

Construction & Mobility Management Policy

File No. CW-27-19

Items for consideration:

Improved Communication/Fair Notice

The only occasion where we are generally aware of development plans is when a variance has been applied for. Residents often don't know the status of infill developments until a demolition event or other significant phase of construction actually occurs. For many people, that means unexpected noise or other disruption (I've had to reschedule phone meetings due to excessive noise, and cancel or change planned gatherings at our home because I wasn't aware tractors were going to be operating on the weekend).

Neighbouring homes could be provided with a construction schedule/timeline of events, including locate work, demolition, road work created by new water/sewage connections, compromised parking, and any other activities that cause road blockages or excessive noise. This would improve relationships between builders/contractors and existing residents.

It would be nice to see if there was a way to impose transparency on groups or individuals whose sole intent is to flip a house. Not sure how realistic that is.

Environmental Concerns

Neighbouring homeowners MUST be advised when older properties are being demolished. There are materials in these older houses that pose health & safety risks. We should be provided with a list of possible toxic materials that may be released into the environment, as well as if anything hazardous is actually detected.

What kind of regulations can be imposed when there are concerns that are environmental in nature? Is the site contact actually making sure measures are being taken to prevent impacts on air, water & soil quality, as well as wildlife? I argue "no", based on what I've seen over the last few years: I watched as debris from stucco work landed throughout my garden over several days. And while I asked them to clean up the mess, the effort was minimal and I was left to pick up remnants on my lawn for weeks. Cigarette butts and water bottles were tossed haphazardly. And so on.

Proper material handling/construction tools should be enforced, such as ensuring use of a wet saw for concrete work to minimize dust distribution. Most of us have to keep our windows closed during the nicest months of the year due to the constant stream of construction dust. One resident was diagnosed with COPD, thought to possibly be caused by the exposure to air pollutants from several years of construction in their immediate area.

Construction Procedures & Impact on Neighbouring Properties/Owners

Provide neighbours with a list of job site & City contacts to assist homeowners if there is a problem or concern.

In conjunction with Capital Works, land owners & construction companies must provide written assurances that neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected by construction activities. This speaks specifically to the grading & drainage issues that have come up on a number of occasions, though there are other concerns. Someone must be held accountable when our homes are damaged as a result of construction work.

(continued...)

Property Maintenance

When home builders have purchased a property for infill development, impose maintenance regulations since many sites are left unattended for several months (and longer). The landscape becomes overgrown and we start to see infestation of rodents & pests. The site must be maintained regularly - i.e. lawn care, snow removal, etc,

Sidewalks must be kept clean and clear - wash down the mud daily, remove ice & snow build-up so that pedestrians can safely use the space. For example, the house next to me that was recently flipped was NEVER cleared of snow or ice... other than that one time they needed to clear a path for a construction vehicle (and then proceeded to push all their snow onto my property!). Many children use this sidewalk on their route to school or bus stop.

Proper waste disposal on the job site must be adhered to. I am still finding debris left behind by the house flipper - 3 months after they wrapped their job.

Parking

My understanding is that vehicles may park no closer than 1 meter to a driveway. Please adjust this to a minimum of 2 meters, for a few reasons:

1. On several occasions, I have seen contractors park their vehicles directly in front of neighbouring properties' garbage/blue/green/yard waste. This is extremely inconsiderate of waste collectors' efforts - I often see their frustration in having to negotiate around the long line of construction vehicles. Moving our garbage is often not an option since both sides of the driveway are typically blocked, and setting it on the driveway is just asking for trouble.
2. In my delegation, I spoke of my challenges with poor visibility when exiting my driveway. This was a severe problem for many of us over the past few years. Parking 2 meters may not solve this problem - what other direction can be taken? Can you limit the number of construction vehicles working on a residential site on any given day?

Construction Noise

If I am correct in stating that I have to log noise for 21 days before action can be taken, then please consider adjusting this to a something like a 3 strike system, i.e. 1st notice is a warning, 2nd notice is a large fine, 3rd notice results in revoking their building permit. Builder would have to re-apply to continue work.

Construction sites should post not only their building permits, but a copy of the noise by-law as well. When I challenged the contractor who helped flip the property next to me, he produced an outdated document that indicated he could work between 7am-12 noon on Sundays. This is incorrect information, according to By-Law 49-2008 (also confirmed to me by City staff). If this is not accurate, please advise.