



Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw Update

Phase 1 and 2 Engagement Summary (2018-2019)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who provided input on the first two phases of public engagement for the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw update. Metro Vancouver embraces collaboration and innovation to provide sustainable regional services, contributing to a livable and resilient region, and a healthy natural environment for current and future generations.

The first two phases of engagement were held in 2018 and 2019, with the purpose of enhancing compliance with this important bylaw that protects private property, public sewer infrastructure, and the environment. Engagement sought to identify factors hindering compliance and find potential bylaw amendments that could increase compliance. This bylaw update was put on hold in June 2020, as a result of the impacts of the pandemic on the food sector.

We appreciate your time as well as the insights and comments you shared with us during these first two phases. As we move forward with this bylaw update, we invite you to participate in the third and final phase of engagement in 2023.

About Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation that collaboratively plans for and delivers regional-scale services. Its core services are drinking water, wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. Metro Vancouver also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, and provides affordable housing. The regional district is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each local authority.

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Contents

About the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw _____ 4

About the Engagement Program _____ 5

Engagement Promotion _____ 7

What We Heard and How We're Responding _____ 8

How Feedback Will Be Used _____ 10

Next Steps _____ 10





About the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw

When fats, oils, and grease are flushed down sinks and drains, they harden and lead to serious blockages. This can cause significant and costly damage to residential and commercial plumbing systems, and the region's sewer system, and cause harm to the environment through sewer overflows. The main source of grease entering the sewer system comes from food sector establishments and residential homes. Metro Vancouver works to inform residents about the harmful effects of grease and their role in disposing of it in their green bin through **public**

education campaigns. To manage the fats, oils, and grease coming from food sector establishments, Metro Vancouver adopted the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw (No. 268) in 2012. This bylaw requires food sector establishments to have all grease-bearing fixtures connected to an appropriately sized and maintained grease interceptor. Grease interceptors separate fats, oils, and grease from wastewater and help prevent them from entering the sewer system.

About the Engagement Program

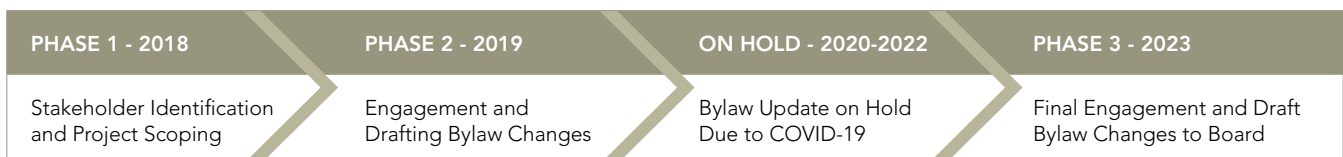
The bylaw review was initiated in spring 2018. The first phase of the project — to define the project scope, collect data, and identify affected stakeholders — occurred in spring/summer 2018. Small group meetings were held during this phase in late 2018 and early 2019. The second phase — which involved engagement through working group and technical group meetings, as well as a stakeholder survey— was held fall and winter 2019. **During this phase of engagement, several proposed bylaw changes were developed, discussed, and generally agreed upon.**

The final phase of the project was intended to conclude in 2020, with engagement results and recommended bylaw amendments presented to Metro Vancouver’s Liquid Waste Committee and Board for review and approval. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conclusion of the bylaw

review was put on hold, allowing the food services sector to concentrate on day-to-day business during a difficult time.

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted and the food sector beginning to rebound, Metro Vancouver is ready to resume the bylaw review and update, by sharing the key themes and feedback received during the first two phases of engagement in this summary report, and offering a final round of engagement with current members of industry on the proposed changes.

We have summarized what we heard in the first two phases of engagement in this report and will use the feedback we received to inform the final phase of engagement, as well as the proposed bylaw changes that will be put forward for Metro Vancouver’s Liquid Waste Committee and Board’s review and consideration.



The table below provides a summary of engagement activities including intended audience(s).

ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE	TIMING	MEDIUM
Invitation to take part in the bylaw update and engagement	Food service industry and associations	2018	Letters, emails, phone calls, association newsletters and websites, Metro Vancouver website
Small group meetings	Representatives from: small/medium food service business associations, food service chains, grease haulers and maintenance providers, plumbers, grease interceptor manufacturers and maintenance providers, Fortis BC (food waste to energy manufacturers), institutional kitchens, culinary schools, grocery stores, food trucks, digester and grinder industry, Building Officials Association of British Columbia	September 2018 to March 2019	In-person meetings
Non-English speaking meetings (offered based on interest from the community)	Mandarin-speaking food service industry representatives	October 2018	In-person meeting
Working group meeting	Representatives from the following areas of the food sector industry: small restaurants, Mandarin-speaking food sector establishments, food sector establishment chains, plumbers, grease interceptor manufacturers and maintenance providers, grease haulers and biogas processors, food service business associations, City of Vancouver environmental bylaw enforcement	October 2019	In-person meeting
Technical group meeting	Technical representatives from the following groups: plumbers, grease interceptor manufacturers and maintenance providers, grease haulers and food waste energy processors	November 2019	In-person meeting
Municipal engagement	Local Government Fats, Oils, and Grease Working Group, Regional Engineer Advisory Committee – Liquid Waste Subcommittee	2018-2019	Presentations and discussion at regular meetings
Online questionnaire	Food service industry and associations	Winter/Spring 2019	Website

Engagement Promotion

Engagement was promoted via letters and emails to more than 10,000 food service industry stakeholders, and on the Metro Vancouver website. In addition to Metro Vancouver promotion, industry associations shared information about engagement opportunities in their virtual newsletters.

Website

A dedicated project webpage was used to highlight information about the proposed bylaw changes and engagement. There have been 4,382 visits to the project website, with 3,300 unique page views.

Feedback Form

An online feedback form was available on the Metro Vancouver website. The feedback form included 25 questions as well as the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions. The opportunity to provide feedback online was promoted on the Metro Vancouver website, as well as in direct email promotions and at all meetings.

E-newsletters

Information on the engagement was provided to and shared by the BC Asian Restaurant and Café Owners Association, BC Restaurant & Food Service Association, the BC chapter of the Baking Association of Canada, the Vancouver Street Food Society, Western Convenience Store Association, BC Craft Brewers Guild, Hotel Association of Vancouver, and Restaurants Canada.



10,496
stakeholders contacted
through letters and emails

8

industry association
newsletters
sharing updates



4,382
visits to project website

3,300
unique page views

10

small group
meetings with
60 participants

1

working group
meeting with
5 participants



1

technical group meeting
with 11 participants



19
online survey
responses

What We Heard and How We're Responding

These are some of the key themes we heard during engagement. A complete record of all feedback will be included in the final engagement report later in 2023.

INTEREST AREA	WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p>Desire for retroactivity or exemptions</p>	<p>What we heard: Requests for Metro Vancouver to consider bylaw retroactivity — allowing businesses without grease interceptors, or insufficiently-sized interceptors, to remain that way if they were in existence prior to the introduction of the 2012 bylaw requirements</p> <p>How we're responding: No form of retroactivity or exemptions are being considered. The bylaw is in place to protect the environment, sewer system, sewer workers, and the public. However, to support the food service industry, food sector establishments with existing, non-conforming grease interceptors may submit a compliance plan to Metro Vancouver for consideration, allowing them more time to come into compliance with the bylaw. The plan will need to include details on proposed modifications and an implementation schedule.</p>
<p>Installation and upgrade costs</p>	<p>What we heard: Concerns about the cost of renovations to install or upgrade grease interceptors, as well as the potential lost revenue should the business need to close during these renovations.</p> <p>How we're responding: Food sector establishments with existing, non-conforming grease interceptors may submit a compliance plan to Metro Vancouver for consideration, allowing them more time to come into compliance with the bylaw. The plan will need to include details on proposed modifications and an implementation schedule. It's also important to note that having a properly-sized grease interceptor can protect businesses against grease blockages and the potential for resulting sewage backups, and the costs for plumbing repairs, and any necessary renovations.</p>
<p>Residential versus commercial sources of fats, oils, and grease</p>	<p>What we heard: Residential dwellings are a significant source of fats, oils, and grease in the wastewater system, and should also be addressed.</p> <p>How we're responding: Metro Vancouver regularly runs public education campaigns about keeping fats, oils, and grease out of the wastewater system. The 2022 campaign (which included a campaign website, television and online advertising, and ads on social media, YouTube, and Google Adwords) reached more than 800,000 residents.</p>
<p>Awareness</p>	<p>What we heard: In the online survey, respondents noted that while they were aware of general bylaw requirements, grease interceptors were not a priority in their operations and they do not visit the Metro Vancouver website for more information about grease interceptor installation, maintenance, and sizing. In the working and technical groups, we heard that new property or business owners may not be aware of what upgrades are required to bring them into compliance with the bylaw. We also heard that developers and engineers may not be adequately addressing grease interceptor requirements during the planning and design of new builds that may have food sector tenants in the future.</p> <p>How we're responding: Metro Vancouver has a suite of food sector grease interceptor resources for business owners, both prospective and existing. This is also where the Grease Interceptor Selection (Sizing) Tool can be found, to help food sector establishments choose the right size of grease interceptor for their business. Metro Vancouver will consider the creation of new educational and awareness materials to be made available on the Metro Vancouver website that developers, engineers, and others can refer to.</p>

