

NO: **R194**

COUNCIL DATE: **October 17, 2011**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor and Council**

DATE: **October 11, 2011**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering**

FILE: **5405-30**

SUBJECT: **Cessation of Train Whistling along the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor**

RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Support the cessation of train whistling at the crossings of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks at 184 Street and 56 Avenue, at the crossings of the BC Railway Company tracks at 127A Street, 144 Street, 148 Street, 160 Street, 164 Street and 168 Street, and at the crossing of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway tracks at 127A Street, all of which are along the Roberts Bank Railway Corridor (RBRC) in Surrey;
2. Direct staff to bring forward for the necessary readings the necessary By-law and to meet with the appropriate officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, BC Railway and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway, respectively, with a view to achieving the cessation of train whistling along the RBRC in Surrey; and
3. Authorize staff as part of the RBRC Program to implement safety improvements in support of the cessation of train whistling at the at-grade railway crossings along the RBRC as required by the respective Safety Authorities having jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

A principal objective of the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program is to minimize the impacts to nearby residents of increased train traffic resulting from increased port capacity. Impacts are being reduced by means of road/rail grade separations and the cessation of train whistling at at-grade crossings.

Along the RBRC, the railway lines are owned by BC Railway Company (BCR), Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) as illustrated on the map attached as Appendix I. In addition, Canadian National Railway (CNR) and Southern Railway of British Columbia (SRY) operate trains on these rail lines.

Operation of the railways is subject to regulatory bodies with responsibilities for public safety. In the case of BCR the regulatory body is the BC Safety Authority while the CPR and BNSF are regulated by Transport Canada. Since train whistling at level crossings is a safety precaution, decisions regarding whistling regulations require the formal approval of these respective agencies.

A formal process is in place for municipalities to apply for approval to relieve the railway companies and their train crews from the responsibility for whistling at level (at-grade) crossings. In relation to the BCR the municipality is required to pass a By-law supporting the cessation of whistling, then BCR and the BC Safety Authority advise the municipality of what safety enhancements are required to support such a cessation. For the BNSF and the CPR, Transport Canada requires a Council Resolution rather than a By-law.

Once a By-law or Council Resolution is adopted it is expected that the required installations, inspections, approvals, etc., will take several months to complete.

DISCUSSION

To achieve the cessation of train whistling, full crossing signals with gates must usually be installed at the level crossing along with such geometric and sight-line improvements as are deemed necessary by the responsible safety authority. In the case of the BCR crossings at 127A Street, 144 Street, 148 Street, 160 Street, 164 Street and 168 Street, the costs will be borne by the RBRC Program with 100% of the funding provided by Transport Canada, Port Metro Vancouver, and the railway companies. In the case of the CPR crossings at 184 Street and at 56 Avenue, gated crossing protection is already in place and additional improvements are anticipated to be minimal, if any. These crossing locations are illustrated on the map attached as Appendix II.

Train whistle noise has been the subject of resident complaints along other railway corridors in Surrey; primarily along the BNSF corridor in the Crescent Beach area, and along the SRY corridor through the Newton and Kennedy areas. With respect to Crescent Beach, the Engineering Department is currently working in consultation with the Crescent Beach Residents Association toward resolving their concerns with BNSF Railway and the process for cessation of train whistling for Crescent Beach is expected to be initiated in due course. Staff will also be initiating a similar process with the appropriate authorities for whistle cessation along the other railway corridors in Surrey.

CONCLUSION

To initiate the process related to the cessation of train whistling at the level (at-grade) crossings along the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor through Surrey, the process established by the applicable Safety Authorities requires that Council adopt a resolution requesting whistle cessation at the crossings involving CP Rail and BNSF Railway tracks and adopt a by-law related to the cessations of whistling at the crossings of the BC Railway Company. It is therefore recommended that Council:

- Support the cessation of train whistling at the crossings of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks at 184 Street and 56 Avenue, at the crossings of the BC Railway Company tracks at 127A Street, 144 Street, 148 Street, 160 Street, 164 Street and 168 Street, and at the crossing of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway tracks at 127A Street, all of which are along the Roberts Bank Railway Corridor (RBRC) in Surrey;

