

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 11, 2024

From: Jackie Teed,
Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
File: Doc # 2457179

Item #: 2024-137

Subject: **Construction Noise Bylaw Exemption Request: 32 Eighth Street (New Westminster SkyTrain Station) and 2126 Seventh Avenue (22nd Street SkyTrain Station)**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council grant an exemption from Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to TransLink from 12 AM to 7 AM from Tuesday March 12, 2024 to Thursday August 1, 2024 including ten Sundays and excluding all Statutory Holidays, to demolish original maintenance walkways, install new maintenance walkways, and make operational equipment modifications to the New Westminster SkyTrain Station located at 32 Eighth Street and the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station located at 2126 Seventh Avenue.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request Council grant an exemption from Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to TransLink to enable the demolition, modification, and installation of maintenance walkways at both the New Westminster SkyTrain Station and the 22nd Street SkyTrain in preparation for the activation of longer trains to accommodate more ridership.

BACKGROUND

In early 2023, TransLink embarked on a project involving the demolition, modification, and installation of maintenance walkways at both the New Westminster SkyTrain Station and the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station for the purpose of increasing egress at the stations

to support more ridership. Since much of the work can only be performed at night when the trains are not in operation, TransLink requested Council grant several exemptions from the Construction Noise Bylaw to support the project.

For work at the New Westminster SkyTrain Station, Council granted two exemptions: on March 27, 2023 Council passed a resolution granting an exemption from May 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023; and on October 16, 2023 Council passed a similar exemption for the period of October 31, 2023 to February 28, 2024. These exemptions have enabled TransLink to complete the work on the west side of the station and almost two-thirds on the east side.

For work at the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station, Council also granted two exemptions: on February 27, 2023 Council passed a resolution granting an exemption from March 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023; and on December 11, 2023 Council passed a similar exemption that expires on April 1, 2024. These exemptions have enabled TransLink to complete 90% of the work required on the east side of the station and 50% of the work on the west side.

At both stations, work has not proceeded as planned and is taking longer than expected. Reasons for delays include: staffing challenges due to the requirement for specialized personnel to work on the energized rail; longer lead time needed for critical materials; and some developments taking longer than anticipated.

TransLink is requesting another extension to permit completion of the project at both stations prior to August 1, 2024 barring any further unexpected delays.

ANALYSIS

Much of the work involved in this project must be performed during non-operational hours. During most mid-week days, there is only a two hour window to engage in construction activities since much of the non-revenue hours are spent either preparing the worksite following the end of train service, or packing up equipment and cleaning the worksite to prepare for the resumption of train service the next day. Sundays have longer non-revenue hours and provide up to a four hour period in which to advance the project. Eliminating Sundays would lengthen the duration of the project considerably.

The work is expected to occur two to five nights per week and will involve 10 Sundays for the duration of the requested period. Dates of the work will vary throughout the project.

This work includes demolition, drilling, hammering, welding, and concrete pouring. The equipment required to perform the work will be a railway crane, welding machine, sand blasters, work vehicles and hand held power tools. During non-permitted hours the equipment expected to generate the most noise will be sand blasters and the welding machine which are reported to sound similar to loud generators.

Some of the work is weather dependent and the duration of the requested exemption has taken into account the possibility of inclement weather.

Work occurring at the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station will overlap for approximately four months (March to July) with a separate and independent TransLink project at the station involving repainting the station. TransLink is also requesting an exemption from Council to the Construction Noise Bylaw for that project, the details of which can be found in a companion report also on today's agenda.

DISCUSSION

Noise disruption is expected and TransLink has committed to implementing the following noise mitigation measures:

- Ensure all equipment is in good operating order.
- Operate equipment at minimum engine speeds consistent with effective operation.
- Educate and supervise construction personnel to ensure potential noises are minimized.
- Avoid unnecessary idling, revving, use of airbrakes and banging of tailgates.
- Turn off equipment when not in use.
- Spotters can be used in lieu of audible backup alarms.
- Locate stationary noise generating equipment as far away as possible from noise sensitive receivers.
- Schedule construction related activities and limit equipment usage to minimize noise, especially during nighttime hours.
- Provide a night time contact person and respond to any calls from affected residents.

TransLink will be issuing information notices to area residents and businesses in advance via hand Canada Post. This will be the only method of notification for the remainder of the project. No other notifications will be distributed to residents and businesses thereafter. Appendix A shows the area of the proposed work at the two stations. Appendix B contains sample notification letters for immediate neighborhood residents.

Traffic implications are not expected at either station.

Conclusion

City staff consider an exemption of the Construction Noise Bylaw to be reasonable for the following reasons:

1. increased ridership demands larger trains requiring modified infrastructure;
2. SkyTrain operational constraints require construction to occur during nighttime hours;
3. the short window of opportunity for construction to occur during non-revenue hours and plan for inclement weather support the length of the requested exemption; and

4. the project started over a year ago and the neighbourhood does not appear to have been negatively impacted by construction noise.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial impact to the City is anticipated by granting the exemption. If the exemption is not granted, the project will likely be delayed which may result in financial impacts for the applicant.

OPTIONS

There are four options to consider:

1. That Council grant an exemption from Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to TransLink from 12 AM to 7 AM from Tuesday March 12, 2024 to Thursday August 1, 2024 including ten Sundays and excluding all Statutory Holidays, to demolish original maintenance walkways, install new maintenance walkways, and make operational equipment modifications to the New Westminster SkyTrain Station located at 32 Eighth Street and the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station located at 2126 Seventh Avenue.
2. That Council grant an exemption from Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to TransLink from 12 AM to 7 AM from Tuesday March 12, 2024 to Thursday August 1, 2024 including ten Sundays and excluding all Statutory Holidays, to demolish original maintenance walkways, install new maintenance walkways, and make operational equipment modifications to the New Westminster SkyTrain Station located at 32 Eighth Street.
3. That Council grant an exemption from Construction Noise Bylaw No. 6063, 1992 to TransLink from 12 AM to 7 AM from Tuesday March 12, 2024 to Thursday August 1, 2024 including ten Sundays and excluding all Statutory Holidays, to demolish original maintenance walkways, install new maintenance walkways, and make operational equipment modifications to the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station located at 2126 Seventh Avenue.
4. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Maps of Construction Work Area

Appendix B: Samples of Previous Notification to Immediate Neighbourhood

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
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