

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Toronto, ON M5S 1X1



June 20, 2023

TO: **Mayor Olivia Chow**
Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall

RE: **2024.EC9.5 Implementation Review of the Noise By-law**

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Council:

On Tuesday, February 6, City Council will be approving recommendations for the Noise Bylaw Review. I write on behalf of the HVRA, which comprises the area from Bloor St to College St and from Bathurst St to Spadina Ave. We support the recommendations put forth by the Federation of South Toronto Residents Associations and No More Noise Toronto, with our own specific emphasis on the following:

There are several major construction projects in our neighbourhood, with more in the way. While noise and disruption are to be expected from such projects, residents have been experiencing several years of noise in excess of what is reasonable, with huge impacts on sleep, ability to work, and general enjoyment of their homes, with little recourse.

Most recently the hoist noise for the new U of T residence going in at Spadina and Sussex has been very loud and has a pitch akin to nails on a chalkboard. One resident measured the noise and found one of them to have a noise level of 70 dB. (*It is noted that noise above 70 dB over a prolonged period of time may start to damage hearing.*) Numerous complaints were lodged with the construction team to little avail. Prior to that were several months at the neighbouring site where the building's balconies were jackhammered off, with little abatement.

(Exacerbating the balcony situation was the province's 2020 COVID extension of construction hours, meaning residents were subjected to noise and vibration as early as 6.30 am, with no break for 12 hours, 7 days a week. More recently, the U of T residence was itself deemed a public interest project and therefore given an early morning exemption, which means residents have been awoken well before normal hours for several months.)

With some research we were able to determine that a certain adjustment of the hoisting equipment would resolve much of the grating sound – **our request now is that construction crews be required to use counterbalanced hoists in the proximity (1km) of residential neighbourhoods.** We would also request that there be **no exemptions to the hours of construction time, whether at the city or provincial level, except for rare and extreme cases** – developers should have to provide a very strong case and provide a robust abatement plan. Finally, it should not take months of wrangling to get some relief. **By-law enforcement must be beefed up and made available during all hours.**

In addition, as per the submissions of No More Noise Toronto and FoSTRA, we request that Councillors act to:

- Include in the Noise Bylaw a statement acknowledging that noise is a public health issue
- Overhaul the 311 noise reporting process, including identifying better ways to report moving vehicle noise
- Introduce nighttime limits of 45 dB(A) outdoors and 35 dB(A) indoors for all noise sources, reflecting studies establishing serious negative health impacts due to disrupted sleep
- Establish appropriate measurement policies for different noise sources (e.g., measuring at property line of noise source in case of Amplified Sound; measuring at a point of reception such as the plane of an open window in case of Residential Air Conditioners/Stationary Sources)
- Implement automation of noise enforcement and data gathering via, e.g., noise cameras and sound level meters (as is done in London and New York City)
- Create one or more committees for the public, city, police, and other stakeholders to resolve noise issues.
- Remove the exemption for nighttime private Waste Collection pickup
- Establish guidelines for Waste Collection pickup to be in an enclosed space
- Ban the use of gas-powered lawn equipment
- Lobby the Province to make regulatory changes to allow for noise cameras and sound level monitoring.

Excessive noise is a health issue. As the City grows and changes, noise issues are changing. Addressing these issues in the City must be an ongoing and multifaceted endeavour.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Anne Fleming
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