

# **Presentations and Handouts**



# Calling For An End To Whistle Noise Pollution In Wilmot Creek

Report to Clarington Municipal Council calling for a “Train Whistle Cessation Bylaw” covering the Bennett Road and Cobbledick Road CN Rail crossings.

Submitted by

Wilmot Creek Homeowners Association, 1 Wheelhouse Drive, Newcastle, ON. L1B 1B9

## Situation in Wilmot Creek (Pre COVID 19)

- Average of 28 VIA trains + 10 freight trains per day
- Each blow whistles four times at Bennett Rd. and Cobbledick Rd. crossings
- Adds up to over 300 whistle blasts per day

# Locations Where We Measured Whistle Blasts



The two whistle zones are shown with red lines; Sites where decibel readings were taken:

- 1.** Cobbledick Rd. crossing, **2.** Bennett Rd. crossing, **3.** 12 Park Place Lane,
- 4.** 206 Wilmot Trail, **5.** 234 Wilmot Trail, **6.** 42 Heatherlea Drive.

# Decibel Readings at Wilmot Creek

Location	Time	Train	Distance	Decibel Readings
1. Cobbledick Rd. crossing	Nov. 16	Via westbound	30 m	97 db
2. Bennett Rd. crossing	Nov. 17	Freight westbound	30 m	97 db
3. 12 Park Place Lane	Nov. 16	Via westbound	233 m	89 db
4. 206 Wilmot Trail	Nov. 17	Via eastbound	240 m	87 db
5. 234 Wilmot Trail	Nov. 23	Via eastbound	466 m	80 db
6. 42 Heatherlea Drive, (behind berm)	Nov. 23	Via westbound	53 m	84 db

# What it Sounds Like To Us - Outdoors

Noise Source	Sound Level (decibels)
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Whistle readings at Wilmot Creek	80 - 97 db
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Jet taking off at 600 m	100 db
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Electric lawn mower at 1 metre	80 - 90 db
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Hedge clippers at 1 metre	85 db
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# What it Sounds Like To Us - Indoors

Noise Source	Sound Level (decibels)
Train Whistles Readings	75-84 db (windows open)
(EPA equivalent levels at night in Wilmot)	63-72 db (windows closed)
Loud singing at 1 metre	75 db
Sewing machine at 1 metre	70-74 db
Passenger car 60 km/h at 20 metres	65 db
Hair dryer at 1 metre	58-64 db



# Increasing Rail Traffic

VIA is promising to triple the number of trains from the current 28 trains per day

Canada Montreal

## Via Rail's \$4B plan for Quebec-Ontario route opts for 'frequency' over speed

Proposal refined to focus on building electrified tracks under Liberal government

By Terry Pedwell, The Canadian Press Posted: Apr 15, 2016 7:21 AM ET | Last Updated: Apr 15, 2016 7:33 AM ET



Via president and CEO Yves Desjardins-Siciliano says the project will be ready a year from now. (File Photo)

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Via Rail will ask the federal government by year's end to climb aboard a plan to run new "high-frequency," electric-hybrid trains in the busy Windsor-Quebec City corridor, says the head of the Crown corporation

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# Noise Pollution Total

- CN freight traffic is also on the increase
- CN freight carloads increased by 12% between 2011 and 2015 (CN's "Carloads by AAR Commodity Groupings" data)
- In the future, with VIA's triple expansion the grand total will be at least...

Avg. 28 VIA trains x 3 = 84

+ Avg. 10 CN freight trains

= 94 trains per day x 8 whistles

= 752 daily whistle blasts

# Whistle Cessation in Other Communities

## Clarington is in the minority

- 2/3 of *Ontarians* live where routine train whistles are banned...
- Windsor, Sarnia, Oakville, Toronto, Pickering, Oshawa, Cobourg, Sudbury, London, Ottawa, Hamilton...
- and most major cities in Canada

# Rail Crossing Safety and Whistles

Whistle Cessation does not mean a total ban on whistles...

