

# West Industrial Area Noise Study

## ISSUE

Historic zoning and land use patterns in the West Industrial area have resulted in noise nuisances experienced by residents from surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Noise concerns primarily arise from a large manufacturing use within the West Industrial area.

## BACKGROUND

The following motion was approved by City Council at its July 27, 2020 meeting:

“Whereas, land use adjacency between lands zoned Heavy Industrial and Residential are unique to the West Industrial area of Saskatoon;

Whereas, this land use adjacency naturally creates nuisance conflict; and

Whereas, residents of adjacent neighbourhoods and industrial operators are seeking support from the City of Saskatoon to determine options to mitigate land use conflicts;

Therefore, be it resolved that Administration report back at the earliest opportunity about options and estimated costs to complete a study to identify potential mitigating measures to reduce noise and other nuisance impacts between the West Industrial area and the adjacent residential areas, with particular attention to the adjacent areas of Pleasant Hill, King George and West Industrial and that the option consider partnership with willing industrial operators (e.g. access to land, willingness to contribute to study costs, etc.) and residential stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive study.”

## CURRENT STATUS

### West Industrial Area Land Use History

Development of the early West Industrial area land use pattern was largely due to the close proximity of the rail lines which formed the northwest boundary of the area. At that time, industry required direct access to rail transportation for the shipment of supplies and delivery of the product. The West Industrial area came to be surrounded by residential neighbourhoods, including Riversdale, King George and Pleasant Hill, as Saskatoon’s population grew. Prior to the automobile-era, residents sought to live in close proximity to employment areas, which helped shape the residential land use pattern in the early 1900’s.

In 1930, Saskatoon’s first Zoning Bylaw (No. 2051) was created and applied throughout Saskatoon. In 1966, City Council adopted the first Development Plan, now known as the Official Community Plan, which served as a general land use policy to help guide zoning and land development decisions. Under the direction of these documents, newer industrial areas developed in the City feature gradual land use transitions which

seek to avoid the land use conflicts posed by having low-density residential land uses in close proximity to heavy industrial land uses.

### Current Zoning and Regulatory Framework

Most of the West Industrial area is zoned IH (Heavy Industrial District) or IL1 (General Light Industrial District) in the City's Zoning Bylaw (No. 8770) (see Appendix 1, West Industrial Area Zoning Map). The IH District permits land uses that may generate nuisance conditions beyond the boundary of a site, including noise, dust, vibration, etc. The manufacturing use in the West Industrial area is zoned IH District and is fully permitted for use.

Rezoning and land use changes are typically requested by the property owner, however if there is policy framework in place, such as an approved concept plan or Local Area Plan (LAP), the City has initiated zoning and land use changes to implement these plans in accordance with these policy documents. In 2008, following approval of the West Industrial Concept Plan, the City initiated a large number of zoning and land use changes for privately-owned properties in the West Industrial area. These changes were in accordance with the approved land use policies outlined in the West Industrial LAP, approved in 2004. As a result of the zoning changes, several existing businesses became a non-conforming use and continue to operate in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act, 2007* (Act). Non-conforming sites, building and uses refer to land uses and development forms that lawfully existed at the time of development and through the passage of new zoning regulations, are no longer compliant.

Transitional land use is defined in OCP Policy 9700, as "an existing area of the city that has the potential for significant land use changes." Existing IH District zoned sites in the West Industrial area are designated as Transitional ([see OCP Land Use Policy Map](#)) to ensure the area transitions, over time, from historic heavy industrial uses to a land use pattern more compatible with the surrounding area.

### Complaint Summary

From 2016 to present date, the Community Standards Division has received a total of 47 unique complaints related to potential bylaw infractions in the West Industrial area. Common areas of concern focused on overgrown back lanes, noise complaints resulting from land use and debris in the right-of-way. A summary of complaint data is included (see Appendix 2, West Industrial Area Complaint Summary). If contraventions are identified, the City works with the business to identify the issue and ensure the matter is addressed.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### Noise Mitigation Study

As directed through the City Council motion, Administration prepared and distributed a Request for Information (RFI) document to solicit information on cost, feasibility and proposed methodologies associated with undertaking a noise mitigation study to look at potential methods to reduce the noise levels associated with the subject site's operations. The RFI was distributed to a number of acoustical consultants and five

submissions were received. The proposed cost to complete the study ranged from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

If directed by City Council, Administration would procure the services of an acoustical consultant through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process with the objective of having the noise mitigation study completed in spring 2021. The primary objectives of the study would be to quantify the existing noise levels and to evaluate different options for sound attenuation including mitigation at the origin point(s) of the noise.

In the event any feasible noise reduction measures are identified through the proposed study, Administration notes it does not have any mechanism to require a property owner or business to fund and undertake such improvements.

Administration was unable to identify any local businesses who were willing to partner with the City to fund any portion of the costs associated with a potential noise mitigation study.

