

AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Submitted by: Michael K. Young, President
Texas A&M University

Subject: Approval to Amend the FY 2020-FY 2024 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to Add the Railroad Quiet Zone Project (Project No. 2019-07296) for Texas A&M University with an FY 2020 Start Date

Proposed Board Action:

- (1) Amend the approved FY 2020-FY 2024 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to add the Railroad Quiet Zone Project for Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) with an FY 2020 start date and a total planning amount of \$5,000,000.
- (2) Appropriate \$500,000 for pre-construction services and related project costs.

Funding/Planning Amount:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Planning Amount</u>	<u>Average Estimated Annual Debt Service</u>	<u>Debt Service Source</u>
Cash (Investment Earnings)	<u>\$5,000,000</u>	N/A	N/A
Total Project Cost	<u>\$5,000,000</u>		

Project Justification:

Texas A&M and the cities of Bryan and College Station have experienced tremendous growth over the last several decades. With this growth, quality of life issues such as traffic and noise have become more prominent community issues. Texas A&M now has many large buildings, including residence halls, in proximity to the railroad, with several new buildings under construction or in design. The 21st Century Classroom building, one of the largest classroom buildings in the country, and soon to be the largest classroom building on campus, is adjacent to the Doug Pitcock '49 Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center & Hotel and the Cain parking garage. These three buildings are across Wellborn Road from the railroad tracks. Similarly, a new undergraduate chemistry building is being designed and is planned for the corner of Olsen and Old Main, adjacent to the tracks. Because these facilities and others near the railroad corridor are so integral to academia and quality of campus life, and train horn noise affects that quality of life, university officials have been exploring options to establish a quiet zone in order to address noise concerns along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor.

Agenda Item No. 3.1
Agenda Item Briefing

Additionally, Brazos County, the City of College Station, and the City of Bryan are pursuing quiet zones in their jurisdictions. Texas A&M's efforts will allow for a contiguous quiet zone throughout the community. Texas A&M Transportation Services personnel met with local stakeholders to gather information and concerns, and led the effort to pursue actions necessary to establish a quiet zone along the UPRR corridor.

Establishing a railroad quiet zone is critical to Texas A&M in the realms of public safety, academic excellence and quality of life. The safety of faculty, staff, students and general public is a high-level concern. As there is always a risk of a crash occurring at an at-grade railroad crossing, any efforts that reduce the risk of crashes occurring should be considered. Train horn sound is adversely impacting educational and research activities on campus. It is also adversely impacting the work environment of staff providing support operations to campus and The Texas A&M University System. Finally, train horn sound is adversely impacting the quality of stay for guests at the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center. These concerns will only intensify with time as train traffic along the Navasota Subdivision of the UPRR is anticipated to increase from an average of 24 trains per day to nearly 50 trains per day within the next five years. Thus, Texas A&M Transportation Services views the expeditious establishment of a railroad quiet zone to be paramount.

Scope:

Vendor shall offer/propose to provide the necessary services as requested to facilitate the creation of a railroad quiet zone along the Navasota Subdivision of the UPRR near and adjacent to Texas A&M. A specific deliverable is to create the required railroad quiet zone improvements outlined in the Notice of Intent (NOI) as defined by Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings; Final Rule (49 CFR Parts 222 and 229). Through a singular application process, the intent of the project is to establish a railroad quiet zone inclusive of the following four crossings for 24 hours a day, all days of the week:

- F&B Road (DOT No. 743209X) (At-Grade)
- Old Main Drive (DOT No. 743211Y)(At-Grade)
- John Kimbrough Drive (DOT No. 745037Y) (At-Grade)
- W. George Bush Drive/FM 2347 (DOT No. 743215B)(At-Grade)

The total length of the project is approximately 1.7 miles. Trackside improvements of the project incorporates four public at-grade crossings of UPRR along the Navasota Subdivision. There are no cyclist or pedestrian only crossings within the project limits. There is one grade-separated crossing within the project limits. Additional work to enhance the Wellborn Road passageway openings, channelizing pedestrians, wayfinding, landscaping, sidewalk improvements and any other safety measures will be accomplished by traditional university procurement methods as determined by the contract value. Railroad quiet zones are established based on specific measurable criteria established by the Federal Railroad Administration in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation and UPRR. Each railroad crossing is evaluated and scored based on the established criteria. Typical modifications to the crossings will channelize vehicle and pedestrian travel paths. Some crossings may require the addition of specific safety measures such as wayside horns, a median, median gates and pedestrian improvement. It is important to

Agenda Item No. 3.1
Agenda Item Briefing

note that all expenses associated with the design and construction of the improvements are the responsibility of Texas A&M. Also, the future maintenance costs of these improvements are borne by Texas A&M into perpetuity. The trackside improvements are typically performed by contractors that are approved by UPRR. Additional improvements identified to improve pedestrian safety and eliminate rail crossings at Wellborn Road require adjustments to the underground passageway and adjacent property. The intent is to modify the passageway to allow for more inviting access and eliminate at-grade pedestrian crossings along John Kimbrough Boulevard.

Other Major Fiscal Impacts:

None.

