

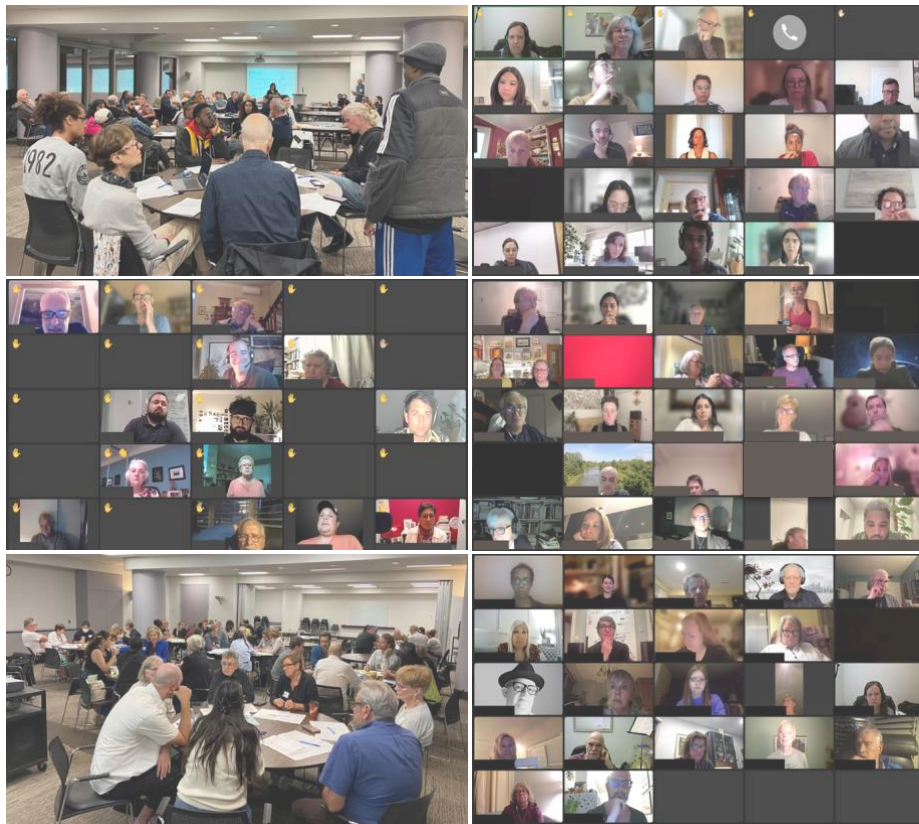
Attachment C: Summary of Public Consultation Feedback

Public Consultation Feedback Report

October 2023

City of Toronto Implementation Review of the Noise By-law

Summary of feedback from six (6) public consultation meetings held in-person and online on September 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, and 21, 2023



Prepared for the Municipal Licensing and Standards
Division of the City of Toronto by Third Party Public Inc.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Overview	4
Feedback that was cross-cutting across all or most meetings	6
Topic-Specific Feedback	7
Feedback on General Noise.....	7
Feedback on Amplified Sound	11
Feedback on Motor Vehicle Noise	14
Feedback on Construction Noise	16
Feedback on Exemption Permits	19
Attachments	
Attachment 1: Participating Organizations.....	I
Attachment 2: Example Participant Agenda & Worksheet.....	II
Attachment 3: Potential Refinements Reference Sheet	VI
Attachment 4: Individual Public Meeting Summaries.....	X

Executive Summary

The Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division of the City of Toronto hosted six (6) public consultation meetings in September 2023 to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise By-law amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise By-law. The consultation meetings focused on different areas of the Noise By-law, including general noise, amplified sound, motor vehicles, and construction noise.

The public consultation was designed to seek a qualitative understanding of different experiences and perspectives related to the Implementation Review. Total participation across all six meetings was 750 people.