- It ends routine whistle blowing at every crossing
- Engineer shall always blow the whistle for a potential emergency to alert vehicles or pedestrians
- Since 1994 many major Canadian cities have instituted whistle cessation
- In the same period, rail crossing safety has improved dramatically

# Accidents Down After Whistle Bans

Year	1994	2004	2014
Accidents	391	237	185
Fatalities	54	25	21
Serious Injuries	64	50	29

*Transportation Safety Board of Canada statistics* <http://operationlifesaver.ca/facts-and-stats/statistics/>

**Accidents, fatalities & serious injuries are all less than half the numbers than before whistle bans enacted (possibly due to the installation of improved safety measures at the crossings).**

# From the Canada Transport Study...

**“... It was argued that much of this whistling is a result of an attitude rooted in railway culture and tradition and is today both unnecessary and ineffective. It was suggested that a better approach might be to treat train whistling the same way as a car horn, using it only when necessary to give adequate warning.”**

*Summary Report - Consultations Regarding the Development of the Railway-Roadway Grade Crossings Regulations 8/10/2012*

# Our Two Crossings...

## Not in the top 500 Crossings by Risk

fx	LOC_ID															
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Controls hidden. Press ESC to show controls. Dismiss			L	M	N	O	P	
1	LOC_ID	TC Number	RWY	Region	Province	Access	FED or PROV	Subdivision_Name	Spur Mile	Spur Name	Location	Latitude	Longitude	HWY No	Municipality	Road Authority
2	10987	7940	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	KINGSTON			BOUNDARY RD	45.0512	-74.6807		CORNWALL (City)	CORNWALL (City)
3	10480	16819	CN	PNR	SK	PUBLIC	F	WATROUS			MUSKOWEKWAN R.-R	51.3189	-104.011	2151	MUSKOWEKWAN 85 IR	MUSKOWEKWAN 8
4	9947	13953	CN	QUE	QC	PUBLIC	F	ST-HYACINTHE			RUE STE-ANNE	45.5673	-73.1915		MONT-SAINT-HILAIRE	MONT-SAINT-HILAI
5	5784	9079	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	CHATHAM			MIDDLESEX RD	41.9441	-81.5438		SOUTHWEST MIDDLESEX	MIDDLESEX COUNT
6	28411	19142	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BELLEVILLE			AUDLEY RD	43.8942	-79.0073		AAJAX (Town)	AAJAX (Town)
7	4779	13392	CN	QUE	QC	PUBLIC	F	ROBERVAL			Scott	48.5099	-72.2237		ROBERVAL	ROBERVAL
8	7838	10261	CP	QUE	QC	PUBLIC	F	CH. HAUT DE RIVIERE			CH. HAUT DE RIVIERE	47.43	-69.9484		SAINT-PACOME	Québec MTQ
9	6125	5381	CN	PNR	AB	PUBLIC	F	EDSON			Campsite Road	53.53801	-113.93461		SPRUCE GROVE (Town)	SPRUCE GROVE (To
10	15915	17177	CN	PNR	AB	PUBLIC	F	WAINWRIGHT			Highway 854	53.284	-112.4165	854	BEAVER COUNTY	ALBERTA TRANSP
11	5851	5379	CN	PNR	AB	PUBLIC	F	EDSON			Century Road	53.54054	-113.88549		SPRUCE GROVE (Town)	SPRUCE GROVE (To
12	9736	229	VIA	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	ALEXANDRIA			FAUCHER-BAKER RDS	45.323	-75.1682		THE NATION (Municipali	THE NATION (Muni
13	4478	9122	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	CHATHAM			THAMES RD	42.7926	-81.647	8	SOUTHWEST MIDDLESEX	MIDDLESEX COUNT
14	16366	860	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			COTE BLVD 80 (Valley	46.6503	-80.925	80	GREATER SUDBURY (City	GREATER SUDBURY
15	6406	9082	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	CHATHAM			THAMES RD	42.7926	-81.647	8	SOUTHWEST MIDDLESEX	MIDDLESEX COUNT
16	22912	24998	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	WINDSOR			CHARRON LN RD (Cnty	42.2841	-82.6839	22	LAKESHORE (Town)	ESSEX COUNTY
17	15765	34033	CN	QUE	QC	PUBLIC	F	LAC-ST-JEAN			PEDESTRIAN ST EDMO	48.41592	-71.26284		SAGUENAY (JONQUIERE)	SAGUENAY (JONQL
18	7644	11662	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			KING RD	43.3245	-79.8363		BURLINGTON (City)	BURLINGTON (City)
19	16011	17187	CN	PNR	AB	PUBLIC	F	WAINWRIGHT			Township Road 504	53.33789	-112.59903		BEAVER COUNTY	BEAVER COUNTY
20	26438	30951	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	WINDSOR			CHARRON LN RD (Cnty	42.2841	-82.6839	22	LAKESHORE (Town)	ESSEX COUNTY
21	11125	761	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			REGIONAL RD 47	44.469	-79.1586		BROCK TWP	DURHAM RM
22	8018	15186	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	STRATHROY			BETHESDA RD	42.9464	-81.9475		WARWICK TWP	WARWICK TWP
23	14860	13249	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			CAPREOL RD 84 (valley	46.6639	-80.9222	84	GREATER SUDBURY (City	GREATER SUDBURY
24	16372	861	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			CAPREOL RD 84 (valley	46.6639	-80.9222	84	GREATER SUDBURY (City	GREATER SUDBURY
25	13667	13219	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			CAPREOL RD 84 (valley	46.6639	-80.9222	84	GREATER SUDBURY (City	GREATER SUDBURY
26	10489	13961	CP	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			CAPREOL RD 84 (valley	46.6639	-80.9222	84	GREATER SUDBURY (City	GREATER SUDBURY
27	9372	741	CN	ONT	ON	PUBLIC	F	BALA			RAVENSHOE RD - REG	44.2322	-79.2892		GEORGINA (Town)	YORK RM

