



2016 Special Committee for a Glendale Quiet Zone

## Community Update #3

March 20, 2017

Since the beginning of the year, the Quiet Zone Committee has focused on four aspects of the initiative: Understanding the level of **support Glendale residents have for a Quiet Zone**, responding to residents' concerns over **proposed improvements of the pedestrian crossing**, arriving at a sound **fundraising** strategy for Glendale's share of the project, and addressing **misleading or incomplete information** that is circulating about a Quiet Zone in Glendale.

**Do Glendale residents want a Quiet Zone?**

In January, the Quiet Zone Committee conducted a survey. Residents were asked about the impact of train horns on their lives and their support to quiet them. With a response of 516 out of 1100 households, and a 95% confidence level, our survey had a margin of error of 3.3%. With 67% of respondents saying they support the Quiet Zone, **we can be 95% certain between 65 and 71% of all of Glendale supports a Quiet Zone.**

**What safety changes are planned for the pedestrian crossing?**

The existing pedestrian crossing from the municipal parking lot to the Village square is considered unsafe and must be removed for Glendale to qualify for a Quiet Zone. Steps have to be taken to direct visitors to cross safely at Sharon Road. Initially, the Committee planned to use planters and landscaping to discourage people from crossing the tracks. Through various public forums, residents asked for stronger safeguards. In response, the Committee has proposed a decorative metal fence, running along the eastern track, the length of the parking lot. There will also be new lighting to highlight the safe crossing.

**What incorrect or incomplete information is out there?**

**Some have said if a Quiet Zone is put into place, a large cement wall will be built all along the tracks or on either side of the Sharon Road crossing.** None of these options are included in any plans for Glendale. A barrier, such as a wall, is required when trains routinely exceed 80 mph. Trains through Glendale cannot exceed 35 mph.

**Since trains have to blow horns for safety, how can no horns possibly be safe?**

With a Quiet Zone, municipalities must implement Supplemental Safety Measures (SSM) to ensure safety at crossings. These include additional gates, medians, curbs, lights, signals, road markings, and other upgrades. It turns out with these upgrades, crossings are as safe as they've ever been. In fact, some are actually safer. According to the Federal Railway Administration (FRA), the upgrades that come with an established Quiet Zone are extremely effective, especially when applied to outdated crossings – with safety at crossings improved by as much as 82%. Bottom line: The FRA sets the rules for what makes a Quiet Zone safe. The option would not exist if the numbers did not add up to safety.

**What other questions are being asked?**

**Why is a Quiet Zone important for Glendale?**

Trains must blow their horns at a volume between 96 and 110 decibels. That level of noise is scientifically shown to pose health risks, from increased chance of heart attacks in

adults to developmental delays in children. Train horns sound for as much as 30 seconds going through a crossing. This means in Glendale, where we have an average 64 trains a day and three crossings, we are exposed to dangerous noise levels for more than 96 minutes a day, or 585 hours a year. And it's only going to get worse. The OKI Regional Transportation Plan projects train traffic through Glendale will grow by 38% by 2040.

A Quiet Zone is a well-tested, safe, and effective process to improve quality of life for all. About 70% of Glendale residents believe it is one of the most important steps we can take for the long-term safety, health and overall well-being of our community.

### **Why the urgency to act?**

According to Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC), out of 5,700 crossings in Ohio, our Albion crossing is the 90th most hazardous. Because of this, it is highly likely the State will close this crossing in the future. If Glendale accepts the closing of the Albion crossing now, the State will support the cost of Quiet Zone improvements for the other crossings. If Glendale declines, the State can close Albion in the future, or install additional safety equipment, and the Village would receive no compensation.

### **Where are the closest Quiet Zones?**

There are more than 700 Quiet Zones in communities across the nation. There are 10 in Ohio, with the closest to Glendale in Springfield and Twinsburg. There are also five in Louisville.

### **If people don't like the horns, why don't they move?**

Many Glendale residents who support the Quiet Zone have lived in their homes for 40 years or more. Over this time, train frequency, horn consistency and decibel level have crept up. Others who moved here more recently knew they were moving into a home near a train. They are staying put because they love their homes and this community. A majority also believes implementing the FRA's approved Quiet Zone in Glendale will benefit our families, our neighbors and our Village.

### **Who will pay for Glendale's Quiet Zone?**

The total cost for all of the changes, upgrades and improvements is estimated to be \$940,000. The State and CSX have agreed to pay \$675,000 of the total, leaving Glendale's share at \$265,000. The Quiet Zone Committee believes much of the funds can be raised through private gifts, foundation grants and voluntary contributions from residents. The need for Village government support is expected to be minimal.

### **Who decides if we have a Quiet Zone or not?**

Implementing a Quiet Zone falls under the responsibilities of the Village Council. Before Council can consider the project, the Planning Commission must approve the Quiet Zone Committee's application to make improvements needed to move forward. These include closing the Albion Road crossing, relocating the pedestrian crossing from the municipal parking lot to Sharon Road, and designating North Greenville on the north side of Sharon Road as "no entrance."