

Some northwest residents want train whistles silenced

BY GORDON KENT, EDMONTON JOURNAL JANUARY 29, 2015

EDMONTON - Northwest Edmonton residents want to stuff a sock in that lonesome train whistle.

People living near the CN line beside 142nd Street want Transport Canada to lift requirements for trains to signal when they cross 162nd Avenue and 167th Avenue, says a report released Thursday.

The province owns the land on which the 167th Avenue crossing is located in the transportation and utilities corridor, and doesn't want to seek the sound of silence.

The city would have to pay for a \$50,000 safety assessment at 162nd Avenue.

If the change was approved, the cost of control signs with flashing warning beacons or possibly full signals might be as high as \$500,000, which could also be entirely on the city's bill.

Coun. Bev Esslinger, who represents the area, said this work is normally done when roads are built, but in this case the surrounding houses have grown up beside the tracks.

"Into the evening, putting kids to bed, loud whistling happens. It's disrupting them," said Esslinger, who sometimes hears the trains from her home many blocks away.

"They blow a warning whistle when they approach the crossing and another when they go through ... It's not just a little toot."

There's already whistle cessation in place for 153rd Avenue, while the city built an underpass on 137th Avenue to avoid traffic problems at the tracks.

Esslinger was surprised by the potential costs to stop the whistles.

She wants to find out more about the circumstances in which the report, being discussed Wednesday by council's transportation committee, says the city see some expenses covered.

"We have a responsibility to do what we can ... We understand we don't have a lot of control when it comes to CN and CP, but it doesn't hurt to ask the questions."