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Town wants increased train safety

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by **Stephannie Johnson** | **more by this writer**

POPULATION OF PARRY SOUND, ONT.: 6326

PARRY SOUND - After a number of derailments and trains blocking intersections for several hours at a time, the town is turning to the provincial and federal governments for help.

Working together, Mayor Richard Adams and Parry Sound fire chief Laurence Green, developed a resolution to increase rail and car maintenance, decrease train length and speed, and limit idling on Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific CP) Railway tracks through town.

Council passed the recommendation at its Dec. 18 meeting with copies sent to the Minister of Transport Infrastructure and Communities, Parry Sound-Muskoka MP Tony Clement and MPP Norm Miller, as well as all West Parry Sound municipalities for their support.

Increased train derailments

"The increased number of train derailments, train stoppages, road and street blockages, increased number of trains, noise and operational complaints received from the residents of Ontario municipalities indicates that there is a requirement to make the operation of Canadian railways safer, thus having less impact on the environment and the residents of Canada," said Mr. Green in his report to council.

Another safety concern is trains stopping for several hours while changing shifts, blocking intersections, and creating potential response problems for EMS and fire departments.

"We have five level crossings in the community. There could be a serious impact on residents if ambulances and fire trucks have to be rerouted," said Mr. Adams.

A report from Transport Canada and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada showed 509 derailments across Canada in 2000 and 613 in 2006.

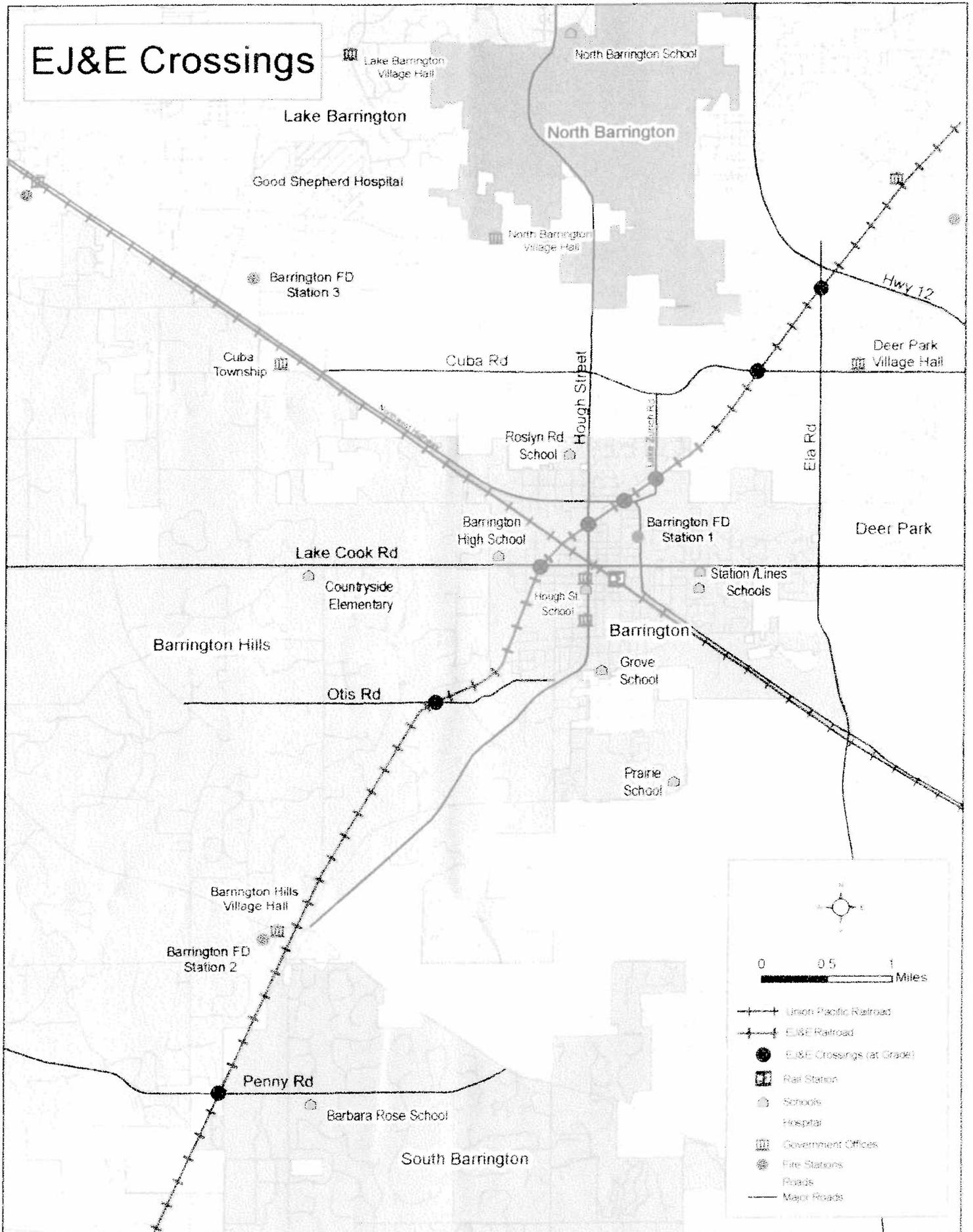
This year, there were three derailments in the area: in McDougall Township, a draw bar pulled from a rail car, causing train stoppage; two derailments on main lines south of MacTier and one south of Sudbury.

In the first week of December, there were seven derailments in an eight-day period in northern Ontario.

"Council further requests that Transport Canada direct the CNR and the CPR to limit track speed through the town of Parry Sound to 30 kilometres an hour," stated an excerpt of the resolution. "And council further requests that Transport Canada regulate the length of trains be limited to, and not exceed the length of the shortest siding or passing rack within that railway subdivision."

Councillor Bonnie Keith said she was pleased to see the resolution come to the council table "because the safety of our community and environment is imperative."

EJ&E Crossings



0 0.5 1 Miles

- +—+— Union Pacific Railroad
- +—+— EJ&E Railroad
- EJ&E Crossings (at Grade)
- ⊠ Rail Station
- ⌂ Schools
- ⌚ Hospital
- ⊠ Government Offices
- ⊙ Fire Stations
- Roads
- Major Roads