Additional information about participants:

- The vast majority were residents with concerns related to their worsening experience with noise in the city over the last four years, as well as concerns with noise enforcement.
- There were some business and industry voices represented in all meetings, including professional sound engineers, people from the construction and real estate industry such as small construction builders and members of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO), buskers, and people who work to support festivals, concerts, and events.
- There were different levels of knowledge of the By-law and noise, and some participants participated in the 2019 public consultation meetings, although most participants are participating in the By-law review process for the first time.
- Several participants attended more than one meeting, and a few attended all meetings.
- Generally, participants had strong feelings about noise in the city. Some conversations had tensions, but at the same time they were respectful, and even when the conversations were difficult, many people had empathy for each other.
- People who produce noise that participated in the meetings were in many cases supportive of stronger enforcement to target the few bad actors.
- There were participants who said that they appreciated the consultation process.

The following feedback was cross-cutting across all or most meetings:

1. For the vast majority of participants in the consultation meetings, noise in Toronto has gotten worse over the last four years.
2. The increase in noise and vibration is impacting residents' physical and mental health.
3. There is frustration with the process to report noise complaints.
4. There is a need for stronger and more effective enforcement.
5. Many want to see the City proactively manage noise and vibrations.
6. There is a need for more public education on the By-law and its rules.
7. More transparency is needed with the different aspects of, and processes followed by, the City in implementing and enforcing the Noise By-law, including what, when, and how data is reported.
8. The language in the Noise By-law needs to be clearer and simpler to understand.

This feedback report was written by Third Party Public and is based directly on the six separate meeting feedback summaries. It focuses on the common themes that emerged across all meetings, as well as the range of perspectives shared in key topic areas. This report does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives, nor does their inclusion here indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Overview

The Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division of the City of Toronto hosted six (6) public consultation meetings in September 2023 to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise By-law amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise By-law. The consultation meetings focused on different areas of the Noise By-law, including general noise, amplified sound, motor vehicles, and construction noise. The public consultation was designed to seek a qualitative understanding of different experiences and perspectives related to the Implementation Review.

Participants

The number of participants in each meeting ranged from 38 to 296 people, with the meeting about Motor Vehicle noise being of highest interest (see table below). Additional information about participants:

- The vast majority were residents with concerns related to their worsening experience with noise in the city over the last four years, as well as concerns with noise enforcement.
- There were some business and industry voices represented in all meetings, including professional sound engineers, people from the construction and real estate industry, including small construction builders and members of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO), buskers, and people who work to support festivals, concerts, and events.
- There were different levels of knowledge of the By-law and noise, and some participants participated in the 2019 public consultation meetings, although most participants are participating in the By-law review process for the first time.
- Several participants attended more than one meeting, and a few attended all meetings.
- Generally, participants had strong feelings about noise in the city. Some conversations had tensions, but at the same time they were respectful, and even when the conversations were difficult, many people had empathy for each other.
- People who produce noise that participated in the meetings were in many cases supportive of stronger enforcement to target the few bad actors.
- There were participants who said that they appreciated the consultation process.

Meeting	Number of Participants
General Noise – In Person (Tuesday, September 12, 2023)	46
Amplified Sound – Virtual (Wednesday, September 13, 2023)	166
Motor Vehicles – Virtual (Monday, September 18, 2023)	296
General Noise – Virtual (Tuesday, September 19, 2023)	141
Construction Noise – Virtual (Wednesday, September 20, 2023)	63
Amplified Sound – In Person (Thursday, September 21, 2023)	38
Total	750

Meeting format

The format of the meetings was identical, with four held online and two held in-person. The methodology to determine the number, location, and format (in-person or online) included:

- Offering two meeting options for those topics that had demonstrated high levels of feedback and interest from residents and businesses over the last four years (General Noise and Amplified Sound);
- Having a mix of in-person and virtual meetings to provide more options for people with varying levels of interests and access needs;
- Having a balance in the number of online and in-person meetings (the original schedule had three in-person and three virtual meetings, however this was adjusted in response to feedback that a virtual meeting to discuss Construction Noise was preferable to an in-person meeting); and
- An effort to support easy access from across the city to in-person meetings to increase the likelihood of participation (which is why the in-person meetings were located centrally).

