



STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

From: Public Works and Town Manager's Office

Title: Discussion / Direction: **Downtown Quiet Zone Follow-Up**

History of Past Town Council, Boards & Commissions, or Other Discussions

The following provides a summary of the past Town Council meetings where the train horn quiet zone was discussed, either as part of the Town Manager's report or as a separate agenda item. The recent public open house is also listed.

Date of Meeting	Topic	Council Direction Provided
February 6, 2007	Overview of train horn rule	
June 3, 2008	Review of quiet zone supplemental safety measure (SSM) options including closing crossings, raised medians, one way streets or four-quadrant gates	Due to budget concerns related to the undetermined North Meadows Extension budget, quiet zone was placed on hold pending future discussion
August 11, 2009	Preliminary design & design contracts w/ railroad	Proceed with preliminary designs and cost estimates on four-quadrant gate system by entering into contract with railroad and then return to Council for final decision.
March 23, 2010	Public Utility Commission (PUC) Application	Proceed with preparation of the application to the PUC but do not file yet. Provide information on possible funding sources
May 11, 2010	Project status report	Proceed with researching options for forming a Public Improvement District (PID) to help cover project costs
Nov / Dec 2010	Budget discussion	Decision made not to pursue project. Boundaries of the PID boundary were difficult to define.
Nov / Dec 2012	Budget discussion	Begin pre-planning work to restart project in 2014, pending budget approval
March 5, 2013	Summary of past efforts	Update cost estimates and research funding partnership. Return with update later in year.
July 2, 2013	Project status report	Review all quiet zone options previously presented including four-quadrant gate system and wayside horns
November 19, 2013	four-quadrant gates or Wayside Horn options	Defer consideration of the project and remove it from 2014 budget. Retained the project in 3-year plan as a place holder in 2015.

December 3, 2013	Budget discussion	Formally removed the project from the 2014 budget
November 18, 2014	Budget discussion	Removed project from the 2015 budget but directed staff to review options for County participation in the process and verify railroad cost estimates were still valid.
November 17, 2015	Rule & Quiet Zone methods review	Council directed staff to further assess establishment of quiet zone through closure of the Second Street crossing, obtain public input, and report back to Council early in 2016.
January 12, 2016	Public Open House	Reviewed details with the public associated with establishing a train horn quiet zone by closing the Second Street crossing and solicited public input at the meeting and through the Town's website.

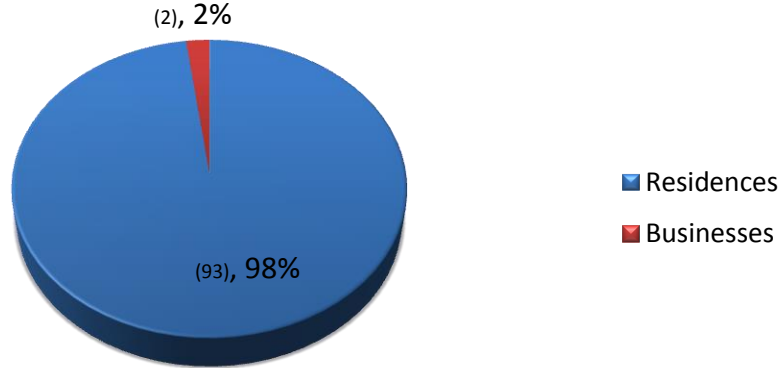
Discussion

Staff completed a further review of the option to establish a train horn quiet zone by closing the crossing at Second Street. The primary considerations that were reviewed in more detail included: 1) potential budget impacts, 2) impacts to traffic operations, and 3) impacts to emergency services from Fire and Police department operations. Details related to these areas that were provided at the January 12, 2016 Open House and on the Town's website are attached (**Attachment A**).

