Improving Safety at Railroad Crossings in Cedar Rapids

July 17, 2019
Overview of 49 CFR 222

• Final Rule on Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings was published April 27, 2005
• Rule describes specific steps communities can take to create quiet zones
• Requires horns to sound when approaching public crossings
• Effective date – June 24, 2005
• Amendments published – August 17, 2006
Horn Use at Public Crossing

- Time-based pattern (15-20 secs) before arriving at crossing
- 25 seconds okay if good faith effort – err on side of safety
- Retained traditional sounding pattern – 2 longs, 1 short, 1 long
- Cannot begin to sound more than ¼ mile from crossing
- Established a maximum volume limit for the first time - 110 dB(A)
Acceptable Quiet Zone (QZ) Risk

To create New QZ:
Reduce risk to the NSRT
or
To the RIWH
Improving Safety = “Quiet Zone”
Supplementary Safety Measures

- Closures (permanent & temporary)
- 4 quadrant gates
- One-way street with gate across width
- Channelization arrangements (mountable and non-mountable) with gates
Other Major Impacts

• Intersections of two or more streets, or a street and an alley, that are within 60 feet of the gate arm must be closed or relocated
  • Appendix A to Part 222
• Diagnostic Review – Rail Road comments
• Notice of Intent.
Private & Pedestrian Crossing Within Quiet Zones

• All Pedestrian crossings and Private crossings into active commercial or industrial sites
  – Must be treated with the improvements recommended by the diagnostic review.
• Minimum – STOP and NO TRAIN HORN signs on all approaches to pedestrian crossings.
• STOP and No TRAIN HORN signs on all approaches to private crossings.
Fast Facts

• 79 Railroad and Cedar Rapids Street Crossings
• 11 additional with private roadways
• Construction projects and RR coordination
• Future 3 Crossings
• 3 Revenue sources
1st Avenue at the Trail – 2020

- Cedar Valley Nature Trail Improvements
- Rail Crossing/Quiet Zone Improvements
- 1st Ave E Median/Pedestrian Improvements

Improving Safety – “Quiet Zone”
NewBo: 12th Avenue – 2020

Improving Safety = "Quiet Zone"
Quiet Zones

Quiet Zone 2019-2021

Quiet Zone 2019-2021

Quiet Zone 2019-2021

Quiet Zone 2019-2021

Quiet Zone 2022-2023

Quiet Zone 2022-2023

Quiet Zone 2020-2021

Quiet Zone 2020-2021
Development Committee
July 17, 2019
Overview

- Performance of the Code
- Changes to Date
- Potential for between 500 and 3,000 housing units
- Approximately half of the land available for disposition today.
City Planning Commission Cases (Annual from January-June)
Overview

- Rezoning Applications
  - 2018 – 16
  - 2019 – 6

- Major Administrative Site Plan Applications:
  - 2018 - 21
  - 2019 – 28

- Drop in CPC cases does not mean a drop in development
Code Updates

- **Spring 2019 – First round of updates**
  - Corrected identified typos and errors
  - Adjusted and clarified Landscaping Requirements
  - Allowed for administrative Minor Design Adjustments for common site constraints

- **Fall 2019 – Upcoming**
Zoning Advisory Group

- 5 member panel
  - 3 community members
  - 1 BOA representative
  - 1 CPC representative

- Role of the group is to assist in evaluating the performance of the code and help staff prioritize updates
Initial Meeting

- Meeting overview
Development Committee
July 17, 2019
6th Street Southwest

- Need for a Corridor Action Plan Identified in EnvisionCR

- Upcoming Paving for Progress project: Wilson to 33rd Street
  - Pavement rehabilitation – 2020
  - Sidewalks – 2021
Plan Elements

Corridor Action Plans focus on

- Land Use and the built environment
- Transportation network and accessibility
  - Cars, bus, bikes, pedestrians
- Other characteristics including public spaces
Workshop

