

# Caldwell Railroad Quiet Zone



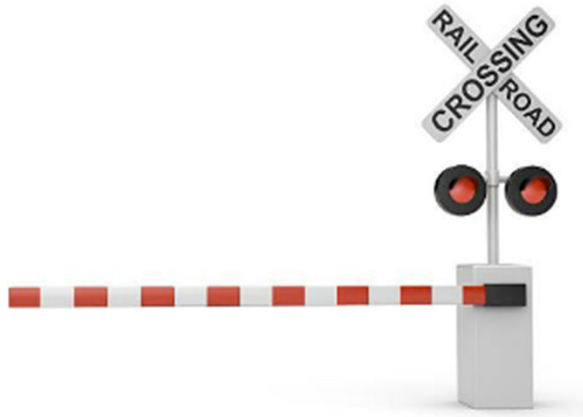
January 20, 2026

Bruce Mills, Deputy Public Works Director (Transportation)



# What is a RR Quiet Zone?

Trains don't blow their horns at crossings



Gates, flashing lights and bells still occur

# How Many Quiet Zones Exist?

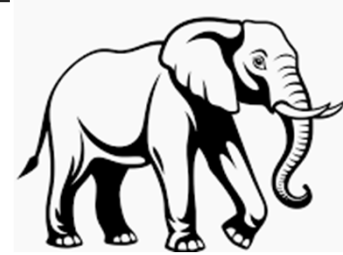


Idaho: 3 (Rathdrum, East Hope, Bonner County) County)



USA: More than 1,000 Quiet Zones with more than 5,500 crossings

# How do you establish a Quiet Zone?



1. ✓ Determine quiet zone crossings
2. ✓ Design mitigation improvements per FRA requirements
3. ✓ Hold a Diagnostic Team meeting (UPRR, FRA, ITD)
4. ✓ Submit Notice of Intent
5. ✓ Submit Public Application to FRA & receive approval
6. ✓ Obtain permits from UPRR and bid project
7. Once complete, submit Notice of Establishment
8. Train horns stop!



# Caldwell's Quiet Zone History



## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Author: Michael Seely, P.E.  
Date: January 23, 2015  
Subject: Public Authority application to FRA, 49 CFR 222.39(b)  
Caldwell Idaho Quiet Zone Evaluation

2014: City hired a feasibility study

❖ Result: \$1.7M - \$2.4M for 6 crossings

2024: City requested proposals

❖ Resulted in staff performing design  
& permitting.

Recent approved budgets

❖ 2024 - \$4.1M      2025 - \$60k      2026 - \$400k

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The city of Caldwell, Idaho is evaluating the feasibility of a Train Horn Quiet Zone pursuant to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations established in 49 CFR 222. These regulations require the routine sounding of train horns at all public at-grade crossings. The regulations also set forth conditions where the train horn may be silenced. The minimum length of a quiet zone is 1/2 mile measured along the railroad track. Establishment of a quiet zone requires the following improvements at each crossing:

1. Installation of automatic flashing lights, gate arms, and bells, with power-out indicators
2. Constant Warning Time (CWT) train detection circuitry
3. Advance warning signs installed on every highway approach to the crossing

# Caldwell Proposed Quiet Zone



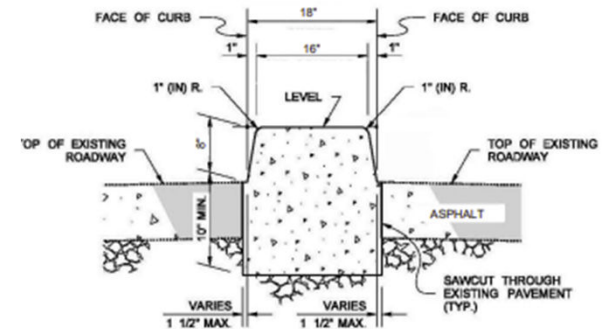
## 7 Crossings:

- 5<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Kimball Ave
- 9<sup>th</sup> Ave
- 12<sup>th</sup> Ave
- 21<sup>st</sup> Ave
- Linden St
- Ustick Rd

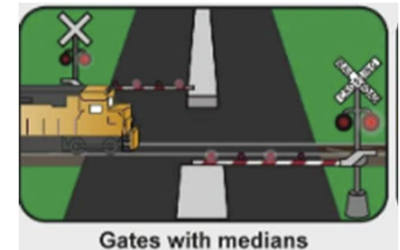


# Mitigation for Quiet Zone

- Concrete Medians approaching crossings
- Close off nearby driveways
- Install warning signs for vehicles and pedestrians



# Are Quiet Zones Safe?



Per Federal Railroad Administration 2020 study:

- ❑ No statistically significant difference in trespass casualties before and after the establishment of the Quiet Zones.
- ❑ Trespass casualties decreased by 42%, where the calculated Quiet Zone Risk Index is at or below the Risk Index with Horns.
  - Caldwell's QZRI = 17,637 – well under RIWH of 28,028.
- ❖ Train Engineers can still sound their horns if they see any potential danger ahead.

# Benefits of Quiet Zones

- ❖ Significantly less noise for nearby residents, pedestrians, businesses and customers
- ❖ More safe with added mitigation features
  - Medians
  - Closed off access points near tracks
  - Warning signs

# Quiet Zone Costs & Schedule



2014 Design/Construction Estimate: \$1.7M - \$2.4M for 6 crossings


2026 Actual Design/Construction Costs: **\$238,000** for 7 crossings

❖ (\$162,679 Construction contract plus ~\$75k other costs).

Ongoing Maintenance Costs: Minimal - maintain signs, delineators and barriers – all with Street Crew.

Estimated Implementation Schedule: **May/June 2026**

# What's Next?

- ❖ Workshop allowing public comment Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:00pm to 7:00pm.
  - ❖ Construction Contract for Quiet Zone implementation will be considered on February 2<sup>nd</sup> Council Agenda.
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# Questions?

