

Rothsay ad hoc Committee

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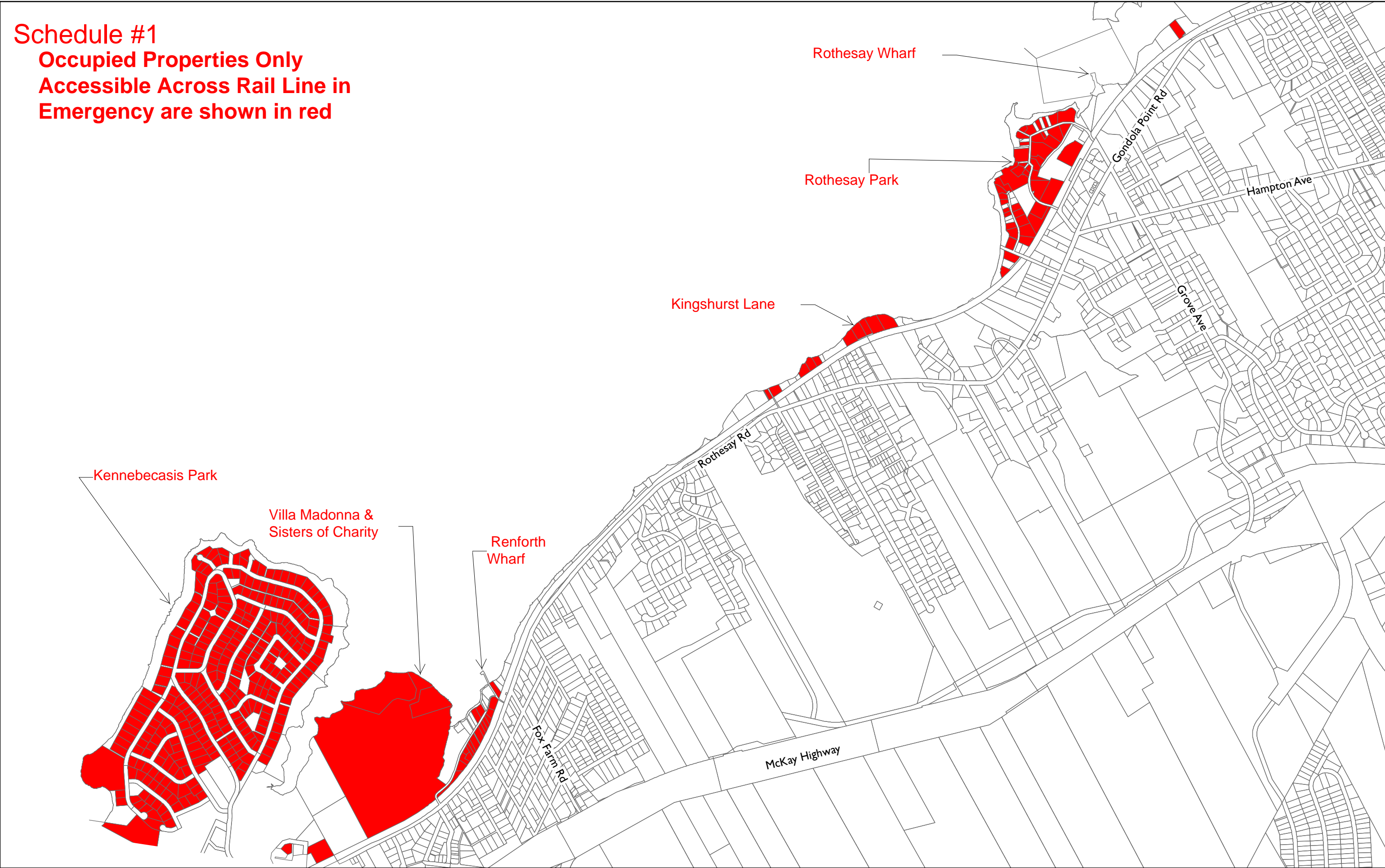
RAIL SAFETY

Final Report

Spring 2016



Schedule #1
Occupied Properties Only
Accessible Across Rail Line in
Emergency are shown in red



Introduction

This is the final report of the ad hoc Rail Committee established by motion of Council January 1, 2015. This report is intended to convey the current status of the assigned mandate and recommend future actions related to rail safety issues in Rothesay.

