

Addressing Noisy Vehicles Through Calgary Traffic Bylaw Enforcement

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council direct Administration to:

1. Approve the proposed workplan as outlined in Attachment 4, including directing Administration to continue to collaborate with the Calgary Police Service (CPS) and the Government of Alberta to obtain appointments and authorizations;
2. Draft amendments to the Calgary Traffic Bylaw (26M96) to better address vehicle noise and return to Council with proposed amendments no later than Q3 2024;
3. Consider budget request for community peace officers to enforce the Calgary Traffic Bylaw to the service plans and budgets in 2023 November and be included in the Standing Executive Committee Item – Strategic Discussion on Building and Delivering on Plans and Budgets; and
4. Defer the return to Community Development Committee to report progress on vehicle noise enforcement and review of automated systems from Q1 2024 to Q2 2024.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, 2023 MAY 31:

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4. Defer the return to Community Development Committee to report progress on vehicle noise enforcement and review of automated systems from Q1 2024 to Q2 2024.

Opposition to Recommendation:

Councillor Chabot

Excerpt from the Minutes of the 2023 May 31 Regular Meeting of the Community Development Committee:

“A Notice of Motion entitled "Excessive Vehicle Noise" was distributed with respect to Report CD2023-0582.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- This scoping report finds that a comprehensive program to address vehicle noise in Calgary could include amendments to the Calgary Traffic Bylaw to increase the enforceability of vehicle noise restrictions, as well as securing resources that could allow community peace officers to effectively enforce the bylaw with the ability to conduct traffic stops. Both would need to occur together to successfully address noisy vehicles in Calgary.
- Collaborating with CPS on a Memorandum of Understanding, Traffic Safety Plan and Professional Standards is an essential part of proceeding with the workplan.

Approval: **Black, Katie** concurs with this report. Author: **Blackstaffe, Anita**
City Clerks **J. Booth / A. Degrood**

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- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** The program would be a step toward providing relief to Calgarians who have been experiencing the negative effects of vehicle noise and it would also become the start of an overall community traffic safety program in Calgary.
- **Why does this matter?** Loud and excessive vehicle noise is becoming an increasing concern for Calgarians. It has resulted in over 1,500 complaints to Calgary 311 in the last five years and research has shown that urban noise can cause a variety of health concerns.
- Changes to Calgary's Traffic Bylaw, peace officer appointments, and fine structure are being recommended to follow The City of Edmonton's model that sets decibel standards for motorcycles, addresses general vehicle noise with objective measurements, increases fines to act as a deterrent, and allows peace officers to enforce the bylaw with the ability to conduct traffic stops.
- A workplan outlines a potential pilot program and resource requirements to address noisy vehicles through traffic bylaw enforcement.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Addressing Vehicle Noise, Quality of Life and Community Traffic Safety

Communities across Calgary have reported for years that their quality of life is negatively impacted by noise emitted from vehicles in residential neighbourhoods and commercial districts. Over the last five years, there have been vehicle noise complaints to Calgary 311 originating in all 14 wards. Vehicle noise is not just an annoyance. Research has shown that urban noise can have serious health impacts such as effects on the cardiovascular and metabolic system, as well as cognitive impairment in children. An overview of 311 complaints, violation tickets, and health impacts is included as Attachment 2.

A comprehensive program to address vehicle noise in Calgary could include amendments to the Calgary Traffic Bylaw, as well as the creation of a bylaw traffic enforcement team to effectively enforce noise restrictions. This team of community peace officers could focus on vehicle noise concerns during months when complaints are higher, generally spring and summer. During months with lower rates of vehicle noise, peace officers could enforce other targeted traffic issues in collaboration with CPS, such as speed enforcement in school zones and checking unsecured loads, creating an overall program of community traffic safety in Calgary. Fine revenue generated could be used to offset program operating costs.

Current Limitations and Learning from Other Jurisdictions

Enforcement of vehicle noise in Calgary is currently limited by existing municipal bylaws and provincial legislation. The Community Standards Bylaw, Calgary Traffic Bylaw, and the provincial Traffic Safety Act are limited in their enforceability, and do not outline measurable restrictions and/or objective standards. Most peace officer appointments for Calgary do not allow peace officers to conduct traffic stops, limiting the ability of officers to enforce vehicle noise bylaws or to conduct other residential traffic enforcement that is done in other jurisdictions.

