

Quiet Zone Funds Skipped West -Siders - West Side Angry Over Quiet Zones

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Glendale resident Phil Gonzales says **west** -siders are beaten down when it comes to fighting trains on the 900 South track.

And they feel like they just took another sucker punch.

He and his neighbors recently learned that Salt Lake City already has set aside funds for quiet zones -- which will stop **train** engineers from blowing whistles except in emergencies -- near The Gateway.

But the city still must approve money for the 900 South line.

"We should come first," Gonzales said. "Every time we ask for something, and what we're just asking for is to improve the safety and quality of life, we always get overridden by other projects."

The Redevelopment Agency set aside \$1 million in 2000 to create quiet zones near Gateway from 600 North to 200 South. Quieting the whistles will help the city and developers obtain federal funds for housing projects at Gateway as well as the surrounding area, said D.J. Baxter, Mayor **Rocky Anderson** 's senior aide.

Money for the Gateway area was approved as the city planned housing projects just **west** of downtown and discovered the whistles posed money problems. That was before Union Pacific reactivated the 900 South line in 2001. Now, the city is pursuing quiet zones for both projects.

The mayor's office says the 900 South line is a priority for mitigation measures as the city seeks for Union Pacific to eliminate the trains altogether. Designs for both quiet-zone projects must still be approved by the railroad company, the Federal Railroad Administration and Utah Department of Transportation. Baxter said if the Gateway quiet zone slows negotiations, the city will pursue 900 South first.

"I don't think it's fair for anyone [in Glendale] to claim that the priorities are not being appropriately assigned," he said. However, he noted that residents near the Gateway want their quiet zone to be a priority: "There are many, many people in the downtown area who have been hearing the **train** whistles for dozens, 20, 40, 50 years who have been anxious to have a quiet zone in place and many of them are upset 900 South is elevated to such a high priority."

Gonzales knew the two quiet-zone projects could happen together, but says the community wasn't told that one already was funded. "We just repeatedly get put on the

back burner. Their quiet zone is already funded and here we're still waiting to have something done in my community."

The City Council -- which as the RDA board allocated the Gateway money -- must approve about \$2.5 million for the 900 South quiet zone. Budget negotiations will start next month. The council has said the project is a priority, though they are struggling with a possible budget shortfall.

If the 900 South line does not get funded, would the city go ahead with Gateway-area quiet zones? "I don't know," Baxter said, though he is confident the 900 South money will be there. "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

The Gateway money cannot be used on the 900 South line because its funding comes from a separate city coffer.

Gonzales, who lives 30 feet from the 900 South line, said talk of the Gateway funding circulated the neighborhood last week.

"There's just a lot of frustration," he said, referring to the railroad situation in general. "I can't remember when a community has been wounded so bad by something [the reactivation of the 900 South track]. It's just been devastating. We've been viewed as nothing."

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