



VILLAGE of GLENDALE

GLENDALE, OHIO 45246

October 21, 2016

Dear Glendale Resident:

As the project to consider establishing a Railroad Quiet Zone has progressed to the Village Government, I have formed a committee to do the necessary research and provide information to the Glendale Planning and Historic Preservation Commission and to the Village Council. This 2016 Special Committee for a Glendale Quiet Zone is led by Bob Kooris and has members drawn from a broad cross-section of the Village.

Attached is the First Community Update from the Special Committee. I look forward to their efforts on this important project for our Village.

Before turning to the Update, let me address one question that has been raised recently: Will the Levy Renewal that is on the ballot on November 8 go toward the financing of a Quiet Zone? The answer is no. The levy renewal is required to fund current operations and not related to the quiet zone. It is a renewal of the existing levy that will be expiring.

Don Lofty
Mayor

Community Update #1

October 21, 2016



2016 Special Committee for a Glendale Quiet Zone

Background

In May, a grassroots committee was formed to revisit possible Quiet Zone options for Glendale. Headed by Bob Kooris, the group of Glendale residents began exploring the impact the projected increase in rail traffic could have on the volume of noise, health effects and property values within the Village.

The group also contacted the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) to learn the latest developments in Quiet Zone initiatives across the state. This contact prompted discussions between ORDC and CSX Railway. Those discussions ultimately resulted in a proposal that would make a Quiet Zone within financial reach of the Village.

A Quiet Zone in Glendale would mean train operators would be prohibited from blowing horns at Village crossings, except in an emergency. The rumbling sounds of the trains would, of course, continue, but the horns would be silenced.

What did ORDC and CSX propose?

The proposal from ORDC calls for Glendale to: (1) accept the closing of the Albion Road crossing; (2) relocate the existing pedestrian crossing to Sharon Road, (3) install improvements and signage to discourage trespassing, (4) add two gates and a vehicle detection system at the Oak Road crossing, (5) convert N. Greenville Avenue to one-way (southbound), right turn only.

Why close the Albion Crossing?

According to ORDC, out of 5,700 crossings in Ohio, Albion is considered the 90th most hazardous. Because of this, it is highly likely the state will either close the Albion Road crossing in the future, regardless of Glendale's actions or install additional safety equipment which would prevent the Village from getting any compensation for closing it.

What will ORDC and CSX do in return?

ORDC and CSX will do the following: (1) install a second set of gates, a vehicle detection system, (2) upgrade the Sharon Road crossing to LED lighting, constant warning time and power-out indicator, (3) upgrade the Oak Road crossing to LED lighting, (4) add a constant warning time and power-out indicator, (5) remove the pavement, restore the grounds around the Albion crossing and pay for all curbing for any project improvements.

In addition, ORDC and CSX will pay the costs to close Albion crossing and for all improvements at Sharon Road crossing. CSX will give the Village \$50,000 for use on any part of the project, including relocating the pedestrian pathway. Also, ORDC will reimburse Glendale up to \$5,000 for work in closing the Albion crossing, including area modifications and signs, and pay the engineering costs for the warning devices.

What is Glendale's share of the bill?

If the Village accepts the proposed Quiet Zone changes, Glendale will be responsible for approximately \$300,000, including a contingency to cover unexpected costs of over \$40,000. This includes assuming the costs associated with installing two additional gates and adding a vehicle detection system at the Oak Road crossing, and relocating the pedestrian crossing. The Village will also be responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle detections systems at the two remaining crossings, which is estimated to cost between \$2,000 and \$6,000 a year.

Has the Village responded to the proposal?

The proposal was presented to Village Council on October 3. That evening, Council voted unanimously to direct Mayor Don Lofty to accept the proposal, subject to the legislative process and community input. Mayor Lofty advised ORDC of the Village's acceptance on October 13. He also advised ORDC that next steps would take several months while the Village gathers public input and attempts to find funding for our share of the project.

Where will the money come from for this project?

It is unclear at this point where Glendale's share of the project – about \$300,000 – will come from. Efforts are underway to contact foundations that have a history of supporting community development programs like the Quiet Zone. Other options are being explored by the Special Committee.

What happened to the grassroots committee?

It has been replaced by a formal Village committee by Mayor Lofty, who is authorized to form such a group. The group is called the 2016 Special Committee for a Glendale Quiet Zone with the responsibilities to pursue the specifics of the project proposal and the Quiet Zone, and to provide information and public input to the Planning Commission and Council.