Background

The rail line has been a physical feature in the town for over 100 years. At one time the rail road provided convenient access from seasonal and permanent homes in Rothesay for workers travelling to and from Saint John. Over the years the nature of the rail traffic has changed. Since the discovery of more oil in the US Midwest, more of the feedstock for the Irving oil refinery arrives by rail. This in turn has resulted in longer trains and greater concern with the nature of the products being shipped. This has been exacerbated by a number of derailments including the catastrophic accident in the small community of Lac Megantic in Québec.

As the town has grown and changed the popularity of river frontage as the site for permanent homes has also increased. The allure of the river has continued to attract residents to homes only accessible after crossing the rail line. With trains approaching 2 miles in length these homes are cut off from access for several minutes by passing trains travelling 40 miles per hour. Thus, even when no accident takes place, there may be delays in response time of emergency services.

The Sussex subdivision of CN rail runs for 7.8 kilometres through Rothesay. At present there are 408 houses within the Rothesay boundaries which can only be accessed by crossing the tracks. There is also an elementary school located in Kennebecasis Park and housing approximately 200 students which can only be reached by crossing the railroad tracks. Seniors housing at Sisters of Charity and the Villa Madonna and the Bill McGuire Memorial Centre are also located between the tracks and the River.

As shown on Schedule one, the rail line is a major physical feature of the town. A buffer of 100 meters from the tracks includes a large portion of the developed area of the community. A second feature which may influence responses to emergencies is the boundary with the City of Saint John. The largest number of homes (341) effected by the rail line are located in the Hastings Cove and Kennebecasis Park residential subdivisions. This boundary crosses the



entrance to the subdivisions at an acute angle leaving the vast majority of the homes in Rothesay while the railroad track crossing is in the City of Saint John at that location. It is equipped with gates.

There are twelve rail line crossings within the Rothesay boundaries. Of these, six are 'public' including two of which are grade separated. There are gates at only one of the crossings.

There are six 'private' crossings including one at the East Riverside Kingshurst Park which is only used for pedestrian and

Town service vehicles. Three of the private crossings serve single properties and two houses are located at the end of a small lane at an extension of Gibbon Road. A sixth 'private' crossing provides to five homes at the end of Kingshurst Lane.

Some buildings in Rothesay are located in close proximity to the rail line with several fewer than 20 metres from the nearest rail and in one case fewer than 10 metres.

Committee work

In November of 2013 Council, on a motion of the Deputy Mayor, approved the formation of an ad hoc Committee on the Entrance to Kennebecasis Park. The committee held its first meeting in February 2014 after an invitation to interested residents. Fifteen residents took part including Deputy Mayor Nancy Grant and Councillor Mariam Wells. At the invitation of the Town, the City of Saint John nominated Councillor Gerry Lowe. The committee met five times and reported on a number of aspects. Meeting guests included CN personnel and representatives of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (by phone), Transport Canada and Irving Oil. The minutes of the meetings are part of the files on the topic maintained at the Town Hall.

The committee's initial work consisted of an examination of three aspects related to the interface of the rail and the community. These included:

- General rail safety,
- Access in and out of Kennebecasis Park other isolated neighborhoods' and
- Emergency Planning for Rail Issues.

These aspects were reviewed by subcommittees who reported at a meeting in July with recommendations as follows.

