

## HILLSIDE RESIDENTS FOR QUIET NIGHTTIME TRAIN HORNS: MARCH 11, 2018 LETTER

To: Hillside Mayor Joseph Tamburino and Village Trustees

Thank you for convening the public meeting on Saturday, March 3 about Quiet Nighttime Train Horns.

Village officials presented new information to residents.

After reviewing this information, residents seek clarifications and more information. We would like these issues to be discussed and information to be provided at the Monday, March 26 Village meeting at 7:30 p.m.

### PREVIOUS VILLAGE OF HILLSIDE RAILROAD CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

Please explain the railroad crossing improvements at the Wolf Rd., Harrison St. and Oak Ridge Ave. railroad crossings over the past twenty years. What improvements have been made? Who paid for them such as Village taxpayers, the Canadian National Railroad or others?

*Response: According to Village records, the Village of Hillside passed an Ordinance on September 28, 1982 which requested that Illinois Commerce Commission designate the at-grade crossings at Wolf Road and Harrison Street be classified as extra hazardous and to install automatic illuminated crossing gates. The costs of such installation and subsequent maintenance be apportioned among the Illinois Central Railroad, the interested highway authorities and, if appropriate, the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund.*

*Legislation Supported Collectively by Ted E. Leverenz (Illinois State House of Representatives & Chairman of the House Appropriation Committee), Greg Zito (Illinois State Senator) and George Dunne (Cook County Board President) initiated the installation of automatic illuminated crossing gates for the safety school children. The costs of which were paid for through the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund.*

### STREET MEASUREMENTS AT PROPOSED RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Per our February 26 request, please show the distance measurements on your engineering drawings including the distance between the railroad crossing gate arms and the adjacent street intersections.

*Response: The drawings were updated on the Village website on 3/2/2018.*

### WOLF RD. & OAK RIDGE AVE. CROSSINGS: CLARIFYING THE FRA GUIDELINES

On March 3, Village officials stated that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires "medians or channelization devices extending at least 100 feet from the gate arm, OR if there is an intersection within 100 feet of the gate, the median or channelization device must extend at least 60 feet from the gate arm."

However, FRA's "Use of Traffic Channelization Devices at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings" states: "The Final Rule permits the use of channelization devices to be applied as an Alternative Safety Measure...with less than 60-ft clearance."

*Response: Yes, this quote is taken from the fourth paragraph of Page 11 of this document. However, later in this same paragraph it is stated that "The benefits of installing channelization devices at quiet zones less than 60 ft have not been quantified."*

*Please note that other stakeholders (Cook County) has the right to require adherence to SSM's and not approve modified ASMs.*

In addition, FRA allows several Alternative Safety Measures (Modified SSMs, Non-Engineering ASMs and Engineering ASMs) for Hillside to apply for Quiet Nighttime Train Horns. Therefore, clarifications are needed:

1) FRA appears to offer the option of medians/channelization devices with less than 60-ft. clearance as an Alternative Safety Measure/Modified SSM. This is ideal for the unique, limited street distances at the Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. crossing intersections. Does the Village of Hillside agree or disagree?

*Response: A non-traversable curb median or channelization device that is less than 60 feet is considered an Alternative Safety Measure by the FRA and can only be considered if the applicant cannot adhere to the required SSM's. All Alternative Safety Measures require a Public Authority Application for the FRA to approve the quiet zone risk index. The proposed designs at Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. include Alternative Safety Measures (ASMs) to allow roadways within 60 feet of the crossing to remain open. Any commercial driveway or intersection that is within 60 feet of the gate arm is considered an Alternative Safety Measure by the FRA. ASM's have to be evaluated and approved by the FRA. Installation of SSMs of 100 ft of median or channelization devices minimizes the request for ASMs.*

2) FRA appears to offer the option of other Alternative Safety Measures (Non-Engineering ASMs, Engineering ASMs) to enhance Hillside's proposal for Quiet Nighttime Train Horns. Does the Village agree or disagree?

*Response: Yes, FRA offers options of other ASMs such as Non-Engineering ASMs and Engineering ASMs. These are described in 49 CFR Part 222, Appendix B.*

*Non-Engineering ASMs include Programmed Enforcement, Public Education and Awareness, and Photo Enforcement. These measures would require baseline monitoring at each crossing and subsequent continual or regular monitoring at each crossing, all subject to reporting to the FRA and audit. Enforcement methods would require possible legislative change and definite ongoing action by law enforcement and the judiciary.*

*Engineering ASMs "may include improvements that address underlying geometric conditions, including sight distance, that are the source of increased risk at the crossing." In order to get FRA approval for a quiet zone using Engineering ASMs, each crossing would have to undergo 3 months of monitoring to establish baseline violation rates. Then the improvements would have to be constructed and then another three months of monitoring would occur to establish new violation rates. The new rates would be compared to the baseline rates to determine a violation rate reduction that would be used to calculate a new Quiet Zone Risk index. There is no guarantee that the reduction would be adequate to allow FRA to approve the Quiet Zone even though improvements were constructed.*

## WOLF RD. & OAK RIDGE AVE. CROSSINGS: SECOND OPTION OF FOUR GATE ARMS

Hillside residents deserve to see a completely second option for the Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. crossings: Install two more gate crossing arms at each crossing for four total arms, which would satisfy FRA requirements.

On March 3, Village officials proposed significant street reconstructions, reconfigurations and turning restrictions at the Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. crossings. These improvements would be costly and inconvenient to taxpayers and residents. However, FRA allows a simpler way to achieve Quiet Nighttime Train Horns:

Install four railroad crossing gate arms.

Over the past twenty years, either the Village of Hillside or another entity likely paid to install two crossing gate arms at both the Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. crossings. This information is requested at this time. Now, if two more gate arms are installed at each crossing, Hillside can gain Quiet Nighttime Train Horns outright.

At the March 26 meeting, please provide three written cost estimates for installing two more railroad crossing gate arms at both the Wolf Rd. and Oak Ridge Ave. crossings.

*Response: Four-Quadrant Gate Systems are one of the five approved Supplemental Safety Measures (SSMs). Traffic channelization with the two existing gate systems at each crossing is typically a much less expensive option than Four Quadrant Gate Systems, which are quoted in the FRA's document "Use of Traffic Channelization Devices at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings" at a minimum of \$250,000 per crossing. The actual cost would have to be determined in coordination with the Canadian National Railway (CN), who would construct any grade crossing signal improvements at the Village's cost. The existing gate systems would have to be evaluated by CN and Hanson to confirm that their locations and gate arm lengths are acceptable for inclusion with two additional gate systems. Additional engineering evaluation by CN and Hanson would be needed to determine if vehicle presence detectors (VPDs) are needed for these crossings. VPDs would have to be maintained by CN if installed in their track and by the State, County, and Village for those installed in the roadway. There is potential for the CN / FRA to require that the existing gate arms be replaced, increasing the cost due to not meeting the requirements of the FRA.*

Thank you for your consideration.