



Chicago Area Transportation Study



To: Local Governments in Northeast Illinois

From: Joy Schaad, P.E. - Director of Community Liaison, on behalf of IDOT District One & Central Office Data Managers

Date: July 29, 2004

Subject: **Guidance on Updating Railroad Crossing ADT info for Quiet Zone Use**

CATS, IDOT, ICC and FRA have had several recent discussions to clarify requirements and procedures regarding the updated inventory forms. FRA has guidance on their website (www.fra.dot.gov) including a 15 page memo called "Procedure for Updating the DOT Crossing Inventory File - For Public Authorities". This document is broad, covering all aspects of the RR crossing inventory. Only IDOT and the railroads can submit those updated forms and you will have to contact the affected railroad directly to have them update the train information for each crossing in your proposed quiet zone.

This memo deals only with the roadway side of the issue. IDOT will submit the changes to the RR Crossing Inventory forms' road information. This will be a large undertaking considering the coordination effort needed for upwards of 389 crossings that need updating by autumn of 2004. District One will be doing the analysis of the raw data and IDOT's Central Office is the group that submits changes to FRA, but in an effort to minimize calls- IDOT has asked that any inquiries, questions, comments go to me, Joy Schaad at CATS (312-793-3472 or jschaad@CATSMPO.com). I will probably be able to answer your questions directly based on similar questions or I will contact IDOT for information. If the same question comes in frequently we will publish a revised memo to be given to the Council of Mayors' Planning Liaisons and posted on the CATS website www.CATSmpo.com.

As you know FRA is requiring the Crossing Inventory Forms to be dated with in 6 months of your submittals to ensure that the data has been recently verified. **This does not, however, mean that every item on the inventory form must have changed within the last 6 months.** Because IDOT is the keeper of extensive roadway data for our state and this new data will become part of the official database, there are certain standards and procedures that will have to be maintained for consistency within the state's roadway database. For example IDOT will only accept "raw" count data and they will review the data, convert it from number of "axles" to number of "vehicles", where appropriate, apply seasonal adjustment factors and expansion factors, and check for consistency with other data in the area.

What locations to submit count data for (and which ones to “leave as is”):

1.) For the time being, IDOT will not be able to process ADTs for crossings that are not already quiet (i.e. the non-Pre-Rule Quiet Zones) and will not accept data on those crossings. The reason is the huge workload associated with pre-rule quiet zones needing to meet their Dec 18th deadline. New traffic count data for crossings that are not “Pre-Rule” Quiet Crossings can be counted this summer and fall, but cannot be submitted to IDOT until further notice. We will publish more information on that this fall but it is anticipated that the data for new quiet zones will be accepted around the end of the year for submission to FRA with the annual statewide update in the Spring. Additionally, traffic counts can be submitted to IDOT later as communities decide to explore the Quiet Zone issue over the coming years.

2.) Only certain counts will be updated; i.e. if the latest official ADT is fairly recent IDOT will not process/submit a new one. Specifically:

- If the railroad crossing is on a Marked Route (i.e. has a posted Illinois Route number or US Route number), IDOT will not accept locally collected data. The Marked Routes are counted on the odd years (2001, 2003, 2005 ...) as part of IDOT’s overall Traffic Monitoring Program. FRA has told us the Marked Route counts within IDOT’s traffic program are considered current.
- If the RR crossing is on a local, county, township, or unmarked state road and collected in 2001 or later – IDOT will not process it, with the exception of any count in the inventory that ends in a “9” – which indicates that it was an estimate, not an actual count. If data is submitted for locations that already have 2001 or later counts that are not estimates, IDOT will not accept it. (In certain rare cases where there has been dramatic growth you can make the case to CATS that you feel the crossing is worthy of an exception to this standard. I will work with IDOT on your behalf, in those cases.)

3.) You should submit new raw traffic count data for: railroad crossings on local, township, county, or unmarked state roads where the crossing inventory sheet indicates that the ADT is from the year 2000 or before or if the ADT value ends in a “9”.

For the latest official ADT data and date that it was collected, go to the FRA website www.fra.dot.gov and click on the link for Office of Safety. Once on the Office of Safety page, you can click on the crossing tab, and type in the crossing number. That will pull up the crossing inventory form with all the latest FRA data for that crossing. If you don’t have the crossing’s ID number you can get it from the QZ calculator or off the actual signal bungalow at that crossing.

Note that IDOT will re-submit to FRA the latest marked route crossings’ data and all unmarked, local, county, and township data from 2001 and later to FRA in the fall in order to meet the “updated inventory form” requirement of the FRA’s Draft Interim Rule.

How to conduct your traffic count

IDOT needs 24 hour continuous counts taken between noon Monday and noon Friday. (preferably 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. starting on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday). IDOT will only take data from automated “tube counts” or “Hi-Star magnetic lane counters”. Although IDOT will also take 12-hour continuous manual counts (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., only) on a limited basis (i.e. the Council of Mayors summer data intern collected counts).

