

City of Fort Worth Railroad Safety Program Transportation and Public Works - (TPW) Regional Transportation and Innovation – (RTI-RR)



Railroad Program Description:

The Railroad Program is to improve railroad crossing safety, develop quiet zones, oversee or promote well planned projects that involve passenger and freight rail, and contribute to improving the mobility of the city's overall transportation system.

Railroad Program Vision/Goal:

The goal of the railroad program is:

- a) Quiet Zones: create quiet zones for all residential neighborhoods as much as we can.
- b) Railroad signals: achieve crossing protection railroad signals (lights and gates; latest preemption technology) at a percentage equal to or better than compared to crossing signals throughout Texas
- c) Crossing surfaces: achieve repair or replacement of all crossing surfaces over the life of the crossing
- d) Planning and Major Project Coordination: continue to successfully assist with major rail projects and also create new development policies and projects to achieve grade separated arterial streets

Railroad Program Mission:

The Railroad Program mission is to improve both neighborhood quality of life and improve crossing safety by:

- 1) Silencing train horns in neighborhoods through the installation of Quiet Zones
- 2) Eliminating unnecessary crossings by closing or grade separating street and railroad
- 3) Creating grade separated arterial streets where appropriate and
- 4) Continuously managing existing at-grade crossings to assure that good quality traffic control devices and methods are utilized to maintain high standard of safety.

Program Components:

Quiet Zone Development

Federal law requires that train locomotives must sound the horn in a standardized pattern of 2-long, 1-short, 1-long blasts 15-20 seconds prior to arrival at a crossing. This means that the train horn must be sounded continuously from about ¼ mile in advance of a crossing until the train reaches the crossing, unless a crossing is designated as a quiet zone. In situations where railroad crossings are within a ¼ mile of another, the train horn will be blown immediately after the first crossing was finished.

The City must follow a strict guideline by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Quiet Zone Rule to certify that each crossing is designated as a quiet zone. The City must install Supplemental Safety Measures (SSMs) to compensate for the train horn. With a proper SSM, or quiet zone device, in place the City can issue a certification notice to inform the FRA, the railroad, and others that the crossing is in compliance with the federal standards for a quiet zone.

The FRA identifies specific methods to implement a quiet zone. The following techniques describe basic methods or devices used to deploy a quiet zone:

- Median Barrier
- Wayside Horn System
- Four Quadrant Gate System (aka Quad Gates)
- Street Closure
- One-Way Street

Crossing Surfaces Improvement

There are over 200 crossings in Fort Worth, operated by 5 RR companies: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Fort Worth & Western Railroad (FWWR), TEXRail (owned and operated by Trinity Metro) and the Trinity Railway Express (TRE).

One of the responsibilities of the TPW RR Safety Program is maintaining the street surface at the crossings. The RR is responsible for street surface between the rails and the crossing panels; the city is responsible for street surface up to the crossing panels. The two areas of street surface need to be in good condition and at the same level in order for cars travel through it smoothly. Cooperation & negotiation between RR and City is essential to overcome scheduling and funding issues.

Crossing Safety Improvement

Working with the railroad installing latest railroad technology equipment to insure reliable, safe operations at each crossing.

Relationship to City Council Strategic Goal:

This program promotes City Council strategic goals in providing “Quality Customer Service” and to “Create Clean, Attractive City”.

Here are the 7 CC strategic goals:

1. Create Clean, Attractive City
2. Become Safest Major City
3. Diversified Economic Base
4. Revitalize Central City
5. Promote Orderly Growth
6. Quality Customer Service
7. Better Mobility & Air Quality

Where to Call:

To report a railroad crossing signal malfunction
To report a street surface problem at a railroad crossing

City Call Center: 817-392-1234
<http://fortworthtexas.gov/report/>

Railroad Companies:

BNSF – 800-713-3599
UPRR – 800-772-7677
FWWR – 817-738-2445
TEXRail – 866-720-5600
TRE - 972-399-0244

To report blocked crossing:

FRA BLOCKED CROSSING PORTAL
<https://www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings/>

City staff contacts:

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