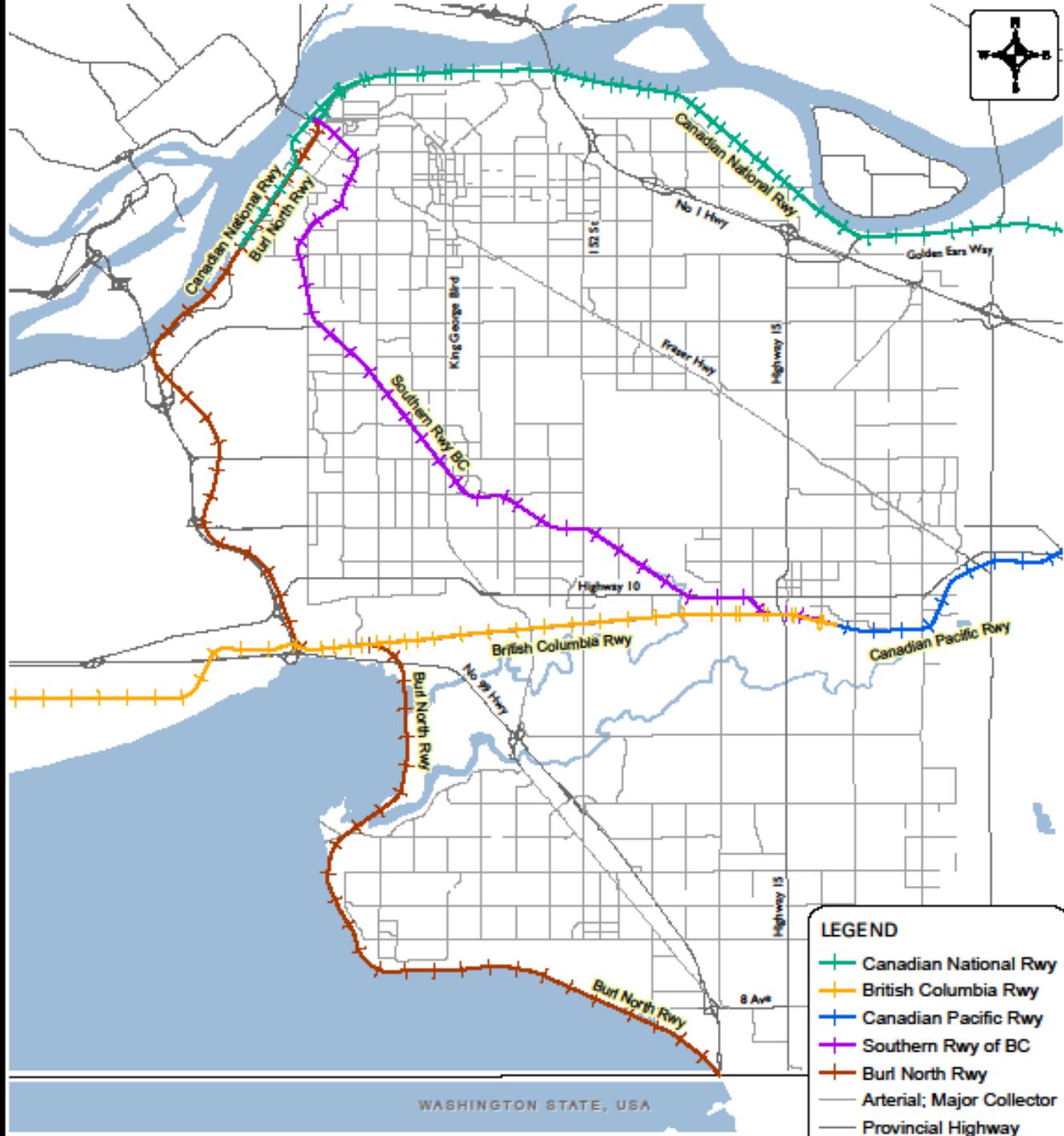
- Direct staff to bring forward for the necessary readings the necessary By-law and to meet with the appropriate officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, BC Railway and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway, respectively, with a view to achieving the cessation of train whistling along the RBRC in Surrey; and
- Authorize staff as part of the RBRC Program to implement safety improvements in support of the cessation of train whistling at the at-grade railway crossings along the RBRC as required by the respective Safety Authorities having jurisdiction.

