

Odour Mitigation Update Report

ISSUE

Heavy industrial uses in the Hudson Bay Industrial Area have historically resulted in odour nuisances experienced by surrounding businesses and residential neighbourhoods. Recent odour concerns primarily arose from a rendering plant within the Hudson Bay Industrial Area. This report provides a current summary on complaint and inspection results.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its Regular Business [Meeting](#) on December 19, 2022, approved the following motion:

“Whereas West Coast Reduction recycles food waste and by-products from farmers and restaurants and operates a plant in Saskatoon’s north end.

Whereas several residents and businesses in the vicinity have recently complained about the persistent strong and putrid odour likely coming from the plant.

Whereas it was recently reported that several dead pig carcasses were left piled outside the plant, generating more intense odours.

Whereas such odours are having substantial negative impacts on the quality of life for many north end residents, to the point where their ability, to sit outside in their own yard or go to the park, is compromised.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Administration report back to the appropriate Standing Policy Committee not later than the end of Quarter 1 of 2023 on various measures undertaken by the City of Saskatoon, Ministries or Agencies of the Government of Saskatchewan, and/or Ministries of Agencies of the Government of Canada to mitigate persistent and strong odours coming from this and other similar plants; and

Be it further resolved that the Administration report back to the appropriate Standing Policy Committee not later than the end of Quarter 1 of 2023 on potential legal options available to the City and/or Province concerning the operations of the rendering plant operating in the north end of Saskatoon, the odour, and the impact this is having on the quality of life of Saskatoon residents.”

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, at its [meeting](#) on April 5, 2023, were provided a report from Administration addressing City Council’s motion and identifying next steps. In follow up, this report provides an update on Administration’s proactive monitoring approach, the outcome of the Province of Saskatchewan’s review and additional consideration for potential regulations required.

CURRENT STATUS

Complaint Summary

In 2023, the Community Standards Department received a total of 43 odour-related complaints. No odour complaints were received between January and March, with April seeing the largest number of complaints at a total of 19, with 12 occurring on one day. During 2023, four groupings of complaints occurring on four different days were shared with West Coast Reduction (WCR) due to the potential the identified odour could be attributed to the rendering plant. This assessment was based on time of complaints, wind direction and potential for other known odours in the area. While not definitive, it is Administration's view that the majority of these complaints did not relate to WCR, based on proactive monitoring of the Hudson Bay Industrial Area and the WCR site. The number of odour complaints substantially increased in 2023, from 12 to 43, due to Administration's communication efforts regarding odour, additional odours being present in the summer months and increased public awareness of the rendering activity.

West Coast Reduction Operations

During operations in 2023, WCR continued to utilize their odour reduction operating procedures and undertake odour investigations based on potential valid complaint data received in real time, when possible, from the City of Saskatoon. Also, WCR continued to report complaints and investigation findings to their executive and management group on a weekly basis. Based on their investigations, WCR concluded minimal odour escaped the facility during 2023 due to normal operations and odour controls. When big disruptions with potential to release odours occur, WCR has committed to continuing to communicate with the City of Saskatoon to ensure the public can be made aware that the resulting odour is not standard operating procedure and that WCR is working towards a resolution.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

City of Saskatoon

During the warmer months in 2023, the Community Standards Department received complaints on multiple odour-related issues occurring within city limits, including odour generated by the wastewater treatment plant due to an operational change, which resulted in an odour side effect between March and May and has since been rectified. Multiple inspections of the WCR plant and Hudson Bay Industrial Area were undertaken by a Bylaw Inspector, several times a week between February and August. While the ability to definitively attribute odours to a source is difficult, it was suspected that detectable odours, when present, generally originated from various heavy industrial users in the area, agricultural activities within and outside city limits, and the wastewater treatment plant during their operational change. On most occasions, proactive monitoring resulted in no or minimal odour being detected. On April 28, 2023, the Bylaw Inspector identified a likely odour, characterized as minor, being generated from the rendering plant which was detectable near the plant.

In June of 2023, Administration communicated with the public, through targeted social media to the Lawson Heights, Silverwood Heights and River Heights neighbourhoods, as well as the Hudson Bay Industrial Area, to provide information on potential land use-related odour nuisances within Saskatoon. Administration also notified these groups of Bylaw Compliance's review and documentation process related to odour complaints. Included in the communication was an invitation for residents to submit any experience of odour to the Bylaw Compliance Section.

Province of Saskatchewan

At the time of the previous report, early indications showed that plant emissions did not trigger any requirements for an Environmental Protection Plan under the Industrial Source, Air Quality Chapter of *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*, and the Province of Saskatchewan (Province) has confirmed this conclusion. During 2023, the Province attended the site unannounced on several occasions to ensure the plant's odour reduction standard operating procedures were being followed, with no concerns noted during these site visits. The Province has not received further odour complaints about the facility since their initial review began.

Industrial/Residential Interface Study

The ongoing Industrial-Residential Interface Study is examining the impact of existing heavy industrial businesses on nearby residential areas in Saskatoon. A Request for Proposals to conduct an Environmental Noise and Air Quality Study closed in October 2023, with three submissions received. Administration has been in negotiations with the highest-scoring proponent and anticipates contract award and mobilization of the consultant team by mid-February. The scope of work includes conducting noise and air quality monitoring in four study areas identified by residents through a community survey. These areas include existing heavy industrial facilities, which may be negatively impacting nearby residential areas. The intended outcome of the study is to understand noise and air quality levels within the heavy industrial-residential interface areas experiencing nuisance conditions. The study will also compare collected data to best practice target levels for municipalities, to identify potential mitigation options to consider.

Administration will provide a report back on the study findings, potential mitigation options and proposed next steps once the monitoring and data collection is concluded in Q3 2024.

Additional Consideration for Potential Regulations

Additional consideration for potential regulations is not currently required, which would be pending the outcome of the Industrial-Residential Interface Study.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Potential continued inspections of the WCR site and Hudson Bay Industrial Area will occur through existing operating budget resources.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, social, legal or environmental implications.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will continue to inspect the subject site upon receipt of any complaints and will also continue to provide complaint data to WCR in real-time to assist their on-going odour investigations. In the event WCR odour-related complaints increase, Administration would again establish a proactive monitoring schedule. Targeted communications, such as social media, flyers, etc., can be used for specific areas, as needed.

Odour Mitigation Update Report

As noted in this report, additional reporting to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services on the Industrial/Residential Interface Study is planned for Q3 2024.

REPORT APPROVAL

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