

I am writing this submission to the traffic committee in order to get some relief from the vehicle noise in my area. When I refer to vehicle noise I am referring to one and all of the noise problems such as high pitched vehicle revving, backfiring, very loud rumbling from mufflers, stunting and speeding. I have been surprised to learn that any vehicle can be modified to make a really loud noise during operation. This noise is coming from an array of vehicles such as half to three quarter ton trucks, sports cars, coupes, compact economy style cars like Honda Civics and Ford Fiestas, and last but not least, motorcycles. From as far back as 2014, I have had many conversations about this issue with the officers within the SPS and employees at City Hall, City of Saskatoon. From Spring 2019 until now I have spoken to the SPS, the City of Saskatoon's Tom Simpson, Minister Hargraves office and SGI Regina. Most recently I have written to Mayor Clark and Cynthia Block.

In many of the conversations I've had directly with officers at the SPS, it was laid out to me that the fines for many of the vehicle offences, including vehicle noise, weren't steep enough. SPS is writing the same ticket over and over to an offending driver/vehicle with no real result, that it is like playing whack a mole. The consensus from these officers being that SGI needed to implement a graduated fine system and the ability to tow and impound a vehicle as a deterrent, and for effective enforcement.

In my quest for a solution to my problem and to try to help the SPS, I phoned SGI Minister Hargraves office. From there they forwarded me to SGI Regina, where I connected with Kaitlynn who forwarded me to a gentleman who worked in traffic fine assessment. The man told me that SGI can revise their fine upwards or assigns the fine on a graduated scale or can also assess an offence as "tow and impound". These fines are monitored and assessed upwards if SGI sees a significant uptick in the ticketed offence, and he was adamant that there has not been a significant uptick. In a September 2019 news article SGI spokesperson Tyler McMurchy stated that there has been an uptick in inspection tickets, however inspection tickets also cover windshields, lighting, tinting and tires, not only vehicles modified to make noise. In the same article he stated that "there is already legislation in place at the provincial and municipal levels". Saskatoon City Hall and the SPS say one thing, SGI another.

It is clear that two mall parking lots along 8<sup>th</sup> street contribute to the vehicle noise issue. On any given night of the week you can find a party atmosphere among many drivers and their noisy vehicles who are parked in these lots. The drivers congregate and rev their engines, force extremely loud backfires, and stunt in the lot. Most nights I hear this racket from my home on Preston as if it were a few houses away, instead of four blocks or many more away. In an effort to place responsibility where it is due, last week I phoned the property manager of Grosvenor Park Centre/mall, Maryann Monuik, and told her that the vehicle noise generated from the parking lot was an issue. I told her how frustrated I was with the noise and that while the parking lot wasn't the entire problem, it was part of the problem. She informed me that there are loitering signs posted all around the mall and that she has made many calls to Patrick Skinnader an SPS community liaison officer, about problems at the mall. She wasn't able to tell me how many of the calls dealt with the vehicles in the parking lot. During the course of our conversation she stated that it is noisy in the city, that all cities are noisy and that she used to have to put up with a lot of noise from the fire-hall on Clarence before it was moved. It's very difficult to have a reasonable conversation with someone who equates the noise from a vital public service such as a fire truck siren, to the needless noise from modified vehicles stunting in a parking lot. Maryann did say that her employer Derby Property Management, employs a security service to "drive by" the mall and phone the police if there is a need. I wasn't able to get much specific information about the security service or anything else, as she was quite guarded. I have left a message for David Bubnick, general manager of Centre Mall in order to discuss what I see as problems in their parking lot that contribute to the vehicle noise issue, but he has yet to call me back.