Rail Safety

- Council examine and consider adopting new proximity guidelines, pertaining to development close to the tracks;
- That the unsatisfactory state of some of the rail lines and the crossings be brought to the attention of CN so that crossing improvement can be part of the major rebuild that is planned;
- That, despite the nuisance of whistles, they are an important component of rail safety, especially in the absence of lights or gates at most crossings;
- That consultation be arranged with neighbouring communities to ensure sharing of information and cooperation on rail safety issues and discussion of possible alternative routes in the future; and
- That the public be informed of the work and progress of the committee.

Committee Members

Emergency Planning:

Chair: Bill Artiss

Councillor Miriam Wells

Will MacEachern

David Creber

Gary Gower

Innis McCready

Rail Safety:

Chair: Dr. Christine Davies

Deputy Mayor Dr. Nancy Grant (Chair of the ad hoc Committee)

Allen Rosevear

Hank Scarth

Jim Crosby

K-Park Entrance:

Chair: Jane Barry

John Oxley

Councillor Gerry Lowe

John Wheatley

Peter Jolly

Safe Access to Neighbourhoods (KPark)



- Access options should include a helicopter landing pad in K-Park as a first priority.
- The sewage lagoon route be upgraded to allow access to Villa Madonna or continue to the Fox Farm Road crossing;
- Work with Kennebecasis Development Inc. to allow for a secondary access to Kennebecasis Park through the Mt. Loyal Road; and
- A long term solution may be a new entrance to Kennebecasis Park through the Drury Cove Road.

Emergency Measures

- Base a new Rothesay Emergency Plan on the NB EMO Planning Guide;
- Develop an Evacuation Plan;
- Plan for establishing “Warming Stations”; and
- Develop a new List of Contacts

A variety of other topics was discussed by the committee during its various meetings; these included a discussion of participation with *Saferail* communities that was helpful in recognizing the concerns of Rothesay residents are shared by those of many other communities. Consideration of the nuisance of train whistles versus their effectiveness and the cost of improved warning infrastructure at crossings led to a suggestion of more thought about adding gates and flashing lights. Distribution of rail safety materials provided by CN suggests that more such joint initiatives are possible with other schools in the community.



Committee Results

The Committee worked effectively with the EMO Committee to encourage the establishment of the Bill McGuire Memorial Centre as a reception centre in disaster or power outage conditions and to insure an update of Rothesay emergency preparedness plan. While it is difficult to attribute to the ad hoc committee the final results in these various areas, the following are noteworthy during the course of the committee’s mandate.

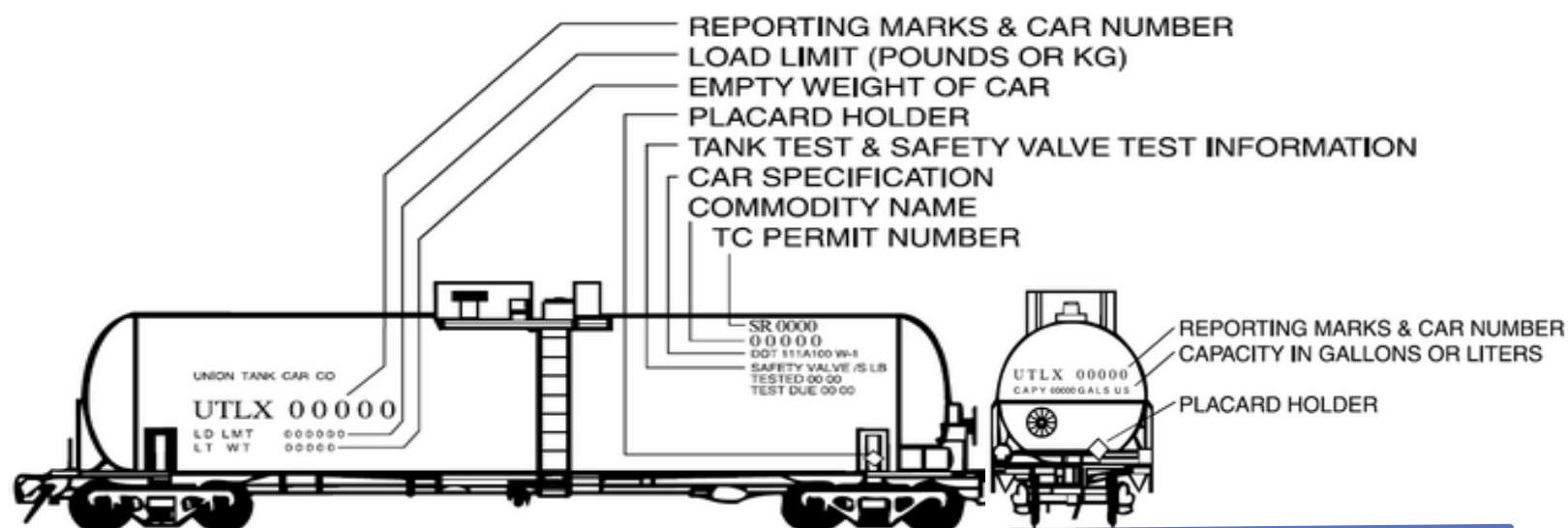
- Council approval of an agreement for an alternate access over the lands of Kennebecasis Developments Inc.,
- development of effective relationship and communication channels with CN,
- CN rail line improvements (welded rails) and cleanup,
- meetings with CN regarding emergency preparedness and exercise of preparedness plans,
- distribution of rail safety information provided by CN to Kennebecasis Park Elementary School,

