




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director,
Austin Transportation Department 

DATE: March 26, 2015

SUBJECT: Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority Quiet Zone on Parmer Lane

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) contacted the Austin Transportation Department on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, to inform the City that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) had reviewed the rail road crossing located on Parmer Lane just north of RM 620 / SH-45 in Council District 6, and found it not in compliance with FRA standards for Quiet Zones due to an issue with the median between westbound and eastbound Parmer Lane. The FRA is requiring both freight trains and transit vehicles to sound their horns approaching this crossing, effective the evening of March 24, 2015 until the situation is corrected and the Quiet Zone is reestablished.

Capital Metro anticipates that the issue will take approximately 30 days to resolve with an interim solution, and between six and nine months to resolve permanently. Once the interim solution is installed, Capital Metro believes the trains and transit vehicles will no longer be required to sound their horns.

This crossing is part of the Avery Quiet Zone which includes many rail road crossings and was expanded following execution of a 2008 interlocal agreement between the City of Austin and Capital Metro. According to the agreement, "The installation, ownership, operation, maintenance, and control of the Safety Measures installed in the Quiet Zones and all associated costs shall be the sole responsibility of Capital Metro at all times."

The Austin Transportation Department has been in communication with Capital Metro about this crossing and has expressed the desire for Capital Metro to immediately begin to remedy the issue and reestablish this crossing as part of the Avery Quiet Zone. Capital Metro is working with the FRA to identify the steps necessary to move forward. Additionally, we have asked Capital Metro to be prepared to respond to questions, comments and/or concerns from community members while the crossing is reexamined.

The Austin Transportation Department's immediate concern is safety for all roadway and transit users. We understand and support the Federal Railroad Administration's determination that sounding horns at this crossing is necessary until this crossing can be brought back to standard.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at, 512-974-2488.