



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Steve Milani

Date: September 21, 2020

Subject: Construction Noise Bylaws from Surrounding Municipalities

Purpose

For Council to consider amending relevant construction noise bylaws to help improve the quality of life for Port Moody residents.

Recommendation

THAT staff be directed to prepare amendments to relevant sound level bylaws to limit the permitted hours of construction to 7 AM to 7 PM Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM Saturday, with no construction permitted on any Sunday or statutory holiday, as recommended in the report dated September 17, 2020, from Councillor Steve Milani regarding Limiting Construction Noise;

AND THAT a fine be created for those in breach of the bylaw in the amount of \$500 for each hour or portion thereof that the violation continues, for up to 12 hours; after 12 hours, the fine increases to \$1,000 for each one-hour period in violation;

AND THAT staff be directed to seek approval from Council before granting variances to sound level bylaw(s).

Background

Exposure to prolonged or excessive noise has been shown to cause a range of health problems with current construction noise bylaws exacerbating the issue.

Discussion

Construction is a necessary but often noisy part of a growing city. Unfortunately, once created, this noise enters one's residence without an invitation and the only way to prevent this from happening is to stop it at its source.

Toronto Public Health states, "The growing body of evidence indicates that exposure to excessive environmental noise does not only impact the quality of life and cause hearing loss but also has other health impacts, such as cardiovascular effects, cognitive impacts, sleep disturbance, and mental health effects." Therefore, it can be concluded that quiet time is important to maintain good physical and mental health. (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp->

[content/uploads/2017/11/8f98-tpH-How-Loud-is-Too-Loud-Health-Impacts-Environmental-Noise.pdf](#))

Currently, the City of Port Moody permits construction noise between the hours of 7 AM to 8 PM Monday to Saturday, and Sunday or Statutory Holiday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., provided that such construction is not being carried out for profit or gain.

(<https://www.portmoody.ca/en/city-hall/bylaws.aspx#Sound-Level-Bylaw>) These long hours of continuous noise do not allow sufficient time for residents to experience peace in their day so the recommendation is to reduce the hours to 7 AM to 7 PM Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM Saturday, with no construction permitted on any Sunday or statutory holiday. To aid with enforcement, a fine is also recommended for those in breach of the bylaw. This fine is on par with that of the District of North Vancouver.

(<https://www.dnv.org/sites/default/files/bylaws/Bylaw%207188.pdf>)

A comparison was done looking at the construction noise bylaws of eight nearby municipalities. While the hours varied, the following similarities were noted with the recommendations in this report. The Monday to Friday recommendation is on par with the hours set by the City of Port Coquitlam. The Saturday hours match that of both the District of North Vancouver and the Township of Langley. Prohibiting construction on Sundays and statutory holidays matches Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Coquitlam, District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver and the Township of Langley.

Further limiting the time construction noise is permitted is especially important now with stress and anxiety levels continually on the rise due to the current pandemic situation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, "The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety." (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>)

With emails being sent to Council on a regular basis and residents pleading for change, an update to the relevant bylaws is being proposed. The following excerpt is from an email sent to City Council.

"I write for the first time, as a concerned citizen because there is a change in the current construction in our neighborhood, and that is the noise levels of construction during weekends.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm all for the vibrant development and growth I'm seeing in our beautiful community, but during weekends, in summer (when we must keep our windows open 24/7) I deserve to sleep in and rest in my apartment after working all week long... I mean we all deserve that, do we not? But it has become impossible to enjoy my own home during the weekends due to the ongoing construction, which begins very early in the morning (6 or 7 AM), industrial pumps, huge trucks, banging and beeping when backing into the site... NON STOP!

As I said before, during the week, go for it, it is to be expected in a city on a growth spurt, but I believe construction should be detained on the weekends. It is not only intrusive but downright careless of the city - and yes I hold each and everyone at council responsible - to impose this upon your constituents, especially during a pandemic in which we are supposed to stay at home more than at any other time."

Further limiting construction hours will improve the quality of life for Port Moody residents, helping to keep them both happy and healthy.

Health Effects

There have been many studies conducted showing the negative effects noise can have on a person's mental and physical health. An article entitled, "Health effects of environmental noise pollution" by the Australian Academy of Science states, "It might be tempting to think that noise isn't a serious health issue, after all, it's just noise. It won't kill us ... right? Well, maybe." It goes on to say, "Exposure to prolonged or excessive noise has been shown to cause a range of health problems ranging from stress, poor concentration, productivity losses in the workplace, and communication difficulties and fatigue from lack of sleep, to more serious issues such as cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, tinnitus and hearing loss."

(<https://www.science.org.au/curious/earth-environment/health-effects-environmental-noise-pollution#:~:text=Exposure%20to%20prolonged%20or%20excessive,cardiovascular%20disease%2C%20cognitive%20impairment%2C%20tinnitus>)

On its website, the Province of Quebec states that environmental noise is a common problem that poses a risk to people's health and quality of life because it can lead to both physical and psychological effects. (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/health-and-environment/the-effects-of-environmental-noise-on-health/>)

Closer to home, the City of Vancouver published a Noise Control Manual which goes into depth explaining what noise is, why it bothers us, and what effects it can have on us.

(<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/noise-control-manual.pdf>) It makes reference to the World Health Organization and how it considers noise to be an "unspecific stressor", stimulating body systems, and, along with other environmental and lifestyle factors, can have significant temporary and permanent effects on overall human health.

Other Option

THAT Staff be directed to prepare amendments to relevant bylaws limiting hours of construction to 7 AM to 7 PM Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM Saturday, with construction to be permitted on Sunday from 10 AM to 6 PM, provided that such construction is not being carried out for profit or gain (such as a homeowner building a deck);

AND THAT a fine is created for those in breach of the bylaw in the amount of \$500 for each hour or portion thereof that violation continues, for up to 12 hours; after 12 hours, the fine increases to \$1,000 for each one-hour period in violation.

Financial Implications

Staff time to prepare the bylaw amendment(s).

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Keeping residents happy and healthy aligns with Council's 'Healthy City' Priority and the objective, "Encourage lifelong healthy and active living."

Attachment

1. Construction Noise Bylaws from Surrounding Municipalities