



Department of Public Works
Infrastructure Services Division

Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Director of Operations

Jeffrey S. Polenske
City Engineer

November 22, 2004

*Letter was written
prior to receipt of
attached notice from
FRA*

To the Honorable, the Common Council

Subject: Ordinance Resolution Establishing a
Quiet Zone at West Waterford Avenue

Dear Council Members:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has published an Interim Final Rule regarding the use of Locomotive Horns at Highway – Rail Grade Crossings. The rule establishes guidelines for the creation of quiet zones within municipalities. The final rule is scheduled to go into effect on December 18, 2004.

In response to numerous citizen complaints, we wish to create a quiet zone near the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPRail) crossing at West Waterford Avenue. This is the only at-grade crossing along this line from the south City limits to North Plankinton Avenue, and it is a good candidate for the creation of a quiet zone.

In order for a quiet zone to be established under the FRA rule, it must be shown that the risk level at all of the at-grade crossings within the proposed quiet zone will be below the Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT), without the train horns being sounded. The NSRT is the average risk index of all public, gated crossings in the nation at which train horns are sounded.

The crossing at West Waterford Avenue is currently equipped with a single gate on each side of the crossing in the direction of auto travel, as well as flashing red beacons and advance warning signs. Even though the crossing is equipped with gates, some motorists choose to ignore down gates at railroad crossings, and weave their vehicles around the gates, creating a hazardous situation. A two-track crossing, such as the one at West Waterford Avenue, may give motorists the impression that a train stopped on one track is causing activation of the safety gates when, in fact, a separate train could be approaching on the other track, hidden from the driver's view.

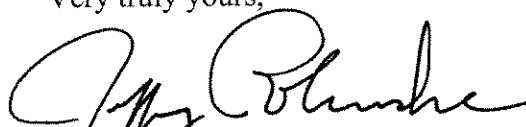
To the Honorable, the Common Council
October 1, 2004
Page 2

The FRA, under the rule which is scheduled to go into effect on December 18, 2004, will approve a quiet zone in which one or more Supplementary Safety Measures (SSM's) have been implemented, thereby reducing the risk level to a point below the NSRT. A review of the West Waterford Avenue crossing indicates the crossing will reach an acceptable risk level with the installation of 100 feet of channelization devices on the roadway approaches. The channelization devices have been shown to discourage motorists from weaving around the gates. Even without the train whistles or horns, the West Waterford Avenue crossing will have a lower risk rating after the installation of the channelization devices than it has currently.

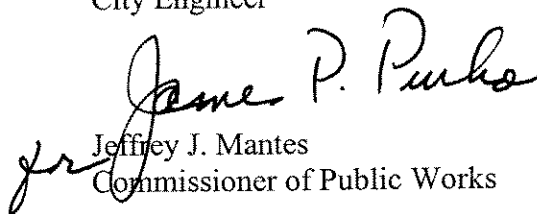
Common Council Resolution file Number 040691, which passed on October 11, 2004, authorized placement of the channelization device in West Waterford Avenue.

We have prepared the attached ordinance, which, if adopted, will create a quiet zone, banning the non-emergency sounding of train horns or whistles in the vicinity of the highway-rail grade crossing on West Waterford Avenue, east of South 13th Street.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E.
City Engineer



Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

CAW:cjt
c: Alderman Terry L. Witkowski
Ms. Tammy Wagner
Mr. Doug Wood