INTEREST AREA	WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p>Alignment of standards and regulations</p>	<p>What we heard: There is inconsistency between provincial, municipal, and regional jurisdictions when it comes to the interpretation of requirements and implementation. Suggestion to establish a central resource that could be accessed by establishments to coordinate with the various jurisdictions—for example, when there is confusion regarding the precedence of building code versus bylaw requirements. Language around sizing requirements is unclear.</p> <p>How we're responding: Detailed information on selecting and sizing the right grease interceptor for your business can be found on the Metro Vancouver website.</p> <p>Metro Vancouver will consider creating a central database of the different jurisdictional requirements relevant to grease interceptors for reference.</p>
<p>Fixtures</p>	<p>What we heard: Questions and concerns about what fixtures are or are not required to be connected to a grease interceptor (dishwashers, glass washers and sanitizers, mop sinks, and floor drains). Some establishments are constrained by the amount of space they have to install a grease interceptor.</p> <p>How we're responding: Under the proposed bylaw changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor drains and mop sinks will not have to be connected to a grease interceptor. This change is being made based on feedback from industry, as these fixtures are not considered a significant source of grease. Removing this requirement helps reduce the burden on food sector establishments of extensive retrofits. • Dishwashers and funnel/hub drains will have to be connected to a grease interceptor (as they are grease-bearing fixtures). However, to help reduce the burden of extensive retrofits on existing food sector establishments, the dishwasher requirement will only apply to new builds and spaces newly converted to support food service. • Hand sinks can be connected to a grease interceptor, but it isn't required. This change is being made based on feedback from industry, as many food sector establishments have hand sinks connected to grease interceptors, which is not necessary, but generally harmless. Removing the requirement that they must not be connected to the grease interceptor helps reduce the burden of extensive retrofits to comply with the bylaw. <p>When it comes to the space needed to install an appropriately sized grease interceptor, Metro Vancouver reviewed and revised the Grease Interceptor Selection Methodology for grease interceptors in 2021. It uses 75 per cent of sink volume (instead of the previous 100 per cent) for determining the sizing of grease interceptors. In general, smaller grease interceptors should be required as a result.</p>
<p>Food grinders and digesters</p>	<p>What we heard: Questions about the regulation of food waste disposal units such as food grinders and digesters.</p> <p>How we're responding: Food grinders are already regulated by the bylaw and are allowed — provided they are connected to a solids interceptor and then a grease interceptor. At this time, changes to how digesters and grinders are regulated under the bylaw are not being considered, however, Metro Vancouver is planning to collect more information to develop regulatory options for digester and grinder technologies in the future.</p>
<p>Fees, fines, and compliance</p>	<p>What we heard: The incentive to comply with the bylaw is low as inspection resources are limited, and fines and fees are nominal and rare, particularly in comparison with the cost of renovations. A financial incentive program to encourage compliance was suggested, such as rebates for completing grease interceptor upgrades.</p> <p>How we're responding: Non-compliance of the bylaw can result in prosecution. Metro Vancouver reviews and updates fees periodically and is seeking legislative changes for Metro Vancouver to ticket and fine bylaw violations, in order to improve compliance. Financial incentives to improve compliance are not provided for in Metro Vancouver's budget, as having a properly-sized grease interceptor is a regulatory requirement to protect the sewer system and the environment.</p>
<p>Preferred hauler program</p>	<p>What we heard: A preferred hauler program was suggested, where approved grease interceptor maintenance providers could electronically submit confirmation that an establishment's grease interceptor is in compliance and being maintained.</p> <p>How we're responding: While this suggestion is not being pursued as part of this bylaw update, Metro Vancouver may look at developing a voluntary hauler program or other initiatives in the future.</p>

How Feedback Will Be Used

Feedback from the food service industry, gathered through the first two phases of engagement, informed the development of several proposed bylaw changes, which received overall support from stakeholders. The Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw review was put on hold for more than two years during the COVID-19 pandemic. A final phase of engagement will begin in early 2023 to seek final confirmation from the food service industry on these proposed changes.



Next Steps

Following the final phase of engagement in early 2023, a full summary of what we heard will be shared, along with a detailed table of all comments received. The proposed bylaw changes will go to the Metro Vancouver Board in late 2023 for consideration. In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments about this project please contact us at fsgi@metrovancover.org



