

QUIET ZONE INITIATIVE TIMELINE

2009

Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad (BNSF) completed an extensive project - double tracking the TransCon railroad artery that passes through the edge of Belle Plaine. Consequently there has been an exponential increase of noise - now a quality of life issue for the residences/schools/businesses located in Belle Plaine.

Michael Mackay, physicist, civil engineer at McConnell AFB, proposed both passive and active audio interference solutions in support of arboretum activities.

January 2016

It was determined that a Quiet Zone (QZ) would be in the best interest of the entire community. A group of constituents began meetings to discuss QZ viability:

A.J. Wilson, KDOT area engineer
Michael Mackay, local resident, civil engineer
Melvin Matlock, Sumner County Road and Bridge
Dave Armstrong, Belle Plaine Township
Gordon Fell, Chief of Police/Director of Operations
Robin Macy, steward of Bartlett Arboretum

The proposal increased the zone distance to include/benefit the entire town of Belle Plaine, five crossings for a 2+ mile zone:

Hillside, K 55, 8th Street, 10th Street, 100th Avenue

May 4, 2016

Diagnostic review – an on-site evaluation of proposed QZ included everyone above with addition of:
Kamalah Young, BNSF, Kansas City Office
Howard Gillespie, Federal Railroad Admin. (FRA) Regional Manager
Gary Farlow, KDOT State Office – Railroad Specialist, Topeka

At that review, 10th Street crossing was considered an unsafe corridor.

Formal presentations were made to the following groups with unanimous support.

Sumner County Commission (8/23/2016)
Belle Plaine City Council (9/1/2016)

September 12, 2016: With the letters of support from the City of Belle Plaine, County Commission, Township and KDOT, the formal Notice of Intent was created and submitted to all required parties: KDOT, BNSF, FRA.

October/November 2016 - received and responded to comments from BNSF, FRA and KDOT.

2017 - Site study, consideration to create corridor connecting 8th & 10th, required environmental assessment completed by Michael Mackay, negotiation with BNSF re: real estate transfer. Decision made to pursue Merchant Street improvements, instead, to benefit more people.

November 2017 – The proposal was amended to now include channelization devices at 100th Ave. and improvements to Merchant Street as school traffic is rerouted due to proposed closure of 10th street. In addition, this will also benefit school athletic practices so coaching will not be interrupted.

Addition of two new QZ advocates:

Dr. Jim Sutton, USD 357 Superintendent
Brady Short, City Attorney

November 2, 2017 – City Council Presentation

December 19, 2017 - County Commission Presentation
Unanimous support at each meeting.

Proposal

Quiet Zone includes five crossings: Hillside, K-55, 8th Street, 10th Street & 100th Ave.

Safety is IMPROVED due to the installations of pre-approved SSMs (Supplemental Safety Measures) Channelization devices at 100th Ave. (example)



Non-traversable median at K-55 (example)



Closure of 10th Street

Tenth Street crossing closure has a financial value assessed by the BNSF to compensate for budgeted items needed by the applicant to support the QZ initiative. These monies will be used to subsidize the design/construction of SSMs, pave Merchant Street, enhance crossing approaches, create signage and educational pamphlets.

The city does not accept any additional liability with QZ.

Of note, safety effective rating:

Train horn – 0.668

Channelization devices – 0.750

Non-traversable median – 0.800

Crossing closure – 1.000

In case of emergency, the train horn will still sound.