Vincent Lalonde, P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering

KZ/brb

Appendix I - Map of Railway Lines in Surrey Including the Roberts Bank Railway Corridor
Appendix II - Map of Locations Where the Cessation of Train Whistling is Being Pursued

APPENDIX I



Produced by GIS Section: October 11, 2011, JJR



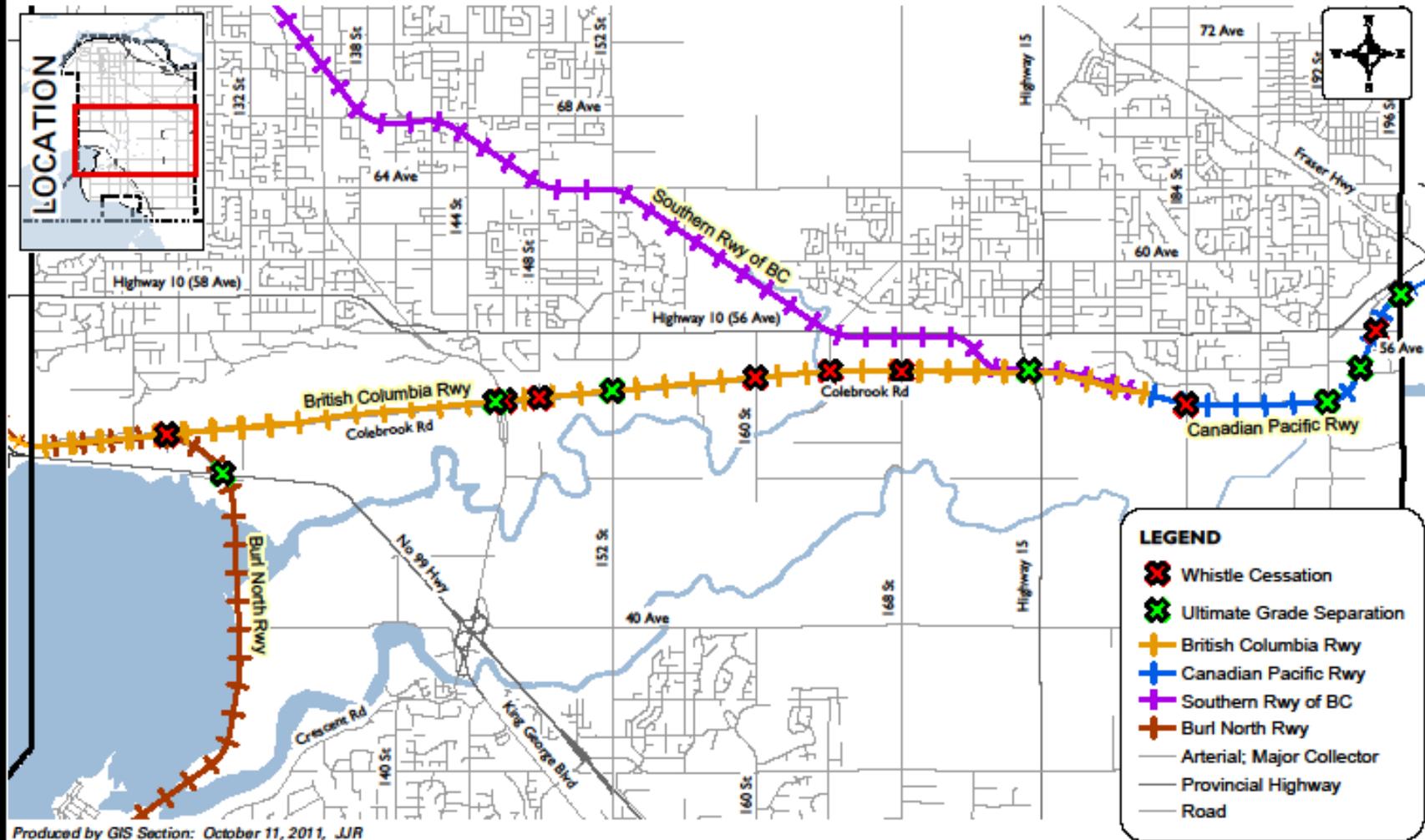
RAILWAY LINES IN SURREY

ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT

The data provided is compiled from various sources and IS NOT warranted as to its accuracy or sufficiency by the City of Surrey.
This information is provided for information and convenience purposes only.
Lot sizes, Legal descriptions and encumbrances must be confirmed at the Land Title Office.

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APPENDIX II



RAILWAY CROSSINGS FOR WHISTLE CESSATION

ENGINEERING
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