IDOT will work from raw data from any of these formats and convert to a seasonally adjusted ADT (actually “AADT” meaning Average Annual Daily Traffic). No classifications (i.e. truck percentages, etc are needed).

How to submit

- 1.) Submit electronically (preferred) to Vince Durante at IDOT District One (please only submit the data asked for) the email address is DuranteVJ@dot.il.gov. Please send a copy of your correspondence to CATS at jschaad@catsmpo.com.
- 2.) To submit as hard copy mail (if necessary) to Mr. Vince Durante, Bureau of Programming, Illinois DOT, 201 West Center Court, Schaumburg IL 60196-1096 “Return Receipt” mail is suggested, so that you know that it made it to IDOT alright. The CATS address for the duplicate copy is Joy Schaad, CATS, 300 W. Adams Street, Chicago, IL 60606.

Information to Include: (please submit only the data asked for)

1. Local Agency - the municipality or county where the crossing is located. Provide the staff contact’s name, address, phone, & email addresses (indicate whether you want this person to receive the correspondence on the IDOT ADTs or the below person.)
2. Entity collecting counts for the local agency, if other than above. Provide the consultant contact’s name, address, phone, & email addresses
3. Date/time that each count collected (Provide start time, date, day of week, and duration.)
4. Type of equipment used
5. Crossing ID number
6. Physical location of count(s) – you need to provide “AT” and “BETWEEN”. For example, “Counted at the UP RR west Line RR at First St. between Oak Ave and Maple Ter.” (FYI: IDOT needs the nearby significant street names {generally collector or arterial roads} to put endpoints to the section of road with this ADT).
7. Any Road Name changes for the crossing, if the FRA data base is incorrect.
8. Date submitted to IDOT
9. Your submittal should be the raw data – do not make any adjustments to it. (If the counting process employed happens to provide interval data and a qualified engineer has determined that there may be a problem with one or two of the intervals you can point that out in your transmittal letter.)
10. If this request is being submitted by a consultant, you must send a copy of this correspondence to the agency contact on the request.

Note that while District One is handling the traffic count analysis and data entry to the State’s Roadway Information System (IRIS) for the Quiet Zone effort, it is requested that you address both technical and process questions to Joy Schaad at CATS – so that we can cut down on the volume of calls that the District needs to answer. It is likely that many municipalities will have the same kinds of questions – and if that is the case we will issue revised guidance on the CATS website to deal with issues as they arise.

What happens after you submit?

- 1.) District One will accept the information and review it, apply any needed axle count adjustment, expansion factor and/or needed seasonal adjustment. They will view other ADT data that they have on record for upstream, downstream, and/or on adjacent roadways to determine if further adjustments are warranted.
- 2.) When District One arrives at a value for your crossings' ADTs (Average Annual Daily Traffic), they will email the ADTs to CATS and I will email (or mail) to the lead contact for your request (to the local agency staff person, if not otherwise specified)
- 3.) IDOT will email a reason why they rejected updating the ADT for any crossing, where that is the case. This info will be forwarded to you as well. Where this is the case, the existing ADT will be re-submitted to FRA to meet the Updated Inventory Form requirements of FRA's Draft Interim Rule on Train Horns.
- 4.) The District One staff will forward the new "official ADT data" to the Central Office's Data Management team in Springfield along with any other relevant info (road name changes) the reasons that certain count data was not accepted/processed.
- 5.) IDOT Central Office will get the official RR crossing Inventory form to FRA as soon as possible.

Note that you can use the ADT numbers from IDOT for your Quiet Zone analysis as soon as you get them. You may want to submit the correspondence from IDOT/CATS providing that info and the reasons why any counts were deemed sufficiently up to date and were not redone – with your submittal if you like. The official updated inventory transmittal will be going to FRA directly from IDOT's statewide data Manager.

Conclusion

IDOT and CATS are hoping that this process will go smoothly and that all 389 "currently quiet" railroad crossings with the December 18th deadline date will be able to be processed quickly and efficiently. We appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

As you embark on the effort to establish a quiet zone for your community or your area, we would also like to encourage you to contact the adjacent communities with crossings on the same railroad line and your Council of Mayors or Municipal Conference transportation staff to be sure that your submittals to FRA do not jeopardize any regional or sub-regional efforts to coordinate for greater efficiency, safety and/or cost savings.

While the updating of the ADT information does not risk jeopardizing future options, your official direct submittal of a Quiet Zone notification or Quiet Zone application may limit future quiet Zone end point options. The Illinois Commerce Commission (Steve Laffey @ 217-785-9026), the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (Rick Curneal @ 630-571-0480 x25), the Northwest Municipal Conference (Larry Bury @ 847-296-9200), the West Central Municipal Conference (Jill Leary @ 708-450-0100) and the City of Chicago's Dept of Transportation (Laura Guillot Wilkison @ 312-742-3151) have been extremely involved in this issue and can lend advice and support. And of course feel free to call CATS at any time (312-793-3472).