

# REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

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Date:21/01/08

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**From:** Maurice S Brenner  
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**Subject:** Railway Operations and Infrastructure . Impact on Citizens and Communities

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## **Recommendation:**

Council recommend the Formation of City/Rail Lines/Community Advisory Committee

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## **Background:**

Both the rail industry and Canadian communities have seen significant changes over the last number of years. Communities such as Pickering have or are expanding, and new road infrastructure and neighborhoods are being developed. With regards to the rail industry, we are seeing an ever increasing volume of rail traffic, and longer and heavier trains.

It can be predicted that with the interface between railway operations and the public, it brings growing risk and problems which have already been experienced by Pickering such as the likelihood of more crossing accidents, derailments, noise complaints, road crossing blockages and so on.

In Pickering at least 4 railway lines dissect across our City with the majority in the urban envelope

## **Public Crossings and Sustainability Impacts:**

Section 103 of the Canadian Rail Operating Rules states that .. *no part of a train or engine may be allowed to stand on any part of a public crossing at grade, for a longer period than five minutes, when vehicular or pedestrian traffic requires passage..*

In Pickering if you were to ask drivers you would likely hear of delays far in excess of the 5 minute regulation.

These delays result translates in not only environmental impacts due to idling vehicles over long periods of time, but also lost economic and social activity opportunity costs, and delays to emergency vehicle access.

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This problem will only worsen as train lengths continue to increase, and where the road and rail infrastructure are not adjusted to accommodate this development.

### **Levels of Noise**

Bill C-11, which amended the *Canada Transportation Act*, contained new and stronger provision for the Canadian Transportation Agency to act in cases of noise complaints against railways.

However the provisions do not translate into actions.

There needs to be a strong systematic legislative and program approach to balance the issues of railway operational decisions and the interface with the public and communities, beginning with the assertion of sustainability principles in the policy statements of federal legislation overseeing the railway industry, including the *Railway Safety Act*.

There is a “disconnect” with no leverage for communities or jurisdictions to work on this element of community sustainability,

### **Public Safety**

Residents have and continue to express a concern for public safety and impacts on their quality of life caused by the perspective of the high speed of trains that run through the urban area.

In addition according to presentations presented by several groups as part of the Rail Safety Review there is a lack of understanding on the movements of dangerous goods in high population density corridors.

### **Track Monitoring and Inspection**

The standards for track structures are developed by railways and approved by Transport Canada. Known as the Track Safety Rules (TSR), these rules are the “minimum standards” that the Federal rail industry in Canada must abide by.

However, railways are not always obligated to follow these “minimum standards.” There are many instances where railways apply for and are granted exemptions from the “minimum standards” found in the Track Safety Rules.

Without adequate monitoring and inspection, not only does the Community risk issues of safety, residents abutting rail lines face severe vibrations and noise impacts.

Reports on the incidents and their causes would suggest that the railways are not doing all that they can to prevent, or at least reduce the severity of, these occurrences.

### **Conclusion:**

Rail Safety must be a concern to this Council and issues pertaining to impacts must be advocated on behalf of the community by this council.

In addition to the recommendations before you in the Notice of Motion Council should consider forming an advisory committee to meet with similar to that that was set up in Port Moody

Reference Materials:

1. FCM Submission November 2006
2. Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation Submission August 2007
3. Sorry State of Railways In Canada October 28<sup>th</sup> 2007
4. Submission June 2007 United Transportation Union Local 1178
5. City of Port Moody Community Advisory Panel
6. Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs Submission August 15<sup>th</sup> 2007
7. Teamsters Canada Rail Submission August 30<sup>th</sup> 2007
8. Canadian Wheat Board of Canada Submission June 8<sup>th</sup> 2007

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**Prepared and Submitted By:**

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