Strategic Plan Imperative(s) this Item Advances:

Approval of this agenda item will advance The Texas A&M University System Strategic Imperative 3, by providing faculty and students unmatched and distraction-free educational experiences and experiential opportunities in classrooms and labs. Because at least two state-of-the-art classroom and lab facilities near the railroad corridor are so integral to academia and quality of campus life, and train horn noise can adversely affect that quality of life, creating a Quiet Zone along the UPRR corridor will assist researchers and scientists who need a silent environment.

Agenda Item No. 3.1

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Office of the President
December 10, 2019

Members, Board of Regents
The Texas A&M University System

Subject: Approval to Amend the FY 2020-FY 2024 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to Add the Railroad Quiet Zone Project (Project No. 2019-07296) for Texas A&M University with an FY 2020 Start Date

I recommend adoption of the following minute order:

“The request to amend the FY 2020-FY 2024 Texas A&M University System Capital Plan to add the Railroad Quiet Zone Project for Texas A&M University with an FY 2020 start date and a total planning amount of \$5,000,000 is approved.

The amount of \$500,000 is appropriated from Account No. 02-021843, Income Equalization, for pre-construction services and related project costs.”

Respectfully submitted,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Michael K. Young
President

Approval Recommended:

Approved for Legal Sufficiency:

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

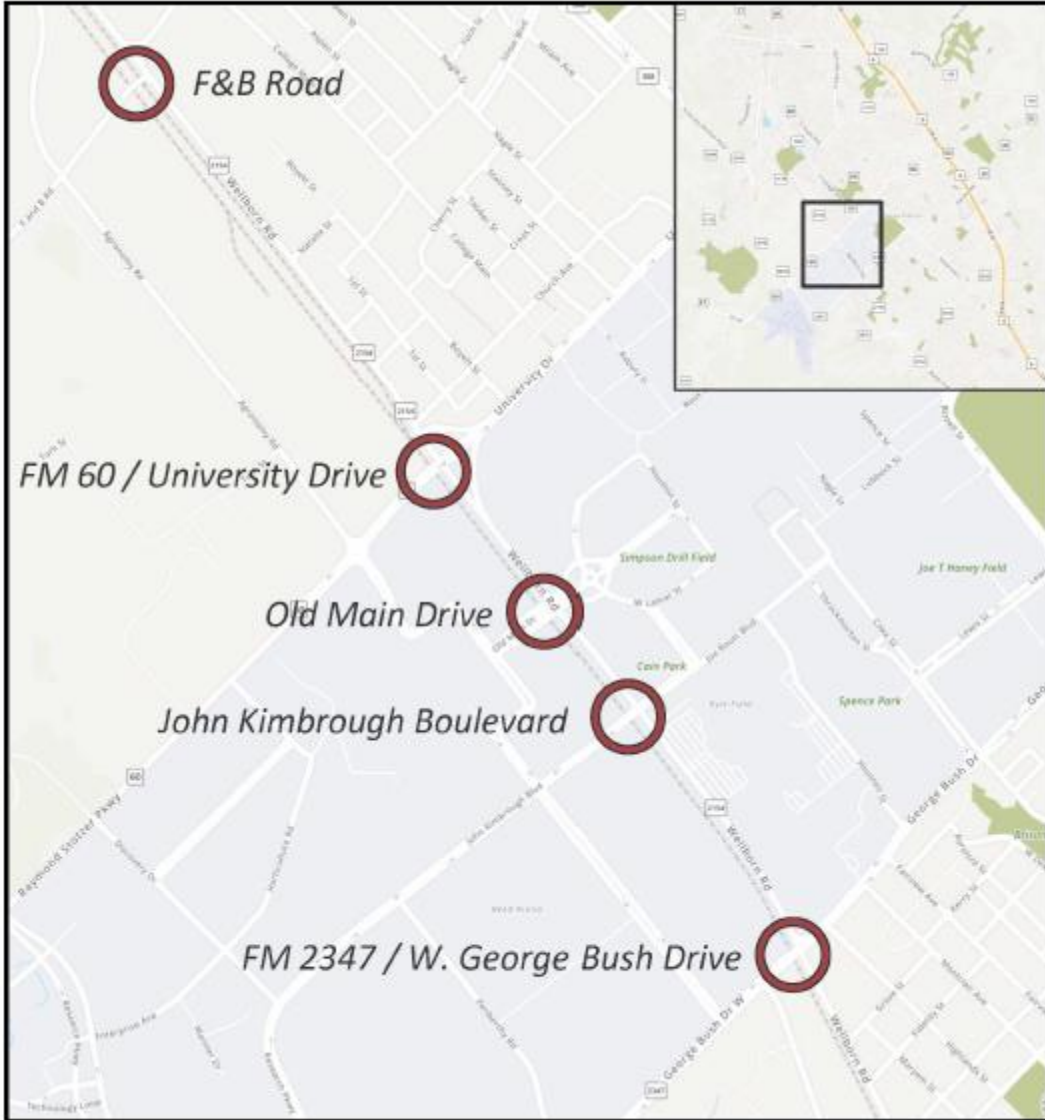
John Sharp
Chancellor

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Ray Bonilla
General Counsel

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Billy Hamilton
Deputy Chancellor and
Chief Financial Officer



RAILROAD QUIET ZONE PROJECT
Texas A&M University