• In 2014 Transport Canada listed the 500 riskiest level crossings in Canada

• Based on traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, train speeds, sightlines, number of tracks and warning devices present

• Neither Bennett Road crossing or Cobbledick Road crossing appears on the list



# Most Drivers Do Not Notice Whistles

- Drivers usually have their windows closed
  - Often a radio or other sound system is on
  - External noise has been largely engineered out of modern cars
  - Train whistles are not noticed by drivers
- “.... It has been documented that a train's whistle ... has been measured at higher decibel levels within the homes of nearby residents than within the cab of a vehicle sitting at the grade crossing.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Train\\_whistle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Train_whistle)

# Train Whistles and Rice Development Homes



**Red lines** along the tracks indicate where whistles are blown. White area is where homes will be built with distances from 280 - 700 metres from whistles, with the average being 400 metres.



# Train Whistles and Lakebreeze Homes



**Red lines** along the tracks indicate where whistles are blown. White areas are where homes will be built. Whistle blast effect will be severe throughout East Village.

# Whistle Bans Improve Everyone's Quality of Life

- Whistle noise pollution is a quality of life issue.

In their extensive study of crossing regulations in 2012, a federal panel pointed out the following:

**“...train whistling is seen to be very disruptive. It was suggested that frequent train whistling can have adverse health impacts on nearby residents primarily due to sleep interruption/deprivation.”**

*From the Summary Report - Consultations Regarding the Development of the Railway-Roadway Grade Crossings Regulations 8/10/2012*

# Conclusion

The following explains the 19<sup>th</sup> century origins of train whistle procedures:

- “The pattern of two long blasts, one short, followed by another long harkens back to the days of morse code, in which it designated the letter “Q”. It dates back to another era when the Queen of England would come on board ships in the harbour. The ships would blast their horns with the morse code for “Q” to let other ships know the Queen was on board, and to yield right of way.

Trains then adopted this signal pattern, and what once was the announcement of royalty is now simply the herald of sleep disruption and misery for many, and a flash point for where a safety device crosses over into a public health hazard.

**“...The use of 90 decibel train whistles to protect crossings can simply become a late-night auditory assault on the local community. It is further ineffective and outmoded that only a fraction of those hearing the whistle are actually those attempting to use the crossing. The majority haven’t been warned – they’ve been woken.”**



- I hope that my presentation answers any questions or concerns that Council may have about Train Whistle Cessation and remind Council that when we came before you with this presentation in 2017 it came with several hundred seniors who packed the Municipal building and included a petition with over 1000 signatures from Wilmot Creek residents who supported this initiative and that was easily 9 out of every 10 residents that we had approached before Capreit stopped us from going door to door.
- I would ask Council to continue moving forward towards a Train Whistle Cessation By-Law and thank all of you for your time.