

# Edmontonians in northwest part of city losing sleep over train whistles

BY BILL MAH, EDMONTON JOURNAL FEBRUARY 1, 2015 4:50 PM

EDMONTON - A chilly Sunday morning in Edmonton should present the perfect opportunity to sleep in.

Not so for Ishakeem Thomas, who was jolted awake around 6 a.m. by the blast of a train whistle less than a block behind his home.

It's a common occurrence for Thomas and other northwest Edmonton residents who are asking city council to help silence the racket. The whistles warn of trains approaching an uncontrolled crossing at 162nd Avenue, near 142nd Street.

"It comes three or four times a day," Thomas said.

"Middle of the night. Every day. Early morning."

When he bought the year-old home, which backs onto the tracks, he was told the train came perhaps once a week.

Thomas has phoned Canadian National Railway to complain but said he never received a call-back.

Neighbours Adam and Jessie Bruce said they were also told the train didn't come as often as it did.

"We were told it only comes three times a week and only mid-day, but it's always in the middle of the night," Adam said.

"It was frustrating at first, but it's grown on us."

Masihullah Zabiullah, another neighbour, said the trains wake him and the rest of his family in the night.

"If they could make the (crossing) arms, that would be helpful," he said.

People living near the CN line beside 142nd Street want Transport Canada to lift the requirements for trains to signal when they cross 162nd Avenue and 167th Avenue.

Train whistling is required at all at-grade crossings but the requirement may be removed if the municipality and the railway seek an exemption from Transport Canada.

On Wednesday, the issue will come before Edmonton city council's transportation committee.

According to a report prepared for the committee, the city would have to pay for a \$50,000 safety assessment at 162nd Avenue.

The 167th Avenue crossing is on land controlled by the provincial government, which is not seeking a stop to the whistles.

If approved for 162nd Avenue, the cost of control signs with flashing warning beacons or full signals could cost as much as \$500,000. The city would have to pay a portion or even the full cost of installation.

Coun. Bev Esslinger, who represents the area and asked for the report, has said this work is usually done when roads are built, but many of the nearby homes have recently gone up.