- discussions with City staff regarding alternate access to Kennebecasis Park Hastings Cove through Drury Cove,
- validation of existing alternate access by emergency first responders, and
- application of Proximity Guidelines to a specific situation.

Final Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the Committee for further action:

1. **Monitor changes in government policy regarding regulation of rail roads;**
2. **Continue discussions with the City of Saint John regarding the value of a connection between Drury Cove and Hasting Cove/Kennebecasis Park;**
3. **Include maintenance of alternate connection to KPark/Hastings Cove over Bishop's lands in regular road maintenance schedule;**
4. **Continue to develop emergency response plans for homes between rail line and River;**
5. **Pursue more information on the 'risk assessment' developed by CN for the rail line through Rothesay;**
6. **Maintain regular communication with CN rail concerning emergency planning, rail line maintenance and other topics of common interest; and**
7. **Continue steps to making the Kingshurst Lane crossing a 'public' crossing.**



Appendices

The following resources were identified during the work of the Committee as having potential application to improved rail safety in Rothesay..

Emergency Response Guidebook 2012

Guide to aid first responders in quickly identifying the specific or generic hazards of the material(s) involved in the incident, and protecting themselves and the general public during the initial response phase of the incident.

<http://wwwapps.tc.gc.ca/saf-sec-sur/3/erg-gmu/erg/ergmenu.aspx>

The Grade Crossing Improvement Program (GCIP).

Funded under section 12 of the Railway Safety Act (RSA), provides a contribution of up to 50 percent of the cost of a crossing improvement project. The maximum contribution to a recipient for a single project is limited to \$550,000.

http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/railsafety/publications-768.htm#program_overview

Grade Crossing Regulations

Federal Regulations apply in respect of public grade crossings and private grade crossings.

<http://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2014/2014-12-17/html/sor-dors275-eng.php>

Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations

Developed by the FCM/RAC Proximity Initiative with stakeholders from government, freight, passenger, and commuter railway operators, municipal councillors and mayors, municipal urban planners, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Railway Association of Canada.

http://www.proximityissues.ca/asset/image/reference/guidelines/2013_05_29_Guidelines_NewDevelopment_E.pdf

Emergency Directive and Rules Respecting Key Trains and Key Routes Comparison Table

Complete within six months from the date of this Emergency Directive, a Risk Assessment that will determine the level of risk associated with each Key Route over which a Key Train is operated by the company. Note information not released to municipalities.

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/railsafety/railsafety-997.html>