### 17<sup>th</sup> Street Extension Project

Detailed design of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Extension project (see Appendix 3, 17<sup>th</sup> Street Extension Plan) is anticipated to be complete in 2021, with construction potentially commencing in 2022. Sound attenuation walls are not anticipated as part of this project as they are constructed with the intent to mitigate traffic noise in excess of the City's threshold level (65 dBA), as per Policy C07 028, Traffic Noise Sound Attenuation. It is not anticipated traffic noise levels will exceed the City's threshold level once the extension of 17<sup>th</sup> Street is complete. The Traffic Noise Sound Attenuation Policy does not support sound attenuation walls to address noise nuisance related to permit industrial land use operations.

A portion of City-owned land is currently leased by an industrial manufacturer and this 20 metre wide parcel of land will be required for use by the City to become part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street extension right-of-way. Construction of this project is not anticipated to reduce the noise levels originating from the business operations, though the right-of-way alignment associated with this project would be factored into the review of the potential noise mitigation study.

### West Industrial Area Local Area Plan

The West Industrial Local Area Plan (LAP) was adopted by City Council on July 19, 2004 and included 52 recommendations related to addressing land use incompatibility, infrastructure deficiencies/gaps, site servicing, transportation concerns and economic development opportunities.

LAP recommendations are implemented over the short- to long-term, with collaboration from civic departments, the LAP communities and other identified stakeholders. Each year, budgets and work plans from various civic departments are used to support capital investments needed to implement recommendations of a LAP. Implementation actions

are prioritized based on funding availability (if required), staffing resources, community input and strategic direction.

To date, 36 of the 52 (69%) West Industrial LAP recommendations have been completed. Of the 16 outstanding recommendations, 14 (88%) are linked to long-term implementation actions related to the West Industrial Concept Plan (see Appendix 4, West Industrial Concept Plan) and Southwest Transportation Study ([see Traffic Studies](#)). The remaining two outstanding recommendations include:

1. **“RECOMMENDATION 5.3 AWARDS PROGRAM:** That the Community Services Department, Development Services Branch, be encouraged to develop an industrial/commercial landscaping awards program that considers criteria such as building design, property improvements, beautification, good neighbour relations and community collaboration.”

Implementation Status: Neighbourhood Planning has reached out to area businesses/property owners periodically to discuss this recommendation; however, the proposed awards program has not been a high priority for those consulted. Neighbourhood Planning will be reviewing this recommendation in their 2021 Work Plan to determine if another approach to address the intent of the recommendation could be considered.

2. **“RECOMMENDATION 5.4 (b) PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE:** That the Fire and Protective Services Department, in consultation with the Utility Services Department, Environmental Protection Branch and Community Services Department, Development Services Branch draw up a timeline and schedule for enforcing The Property Maintenance & Nuisance Abatement Bylaw No. 8175, Waste Bylaw No. 5203 and Zoning Bylaw No.7800 in the West Industrial area .”

Implementation Status: Since 2016, Bylaw and Fire Inspectors have completed 60 inspections related to the enforcement of the Property Maintenance Bylaw in the West Industrial area.

#### West Industrial Concept Plan

The West Industrial Concept Plan was a result of the implementation actions related to West Industrial LAP Recommendation 1.3(a): Concept Plan. The West Industrial Concept Plan was approved by City Council on May 20, 2008 and outlines a long-term redevelopment plan of the West Industrial area. The West Industrial Concept Plan lays out the locations of future roadways and developable lands and is intended to guide future development and infrastructure investment in the area. It also serves to increase the level of confidence in the area’s future and encourage additional private investment in this area as improvements are made to the City’s overall transportation network, with historical heavy industrial land uses transitioning out of the area.

Neighbourhood Planning has discussed with other relevant civic departments the implementation of the remaining 14 West Industrial LAP recommendations related to the West Industrial Concept Plan and Southwest Transportation Study. These recommendations will be strategically addressed as the Transportation Division proceeds with detailed design of the transportation network in the area, once construction of 17<sup>th</sup> Street, west of Avenue P to 11<sup>th</sup> Street (anticipated to begin in 2022) is completed and development parcels are created in accordance with the West Industrial Concept Plan. Administration will continue to look for opportunities to achieve the goals and objectives of the West Industrial Concept Plan by tactically implementing the remaining related LAP recommendations.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The projected cost for the noise mitigation study is between \$15,000 and \$30,000. Potential funding for this work exists in the Community Services Capital Reserve or West Industrial Area LAP implementation budget. The LAP implementation budget could fund to a maximum of \$11,000 and the remaining costs would need to be funded from elsewhere, with the suggestion being the Community Services Capital Reserve.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, CPTED or environmental implications. Related to potential policy implications, if Council were to direct Administration to undertake the noise mitigation study and fund it through the sources identified under Financial Implications above, any funding allocated from the Community Services Capital Reserve would need City Council's approval as an exception to policy, as the funding amount for this project does not meet the current policy definition of a capital project.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If directed by City Council, Administration will proceed with the issuance of an RFP in order to procure a consultant to undertake a noise mitigation study.

### **APPENDICES**

1. West Industrial Area Zoning Map
2. West Industrial Area Complaint Summary
3. 17<sup>th</sup> Street Extension Plan
4. West Industrial Concept Plan

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

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