Almost three weeks ago I wrote and emailed a letter to Mayor Clark. The Mayor replied with a perfectly pleasant letter. In his reply he stated, among other things, that he would forward my emailed letter to the Chief of Police. Perhaps as a result of that forwarded letter, I received a phone call from Staff Sargent Clossen. It didn't seem as if Sargent Clossen had read my letter but to his credit he listened to me speak for a significant amount of time before he was able to reply. I covered my very recent conversation with Grosvenor Centre's property manager Maryann Monuik and then went on to point out that the parking lot and the drivers there contributed to the vehicle noise problem. I was very surprised to learn from Sargent Clossen, that because the mall is private property I cannot phone and make a noise complaint stemming from vehicles parked there. A complaint has to be initiated by the property manager or the property owner. As I said in an email to Cynthia Block, the property manager is not around during the peak problem hours. She works daytime hours and doesn't hear the nighttime noise. It's then not her problem, but it's my problem? Sargent Clossen was confused as to why I spoke about the incessant vehicle noise around my home as well as the mall parking lots. In my mind they are certainly related. Sargent Clossen informed me that because of Covid 19 and some of the many challenges it presents, there is currently no assigned traffic division. Traffic division is now rolled into patrol. And as far as vehicle noise is concerned, he informed me that some of the vehicles don't have aftermarket modifications, they come off of the line the way they are. I don't have a habit of making notes during a call or immediately after a call but I'm quite sure during the course of this conversation that he told me it's hard to enforce vehicle noise issues and that noise is subjective.

It was extremely noisy around my home on Saturday night. At 9pm that night I went for a walk and tried to listen to a podcast with my headphones in. When I walk, I purposefully walk through schoolyards and parks making every effort to stay away from most streets. I was flabbergasted by the high level of vehicle noise. The noise level from 8<sup>th</sup> street seemed quite pronounced but I was astounded by the noise along Taylor street. During most of my walk I was at about two blocks away from Taylor and the noise still seemed overpowering. The outside noise level is high from inside my home and the rare times that I'm outside in my back yard at night, but being outside for over an hour was enlightening. I was hit by how pervasive the noise seemed for most of my walk.

Although the vehicle noise is a problem during the day, I have reserved my calls to SPS about the noise at night. I could be phoning the SPS about the excessive vehicle noise on a nightly basis but I don't. Many nights I wait for several hours before I phone the SPS because there is a little bit of optimism in me that these drivers will disperse. While I realize that during this time of Covid 19 there are some special challenges to running the City of Saskatoon, and that the SPS have had to make certain policing adjustments, it seems as if these drivers are running amuck, flouting the law and not worrying about any consequences.

The excessive vehicle noise has been an issue in this area as far back as 2014, growing worse year by year. For how long and how many times do I have to read an SPS officer stating in the news, noise is subjective and or, the bylaws are extremely hard to enforce. And this quote which I find particularly astounding, "Unfortunately, I think this is as much a social issue as it is a policing issue", "If it's an obvious problem and important to the homeowner, we'll certainly investigate it". On one hand the officers say that noise is subjective but it has to be obvious. Obvious to who and by what or who's metric? Important to the homeowner? That's why many of us homeowners phone the police department to report. It's certainly important enough for me as a homeowner that fighting vehicle noise has begun to take up as much time as a hobby. I'd rather be pursuing something enjoyable. And finally, can't most policing challenges be described as social issues? A social problem is defined as an issue which affects or influences members of a society. How does this definition not fall neatly under the umbrella of policing?

I plan to speak to many more of the people in my Brevoort Park/Holliston area about the vehicle noise problem. I can push doorbells with a meter stick and then at a proper social distance, stand back to have a conversation about their experience with this issue. I do know that because of the incessant noise, many of the seniors at Preston Park condominiums can't take full advantage of their balconies, even those who don't live adjacent to Preston avenue. My immediate neighbour built a small deck on the front of this home about four years ago in order to try to take advantage of his front yard on some days and evenings. For a few years he has been saying "maybe next year" but he has given up on that idea and now only uses the deck as a space for his air conditioner. The vehicle noise is all consuming, he can't sit in his back yard, let alone his front. It's the same for me and for my husband and for countless other people on Preston, on Taylor and the areas surrounding 8<sup>th</sup> street.

I have many more details that I could write about here including how exposure to noise is a health hazard, but this is already a long letter. I realize that there is only so much time in your traffic committee meeting and you have many items on your agenda.

The drivers who have noisy engines and mufflers, who rev their engines, stunt, and who cause their vehicles to backfire, are also the regular speeders who are a danger on the road. None of these types of drivers are going to respond to a traffic blitz or a "keep it down" hashtag. Why not give a ticket out over and over until it hurts enough to exact change? As I said in my letter to Mayor Clark, there must be a sustained policing effort to get this problem under control.