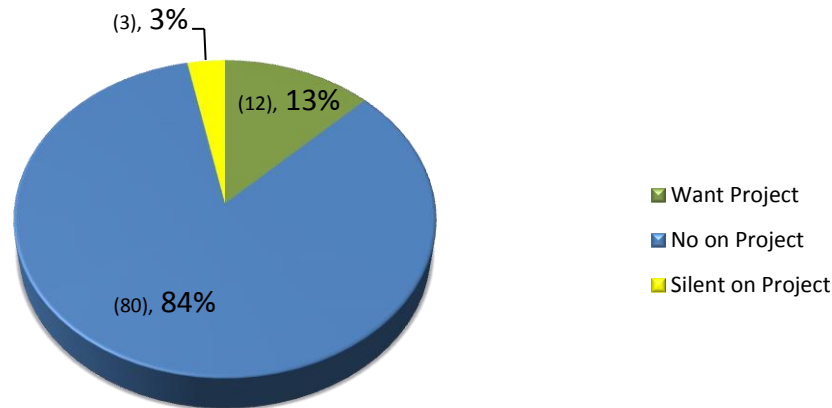
Public Feedback

To achieve Town Council's goal of gathering feedback on the idea of closing the Second Street crossing to create a train horn quiet zone, staff provided two formal opportunities: an online feedback form at CRgov.com/TrainHorn and an open house on Jan. 12, at Town Hall. In addition, it's worth noting that there were some comments on the Town's social media platforms. A summary of those comments follows the formal comment summary. The summary information that follows is from the formal surveys received. As of January 24th the total number of formal surveys received from the open house and online is 95. The individual surveys received are attached (**Attachment B**).

Number of Surveys Received by Location Type



Percentage of Responses by Position on Proposal to Close Second Street Crossing



Of the people that supplied a formal comment form staff also tried to get a general sense of comments regarding the quiet zone issue itself. There is a fairly even split of the majority between people who still desire a quiet zone be pursued using a different method to preserve all crossings with those who did not provide additional information on establishing a quiet zone. The remaining folks did not favor pursuing a quiet zone at all.

A map showing the locations within Town based on addresses supplied on the formal surveys received is shown on the next page.

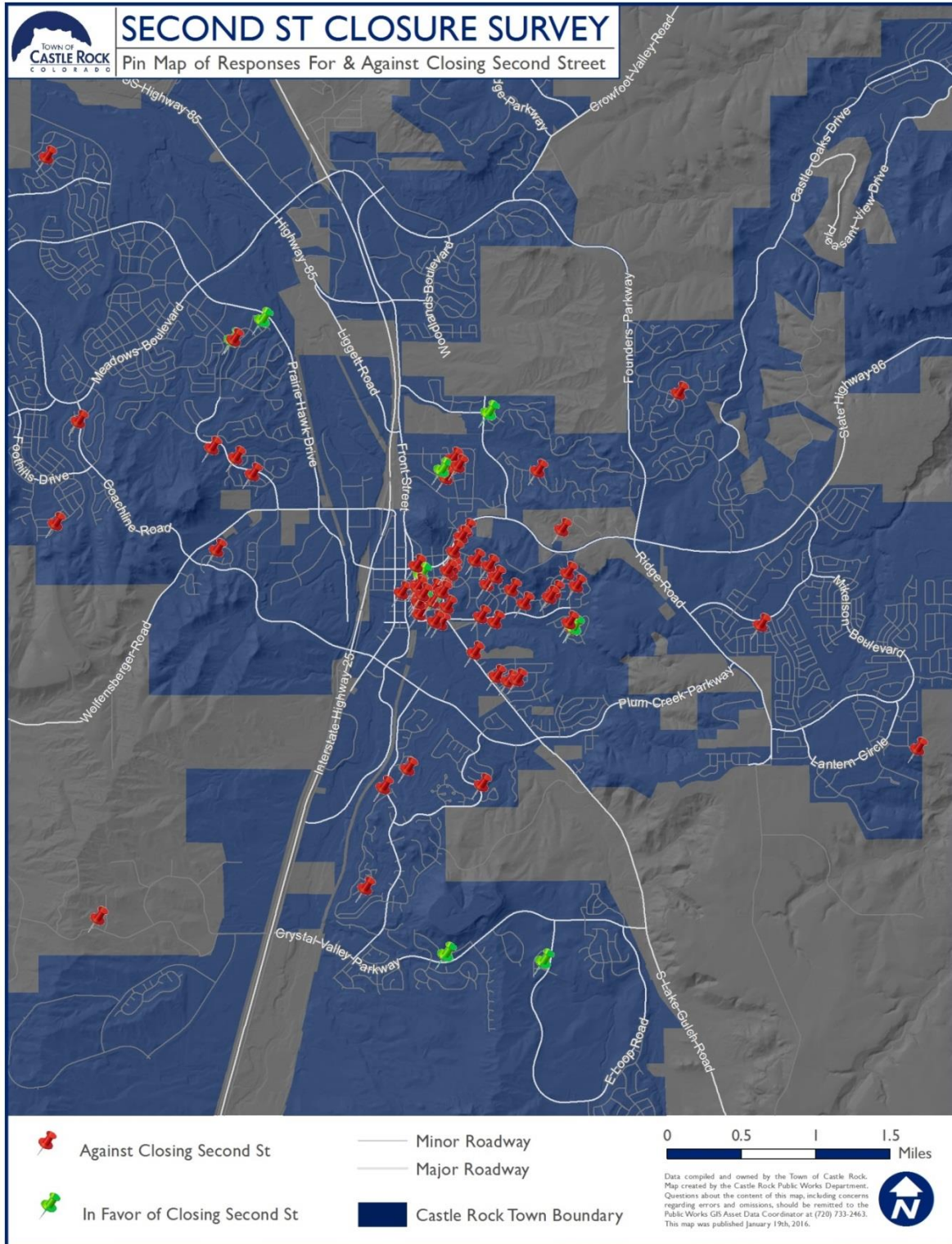
Regarding the Second Street Crossing:

In all, the vast majority of residents and all business owners who responded were against closing the Second Street crossing. In general, they referenced traffic concerns, along with business and event access as reasons for keeping the Second Street crossing open. As the Town continues to grow to full build out, this concern escalates, and closing an existing crossing will only increase the future concern with congestion. Additional concern exists around potential accidents due to steep grades on Third (11% near the Cantril School), and relative narrowness of the road.

During the open house, there was some input received by various attendees asking whether a trial closure of the Second Street crossing could occur to get a better feel for the actual impacts to traffic. This would entail the temporary closure of access across the tracks during a specified period (several months). The primary deterrent to this is the current two-way stop control at the intersection of Perry Street and Third Street. Because either a roundabout or traffic signal is necessary to accommodate the traffic increase on Third Street, one of these improvements would need to be installed. The duration to complete one of these improvements would take at least a year to 18 months.

For those who favor a quiet zone, they expressed the need to quiet the train for businesses and residential quality of life. Most who wanted the quiet zone were against closing the Second Street crossing and urged the Town to invest in a more

comprehensive option, such as the four-quadrant gates. For those who opposed the quiet zone, they expressed that the train has been here long before residents and asked the Town not to spend money on a quiet zone for a small portion of the Town's population.



Social Media Feedback Summary:

The Town always welcomes comments and questions on its social media platforms. Information about the train horn quiet zone open house was posted on the Town's Facebook page twice, between Dec. 30 and Jan. 12. The initial post – a news release on Dec. 30 – garnered three comments. One was against the quiet zone and two asked for consideration of one in The Meadows. A post about the open house on Jan. 11, had four comments. Two related to the issue (the other two complimented the photo) One was in favor of a quiet zone and one was against.

Following the open house, we reminded residents about the online feedback form with a post, which garnered no additional comments. On the general page, there was one comment, which was against the idea to close the Second Street crossing. There was also one post with a question about the online feedback form, which staff answered.

Options to Proceed

Staff has identified several options that Town Council may consider. These are summarized as follows:

1. Do not pursue a train horn quiet zone: Under this option, Town Council could either not pursue action on this subject further, or formally vote to not pursue the implementation of a train horn quiet zone.
2. Implement a different option to establish a train horn quiet zone: Under this option, Town Council could direct staff to pursue a method that has previously been discussed. Remember, the goal of a train horn quiet zone is to achieve a certain safety level without the horn, as measured by the Federal Railroad Administration. To do so, a combination of methods could be implemented. Town Council has considered:
 - Installing a Supplemental Safety Measures (SSM) at each crossing. A SSM is an approved construction treatment listed in the Federal Rule. One example of this is installing four-quadrant gates at both Second and Third street crossings and minor median modifications to the Fifth Street crossing.
 - Installing a different SSM at one of the crossings such as Second Street or Third Street to get the safety rating below either the Risk Index with Horn (RIWH) or National Safety Risk Threshold (NSRT). As a reminder, the RIWH is the existing safety index of the specific corridor under consideration. The NSRT is an average safety index of all public at-grade crossings nationally. One example could be the installation of a 4-quad gate at either the Second or Third Street crossing.
 - Install Way-side horns: While this doesn't silence the horns, it does minimize the noise footprint by placing horns directly at the crossings versus the train blowing the horn while moving.

3. Assess other options and gain public feedback: Under this option, the one-way street concept for Second and Third Streets, which is an approved SSM, would be further assessed for budget and traffic impacts. When previously discussed, the concept involved keeping the existing width of the streets as is and adding an additional gate on each street to fully close off the one-way direction. Traffic impacts were not fully reviewed during original discussions, as this option was ruled out in favor of the 4-quad gate systems. The configuration of these one-way streets could be further refined in an effort to try to reduce the costs, and a more detailed review of traffic impacts assessed.
4. Proceed with the Second Street crossing closure option: Under this option staff would begin undertaking the approval and installation process to create a train horn quiet zone by closing the crossing at Second Street.

Attachments

Attachment A: Open House Information Boards
Attachment B: Formal Surveys
Letter from the DDA