

Noise

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie RPSC

City Noise

There is growing concern among Vancouver residents that urban noise is on the rise. In some residential areas, city noise has reached the point where residents must keep windows shut day and night to carry out regular household activities. Even near quiet areas like Pacific Spirit Park, an ever-present "urban hum" can be heard late at night.

Issues related to noise from restaurants, cabarets, leaf blowers, boom cars, security systems, construction and garbage trucks are presented to Vancouver City Council on a regular basis.

Vancouver has one of the most restrictive noise by-laws in Canada, yet noise remains to be a problem.

There is reason to believe that the growth of noise in Vancouver has followed the trend in most major cities with an approximate doubling of the intensity of noise every six years.

In a survey conducted in 1996 for the Urban Noise Task Force, over 50% of respondents reported that noise is a problem "occasionally", with one quarter of the respondents reporting to be bothered by noise "frequently".

There is no doubt that the largest increase in noise is due to the growth of automobile, bus, truck and motorcycle traffic in the city.

Of growing concern is the unrestrained use and intrusive sound of leaf blowers, noise from entertainment districts and the increasing frequency of aircraft movements.

Urban Noise Task Force

The Urban Noise Task Force was appointed by City Council in early 1996 to seek ways to deal with excessive noise. The Task Force carried out an extensive public consultation process before presenting its final report.

The report, which contains 165 recommendations, identified numerous soundscape issues and solutions, with a focus on public education, regulatory controls, and modifications to equipment and noise at the source. The report suggests that the City set an example by implementing noise reduction methods for its work crews.

On May 27, 1997, City Council considered the Urban Noise Task Force report and approved most of its recommendations.

Controlling City Noise

Noise originating from construction sites, commercial and industrial sites (fans, music, power equipment, garbage trucks, amplification equipment, parties and dogs) are all regulated by the City's Noise By-law. Hours of operation and acceptable levels of noise from a variety of sources are outlined in the By-law.

In some cases, City Council grants exceptions for special events (i.e. parades, festivals, races) and construction work to occur outside the specified hours, where it is impossible or impractical to comply with the By-law.

Penalties for non-compliance with the Noise By-law #6555 range from \$100 to \$2,000.

For further information about the Noise By-law or who to contact for a particular noise problem, call the Vancouver Environmental Health Division at (604)736-2866.

Untidy Premises

See Fact Sheet on Street Clean-up/Untidy Premises.

Animal Control

Every person who owns a dog in the City of Vancouver is required to obtain an annual license for their pet.

Dogs are not permitted to run at large in the city and must be on a leash, under full custody of a competent person when off the owner's property.

Vicious dogs or dogs with a known propensity to attack domestic animals or humans are required to have a muzzle when on a leash, off the owner's property.

The "Pooper Scooper" section of the Animal Control By-law requires dog owners to remove their dog's waste deposited outside their own property and dispose of it accordingly.

For more information about animal control call the Dog Hot Line at 871-MUTT.

Integrated Service Teams

In communities where residents need help to resolve issues relating to noise and nuisances, the City's Neighbourhood Integrated Service Team (NIST) is ready to assist and mediate. The Planning Department contact person for your Visions Area is Joanne Franko, (604)873-7919.

For more information about NISTs, see the fact sheet titled the same.

Sources

- Report of the Urban Noise Task Force, 1997
- Noise Control By-law (#6555)
- Standards of Maintenance By-law (#5462)
- Untidy Premises By-law (#4548)
- Animal Control By-law (#7528)