevelt Boulevard, Bethel Drive and Prairie Road - are within the City's jurisdiction. These city crossings contribute less than 3% of the horn sounding in Eugene.

Irving, Enid and Awbrey Roads are jurisdictionally Lane County's and contribute less than 2% of routine horn sounding. The Enid and Awbrey Road crossings feature stop signs on the road approaches and do not have standard actuated entry gates. By Federal Railroad Administration rule, before any crossing can be considered for a quiet zone it must first be equipped with actuated crossing gates. Adding standard crossing gates to these crossings would require advance detection, roughly estimated by Union Pacific to be about \$1 million per crossing, just for the detection, gates are extra. The rest of the P&W mainline crossings have existing actuated gates.

Portland & Western also has five minor at-grade crossings - two on Garfield Street, one each on Cleveland, Cherry and Grant streets. All are stop or yield controlled. In addition to the 13 public crossings, P&W has 14 private crossings for a total of 27 crossings listed in the Federal Railroad Administration database. The four city crossings on the mainline are more than one-half mile apart and could be considered separately for quiet zone status.

WEST EUGENE COOS BAY/UNION PACIFIC

In addition to the 13 mainline crossings previously mentioned, Union Pacific is listed as the operator for 12 additional public crossings in the industrial corridor extending west from 1st and Chambers to the Eugene UGB at Greenhill Road. The western line ultimately becomes the Coos Bay Line. Union Pacific is listed as operating the four mainline crossings at Garfield, Seneca, Bertelsen and Danebo. These four crossings are all served by existing actuated crossing gates and are listed as having three or four trains per day. However, the number of daily trains listed in the Federal Railroad database for the western mainline crossings appears to be higher than the actual number of trains. Using the federal numbers, these crossings contribute less than 4% of routine horn sounding.

Union Pacific also operates eight minor crossings, including two additional crossings on Seneca, and one each at Garfield, West 1st, West 5th, West 7th, West 7th Place, and McKinley Street. These minor crossings are all stop or yield controlled. There are no actuated gates at these minor crossings. Union Pacific is shown in the Federal Railroad Administration as operating 16 to 20 private crossings in west Eugene. There is duplication and ambiguity in the private crossing numbers. The last crossing on the western mainline is at Greenhill Road. It is shown as belonging to and operated by the Coos Bay Line and is jurisdictionally a Lane County crossing. It is stop controlled and has no actuation. In addition the Coos Bay line is shown on the Federal Railroad Administration database as operating four private crossings.

All four Union Pacific crossing under city jurisdiction are more than one-half mile apart and could be considered separately for quiet zone status.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Phase One

Based on the concentration of crossings and the potential for reduction in horn sounding, the central core should remain as the first phase of obtaining a railroad quiet zone. This central core represents the greatest concentration of horns and offers the greatest reduction in horn sounding for the required investment. The first phase is estimated to cost \$7.4 million and results in about a 69% decrease in routine horn sounding in Eugene. All the crossings are in City jurisdiction and only the Union Pacific Railroad is involved. This section should remain as the highest priority. Closing at least two existing crossings is critical to railroad and Federal Rail Administration support for a quiet zone. While funding is yet to be identified, public outreach and community involvement should move ahead.

Additional City Phases

The four city jurisdiction crossings on the Portland & Western mainline comprise a project phase. The proximity to housing and regular use of the tracks makes this an important priority. Upgrading the Eugene crossings on the Portland & Western line is estimated to cost \$2.8 million and eliminate roughly 2.5% of horns.

Another phase would deal with the west Eugene industrial area railroads. The city portion is Union Pacific owned. A quiet zone on the four crossings in the UP section is estimated to cost \$4 million and eliminate roughly 4% of horns.

Lane County Crossings within the Urban Growth Boundary

Almost 25% of the routine horn sounding within the urban growth boundary takes place at Lane County crossings. Financing and jurisdictional issues would need to be resolved prior to including Lane County crossings in an area-wide quiet zone.

- Adding the three Lane County crossings into a Union Pacific mainline quiet zone would silence an additional 22%% of train horn sounding at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million.
- Adding the Lane County portion of the Portland & Western line is estimated to cost \$6 million and eliminate an estimated 1.5% of horns.
- The Lane County crossing of the Coos Bay line is estimated to cost \$1.5 million and eliminate less than 1% of train horns.

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Railroad Mainlines in Eugene

