

What are “quiet zones”, and how could such zones be used to mitigate impacts of freight rail?

From the Minnesota Department of Transportation:

Quiet Zones are sections of track at least ½ mile in length where the train whistle does not sound at highway-rail grade crossings. To achieve a quiet zone, a community needs to apply to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for a waiver of the train horn rule. A formal diagnostic of the crossing(s) within the proposed quiet zone corridor are reviewed and a determination is made as to what additional safety measures need to be added to the crossings to compensate for the lack of the train whistle. These safety measures could include, but are not limited to roadway medians, 4-quadrant gate systems, closing of crossings and wayside horns.