

# Vehicle Noise Mitigation Study Final Report – Follow-Up

## ISSUE

This report presents the prioritized recommendations from the Vehicle Noise Mitigation Study Final Report.

## BACKGROUND

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting held on February 28, 2022, considered the Vehicle Noise Mitigation Study Final Report, and resolved:

- “1. That the vehicle noise information be reviewed and updated for the future 311 Customer Service System (Recommendation 3);
2. That it pursue stronger legislative and regulatory penalties for street racing, stunt driving infractions (Recommendation 14) by advocating to the Minister responsible for SGI;
3. That the Administration implement Option 2 and prioritize based on City Council providing a ranking of each recommendation; and
4. That the Administration add the prioritized recommendations to the options portion be presented for 2023 budget consideration.”

## CURRENT STATUS

Systèmes de Contrôle Actif Soft dB Inc. (Soft dB), an acoustical engineering consultant, completed the Vehicle Noise Mitigation Study Report. The recommendations were grouped by theme and there is significant flexibility of potential actions that could be taken depending on priorities and available funding.

Each City Councillor was asked to provide their top three priorities for the vehicle noise recommendations, with 1 being the highest ranking. A ranking of 1 received three points; a ranking of 2 received two points; and a ranking of 3 received one point. The point allocation method is commonly used in market research because it is objective and carries little risk for bias due to respondent subjectivity.

Recommendation 3 is in progress. The vehicle noise information is currently being reviewed and updated for the future 311 Customer Service System.

Recommendation 14 is complete. A letter was sent to the Minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) on December 20, 2021. On October 1, 2022, new penalties were introduced by SGI for stunting and street racing, including:

- A ticket for stunting in a motor vehicle increased to \$580 (from \$150) plus four demerit points.
- A ticket for street racing increased to \$580 (from \$205) and escalates for repeat offences within a one-year period (\$1,400 for a second offense, and \$2,100 for a third). All offences also include four demerit points.

A second upcoming phase of legislation change includes:

- A ticket for stunting, racing, and exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 km/h, or more than double the posted speed limit, will result in a 30-day vehicle impoundment and immediate seven-day license suspension.

The definitions for stunting and racing have also been updated in *The Traffic Safety Act*.

The Administration and His Worship also recently met with SGI and the City of Regina to discuss this issue. Highlights of the meeting include:

- SGI, in conjunction with the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) participated in a pilot project to address excessive vehicle noise in the summer of 2021.
- A potential standard for measuring vehicle noise has been identified in accordance with SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers). This standard includes a methodology of measuring the sound from a vehicle’s exhaust system and will assist in moving the issue of measurement from ‘subjective’ to ‘objective’.
- The Cities of Saskatoon and Regina will continue to collaborate with SGI regarding the regulation and enforcement of excessive vehicle noise.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Using the rankings received from City Council members, the rest of the recommendations were prioritized based on total points received. Table 1 lists the recommendations in order of priority, with costs and staffing impacts.

Table 1 – Prioritized Rankings of Vehicle Noise Study Recommendations

Priority	Total Points	Recommendation	Cost (\$)	Staffing Impacts
1	17	11. Consider the development and implementation of new vehicle noise inspection procedures, potentially in collaboration with SGI, including vehicle noise inspection notices prompted by pre-screened noise and traffic monitoring data and the use of inspection sites dedicated to vehicle noise.	Unknown	Staff time required to collaborate with SGI to consider vehicle noise inspection procedures and assess feasibility of new methods to address non-compliant vehicles
2	9	10. Use commercially available noise and traffic monitoring systems to collect and analyze vehicle noise-related acoustical data.	50,000 <sup>1</sup>	Requires technical skills not currently available in-house
3	6	2. Establish and implement an improved complaints management system for vehicle noise.	100,000 <sup>1</sup>	Increased staff resources to set up the complaints management system and establish processes
4	4	4. Promote and advertise official 311 Customer Service System once operational.	10,000 <sup>1</sup>	Increased staff resources

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Priority	Total Points	Recommendation	Cost (\$)	Staffing Impacts
	4	6. Review and update all existing city-produced public information on vehicle noise highlighting the legislation, enforcement processes and soft measures implemented by the City of Saskatoon.	10,000 <sup>1</sup>	Increased staff resources and printing costs
	4	8. Develop and install responsive signage at critical locations.	Unknown	Increased staff resources for development, location selection, procurement, and installation
5	3	1. Develop and carry out a multifaceted public consultation strategy to solicit input from the public on the vehicle noise issue.	75,000 <sup>1</sup>	Increased staff resources
	3	5. Develop a communication and media strategy aimed at raising awareness on vehicle noise issues.	75,000 <sup>1</sup>	Increased staff resources
6	2	9. Develop short, attention-grabbing content that can be used as ads on social media or as standalone campaigns.	25,000 <sup>1,2</sup>	Increased staff resources
7	0	7. Develop formal marketing material and video material for the City and SPS websites and share on social media.	75,000 <sup>1,2</sup>	Increased staff resources
	0	12. Dedicate internal resources to develop in-house expertise within the City of Saskatoon and in particular within the Bylaw Compliance team	100,000 <sup>3</sup>	Ongoing annual staffing cost
	0	13. Lobby the Minister responsible for SGI to implement tougher penalties for street racing, stunt driving infractions.	0	NA SGI introduced new and tougher penalties for stunting and street racing which came into effect on October 1, 2022.
	0	15. Create and sustain a staff position within the City of Saskatoon whose main task is to coordinate and support the development, implementation, and management of the vehicle noise strategy.	100,000 <sup>3</sup>	Ongoing annual staffing cost

Notes: 1 – One time funding only, or per occurrence  
 2 – The funding amount is an estimate only. City Council could allocate more funding to this item if more effort was preferred or alternately reduce funding to this item and do less.  
 3 – Per year

The number one priority identified by City Councillors is currently being worked on by SGI. Further reporting by SGI is expected in the future.

For 2023 budget consideration, new capital project submissions must have an identified funding source in order to be considered. Existing internal reserve funds are not sufficient for 2023 implementation of the ranked priorities and would require a mill-rate increase in order to allow for additional capital reserve contributions. In consideration of the recent positive outcomes achieved by SGI regarding this issue, and the budgeting constraints, Administration is recommending inclusion of the second and third priorities, for a total cost of \$150,000, in the 2024-2025 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget deliberations as follows:

Priority No. 2 - Use commercially available noise and traffic monitoring systems to collect and analyze vehicle noise-related acoustical data, and

Priority No. 3 - Establish and implement an improved complaints management system for vehicle noise.

Bringing these recommendations forward in the next budget cycle will also provide some time to further assess the impacts of the new penalties for stunting and street racing on excessive vehicle noise incidences and complaints and to continue to collaborate with SGI on implementing other potential measures to mitigate excessive vehicle noise.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated costs are included in the body of this report. There is currently no identified operating or capital funding for this work.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Privacy, legal, social, and environmental implications were not reviewed as part of the preparation of this report

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. Complete the review and update of the vehicle noise information for the future 311 Customer Service System.
2. Submit Priorities 2 and 3 in Table 1 for consideration in the 2024-2025 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Deliberations.

#### **Report Approval**

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