Each meeting was two hours in length. The meeting started with an overview presentation delivered by MLS staff (available on the City website), which provided background on the Implementation Review, including an overview of the 2019 amendments to the Noise By-law, results of the public opinion research related to noise, complaints data collected by 311, proposed criteria, and potential refinements being considered as part of the Implementation Review. A reference sheet summarizing all the potential refinements being considered was also distributed to participants in advance of the meeting and available on the [City's Implementation Review website](#). It was noted that the potential refinements were not exhaustive, were subject to Council approval and that staff may consider options that were not specified as a refinement during consultations.

The presentation lasted roughly half an hour and was customized to focus on the meeting topic. After the presentation, participants had an opportunity to ask questions of clarification. Facilitation of all meetings was provided by Third Party Public, a professional facilitation and engagement team. Facilitated small group discussion followed for roughly 45 minutes, and participants were asked to discuss the following questions:

- Has your experience with noise (and the specific noise topic) in the city changed over the last 4 years? If so, how?
- Do you think the potential refinement(s) will improve your experience with noise (and the specific noise topic)? Do you have any suggestions you would like the City to consider?
- Do you have any other advice for City staff to consider as they develop their recommendations to Council?

After the small group discussions, each small group facilitator shared highlights from their small group discussion with all meeting attendees. An opportunity for final questions or additional comments was provided to all participants in the closing plenary.

In addition to providing feedback at the meetings, participants were encouraged to send comments and questions by email directly to MLS staff no later than October 15, 2023, to inform the City Staff Report requested by Council. A summary of the feedback received during each meeting, including comments received verbally and in writing, was drafted and sent to participants for review prior to being finalized. See Attachment 4 for all final summaries.

Feedback that was cross-cutting across all or most meetings

The following feedback was cross-cutting across all or most meetings. These themes were developed through analysis of the individual meetings summaries (included as Attachment 4).

- 1. For the vast majority of participants in the consultation meetings, noise in Toronto has gotten worse over the last four years.** It is disrupting their sleep and enjoyment of daily life. Many said they are disrupted by the same noise sources on a regular basis. The most common noise concerns were from overnight waste collection, overnight deliveries, modified exhausts on motorcycles and cars, sirens from emergency vehicles, leaf blowers, construction noise (including back-up beepers), waterfront party boats, amplified sound from nearby bars and clubs, air conditioning units and other stationary sources, and festivals near/parties in residential areas.
- 2. The increase in noise and vibration is impacting residents' physical and mental health.** Participants said that noise is a health and equity issue that is impacting their physical and mental health, careers, and social life. They are chronically exhausted and suffering due to sleep deprivation and unreasonable and persistent noise at all hours of the day, as well as vibration from increased noise and bass.
- 3. There is frustration with the process to report noise complaints.** Participants shared frustrations around their experience reporting noise complaints to 311 Toronto, including what they describe as a tedious process of registering complaints, being connected to multiple City departments for follow-up, noise complaints not being logged if the City can't enforce the issue being raised, and waiting days or weeks for enforcement. They said that the current system puts the onus on residents to track non-compliance when this burden should instead be on the generators of noise. Participants would like to see improvements in the City's process of collecting and managing noise complaints, including providing more training for 311 operators, crowdsourcing data collection.
- 4. There is a need for stronger and more effective enforcement.** Participants would like to see stronger enforcement of the City's Noise By-law. Suggestions included real-time enforcement, enforcement at night, proactive enforcement through patrolling / monitoring of hot spots, hire more By-law enforcement officers, increase fines (especially for repeat offenders), and scale fines with increased consequences (including suspension of licenses for non-compliance).
- 5. Many want to see the City proactively manage noise and vibrations.** Suggestions included requiring the use of alternatives to back-up beepers (like broadband reversing alarms), reducing the volume of emergency vehicle sirens (especially overnight), installing noise-activated cameras to identify and fine loud vehicles, and requiring better construction materials and soundproofing in new building construction (especially in mixed use areas).
- 6. There is a need for more public education on the By-law and its rules.** The public needs a better understanding and clarity on how the City manages noise, including things like how the By-law works, the hours during which its restrictions are applied, what different decibels mean, who is exempt from the By-law, what enforcement steps are taken after a complaint is made, and who is responsible for resolving noise issues.

