

Village of New Lenox

Tuesday, December 21, 2010

Fund Quiet Zone Improvements

Village Resolution Authorizes Canadian National Agreement to Fund Quiet Zone Improvements

New Lenox officials at their December 20th Village Board Meeting announced that Canadian National Railway Co. has agreed to fund the design and installation of Quiet Zone improvements at five railroad crossings in and adjacent to the Village.

The improvements will be made at the Gougar, Nelson, Cedar, Spencer and Schoolhouse Road crossings. They are part of a mitigation agreement approved on December 20th between the Village of New Lenox and the Canadian National Railway Co.

Mayor Tim Baldermann supported the agreement. "We are pleased to announce this agreement. This mitigation agreement will benefit Village and Township residents alike through the elimination of blaring train whistles on the CN line through New Lenox. The Village and CN have negotiated Quiet Zone improvements along the entire stretch of the CN rail line between Gougar Road to east of Schoolhouse Road.

The improvements include constant warning time circuitry at all five locations. Once the Quiet Zone has been implemented, CN will fund the additional measures needed to maintain the Quiet Zone designation of the former Elgin, Joliet & Eastern line in and around the Village should CN train volumes increase in those areas.

Under a memorandum of agreement between the Village Board and Grand Trunk Corp., a U.S. subsidiary and owner of the U.S. rail operating subsidiaries of Canadian National, the railway company also has agreed to contribute \$500,000 toward preliminary engineering and assessment of options for a grade separation at Gougar Road.

Although the Gougar Road crossing is in unincorporated New Lenox, Village officials believe it is important to the community's present and future transportation network.

CN also agreed to pay New Lenox \$240,000 for noise and visual mitigation. The Village will use the funds to construct mitigation elements on non-railroad property adjacent to the right of ways.

The railroad company agreed to abide by New Lenox's Train Blockage Protocol. The protocol establishes a call list of municipal officials should a CN train block a roadway for more than 10 minutes without train movement or a signal malfunction that causes the railroad crossing arms to block the roadway.

Under the agreement, CN also agreed to provide:

- Emergency response training, both in-house and off-site, to New Lenox's first responders;
- A web-based system to monitor the location and direction of trains that will help in the event of an emergency;
- A fee waiver for all existing municipal utility license agreements between CN and New Lenox for 10 years. CN will convey up to four easements for municipal utility crossings at no charge for 10 years from December 20, 2010, the effective date of the agreement.

In addition, CN agreed to cooperate with New Lenox in the annexation of CN's railroad right-of-way in unincorporated Will County and contiguous to the Village if New Lenox chooses to annex all or a portion of the unincorporated right-of-way.

In return, the Village will not pursue further action from either the Surface Transportation Board or the Appellate Court.

“After two and a half years of working with our governmental partners in Will County Government and negotiating with the CN, we feel that we have reached an agreement that looks out for New Lenox and the residents today and in the future.”