

Emily Mak | Director, Corporate Affairs and Legal Services | Southern Railway of British Columbia Limited sent the QCB the following response June 24, 2020: “

...Dear MS,

I write in response to your email to Maureen Albanese regarding the status of achieving whistle cessation at the Quayside Drive crossing in New Westminster. Your email was forwarded to Southern Railway of British Columbia (SRY).

As noted in your email, the Quayside Drive crossing is equipped with automatic crossing protection and the City of New Westminster has been working on achieving whistle cessation at this crossing. You may already be aware that Transport Canada has a prescribed procedure to enable municipalities to require railways to cease whistling at specific public grade crossings. Achieving whistle cessation at a grade crossing is a lengthy and rigorous process to ensure the safety of the public in the absence of train whistling. There are a number of steps that municipalities need to follow and the crossing must comply with all regulatory requirements before it is eligible for whistle cessation. Sometimes, one step in the whistle cessation procedure can be completed, for example, the signal system is installed and operational, but other steps in the whistle cessation procedure are not. Until all steps are completed, the railway must continue to whistle.

At the Quayside Drive crossing, the signal system was installed in November 2018 and since then it has been under provincial regulatory review to determine its compliance with regulatory requirements for whistle cessation. The regulator has performed inspections but has not yet approved the crossing for whistle cessation. Your observation is correct, which is that more work has been done in the time since November 2018. Such work has been in response to the regulator's directions and follow-up inspections. Most recently in May 2020, the regulator indicated additional steps to be taken to protect the safety of pedestrians using the sidewalk and the installation of walking barriers and signage. SRY does not know when the City will complete the work or a follow-up regulatory inspection performed. My understanding is that the City intends to complete the additional upgrades as soon as possible but COVID-19 could have an impact on timing.

Until the crossing is approved for whistle cessation, SRY is required to comply with the whistling requirement: a prescribed whistle sequence of long-long-short-long whistles to provide at least 20 seconds of advance warning before a train enters a public grade crossing, and then repeated or prolonged whistling until the train fully occupies the crossing. You can follow the City of New Westminster's updates on whistle cessation at www.newwestcity.ca/transportation/trains or contact the City directly.

Yours truly,

Emily Mak*
Director, Corporate Affairs and Legal Services
Southern Railway of British Columbia Limited