7. **More transparency is needed.** There was strong interest to make data collected related to noise in the city more transparent, including how many complaints are being made (even if they are outside the mandate of By-law enforcement officers), training By-law officers receive, and acoustical engineering reports and process/formula used for determining ambient noise.
8. **The language in the Noise By-law needs to be clearer and simpler to understand.** The By-law needs to use language that is clear, concise, and accessible, including specific definitions for terms used like “persistent noise” and “source”, as well as explanations for what certain decibel levels mean to a regular person.

Topic-Specific Feedback

The following pages summarize the feedback on different areas of the Noise By-law, including general noise (combining the feedback received from both the in-person and virtual consultation meetings), amplified sound (again, combining the feedback received from both the in-person and virtual consultation meetings), motor vehicle noise, and construction noise. Exemption permits were discussed at all six consultation meetings, so all feedback has been combined into one section.

Feedback on General Noise

The points below summarize participant feedback on General Noise. They are drawn from the two General Noise meeting summaries (one held in-person on September 12 and one held virtually on September 19). They should be read in conjunction with the meeting summaries found in Attachment 4.

Experience with General Noise

Most participants said that their experience with noise in the city has changed for the worse since 2019, though a small number of participants said their experience with noise had improved. Many participants attended the meetings because of frustration with increased noise in the city, noting that noise is a health issue that impacts people’s physical and mental health, career, and social life. They also said that excessive noise is an equity issue as it can make living in the city difficult for people with accessibility requirements. Participants understand that the City is growing, and they don’t want the vibrancy of the city to go away, but quality of life has been deeply and negatively impacted in the last four years.

Concerns

Concerns raised by participants included:

- **Concern that the city is getting noisier as it grows.** Participants said densification is a problem because sounds of entertainment are so close to housing.
- **Concern that not all noise complaints are logged.** Participants said the 311 noise complaints data presented by the City during the meeting understates the issue because not all noise-related calls are counted.
- **The vibration component of sound is a big problem.** Participants raised concerns about not only hearing sound, but also feeling it.

- **Concern that City Council makes decisions driven by economic factors over community impact** (with participants citing the 2022 By-law change that permitted overnight waste collection, without public consultation).
- **Frustration with enforcement delays**, including the process of registering complaints and waiting days or weeks for enforcement. Some said that reporting noise violations felt like a part-time job and that it affects their mental health, especially when they are directed to multiple departments (311, fire services, police) and wait for days for enforcement officers to respond to persistent noise requests.
- **Concern that the current system of managing noise is contributing to tensions between neighbours and between neighbours and businesses.** There was interest in seeing the City help create a better system for managing these tensions, outside of legal avenues.
- **Concern about the use of decibels to measure noise.** Participants said that decibels are not always the best measurement for noise because when compared to ambient noise, the difference can be significant enough to disrupt peaceful living and yet still be under the By-law threshold.
- **There are no decibel limits referenced for “Unreasonable and persistent noise” (By-law 591-2.9)**, which makes it unclear what noise levels residents are expected to live with.

In addition to the concerns listed above, participants identified the following sources of noise they find concerning, with noise from waste collection and leaf blowers identified as major issues.

- Waste collection
- Leaf blowers, including commercial leaf blowers from the landscaping industry and exemptions for golf courses
- Overnight delivery trucks
- Backup beepers
- Sirens from emergency vehicles and police
- Waterfront party boats
- Noise from aircrafts, including airplane noise and helicopter tours out of Billy Bishop Airport, and noise from airshows
- Air conditioning units and other stationary sources
- Modified vehicles and noise from stunt racing
- Festivals
- Night economy, including noise from restaurants and night clubs and the noise coming from

people spilling out into the street from these establishments

- Factory operating 24/7
- Construction noise

Potential refinements being considered

The table below outlines the potential refinements MLS outlined during the meetings on General Noise, including unreasonable and persistent noise, waste collection noise, and power device noise.

