

RAILROAD QUIET ZONE PROJECT UPDATE

The Town of Hamburg has received a total of \$525,000 in Federal and State funding for the establishment of railroad quiet zones at grade crossings within the Town. During the spring of 2014, construction work was completed for creating railroad quiet zones at the CSX and Norfolk Southern grade crossings on Rogers Road and Cloverbank Road. These quiet zones went into effect on June 24, 2014. Since that time, trains have been prohibited by Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations from using their horns at these crossings, except in situations where the train engineer observes an imminent danger along the tracks. In that \$300,000 in Federal highway funding still remains available for this project, the Town has been looking into the possibility of expanding the quiet zones to include the following grade crossings:

- Bayview Road (CSX and Norfolk Southern)
- Pleasant Avenue (CSX and Norfolk Southern)
- Lakeview Road (CSX and Norfolk Southern)

This would be accomplished through the installation of the same type of supplemental safety measures that were utilized at the Rogers Road and Cloverbank Road locations (mountable medians with reflective channelization devices installed along the centerline of the highway approaches to these crossings), as shown in the photos below. In addition, pavement resurfacing work would be performed along the highway approaches prior to the installation of the medians, in order to improve the condition of the roadway and stability of the shoulders in the project area.

For the Pleasant Avenue location, it is noted that the south side of the Norfolk Southern crossing is located too close to the Versailles Road intersection to comply with the 60 feet minimum length required by FRA for the installation of the medians as an acceptable supplemental safety measure. However, based on recent conversations with FRA, the Town is including this crossing for further analysis and submittal of an application to FRA requesting their consideration and approval of an alternative safety measure that would allow a shorter length of median (40 feet +/-) to be installed at this location.

In that Pleasant Avenue and Lakeview Road are County highways, the Town has had discussions with Erie County Highway officials relative to their requirements in this regard. The County informed the Town that they would allow the proposed installations only if the Town agrees to takeover substantial portions of these roads, which the County would upgrade to a condition acceptable to the Town prior to the transfer of ownership. Although several meetings have been held in this regard, the Town and County have not to date have been able to mutually agree on acceptable lengths of these highways to be taken over by the Town.

Assuming that the Town will be able to reach an acceptable agreement with the County for the installations on Pleasant Avenue and Lakeview Road, the Town has proceeded with initiating the preliminary engineering design work necessary for establishing the additional railroad quiet zones at these crossings, as well as on Bayview Road which is a Town highway. In

order to have the Federal funding allocated for this purpose, an Initial Project Proposal form and associated documents were prepared and submitted to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Following a required review and approval process by various entities, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council added the project to the Transportation Improvement Program. This then allowed NYSDOT to prepare and issue the Federal funding agreement to the Town. The Town Board adopted an authorizing resolution for this agreement on 1/26/15, and the signed agreement was returned to NYSDOT on 2/3/15 for final execution by appropriate State agency officials.

By 1/27/15 resolution, the Town retained Erdman Anthony Engineers for providing the preliminary engineering services for this project, as an amendment to their previous engineering contract with the Town for the Rogers Road and Cloverbank Road railroad quiet zone project. They have started their work in this regard and performed the necessary site survey work in the area of each of the crossings. It is expected that the design work will be completed by the end of this year, pending timely reviews and approvals by NYSDOT, FRA, and the railroads during the design process, as well as a favorable outcome in the ongoing negotiations with the County.

After an agreement is reached with the County for the Pleasant Avenue and Lakeview Road portions of the project, the County will need to undertake a project to resurface the roads and perform other necessary improvements. The Town will also need to prepare and issue a Notice of Intent for the project and have the USDOT Grade Crossing Inventory Forms updated in compliance with FRA requirements in this regard. Also, CSX will need to install necessary equipment at their crossings (power out indicators), and railroad right-of-entry permits will need to be obtained by the Town's construction contractor for the project. Based on these factors, it is considered that the earliest that the quiet zone construction could take place is Spring 2016. Upon the completion of construction, FRA requires that a Notice of Establishment be issued by the Town, following which a minimum 21 day period is necessary before the quiet zones go into effect.

Copies of various documents from the currently proposed and previously completed quiet zone projects are available for review in the Town documents section of the Town of Hamburg website, which can be accessed as follows:

http://www.townofhamburgny.com/Important_Town_Documents-117736.html

Prepared by: Town of Hamburg Engineering Dept.
Date Issued: April 16, 2015



Rogers Road Railroad Quiet Zone Installation



Cloverbank Road Railroad Quiet Zone Installation