



City of Saginaw

Meeting Date: 6/26/2018

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Director of Public Works

Agenda Item: 8
(CC-0618-20)

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SUBJECT: Policy Discussion regarding Quiet Zones

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

The information attached to this item is for a general discussion of railroad quiet zones and the process of permitting them through the Federal Railroad Administration. The attachments provide a brief overview and a process schematic.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Attachments

Quiet Zone Overview

Quiet Zone Process Schematic

Railroad Quiet Zones

Quiet Zones Background

The Federal Railroad Administration Train Horn Rule (49 CFR 222) sets the requirements for the use of train horns at public street crossings.

The rules require that train horns must:

- Be within 96 and 110 decibels
- Be sounded between 15 and 20 seconds before reaching a crossing
- Be sounded no more than a quarter of a mile from a crossing if the train speed exceeds 60 mph
- Be sounded if a person is on or near a track
- Be sounded while moving through a tunnel

On June 24, 2005 the Federal Railroad adopted a final rule “Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Railroad Grade Crossings – Final Rule” that allowed Quiet Zones to respond to “quality of life” concerns.

Federal Railroad Administration Criteria

- Quiet Zone Risk Index¹ less than or equal to Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold²
- Crossing length is ½ mile or greater
- Crossing is gated with signals
- Supplemental Safety Measures are in place (i.e. gates with medians)

Quiet Zone Operation

- “No Horn” boundary is ¼ of a mile either side of crossing
- Trains are not prohibited from using horns when an emergency exists

¹ Quiet Zone Risk Index – average risk for all public highway-rail grade crossings in the quiet zone, including the additional risk for absence of train horns and any reduction of risks due to the risk mitigation measures.

² Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold - level of risk calculated annually by averaging the risk at all of the Nation’s public highway-rail grade crossings equipped with flashing lights and gates where train horns are routinely sounded.

Railroad Quiet Zone Process