Unreasonable and persistent noise	1. Permit category to be used when there are multiple noise sources
Waste collection noise	1. Remove waste collection exemption 2. Maintain waste collection exemption, but move out of “Safety and government work” to a separate section under “Loading and Unloading”, and introduce a definition for waste collection
Power device noise	1. Consider appropriateness of status quo time constraints 2. Amend definition 3. Amend definition and add decibel limits

Feedback on the potential refinements

Many supported removal of the exemption for private waste collection companies, though a handful disagreed. Many participants said that the overnight collection is a serious problem. They said noise from waste collection is lasting 20-40 minutes at a time, as many as 6-7 nights per week. [Council’s granting of the](#)

[waste collection exemption in 2022](#) to private companies without public consultation was concerning to many. Those that disagreed with removing the exemption identified two concerns: (1) that waste collection costs would increase if vehicles were forced to operate when roads are busy (as opposed to overnight), and (2) this could hurt private companies that are already struggling to come back from the pandemic.

Suggestions

Participants said noise pollution is very stressful and that refinements and change are needed now. Listed below are the suggestions participants would like the City to consider:

Noise complaints and monitoring

- **Collect and report on all noise complaints data**, regardless of whether the City can enforce them.
- **Support for sound monitoring at the source/point of origin or closest possible to the source/at property limits**, not the point of reception.

Transparency and education

- **Strong interest in making data transparent**, including how many complaints are being made, even if they are outside the mandate of By-law enforcement officers.
- **Increase public education efforts regarding noise and the Noise By-law.**
- **The By-law should use words that people understand** by clearly defining what unreasonable and persistent noise means, and using simpler language as opposed to decibel levels which might not make sense to everyone.
- **Provide clarity on who is responsible for resolving noise issues**, whether that falls on landlords (e.g. TCHC for noise issues within TCHC residences), police, or By-law officers.
- **Provide clarity on noise issues from government activities.**
- **Provide clarity on how the Night Economy Review overlaps with the Noise By-law**, including the proposed requirement for establishments to comply with a Noise Control Plan.

Proactive mitigation

- **Design the city to proactively reduce noise and vibrations.** Ways this could be done include using newer technology that provides quieter alternatives for back-up beepers (like broadband reversing alarms), designing new buildings with better soundproofing, using better construction materials, and rerouting heavy traffic of large diesel trucks away from residential areas. Also, think about how noise is considered in new development and especially in taller constructions.
- **Consider having different Noise By-laws and standards for different areas of the city**, since different areas have different needs and noise levels.
- **Consider moving festivals out of residential areas.** Participants said festivals are great but create a lot of noise, especially those that run overnight.
- **Ban the use of leaf blowers with two-stroke engines** or limit their use during shoulder seasons only, so they are not used in the summer. Also encourage use of alternatives like electric leaf blowers and rakes instead of gas leaf blowers to reduce concerns about air pollution and dust.
- **Provide financial incentive/rebate to buy new and quieter air conditioners.**
- **Reduce volume of sirens from emergency vehicles and police overnight** when streets are empty.

Stronger enforcement

Participants said the Noise By-law will only look good on paper if there isn't effective enforcement.

Specific suggestions regarding enforcement include:

- **Increase fines.** Participants said that the existing fines are too low and are insufficient to deter repeat offenders. Consider the creation of escalating fines with increasing consequences.
- **Enforcement officers should take action proactively when a noise violation occurs,** and not only in response to complaints. For example, patrol different neighbourhoods and monitor noise proactively.
- **Link granting of business licenses with the businesses' compliance with the Noise By-law.**
- **License, regulate, and monitor activity from waterfront party boats regularly, with consequences for non-compliance.** Consider relocating the party boats away from the residential area of Queens Quay.
- **Need for additional resources dedicated to enforcement,** including enforcing 24/7 and hiring more By-law enforcement officers and investing in technology (e.g., data app to crowdsource complaints and employing “sound sensors” that specifically target leaf blowers).
- **Create opportunities for the community to be part of enforcement.** Create standardized ways that residents can monitor and report noise and allowing community groups to deal with noise complaints as a collective rather than requiring enforcement officers to resolve situations.
- **Enforce and study impacts of noise using a multi-pronged lens,** including environmental, physical health, and mental health.

