

SMART

Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) is coming to Novato in 2016 with two stations at San Marin/Atherton and at Hamilton. More info on [SMART](#) and [SMART station designs in Novato](#).

Quiet Zones

What is a Quiet Zone?

A quiet zone is a rail crossing that prohibits the **routine sounding of train horns**. Federal law requires train horns to be sounded at all public crossings, 24 hours a day, to warn motorists and pedestrians that a train is approaching. Quiet zones, once established, reduce the routine use of train horns.

Can you still hear train horns in a Quiet Zone?

Yes. Horns in quiet zones will be sounded upon departure from a station and at the discretion of the train operator. In addition, Quiet Zones do not impact the bells and ringing associated with rail crossing safety gates.

How are Quiet Zones established?

To be eligible for a quiet-zone designation, safety improvements must be made at all public rail crossings to reduce the risk caused by the lack of horns. In Novato, there are ten at-grade (same level as the street), public crossings on the new railroad line, and SMART will be designing and installing improvements that will help to mitigate the potential loss of the train horn and make these crossings "Quiet Zone" eligible. These improvements were advised by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) after a visit to Novato. Those agencies reserve the right to add in the future additional safety measures depending upon any additional data and safety history.

To start the Quiet Zone application process, the City Council would need to pass a resolution, and staff would provide a written Notice of Intent to the FRA, CPUC, and SMART.

The process is anticipated to take 3 months.

Does the City assume any risk with the implementation of Quiet Zones?

Currently, City staff is doing significant research to understand the scale and scope of liability risk related to the implementation of Quiet Zones, and will report back to City Council within the first quarter of 2015.

When will the Novato City Council consider Quiet Zones?

A public workshop to discuss Quiet Zones and the designation process will be held on Tuesday, September 23, at 6:30 p.m., during a regularly-scheduled City Council meeting.

Novato Quiet Zone Readiness Overview