The Committee is chaired by Bob Kooris. The other members are Diane Agricola, Dr. Rodger Brown, Jenny Dennis, Nancy Macenko, Susan McCormick and Peg Shardelow.

What are the next steps?

First, the proposal must be reviewed by the Glendale Planning and Historic Preservation Commission. That is expected to begin before the end of the year. There will be opportunities for public comment during the Commission's consideration. Then the Commission will make a recommendation on the proposal and it will go to the Glendale Village Council for consideration. At this point, there will be more opportunities for input by residents.

After hearing from residents and deliberating, if Council accepts a motion to move forward with the project, it is likely to require three readings (at separate Council meetings) before a vote is taken. That would put a final decision to move forward into the second quarter of 2017. If the final proposal is approved by the Village Council, it will then go to the Federal Railroad Administration for approval.

Didn't Glendale try to establish a Quiet Zone before?

This is the third attempt to bring a Quiet Zone to Glendale. The idea was abandoned the previous two times because Glendale would have had to assume all of the costs associated with the infrastructure changes, which were estimated to be as high as \$1.5 million. This time, with the goal of improving safety, the state and the railroad are prepared to pick up 80% of the costs.

In addition, community support is stronger this time because there are more trains. On average, 64 trains come through Glendale every day, or an average of one every 22.5 minutes. Furthermore, the OKI Regional Transportation Plan projects train traffic through Glendale will grow 38% by 2040.

What are some towns with Quiet Zones?

There are 10 Quiet Zones in Ohio, including Twinsburg, Springfield and Moraine. In Kentucky, there are 12 including Louisville and St. Matthews. Indiana has 13, including Lafayette and South Bend.

What if Glendale doesn't agree to close the Albion crossing?

We can decline to close the Albion Crossing and, instead, install additional gates or warning devices that could bring us into compliance with Federal Quiet Zone regulations. However, State and CSX funding would not be available for this approach and the cost to move forward with a Quiet Zone would, once more, be prohibitive.

Will moving the pedestrian crossing closer to Sharon Road impact business in the Village square?

The Meritage, The Cock and Bull, The Village Wine Store and Piccolo, A Village Gift Shop at The Century House, The Glendalia, Statements in Hair and Local Yokel – all businesses on or near the square – support the Quiet Zone including the relocation of the pedestrian crossing. They acknowledge any minor inconvenience for visitors and customers is significantly outweighed by the improved environment, especially for outdoor dining and events.

Won't the train conductors blow the horns anyway?

Evidence suggests this restriction is being taken quiet seriously. This is because, if the operators blow their horns in a Quiet Zone, it is a violation of Federal Railway regulations. Last year, in the 701 Quiet Zones across the US, there were only nine violations.

Some have said, given recent water main breaks, the Village should focus on infrastructure instead of a Quiet Zone.

Aging Village water and sewer lines require a different level of response and financial commitment in the millions. It is a significant long-term capital project that the Village has begun to study. The opportunity to implement a Quiet Zone in the Village has a price tag of less than \$300,000. That amount of money would be a fraction of what would be needed for water and sewer infrastructure improvement.

Won't Glendale lose some of its charm if the train horns are silenced?

The era of the romantic steam-driven train horns has passed. These days, trains use high decibel "K Horns" that run on compressed air power and deliver forward and rear blasts. They are mandated to be between 96 and 110 decibels with most rail companies choosing the higher level, to reduce liability.

Do we have any proof of how loud the horns are?

In 2000, an audio study of the Village was conducted by Beta Associates. The firm measured train horns in various areas. Sound levels along Greenville Avenue, at street side and front porch locations, ranged from 99.9 to 117.8 decibels. Inside one residence, with doors and windows closed, the sound ranged from 72.9 to 86.2 decibels. Sound levels outside the current Meritage location were measured at 114.5 decibels, and as high as 117.8 at the depot.

Research Indicates noise at 85 decibels or higher can cause permanent hearing damage and other health problems. A typical conversation occurs at 60 decibels. The noise level of a chainsaw or leaf blower is between 106 to 115 decibels.

How can I learn more or to contact the special committee?

More information is available on the Quiet Zone page on the Village website at www.glendaleohio.org. The public is also invited to attend meetings of the Special Committee, which will be announced through the Village email blast system. The committee's email address is GlendaleQuietZone@gmail.com.