Feedback on Amplified Sound

The points below summarize participant feedback on Amplified Sound. They are drawn from the two Amplified Sound meeting summaries (one held virtually on September 13 and one held in-person on September 21). They should be read in conjunction with the meeting summaries found in Attachment 4.

Experience with Amplified Sound

Participating residents said their experience with amplified sound in the city is worse than 4 years ago, while some participating business owners said it has improved, and a few participants (residents and buskers) were unsure if it has changed. Some participating business owners said their experience with noise has improved because the decibel levels introduced four years ago have brought clarity to the By-law.

Concerns

- **Concern that the densification of the City is out-pacing noise regulations** with some considering that the updates from 2019 are already obsolete.
- **Concern that the City is advancing the notion that “vibrancy” requires residents to tolerate harmful noise pollution** when the onus should be on generators of amplified sound to make the investments required to mitigate noise problems.
- **Business operators expressed concern that the City is too strict on noise and less friendly to music producers and those in the live music industry**, which is still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic (there are significantly fewer music venues in the city today).
- **Concern about the impacts of vibration.** Participants said that bass-heavy noise can be heard and felt in living rooms, bedrooms, in the vibration of walls, windows, and furniture, etc. It was suggested that low frequency sound also be measured.
- **Concerns were raised about ineffective enforcement**, including limited availability of By-law officers and the restricted hours they work (noting that noise issues often occur outside of these hours), no mechanism for addressing noise disturbances from party boats.

In addition to the concerns listed above, participants identified the following sources of noise they find concerning.

- Bars
- Special events
- Concert venues
- Festivals in residential areas
- Waterfront party boats
- Restaurants/clubs
- Short-term rentals (like AirBnB)
- Buskers
- Monster homes squeezed into small lots
- Increased number of high rise buildings

Feedback on the potential refinements

There were a range of perspectives on the proposed refinements, with some supporting refinement 1 (while others were opposed), different opinions on where to measure sound related to refinement 2 (with some supporting measuring at source and others supporting measuring at point of reception), and a range of support and suggestions for refinement 3.

- For refinement 1, many participants supported lowering the decibel levels to reduce impacts from amplified sound on residents. There was some concern that lowering decibel limits will not resolve ongoing noise complaint issues because ambient sound levels throughout the city are, in most cases, greater than the proposed limits, and it is not practical to separate amplified noise from other noise caused by business activity.
- For refinement 2, those who supported noise measurement at the source said that this puts the burden of compliance on those creating excessive noise, rather than those impacted negatively by it. Participating event producers preferred measuring at the point of reception, noting that if the sound doesn't bother anyone, there should be no need to enforce. Some liked the additional enforcement pathways.
- For refinement 3, there were many questions about how this could work, especially in mixed use areas. There were also a range of suggestions, including:
 - defining commercial properties/uses based on commercial activities conducted, including differentiating how the By-laws apply to music-specific events versus general commercial uses;
 - adding public spaces, like parks and streets, to the By-law categories; and
 - adding a separate section for "Quiet areas" where decibel levels would be lower than residential.

Potential refinements being considered

The table below outlines the potential refinements MLS outlined during the meetings on Amplified Sound.

1. Lower decibel levels
2. Lower decibel levels + consider additional enforcement pathway
3. Introduce separate sections for commercial and living area amplified sound

Suggestions

Listed below are the suggestions participants would like the City to consider:

Suggested refinements to the By-law

- **Strong support from some participants to measure using dB(Z).** These participants said that dBA is not a sufficient unit for measuring amplified sound, including bass.
- **Make language in the By-law simpler.** Include clear and specific definitions for "persistent noise" – what is it and how is it enforceable.
- **Address vibration from amplified sound.**
- **Coordinate the By-law refinements with the Night Economy Review.**
- **Take the context of the event into account to provide a way to navigate the complexities of the By-law.** Many establishments, events, and performers are willing to work with the City to find a reasonable path forward and penalize only those who intentionally want to disturb.
- **Consider different decibel limits** for the entertainment district, parks, the waterfront, and residential areas.
- **Reduce noise levels in line with the World Health Organization** suggested levels to support public health.

