

ITEM 29

MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 51

COUNCIL MEETING July 22/74

Re: Train Whistles
(Item 6, Report No. 29, April 16, 1974)

Council is aware of the fact that train whistles at crossings, and the attendant question of possible alternative means of signalization at crossings, is the subject of an investigation by the Traffic Division of the Engineering Department. Following is a further report on this matter from the Municipal Engineer.

This is for the information of Council.

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TO: Municipal Manager

July 18, 1974

From: Municipal Engineer

Re: Anti-whistling By-law (Trains)
Progress Report for the Information of Council

The last progress report on the subject of an anti-whistling by-law dated April 16, 1974 advised that the necessary documents to initiate consideration by the Federal Railway Transport Committee, who control regulations governing inter-provincial railways, and the Provincial Department of Transportation and Communications who control railways operated solely within the Province (B.C. Hydro and B.C. Railway), had been mailed to both parties on March 11, 1974 and April 3, 1974 respectively.

Railway Transport Committee

We received confirmation from the Secretary, Railway Transport Committee, on March 26, 1974 advising that documents had been received and that we would be contacted in due course for on site inspections.

On Monday and Tuesday, May 13 and 14, 1974 representatives of the Municipality met with representatives of the D.O.T., C.N.R., C.P.R., and the Burlington Northern Railway to inspect those crossings regulated by the D.O.T.

All crossings along the C.P.R. line adjacent to Burrard Inlet are private crossings and would not be covered by our proposed by-law.

Crossings along the Central Valley line are in the majority of cases across public highways and under the present requirements of the Railway Act require the train engineer to sound his whistle. Before the D.O.T. will even consider the elimination of a train whistle on a crossing approach they will require that such crossings have adequate protection. This usually involves signals and where there is more than one track, crossing gates. The initial cost of such signal installations runs between \$25,000 and \$30,000 each. In addition, the yearly maintenance costs are presently \$950 per signal.

Should a signal be installed under the normal warrant system, the grade crossing fund would pay 80% of installation costs while the railway and Municipality pay 7½% and 12½% respectively. The Board of Transport Commissioners usually direct the maintenance costs to be shared equally between the railway and the road authority. However, should a signal be installed as a requirement of a municipalities enactment of an anti-whistling by-law, then the municipality would normally be required to bear all the costs of signal installation and maintenance.

If we were to take into consideration the possible signal requirements of the Central Valley Line (Burlington Northern) as a requirement of an anti-whistling by-law we could be required to install signals at five crossings, one on the main line at Piper Avenue that is now protected by stop signs and four along the main spur line into Lake City. The installation costs would be approximately \$130,000 with a yearly maintenance charge of about \$4,750. If these same crossings were to be protected under a normal warrant procedure our share of installation costs would be about \$16,250 and annual maintenance would be \$2,375.

We have reason to believe that all five crossings now have a combination of rail and highway traffic that would meet the requirements of the Board of Transport Commissioners for contributions from the crossing fund.

In view of the above we felt that we should waste no time in applying for a cost sharing agreement at the five crossings. We therefore made application for these signals on June 25, 1974 and received confirmation of our applications on July 8, 1974.

All rail lines in the Big Bend Area come under the control of the D.O.T. and were inspected at the same time as the Central Valley line.

As it now stands all field inspections and input from the Municipality related to crossings controlled by the D.O.T. have been completed and we have now only to wait for the final conditions that will be a requirement of the Railway Transport Committee should the Municipality wish to enact an anti-whistling by-law.

Provincial Department of Communications and Transportation

Those rail crossings of the Central Park line are under the control of the Provincial Department of Communications and Transportation and must be commented on by that office. To date we have received no formal replies to our submitted documents of April 3, 1974.

During the inspection of crossings by the D.O.T. the Provincial representative, a Mr. Mester, was invited along. He did not attend the field checks but sat in on a meeting that concluded the field inspections. When asked for his comments on the subject he was very non-committal except to state that his office felt that all crossings on the Central Park line should be protected by stop signs regardless of an anti-whistling by-law.

We contacted the local office of the Department of Transportation and Communications by telephone on July 15, 1974 and were informed that their Mr. Mester, who was working on this file, was no longer with them. We were advised to contact the Chief Inspector, Mr. Turnbull, regarding the present status of this subject. Unfortunately, Mr. Turnbull had just gone on a two week vacation. A message was left to have him contact our office on his return.

As it now stands we have no final directives from either Government on the action required on crossing protection should we introduce an anti-whistling by-law in Burnaby. Any comments received from either Board will be forwarded for the information of Council.

As a point of interest, we would advise that any anti-whistling directive from the Board of Transport Commission applies only to crossings and still leaves it to the discretion of the train engineer who can sound a whistle if, in his opinion, the crossing is a hazardous one. Also, an anti-whistling directive does not cover sounding whistles along the main line where there are sight problems or where the engineer has knowledge that track crews are in the general area. Another area of operation that involves whistles but would not be covered by our by-law would be shunting operations.

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cc: Traffic Supervisor


ACTING MUNICIPAL ENGINEER