



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: October 26, 2004
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Referral to: None

Subject: Railroad Quiet Zones

Recommendation:
Receive and file

Previous Directives:
9/14/04 – Information presented regarding Railroad Quiet Zone Study. Report received and filed.

Prepared by: John R. Hotvet, P.E., Traffic Operations Engineer, 673-2743

Approved by:

Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Jon Wertjes, P.E., Director of Traffic and Parking Services

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information Attached

On September 14 we presented information about a Railroad Quiet Zone study that we have undertaken to comply with a recently passed Federal law. At that time we indicated that we would conduct an engineering study and submit the study to you on October 12, 2004. This study, if approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), will permit the City to continue its whistle ban for up to another five years while a plan to bring all grade crossings into compliance is developed and construction is completed. The study includes field inventory, risk assessments and calculations plus documentation of conclusions and recommendations.

The engineering study has not been completed yet, because the "Quiet Zone Calculator," which is administered by the FRA, has not been working. This calculator is used to perform risk calculations for each corridor. We have finished the field inventory of all the grade crossings in Minneapolis, but we are unable to do the risk calculations. In addition, a meeting was held with the railroads and FRA to keep everyone apprised of the study. We have been told by the FRA that the calculator will be up and running in late October.

Two new items of interest came up in the recent meeting with the FRA:

- First, the scope of the study has been broadened to include private crossings in the inventory, which we estimate to be about 20 in number. These crossings must be included in the study, but the financial impact to the City will be miniscule compared to the public crossings. Private crossings in a quiet zone area must be protected by railroad crossbucks, stop signs, and advance warning signs notifying people of the quiet zone. This cost is estimated at \$1,000 per crossing.
- The second item is a time extension to submit the report to the FRA. The original deadline was December 18, 2004, but with the risk calculator difficulties, the deadline for submittal has been extended to January 10, 2005.

It is our intention to return to Committee on November 23 with the results of the engineering study, so that it can be submitted to the FRA well before the January 10, 2005 deadline.