

Friday November 19, 2021

Delegation Submission for: Town of Aurora Council Budget Meeting

Saturday November 20, 2021 Ref#2021-11-18-014

Submitted to: clerks@aurora.ca attention: Samantha Yew, Deputy Town Clerk

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To: Aurora Town Council & Senior Town of Aurora Staff

Prepared by: Lynn Browne & Susan Morton-Leonard, Aurora Residents and Taxpayers, on behalf of all Residents and Workers in the Train Whistling Zone of Aurora

Train whistle cessation is a longstanding issue in Aurora. This issue will **never** subside until relief is adequately acknowledged and funded by Aurora's Council, plus other levels of government and corporations including Metrolinx, CN and CP who own the tracks. The number of commuter and freight trains passing through Aurora's core has steadily increased. Canada, now obligated to eliminate fossil fuel travel to improve our ailing climate and impact the health of citizens less, will allow more freight trains to move goods, plus electrified GO commuter trains to be added on the Barrie GO line. Residential housing will be built along Berczy Street to fulfill the Province's growth mandate for our Town. The new housing is located directly opposite Aurora's heritage GO Station and tracks. The new residents will be subjected, like the present residents and workers to hearing train whistles, every 15 minutes day and night, which will affect their well-being as it has ours.

Residents who bought their homes near the tracks years ago, like we did, were not subjected to the constant noise and air pollution of the trains like today. Taxpayers have petitioned many Aurora Councils before 2008 seeking relief from the blaring train horns in particular. Aurora, to this day, has failed to respond to the needs of residents affected by the archaic practice of train's whistling as a safety measure.

We envy other communities like the City of Markham who ended train whistles February 2020. The City of Vaughan, Woodbridge and Kleinburg have created Quiet Zones. We are also aware of other places like Milton and Tottenham, who like us are seeking relief from blasting train horns. If it is possible elsewhere in York Region to end the whistles, it is possible for the Town of Aurora to get on board too!

Transport Canada provides a process for train whistle cessation, plus a funding program to improve the safety equipment required at level crossings to staunch the practice of blaring train horns – Aurora has never applied. Of the 4 level crossings, Aurora is responsible for the Centre Street and Edward Street crossings, while York Region is responsible for the busy Wellington Street crossing by the GO station, and the St. John's Sideroad crossing – both on regional roads. Markham partnered with the Region and Metrolinx to modernize and improve their crossings with updated safety equipment especially for pedestrians. This measure provided relief from

train whistles except in emergency situations. Aurora has no safety equipment presently installed for pedestrians crossing the tracks. Aurora needs to follow Markham's model – clearly the Region and Metrolinx are approachable.

Our delegation today is asking for a courageous Councillor to put forth a Motion to create a line on the 2022 Budget to end train whistling. Adequate funds are needed for a Town staff working group devoted to modernizing crossing safety equipment, especially for pedestrians – going beyond gates, lights and beeps aimed mostly to prevent vehicles at level crossings. To develop long-term initiatives and management practices in compliance with Transport Canada's train whistle cessation program – thereby relieving our community from the noise irritants associated with the trains.

Resident well-being needs to be equally as important to Council as funding passion projects like the Aurora Civic Square – the square is within the train whistle zone. When the pandemic ends and travelling for pleasure is secure, surely the Town will encourage tourism as a stimulant to the economy – visiting Aurora's Cultural Precinct via commuter trains should be encouraged. Doesn't it make sense to improve train-crossing safety plus eliminate train noise pollution now, in preparation? Do not let this issue be ignored any longer. Let this be the Council known for accepting responsibility to modernize and improve train travel through our Town for the pleasure of everyone.