



ALBERTA
TRANSPORTATION
Office of the Minister

AR41946

October 5, 2009

His Worship Stephen Mandel
Mayor
City of Edmonton
3rd Floor City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor Mandel:

Premier Ed Stelmach forwarded your letter of September 15, 2009 regarding sound levels along Anthony Henday Drive. As Minister of Transportation, I am able to provide the following information.

Residents living adjacent to Anthony Henday Drive have expressed concerns about the provincial guidelines for noise attenuation. Residents in Wedgewood, Blackburne Creek, and other communities say the province committed to respond to noise levels of 60 decibels during the planning stages in 2000.

In the early days of the Edmonton Ring Road project, a couple of documents quoted 60 decibels. This included the April 7, 2000 letter from Premier Stelmach, when he was Transportation Minister, to Ms. Miller that said "the highway will be constructed to match the City of Edmonton noise policy; that is, a 24-hour 60-decibel level." However, the city's standard at that time was 65 decibels. If the 65-decibel level was reached, the goal was to achieve 60 decibels through sound attenuation, as a difference of less than five decibels is not noticeable to the human ear. We explained several times in previous correspondence that the quote from the letter was simply misinterpreted.

The province established its own noise attenuation guideline in 2001, set at 65 decibels. This means the province will consider noise attenuation on provincial highways in cities and urban areas after it reaches 65 decibels averaged over a 24-hour period. Alberta Transportation guidelines also allow a local jurisdiction to build their own noise attenuation measures if they wish to attain more attenuation than the provincial guidelines. The cost of a five-metre high, solid concrete noise wall (with no access to the properties) would be \$1.5 million per kilometre, per side, and this wall would have to be built along the property line.

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The province has taken sound measurements along the southeast and southwest Anthony Henday Drive and found that the noise levels near the homes in Blackburne Creek are 57 decibels and 56 decibels at Wedgewood. The noise levels were also calculated for future conditions with projected traffic volumes for the year 2027 and the results indicated that noise levels were still below the limit of 65 decibels at all locations. For example, the communities of Blackburne Creek and Wedgewood are predicted to have 63 and 60 decibels respectively in 2027.

Most of the homes along the ring roads were built after the Transportation and Utility Corridor was identified in the late 1970s. A freeway has always been planned as part of this corridor and the City of Edmonton decided what land use would be adopted next to the Transportation and Utility Corridor. The city did not require developers to build noise attenuation measures as part of their residential development.

At this point, there are no plans to build noise attenuation along Anthony Henday Drive. If and when noise levels reach 65 decibels, attenuation will be considered at that time.

Sincerely,



Luke Ouellette
Minister of Transportation
M.L.A., Innisfail-Sylvan Lake

cc: Honourable Ed Stelmach, Premier
Mr. George Rogers, M.L.A., Chair, Capital Region Caucus