



MEMORANDUM

To: Nathan Poore, Town Manager

From: Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-Range Planning

Date: June 8, 2012

Re: Railroad Crossing Upgrades - Quiet Zone – Amtrak/Downeaster Train

On December 12, 2011, the Council voted 7-0 to approve an order to authorize a supplemental appropriation of \$130,000 from the undesignated fund balance for railroad crossing upgrades.

These funds would pay for improvements to four railroad crossings along the Pan Am Railways line to be made in order to maintain (and expand) a so-called “Quiet Zone” (QZ) in Falmouth in anticipation of increased frequency and speed of trains when the Amtrak Downeaster train service starts.

The improvements consist of “channelization” devices as shown below. These are reboundable vertical panels mounted on a 2.5 feet wide traversable median with 45 degree granite curb intended to prevent drivers from circumventing the crossing gates by switching into oncoming traffic lane and driving around the lowered gates to cross the tracks. This work mandates slight road widenings.



In December 2011, staff stated it would bring this topic back to the Council for a check-in if the Amtrak expansion does not happen. On June 7, 2012, the Town was informed

by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority that the Amtrak Downeaster train service is scheduled to commence on or around November 1, 2012.

This November 1, 2012 date requires immediate action by the Town to install the proposed crossing upgrades in time and make the necessary notifications to the Federal Railroad Administration and other parties. Before the Town does so, it seemed prudent to do an additional check-in with the Council at this time. No action by the Council is required at this time.

Notes:

- The private Muirfield-Birkdale crossing (located in Cumberland) is not part of this upgrade or Quiet Zone.
- The Town of Cumberland has opted not to make crossing upgrades at this time.
- Falmouth will lose its existing Quiet Zone status if it does not make these improvements due to past accident data and the increase in the frequency and speed of freight trains, regardless of the Amtrak expansion.
- The cost estimates for each crossing are:

Crossing	Cost Estimate	Required for QZ?
Blackstrap	\$27,000	Optional
Falmouth	\$30,000	Optional
Field	\$35,000	Mandatory
Woodville	\$35,000	Mandatory
Total	\$127,000	

- In addition to the upgrades, Chief Tolan developed and is prepared to execute an educational outreach plan for the public that is associated with railroad crossing safety.
- The Council's December 12, 2011 agenda materials provide background information on this topic (including a Quiet Zone presentation). Please see: http://www.town.falmouth.me.us/Pages/FalmouthME_CouncilAgendas/2011/12122011/TM_RRCrossing_O