



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 4/6/2021

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Transportation and Public Works

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz 707-565-2231

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisorial District(s): Second

Title:

Establishment of Joint Quiet Zones at Railroad Crossings in Sonoma County

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize the Chair to execute a cooperative agreement with the County of Marin regarding a combined application submission for the establishment of joint quiet zones at Railroad Crossings within Sonoma and Marin Counties relating to the rail operations of Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit.
- B) Authorize the Director of Transportation and Public Works to submit a Notice of Intent and a Letter of Establishment to the Federal Railroad Authority after obtaining concurrence agreements from the Cities of Petaluma, Novato, and San Rafael and the installation of the required supplemental safety measures.

(Second District) (4/5ths Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

In an effort to reduce noise and enhance quality of life for Sonoma County residents and businesses located near railroad crossings, the Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW) has worked with the County of Marin to establish a joint quiet zone. The list of the 4 impacted private crossings is detailed within the attached County of Marin Agenda Item. TPW is working with the Cities of Petaluma, Novato, and San Rafael and expects to have executed agreements in order to establish the quiet zone.

Discussion:

On December 13, 2016, the Board authorized submitting a Notice of Intent to the Federal Railroad Authority for establishment of a combined quiet zone with the cities of Cotati and Rohnert Park. With the establishment of a quiet zone, locomotive engineers approaching a designated crossing must refrain from sounding the train's horn. The locomotive engineer may sound the horn to provide a warning to animals, vehicle operators, pedestrians, trespassers, crews of other trains, and in an emergency situation by the locomotive engineer's sole judgment if taking such action is appropriate.

Quiet zone regulations do not eliminate the use of locomotive bells or lights at crossings, and the establishment of a quiet zone requires that certain Supplemental Safety Measures be installed so that the Quiet Zone Risk Index for the subject grade crossing is at or below the Risk Index with Horns.

Along the 43 miles and 76 public, private and pedestrian at-grade crossings on the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) line there are five established Quiet Zones: San Rafael/Novato, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Sonoma County (2). These established quiet zones regulate approximately 37 miles of the SMART right of way,

leaving an estimated six miles along SMART's route without horn silencing efforts. This area includes ten private crossings which are between the Novato/San Rafael and Petaluma Quiet Zones. Because of this lack of Quiet Zone coverage, the families who own the properties in these areas are concerned that their community/homes will be the only ones with horns regularly sounding at these crossings.

There are four private crossings located in Marin County, all north of the San Marin SMART station:

- Miramonte/Burdell
- Redwood Landfill
- Hunting Lodge
- Neil's Island

The need for the Joint Quiet Zone is due to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations that stipulate Quiet Zone boundaries must be at the nearest public crossing; county or other jurisdictional boundaries are not valid in establishing a quiet zone. The agreement will allow Sonoma County to proceed with establishment of the Joint Quiet Zone and will include the affected private crossings in both counties. In addition to the County of Marin, Sonoma County will also serve as Lead Authority for the jurisdictions of Novato and Petaluma in establishing this new Joint Quiet Zone.

Pending Board approval of this item, the Director of TPW would be authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the County of Marin to act as the lead agency in establishing the quiet zones. Once all the required additional improvements and signage have been installed and verified a Notice of Establishment is filed with the Federal Railroad Authority. The quiet zone can take effect no earlier than 21 days from the date on which the Notice of Quiet Zone Establishment is mailed. TPW is requesting authorization to submit the Notice of Establishment after receiving written concurrence from Marin County and all required improvements are installed.

The estimated cost for the installation of remaining signage and related safety measures is \$25,000.

Prior Board Actions:

12/13/16 Board authorized submittal of a Notice of Intent for Quiet Zones at Railroad Crossings within Sonoma County and authorized the Director of TPW to negotiate cooperative agreements with Rohnert Park and Cotati regarding joint quiet zone applications.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$25,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$25,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			

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State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$25,000	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$25,000	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The estimated cost for installing the remaining signage and related safety measures is \$25,000. Appropriations for this work is included in the FY 2021-22 Road Maintenance recommended budget (11051-34010102). Sources of funding for Road Maintenance include allocations from the State Highway Users Tax and the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Act.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Cooperative agreement with the County of Marin County
Location Map

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None