

DATE: February 12, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Blake McIntosh, Acting Director of Civic Operations

SUBJECT: Canadian National Railway Otway Road Crossing

ATTACHMENT(S): CN Railway Otway Road Crossing Location Map

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION, the report dated February 12, 2021, from the Acting Director of Civic Operations, titled “Canadian National Railway Otway Road Crossing”.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the Canadian National Railway (CN) project at the west Otway Road crossing, located roughly 4.2km northwest of Foothills Boulevard.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This project supports Councils Focus Area by maintaining fiscal sustainability and ensuring safe operation of transportation services.

BACKGROUND:

Transport Canada introduced *Grade Crossings Regulations* that incorporate *Grade Crossings Standards* and to bring a consistent level of safety to each railway crossing in Canada. All existing grade crossings must comply with the new standards. Under the *Grade Crossings Regulations*, railway companies, road authorities and private authorities share responsibility for managing the safety at federally regulated crossings.

In accordance with the *Grade Crossings Regulations* and *Grade Crossings Standards*, CN is planning to modify the existing crossing warning system with the installation of a roadway warning system consisting of flashing lights, bells, gates and a constant warning time device at the west Otway Road crossing, at Mileage 6.31 Nechako Subdivision. A constant warning device is necessary to detect varying train speed for the new system to provide consistent warning time to motorists approaching the crossing. The addition of gates will further improve the overall safety at the crossing by reducing driver complacency and address existing roadway geometry and sightline concerns. In 2019, the same system was installed at both the east Otway Road crossing and the Wilson Park access crossing as part on CN’s rail line twinning project. The works are expected to be completed by March 31, 2021.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Pursuant to the *Canadian Transportation Agency Guide to Railway Charges for Crossing Maintenance and Construction*, 50% of the total cost of the crossing warning system modification or, if the funding is awarded, 50% of the remaining balance of the total cost of the crossing warning system modification after the funding has been applied shall be paid by the Road Authority.

CN Rail, as the party undertaking the work and pursuant to the Railway Safety Act, applied for a grant towards the costs of these proposed works, and was approved for federal funding amounting to 50% of the total project cost.

CN Rail is estimating the total project cost to be in the range of \$472,000 to \$529,000. With the federal funding approved, the City's estimated contribution will be \$118,000 to \$132,250.

As this is not a City asset we're contributing to, we cannot capitalize these costs and so it becomes an operating expense. The City's internal reserves are established with criteria for capital purposes. There are some rare exceptions (ie. Snow Reserve) that can fund certain operating expenses but nothing with enough funds or the proper criteria to allow for this particular expense. The funding source would need to be the City's contingency budget.

The cost of maintaining the crossing warning system shall be paid 50% by the Road Authority and 50% by the Railway. The City currently pays \$296 monthly for the existing crossing warning system, and will pay \$326 monthly for the new crossing warning system.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Pursuant to the *Canadian Transportation Agency Guide to Railway Charges for Crossing Maintenance and Construction*, The City will be contributing approximately \$118,000 to \$132,250 to the CN project at the west Otway Road crossing, located roughly 4.2km northwest of Foothills Boulevard, at Mileage 6.31 Nechako Subdivision. CN will modify the existing crossing warning system with the installation of a roadway warning system consisting of flashing lights, bells, gates and constant warning time device, in accordance with *Transport Canada's Grade Crossings Regulations and Grade Crossings Standards*. The works are expected to be completed by March 31, 2021.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Blake McIntosh, Acting Director of Civic Operations

PREPARED BY: Chris Vliegthart, Transportation Supervisor

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021-03-08