- Wednesday, August 7 – 6pm
  - Time Check Hall, City Services Center, 500 15th Ave SW
  - Follows Paving for Progress Project Meeting at 5pm
- Attendees will have opportunities to collect and provide information related to the project.
Timeline

- Fall 2019 – Open House
  - Review results of workshop
  - Draft action steps for corridor
- Fall 2019/Winter 2020
  - Presentation of Plan

Presented by:
Development Committee
July 17, 2019
Advisory Group

• Role
  • Provide feedback
  • Preview public engagement activities
  • Encourage and advocate

• Member Entities
  • SSMID
  • NewBo Association
  • Oak Hill Jackson Neighborhood Association
  • Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District
  • Czech Village Association
  • Southside Investment
Plan Focus

- Connectivity
  - Vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit
  - 8th Avenue Bridge
  - Smokestack Bridge

- Land Use
  - Density and intensity, City-owned property, greenway

- Streetscapes
  - Landscaping, lighting, amenities (i.e. 3rd Street)
  - Transition from NewBo to downtown

- Character
  - Building placement, location, height

- Placemaking
  - Gateways, archways, signage
  - Regional & national precedents
Internal Kick-off

- City staff met with consultant on May 8\textsuperscript{th} to determine:
  - Existing conditions
    - Utilities
    - Streets and Right-of-way
    - Identify known and potential technical issues
  - Existing and planned development
  - Relevant local and and national trends
  - Data Needs
Visioning Workshop

- June 5th – 50+ attendees
- Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges Analysis
- Geographic Mapping Exercise
SWOC Analysis

• Strengths
  • Historic buildings
  • Walkable
  • Arts and cultural reputation
  • Lots of land for infill/expansion

• Weaknesses
  • Lack of shuttle/transit service
  • Lack of cultural curation
  • Scale/context of new development
SWOC Analysis

• Opportunities
  • Trolley loop
  • Access to the river
  • City-owned property open for development
  • Well designed architecture

• Challenges
  • Finding developers willing to go small
  • Lack of funding
  • Rent and housing costs
  • Limited hours and days for retailers
Geographic Mapping Exercise

- Focus on Housing and Public Amenities
  - Trails
  - Playground
  - Boutique hotel
  - Unique bridge lighting
  - Lot 44 development
  - Year round Roundhouse
  - Housing around greenway park
  - Housing around Sinclair Site
Design Workshop

- 3-Day Event
  - Consultant brings the design studio to Cedar Rapids
- Day 1
  - Concept Formulation
  - Public pin-up session
- Day 2
  - Refinement of concepts
  - Public pin-up session
- Day 3
  - Refinement of concepts
  - Public pin-up session
Timeline

• July 17th, 18th, 19th from 6 pm to 8 pm – Design Workshop at National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

• August/September – Open House

• November/December 2019 – City Council Adoption

Presented by:
Historic Rehab Program

• Established in August 2016 to replace the Paint Rebate Program
• Provides funding to owners of local landmarks and properties in the local historic districts for exterior rehabilitation projects
• Guidelines revised in October 2018 to make the program more accessible and increase number of applicants
October 2018 Changes

• Allow commercial properties in addition to residential
• Eliminate loans, offer two tiers of grants, based on household Area Median Income (AMI):
  • Above 100% AMI receive 50% of project costs, up to $5,000 grant
  • Below 100% AMI receive 75% of project costs, up to $7,500 grant
• Allow broader eligibility of re-roofing projects
• Funding prioritization clarified
• Allow new construction as an eligible project for funding
FY20 Budget

- FY20 Program Budget: $50,000
  - Amount committed to projects: $40,886
  - Remaining funds: $9,114
- The program has an additional $34,549 to spend due to repaid loans and rollover funds from FY19
- Continue funding projects on a “first come, first served” basis
Completed Projects

1545 2nd Avenue SE

Before

After
Completed Projects

1831 Ridgewood Terrace SE

Before

After
Completed Projects

1630 Park Avenue SE

Before

After
Presented by: