

## **MAYOR'S COLUMN**

I want to update the community and especially our residents living along the rail corridor of our recent communications with Metro North and the measures they are taking to address our concerns.

The Metro North Track Department inspected the track from Midland Avenue Bridge to north of the station for any exceptions that may be related to noise and/or vibration.

As you may remember, we raised a number of specific issues and asked for explanation and/or remediation.

### **Whistle Blowing**

The Senior Vice President of Operations for Metro North issued a notice to all Harlem line train engineers reminding them that unnecessary use of the engine horn is prohibited and that the engine horn signal is not required between 9:00pm and 6:00am. The only exception being if the engineer observes individuals on or near the platform or near the railroad right of way.

I am asking residents who still hear the horns during prohibited time periods to note the specific date, time and location of these incidents and report them to Village Hall via phone or email so that we are better able to document them.

## **Flat Wheels**

The “Flat Wheels” condition often generates increased noise and vibration. It most frequently occurs when the rails become slippery due to weather conditions. Problems are particularly bad during the fall when leaves on the tracks create a slip and slide condition, with sliding wheels developing flat spots.

In an effort to reduce flat wheels, a Wheel Impact Detection System will be installed this summer along the right of way to be operational at the start of our next leaf season. The system will improve the ability to quickly identify and address wheel conditions that generate noise and/or vibration.

## **Diesel Engines**

Metro North operates eight diesel trains (four round trips) each day through Bronxville, a number Metro North states has been consistent since 2000. Each train consists of 7 to 8 coaches, not 10 coach trains, as on some other lines. Train lengths of these diesel powered trains have not changed since through service north of Southeast Station was introduced in the 1980’s. The maximum authorized speed through Bronxville remains 60 mph, the limit for the past 16 years.

## **Ballast Mats**

Metro North sent photo and engineering documentation to demonstrate that the ballast mats were placed in the locations agreed upon between Metro North and the Village at the time of Third Track construction.

However, my question inquiring into the useful life and efficiency of ballast mats over time and weather conditions was not addressed. I will continue to pursue this issue.

## **Noise from Rattling Train Carriages**

The new M-7 train car is undergoing warranty modifications that should be completed by the end of 2009. In 2010, Metro North will begin to overhaul other cars. They are confident both efforts will result in less rattling of the car bodies.

## **Track Welds**

The locations identified during our public meeting have been inspected twice since then. There was an insulated joint on the track closest to Parkway Road that had been replaced, but not welded in. The Track Department will weld this joint once the weather gets a little warmer. On the middle track, everything was welded but the insulated joint is a little low and will be tamped.

## **Concrete vs. Wood Ties**

Metro North replaced all of the wood ties on the Harlem line with concrete ties just prior to the construction of the Third Track. There is some scientific literature relating concrete ties to increased noise and/or vibration, so we addressed this with Metro North.

They sent us their engineering study prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. that addressed the specific question of train pass-by noise levels from trains traveling along ballasted tracks with wood ties vs. concrete ties. The study concluded that the replacement of the existing wood ties with concrete ties for the Third Track would result in the same difference in total energy and the same increase in noise levels between the existing and future conditions as with the exclusive use of wood ties.

While many more questions remain unanswered, we are making progress with Metro North in a helpful collegial way. I ask residents to share any information or concrete data that would assist me in my discussions and presentations with Metro North executives.

Of additional recent concern is the vacant rental space in the station itself. We will be monitoring it closely to ensure that a

business that is compatible with its surroundings and our Village in general is chosen by Metro North's rental property staff.