Enforcement

- **More proactive enforcement** by adding requirements to include soundproofing and proper acoustical barriers for restaurants, bars, and clubs.

- **Requiring businesses to close their doors and windows** by 11pm or if the sound is above a certain decibel. Also consider not allowing amplified speakers on patios of businesses.
- **Consider more significant consequences for offending businesses**, including suspension of licenses, larger fines for repeat offenders, scaling fines to the size of the venue and whether its commercial or residential, and a “three strikes and you’re out” option.
- **Hire more enforcement officers.**

Complaint process

- **Provide more training for 311 operators** so they have better information to provide to people making complaints (what is/is not allowed, what will happen with complaint, etc.).
- **Create an app** that measures decibel levels and records sound.

Transparency

- **Increase transparency with the public**, including sharing more information on the training that By-law officers receive, acoustical engineering report and process/formula used by By-law officers for determining ambient noise.

Noise monitoring

- **Consider measuring and placing limitations to vibration.**

- **Consider an option where residents can book noise monitoring in advance**, when there’s a pattern of disturbing noise every weekend.
- **Measure sound at the perimeter of the site with a limit of 85 dB, or measure at 30 meters from the source with a limit of 100 dB** (as opposed to the current By-law which measures sound 20 metres from the source with a limit of 85 dBA). Participating event producers said this would allow for a more acceptable concert audio level for the audience or the talent on stage.
- **Be cautious of measuring impact only by decibels** as impact should also be based on people’s experience and how it impacts their quality of life. However, others said that quantitative measures should be used because qualitative experiences are subjective.

Suggestions on how businesses and residents can better co-exist

- **Use better soundproofing in new residential buildings** to protect from amplified sounds (e.g., laminated windows, soundproofing insulation).
- **Condo owners and landlords should let tenants know they are living in the entertainment district** and the associated levels of noise they’re likely to experience (so they’re not surprised).

Feedback on Motor Vehicle Noise

The points below summarize participant feedback on Motor Vehicle Noise. They are drawn from the Motor Vehicles Noise meeting summary (held virtually on September 18). They should be read in conjunction with the meeting summaries found in Attachment 4.

Experience with Motor Vehicle Noise

Most participants said their experience with motor vehicle noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago, however there were some who said they experienced no change and a few that said their experience had improved. The few participants who said their experience had improved noted that one of the reasons was construction causing accidental traffic calming. The slow speeds and narrow lanes greatly reduced traffic noise even during rush hour.

Concerns

- **Participants said there are a multitude of public health issues caused by sleep deprivation, often due to noise.**
- **Concern that it is impossible to overstate the roars of engines audible at some residential buildings.** Participants said that the sound is terrible, grating, and stomach-churning.
- **Noise in the middle of the night is especially problematic.** Some noted that night-time motor vehicle noise worsened during COVID lockdowns and continues to this day.
- **Lack of enforcement was a frustration raised repeatedly.** Because vehicles are moving, the sound lasts 5 seconds and then it's gone. Some participants expressed doubts that enforcement is possible. There are also concerns that police are not enforcing noisy exhausts that may have been modified illegally.
- **Calling 311 is tedious and frustrating to many participants** who remain unclear if the City collects data on complaints related to vehicles. Given that the City can't enforce noise from moving vehicles, people stop calling 311.

In addition to the concerns listed above, participants identified the following sources of noise they find concerning:

- Motorcycles
 - Modified exhausts from all types of vehicles
 - Speeding cars
 - Blaring music from cars
 - Emergency vehicle sirens
 - Vibration from motor vehicle sound, including low frequency noise and noise from subwoofers
 - Noise from large trucks, including waste collection trucks, private and public delivery trucks, and construction vehicles.
- While there were participants who expressed concerns about motor vehicle noise, **there were also participants who were against modifying noise regulations** as they said that modified cars are a form of self-expression “like tattoos and haircuts”. They said that protecting space for car enthusiasts is important, noting that they are trying to enjoy their vehicles and not seeking to hurt others. They also said that loud motorcycles contribute to the safety of motorcyclists on the road.

