

Vehicle Noise Update

ISSUE

The Administration received responses from Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) and Board of Police Commissioners regarding traffic noise due to vehicle mufflers.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting held on June 25 and 26, 2018, considered a report regarding traffic concerns on Spadina Crescent from 33rd Street to University Bridge and resolved, in part:

- “2. That a letter be written to SGI and Board of Police Commissioners to work together to revisit the application of amendments to include a decibel limit for all vehicles in general.”

The Standing Policy Committee on Transportation, at its meeting held on August 6, 2019, considered a letter from Terry Neefs regarding his concerns with anti-social driving and noise pollution and resolved:

- “That the Administration attach the letter from Mr. Terry Neefs, dated June 10, 2019 to the upcoming report regarding the City's request that SGI and the Board of Police Commissioners work together to revisit the application of amendment to include a decibel level for all vehicles in general.”

CURRENT STATUS

The Administration sent letters to SGI and Board of Police Commissioners requesting that they work together to revisit the application of amendments with regards to the enforcement of traffic noise. Highlights from SGI's response (Appendix 1) are as follows:

- SGI spoke with the Saskatoon Police Service and the Crown Traffic Prosecutor regarding traffic noise enforcement, and convictions have been realized, and concluded enforcement is occurring.
- The number of tickets issued each year varies, which does not indicate a drop in enforcement, but perhaps more warnings would have occurred.
- Most jurisdictions have similar Regulations to Saskatchewan, and all rely on subjective enforcement.
- SGI notes that after market mufflers are not marked, rated, or have any markings, resulting in subjective enforcement still being required.

Highlights from the Board of Police Commissioner's response (Appendix 2) are as follows:

- The number of cars with modified muffler systems has increased in recent years.
- Some city events, such as Cruise Night, provide opportunity for increased traffic noise.

- Legislation to address vehicle noise is provided in the *Traffic Safety Act*, the *Vehicle Equipment Act*, and the Saskatoon Noise Bylaw. The *Traffic Safety Act* outlines a very subjective charge. The *Vehicle Equipment Act* and Saskatoon Noise Bylaw are more objective and require officers to have a minimal amount of mechanical knowledge, specialized equipment, and training.
- Enforcement has occurred over the past five years.
- 41% of all traffic noise violations are issued on 8th Street.
- The Saskatoon Police Service Traffic Unit completed a multi-faceted educational campaign this past June which included:
 - social media messaging (hash tag #KeepItDown);
 - voluntary testing clinics were set up for motorcyclists at various locations;
 - noise checkpoints were completed with very few surpassing the upper noise threshold limits; and
 - Traffic Unit representatives spoke with local media outlets to inform the public of the issue.
- Concurrently with the educational campaign, Traffic Unit members received training and information about traffic noise.
- Consultation with SGI occurred regarding repeat offenders who would not remove the offending equipment despite receiving subsequent tickets. SGI agreed to provide compliance letters to the offenders and provide thirty days to fix the issue, or face registration cancellation.
- Discussion on mitigation measures is provided.

The letter from Terry Neefs is included in Appendix 3.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial, legal, social, or environmental implications were not reviewed.

APPENDICES

1. Email from SGI, dated February 5, 2019
2. Letter - The Board of Police Commissioners, dated September 23, 2019
3. Letter - Terry Neefs, dated June 10, 2019

Report Approval

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