



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: AUGUST 23, 2016**
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: PROCLAMATION FOR RAIL SAFETY MONTH AND RIVERSIDE QUIET ZONE UPDATE

ISSUE:

Presentation from Operation Lifesaver, provide a proclamation in recognition of Rail Safety Month and report from the Public Works Department on the Riverside Quiet Zones.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council receive the presentation and file this report.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside faces an exceptional hardship as it is trisected by two transcontinental rail lines, the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), handling over 65% of all freight exiting the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. There are 20 at-grade highway-rail crossings along these congested rail lines within the City, seven at-grade highway-rail crossings along the recently opened Perris Valley Line (PVL) commuter rail line, and 12 crossings along various spur lines. Approximately 149 trains pass through the City on a daily basis.

Historically, the state of California has always reported some of the highest numbers of highway-rail grade crossing fatalities in the nation. In 2015, California accounted for more than 13% of the total railroad-related fatalities nationwide. On September 1, 2009, the Riverside City Council joined the State of California by adopting a resolution designating September as Rail Safety Month. September is the month that many children return to school and motorists and pedestrians are crossing train tracks to get to and from school.

Also in 2009, the City began working with Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), a non-profit organization dedicated to ending tragic collisions, fatalities, and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and on railroad rights of way. OLI's proven model uses a three-tiered approach to changing behaviors and saving lives: education, engineering, and enforcement. This outreach will be even more important as the City gets ready to launch its Quiet Zones.

DISCUSSION:

The Riverside Quiet Zone Projects are part of the City's efforts to mitigate the adverse noise impacts from the high volume of train traffic within the City. These projects will significantly reduce train horn noise by eliminating the need for locomotives to routinely sound their horns. The first

Riverside Quiet Zone project is nearly complete. This project extends over 7 miles along the BNSF between Mary Street and Buchanan Street (running parallel to the SR-91 Freeway) and includes 12 at-grade crossings. The street and railroad signal improvements required for the quiet zone are complete. Traffic signal preemption equipment testing began on July 26 and is ongoing. Following successful completion of the testing, the City will issue the Notice of New Quiet Zone Establishment (NOE). The routine sounding of the train horns will cease on the time and dates specified in the NOE.

The City is also working with the Southern Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) to finalize arrangements to implement a quiet zone along the PVL between Mt. Vernon Avenue and Marlborough Avenue. Once these arrangements are finalized, the City will file a Notice of Quiet Zone Establishment (NOE) to establish the quiet zone at the four crossings. The routine sounding of the train horns will cease on the time and dates specified in the NOE.

For the future, there are three additional Quiet Zone Projects planned. These projects are located at Panorama Road on the UP, Cridge Street at the BNSF and UP main line merger, and Brockton Avenue and Palm Avenue along the UP. The Panorama Road and Cridge Street projects are fully funded and are in the final design phase. The City is striving to implement the quiet zones at these crossings by winter 2018. The Brockton Avenue and Palm Avenue quiet zone is in the planning phase. The project will be fully funded in fiscal year 2018/2019 with the quiet zone expected to be in effect by early 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with presenting the proclamation or filing this report.

Prepared by: Kris Martinez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Scott G. Miller, Interim Finance Director/Treasurer
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment:

1. Proclamation
2. Presentation