A jurisdictional scan, included as Attachment 3, reveals that municipalities across Canada have bylaws addressing noisy vehicles and that two municipalities in Alberta have developed comprehensive enforcement programs. Edmonton and Red Deer have bylaws that include decibel levels, measurement standards, and a substantial fine. Additionally, both Edmonton and

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Red Deer have appointments with the Government of Alberta that allow peace officers to conduct traffic stops in collaboration with local police services.

Potential Changes to the Traffic Bylaw and Fine Structure

Amendments to the Calgary Traffic Bylaw to address noisy vehicles could incorporate decibel standards, objective measurement standards, and an increase in the fine structure.

Administration recommends following an approach like the model at the City of Edmonton:

- (1) Use Society of Automotive Engineers decibel standards for motorcycles.
- (2) Evaluate the existing general noisy vehicle section to identify opportunities to improve enforceability and successful prosecution, such as including measurement standards.
- (3) Increase vehicle noise fines up to \$1000 to align with other Alberta municipalities and to act as an effective deterrent.

Proposed Workplan for Pilot of Calgary Traffic Bylaw Enforcement

A comprehensive program to address traffic stop enforcement would be substantially different from our current model and would require significant engagement and investment to operationalize. We are proposing a team of eight peace officers and one sergeant for traffic bylaw enforcement.

If Council wishes to proceed and there is a committed budget, several key areas of work have been identified for this pilot program to become operational. A proposed workplan is included as Attachment 4, and outlines multiple requirements including:

- (1) Collaboration with multiple partners, including CPS, Government of Alberta Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to secure support and update existing agreements and policies.
- (2) Incorporation of new training, such as the Emergency Vehicle Operator Course, training for traffic stops, and the use of sound meters.
- (3) The procurement of fleet and equipment required, such as new vehicles, vehicle lights, ticketing systems, sound meters, body worn or dash cameras, and data storage.
- (4) The redeployment of experienced peace officers to launch the traffic bylaw enforcement program, as well as the recruitment of additional peace officers and support staff.
- (5) Preparation and implementation of a public awareness campaign.
- (6) Ensuring the program aligns with Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging principles.
- (7) Development of a data driven deployment approach in collaboration with CPS.
- (8) Evaluation of the pilot program in collaboration with CPS.

The launch of this program would require additional resources to become fully operational.

If Council wishes to proceed, Administration could reasonably facilitate the launch of a pilot program in Q3 2024, which would allow for continued discussions with CPS and the Government of Alberta, as well as time to put program requirements in place and plan for a public awareness campaign.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed |
|---|--|

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☒ Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken

☒ Public communication or engagement was not required

Preliminary conversations have occurred with the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services, CPS, and other municipalities. Public communication and engagement were not required at this time but will be conducted if the budget is approved.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

A program to address noisy vehicles through traffic bylaw enforcement would positively impact the quality of life for Calgarians, aligning with the *Social Wellbeing Policy*.

Environmental

Compliance and enforcement of an amended bylaw addressing noisy vehicles can help to reduce noise pollution. According to the World Health Organization noise pollution is the second largest environmental cause of health problems, just after the impact of air pollution.

Economic

Effectively managing vehicle noise creates a business and tourism-friendly environment.

Service and Financial Implications

A potential budget request would be considered as part of adjustments to the service plans and budgets in 2023 November and would be included in the Standing Executive Committee Item – Strategic Discussion on Building and Delivering on Plans and Budgets.

The estimated investment required would include operating and capital costs associated with the launch of a traffic bylaw enforcement program, including staff, fleet, equipment, and technology.

RISK

Risks if we proceed with a traffic bylaw enforcement program include officer safety risks and potential service impacts. We are working with CPS to better understand these risks and how to mitigate them. Risks if we do not proceed with this program include impacts to the quality of life and health of Calgarians. If a bylaw amendment is approved without resources, the bylaw is not enforceable. This would set citizens expectation without the resources to enforce

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Noisy Vehicles Complaints and Concerns
3. Jurisdictional Scan
4. Proposed Workplan
5. Presentation
6. **Notice of Motion**

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Lynne Davies	Law	Inform
Chief Mark Neufeld	Calgary Police Service	Consult

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Carla Male	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Consult
Troy McLeod	Mobility	Inform