



May 27, 2022

EC3.4 Report on Outstanding Noise Directives

Chair and members of the Economic and Community Development Committee

The Toronto Noise Coalition was established in 2016 to provide a voice for residents in the development of the new Noise Bylaw, now in force. We met regularly with MLS staff to discuss the various provisions for the Bylaw. We did not support the regulations in the 2019 Noise Bylaw regarding prohibitions of excessive noise from motorcycles and gas powered garden equipment among others.

Fellow Coalition member, Alan Baker has submitted a letter focussing on the vehicle noise issues and agrees with the comments below.

The Coalition supports the recommendations of the Report, except as noted below. More must be done to reduce the excessive noise now and to ensure public consultation in the process.

Restricting Vehicle noise – noise from exhausts

Report recommendation 2. that the Government of Ontario increase fines for violations of modified exhaust and excessive vehicle noise under the Highway Traffic Act, and that a violation result in demerit points.

TNC also recommends that there be an increase staffing for the Toronto Police Service to do more blitzes of vehicles to examine the mufflers by trained officers and to explore the equipping and training of TPS on sound level meters to support enforcement as requested by the Mayor; and to add restriction of excessive vehicle noise to the Bylaw and to include them in blitzes.

Report recommendation 4 for the 2023 Noise Bylaw Review to include improvements to City regulation of motor vehicle noise and an assessment of additional options to support a reduction in motor vehicle noise, including setting a decibel limit for stationary motor vehicles.

TNC also recommends adding a new recommendation now to reduce the permitted level db for stationary vehicles to 82 at idle. The maximum allowable decibels in the current bylaw is 92. This should be changed to no greater than 82 (with no 2 decibel 'grace') as sounds above this level are unacceptable and considered very loud by most authorities such as the World Health Organization who have stated on numerous occasions that noise pollution this is a serious long-term health issue. And also to add new recommendation now to include "motor vehicles". The current blitzes target motorcycles but must include modified vehicles as well.

Report recommendation 5. to continue monitoring of technology developments related to

automated noise enforcement /noise radar, and that the 2023 Noise Bylaw Review in 2023 include any progress in reducing noise levels.

TNC also recommends that the City must begin asap to use Acoustic Camera System (noise radar) technology that is already in use in several cities in Europe and the United States. However, it will only work if the maximum permitted decibel level is drastically reduced as we recommended above. In addition, a new decibel level especially created for this system would have to be established because the current testing is measured at 50 cm from the end of the exhaust pipe at idle and the acoustic cameras would measure the decibels from a far greater distance.

1. Restricting noise from two-stroke leaf blowers and other small-engine equipment.

The Coalition is disappointed that noisy leaf blowers will continue to disturb residents for another year. Using low levels of complaints as a reason for no change is insufficient. We know, for example, that there is widespread objection in neighbourhoods and that people may not bother registering complaints, perhaps as the noisy machines are permitted by the Noise Bylaw now.

TNC also recommends that a survey be undertaken get a more accurate measurement of the impacts on Toronto citizens.

FONTRA believes that Recommendation 8. to explore the feasibility of including decibel limits for power devices through the 2023 Noise Bylaw Review, with the report to come late in the year, can help establish appropriate noise levels to protect us from excessive noise and fumes. Use of an appropriate decibel limits is an excellent approach that will be easy to inspect, and reflects that such limits can be applied to different types of equipment. Electric powered equipment with acceptable noise levels is becoming more available as well as the now new and much quieter types of gas powered machines which have the similar noise level as electric ones. We expect broad public consultation in this process.

Report recommendation 7. to initiate public education efforts, for the summer of 2022, about the appropriate use of lawn equipment such as leaf blowers.

TNC also recommends an additional recommendation to require public consultation to help determine the key issues regarding use of the equipment.

Yours truly

Cathie Macdonald, member, Toronto Noise Coalition