



Policy Title: Surface Transportation Noise Policy

Policy Number: TP003

Report Number: OD88-2

Approved by: City Council

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Business Unit: Transportation Planning

BACKGROUND

Many people are exposed to sounds which become annoying. Transportation noise, especially from vehicles, is part of our daily lifestyle. Cars and especially trucks are major sources of noise.

The City of Calgary is committed to reducing the impact of such noise sources in existing and future residential areas. As part of the planning process in Calgary, residential areas are examined to determine whether there is an existing or potential problem in outdoor rear leisure areas around the home.

The City of Calgary's Surface Transportation Noise Policy prescribes the conditions under which noise barriers are constructed adjacent to residential properties using guidelines established by the Federal Government.

PURPOSE

The intent of the Surface Transportation Noise Policy is to provide the design noise levels and descriptors, design criteria, and the responsibility for providing noise attenuation.

POLICY

DESIGN NOISE LEVEL GUIDELINES

The Design Noise Level (DNL) in residential areas for outdoor leisure areas is 60 d6 (A) Leq (24).

In order to achieve acceptable noise levels in residential areas in a consistent and objective manner, it is necessary to utilize a guideline or target noise level. The descriptor dB(A) Leq (24) is defined as the daily unit of noise which condenses a full 24 hours worth of sound energy into a single number "A-



Weighted" to correlate closely with human hearing. Generally, it has been found that a single number representing a 24 hour time period is a good measure of annoyance. The descriptor Leq (24) has been used for a number of years and based on empirical research, has proven to be acceptable. The decibel level of 60 dB(A) for 24 hours has also proven to be acceptable from a benefit/cost point of view.

In residential areas it is specifically the outdoor leisure area in which target levels are to be achieved. This would include ground level areas such as yards and patios or common areas allocated outside multi-dwelling complexes. For buildings two stories or higher, where balconies are considered as the outdoor leisure area, protection should be provided on an individual basis through the use of architectural treatments.

With the achievement of the exterior DNL of 60 dB(A) Leq(24), it is expected that the interior DNL of 45 dB(A) Leq(24) should result with the use of standard construction materials. This level is acceptable, on an average, for most rooms inside dwellings.

In all cases, in order to maximize benefit/cost, noise attenuation should be constructed to achieve a minimum 5 decibel reduction, with a desirable target of 10 decibels. There may be instances where these criteria are not achievable and, therefore, the design noise level cannot be applied in all cases. The achievement of design noise levels must be technically, economically and administratively feasible. Therefore, feasibility is determined when the Administration reviews the details of the noise attenuation design and all alternative measures have been evaluated.

PROCEDURE

IMPLEMENTATION OF DESIGN NOISE LEVELS

In the process of implementing design noise level objectives, the roles of all participants involved in the planning, design and construction of residential subdivisions and adjacent roadways and associated noise attenuation, must be clearly defined. The general practice is that the provision of noise attenuation is dependent on the timing of the residential development and/or the transportation facility. The earlier in the planning process that noise is considered, the greater the flexibility that will be available in providing acceptable acoustical environments in residential areas.



POTENTIAL NOISE IMPACT

A Potential Noise Impact area consists of residential development proposed adjacent to major roads, expressways, freeways, light rail transit corridors, and other rail lines.

Residential development adjacent to a transportation corridor/facility may or may not experience traffic noise problems resulting from proximity to the corridor/facility. Based on field measurements and/or computer calculations, facilities are identified as having a potential noise problem and a noise impact analysis is required. In cases where residential development is proposed adjacent to existing or future transportation corridors/facilities, the developer is responsible for providing a noise impact analysis. This requirement and the analysis methodology is reviewed and approved by the Transportation Department.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The City's responsibility for achieving desirable noise levels is an ongoing process. As a general principle, the timing for providing noise attenuation is the most critical factor in determining responsibility for funding its implementation. When a developer constructs a residential development adjacent to a roadway which has a potential noise impact, if the expected noise levels exceed the City's Design Noise Level, the developer is responsible for providing noise attenuation at his expense. The choice of attenuation measure is left to the developer, subject to City approval. When the method chosen is the installation of a noise barrier, the City reimburses the cost of a 1.8 metre high chain link fence (which would have been required as a minimum) for the length of the noise barrier required.

There are four typical cases in which this responsibility can be categorized.

Case I: Residential development or redevelopment adjacent to an existing or imminent (within 10 years) transportation noise source.

The developer, at his cost, is responsible for providing noise attenuation necessary to achieve sound levels less than or equal to 60 dB(A) Leq(24) where technically and economically feasible.

The method of attenuation should be initiated by the developer, and determined in consultation with the City in order to meet City specifications. Given the developer has maximized opportunities to provide an acceptable



acoustical environment, the City will continue to accept the responsibility to further the achievement of the desired noise levels as part of the roadway design

Example: Where there are existing transportation corridors/facilities, the future noise level is calculated based on the design year traffic volumes (10 years hence), and noise attenuation must be constructed by the developer at the time of development.

Case II: Residential development or redevelopment adjacent to a future (beyond 10 years) transportation noise source.

The developer is responsible for designing and constructing the residential area in such a way as to facilitate the necessary attenuation at the time of construction of the roadway. The City of Calgary would then be responsible for completing the required noise attenuation.

Example: Where there is a future transportation corridor, the future noise level is calculated, based on the design year (beyond 10 years). The developer shall design and construct the residential area in such a way as to accommodate the construction of noise attenuation by the City.

Case III: Upgrading of a roadway adjacent to existing residential developments:

The City is responsible for providing noise attenuation necessary to achieve the Design Noise Level where technically and economically feasible.

Example: When any upgrading takes place, such as reconstruction or new construction of roadways adjacent to an existing residential development, the City installs noise attenuation, as feasible.

Case IV: Present residential development, adjacent to an existing transportation noise source.

Problem locations are identified, and placed as a candidate on the Noise Barrier Retrofit Program for review by City Council.

Example: In situations where a noise problem has been identified, but where a roadway is not scheduled for upgrading within the foreseeable future, the City installs noise attenuation, as feasible. The process involves a feasibility review of



candidate locations, and ranking based on a benefit/cost analysis. Project priority and funding level is determined by City Council.

AMENDMENTS

N/A