



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

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June 13, 2018

Rapid City Common Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: 18TP022 - Railroad Quiet Zone Task Draft Report

Dear Council Members:

In January of 2017, the Mayor's Office formulated a working group of downtown residents, downtown business owners, City staff and City Council representatives to serve on a newly formulated task force for the purpose of reviewing feasibility and evaluating costs associated with the establishment of a railroad quiet zone through the central business district and Urban Commercial District of Downtown Rapid City.

The City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2014, identifies the following as a near-term action:

'Evaluate potential implementation of quiet zones at high rail traffic locations through populated areas' under Strategies for Efficient Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (pg. 198).

Downtown Rapid City has become a destination, and people want to be a part of what is happening here. The Downtown Master Plan - through extensive community engagement that included participation from more than 1,600 downtown and community stakeholders - identifies **'provide housing everywhere'** as the number *one* improvement participants believed to be the most important to enhancing our downtown (pg. 7). Living downtown has become an increasingly popular trend for not only members of the millennial generation but also baby boomers with empty nests and the generation following the millennials, commonly referred to as 'generation z'. The market assessment in the Downtown Master Plan identified demand for up to 350 additional residential living units in the downtown area.

We have made significant strides in the redevelopment of our downtown over the last 10 years and have the opportunity to make an investment now to influence what happens over the next 10 or more years. There is significant potential and demand for future development, residential housing, and mixed use facilities to be located downtown - especially east of Fifth Street. By reducing noise pollution from the train, the quiet zone will remove a barrier to housing development.



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After issuing an RFP and reviewing four qualified proposals, the City retained the services of SRF Consulting Group, Inc. to conduct a feasibility study and quiet zone assessment to identify crossing improvements required by the Federal Rail Administration for quiet zone implementation. The task force identified 11th Street to the west and Maple Street to the east as the boundary of the quiet zone. This assessment includes 13 rail crossings on Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern (RCPE) Railroad's track and one crossing along the state-owned Kadoka to Rapid City mainline.

The draft report you have been asked to acknowledge and provide input on provides a summary of the quiet zone assessment results, discussion items, and consultant recommendations. The report also includes proposed crossing improvement scenarios with planning level layouts and construction cost estimates for each crossing. Cost estimates were provided for a variety of options including signal upgrades only, as well as several scenarios at each intersection to include high safety, cost-effective (without closures), cost-effective (with closures), and phased implementation.

It seems appropriate that we would consider investing into a railroad quiet zone project in support of the City's plans for a developing downtown, a developing community and our role in bringing about economic stability and prosperity.

Rapid City could not fund a project such as this without consideration from the Vision Fund.

There will be more communication on this topic at a later date. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



Steve Allender, Mayor
Rapid City, South Dakota