

'Quiet Zones' Could Reduce the Impact of Train Horns on Neighborhoods

If you were listening to NPR last Saturday morning, perhaps you heard a segment from Arizona Public Radio about a 2005 rule from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) which now permits localities to implement "quiet zones" for passing trains.

Many metro neighborhoods suffer from the multiple horn blasts which trains sound at every grade crossing. My own home is more than a mile from the rail line serving the Coors Brewery, yet I can still hear the horns of trains as they cross Ward Road, Eldridge Street, Indiana Street and McIntyre Street both day and night. I feel sorry for the homeowners who live closer to these grade crossings — especially when they are trying to sell their homes!

According to NPR, that FRA rule implemented in 2005 allows localities

ties to silence train horns if they have adequate gates, signals and sounds at each grade crossing. All the crossings near my house have

such protections, so I would hope that the train horns could be silenced here as they apparently have been elsewhere under this FRA rule.

I forwarded the link for that NPR segment to County Commissioner Kathy Hartman, who has asked her staff to research the matter. (I'll put this link on www.JimSmithColumns.com for you to click on, if interested.)

Highway noise is another major deterrent to the selling of homes. Until CDOT ran out of money, it built many sound walls along I-70, Hwy 6, and other highways, but sound walls don't work nearly as well as earth berms when it comes to mitigating road noise. I find that highway noise is reflected off the

sound walls, whereas earth berms absorb highway noise.

The City of Golden has done a good job of attracting free dirt from construction projects such as FasTracks. The dirt is delivered free by the contractors, and all the city has to do is shape and landscape it. Most recently, the neighborhoods of Mountain Ridge and Beverly Heights have benefited from these gifts of construction dirt.

'Field Inspectors' Break Into Vacant Homes for Lenders

If you fall behind in your mortgage payments and you have moved out of your home, don't be surprised if your mortgage company sends a "field inspector" who, upon verifying that the home is vacant, breaks into your home, changes the locks, and winterizes it, all in the name of protecting the asset for the lender. I have seen this happen to two of my own listings. It could happen to you.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing:

Walk to "Everything Golden" From Here!

You name it — all of Golden's many attractions are within walking distance of this spacious 4-bedroom home. That includes the Colorado School of Mines, Clear Creek, numerous open space trailheads, museums, public library, city parks, Mitchell Elementary School, and, of course, downtown Golden. With 1,981 square feet of living space and a 2-car garage (facing the alley), this home is surprisingly spacious inside. It has three bedrooms upstairs, including a 20'x20' master bedroom with its own wood deck, plus a main-floor guest bedroom. Take a video tour on website. Open this Saturday, 1-4pm.



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Jim Smith

Broker/Owner

Golden Real Estate, Inc.

DIRECT: 303-525-1851

EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com

17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

WEBSITE: www.GoldenRealEstate.com



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