Feedback on the potential refinements

There were differing levels of support for the potential By-law refinements. Some supported all the refinements, and many were supportive of refinement 2 and refinement 3. A suggestion for refinement 3 was to consider changing “or” to “and” (i.e., “consider limits at idle or at a specific level of RPM while vehicle remains stationary).

Some did not think the current refinements were sufficient to deal with their issues. 92 dB(A) is too high, and instead 80 dB(A) should be used. Others thought the wording was too vague and don't address the real problem of bad actors.

Potential refinements being considered

The table below outlines the potential refinements MLS discussed at the Motor Vehicle Noise meeting.

1. Clarify City's authority with unnecessary motor vehicle noise
2. Introduce stationary motor vehicle noise decibel limit
3. Consider amending motorcycle noise decibel limit

Suggestions

Listed below are the suggestions participants would like the City to consider:

Suggested refinements to the By-law

- **Apply similar rules and noise limits for motorcycles, cars, and all trucks** (waste collection, construction, delivery, trailer trucks).
- **Don't measure dB at idle**, measure when the vehicle is revving.

Regulation and proactive mitigation

- **Reduce siren volume.**
- **Work with other levels of government** to ensure vehicles are manufactured to meet By-laws, as well as help align noise reduction with other City priorities like improving road safety.
- **More heavily regulate the supply of modified parts** coming into the market.
- **Install traffic calming to limit speeds** (e.g., speed humps, narrow lands, pylons, etc.).

Enforcement

- **Increase resources to support enforcement** and provide more training for enforcement officers and 311 staff.
- **Work with police** to target enforcement in noise hot spots in the city. Others said focus on initiatives like “Project **E.R.A.S.E. (Eliminate Racing Activity on Streets Everywhere)**” that is used in other jurisdictions in Ontario to help address bad actors.

- **Install noise cameras.** The cost of noise cameras could be cost-neutral to the City depending on the level of fines and could be covered by ticketing revenue.
- **Connect noise regulation with vehicle registration and licensing.**
- **Issue stiffer fines and demerit points.** Consider fines that reflect the seriousness of the infraction and escalate with repeat offenders. Others said to immediately ticket motorcycles and vehicles with modified exhausts.
- **Monitor and identify shops/mechanics that are modifying cars** to exceed noise limits and crack down on repeat offenders.

Education

- **Add signs at traffic lights that specify noise limits.**
- **Consider regular noise enforcement initiatives** to raise awareness of the By-law.
- **Clarify who is responsible for what** so it is clear to residents.
- **Create a media campaign** to highlight negative impacts of motor vehicle noise on mental and physical well-being, what efforts can be made to decrease noise, and inform the public of standard noise measurement decibels and enforcement processes.

Feedback on Construction Noise

The points below summarize participant feedback on Construction Noise. They are drawn from the Construction Noise meeting summary (held virtually on September 20). They should be read in conjunction with the meeting summaries found in Attachment 4.

Experience with Construction Noise

Most participants (particularly participating residents) said their experience with construction noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago, mainly due to the significant increase in construction in the city.

However, participants from the construction industry shared insights on what is happening in the industry, including: pressure on the industry to develop because Toronto needs the infrastructure; supply issues with equipment so some companies are using older, louder equipment because that's all that's available; time-limited pandemic exemptions allowed 24/7 construction; and the industry's interest in minimizing disruptions to neighbourhoods by completing work quickly, but they also cannot build too fast because it could result in a lower quality of work.

Concerns

- **Concerns focused on the effects of noise on the mental and physical health and social and professional lives of residents.** Although participants understand the City's goals of building more housing and transit, participants said that noise is detrimental to people's health, with some saying that they haven't had a decent sleep in years due to overnight and early morning construction noises, and others have considered moving out of the city.
- **The perception of residents that participated in the meeting was that the construction industry is not considering the noise impacts it has on residents' health.** Their perception is that construction is happening at all hours of the day and night, 7 days a week, with noise only stopping when an inspector arrives.
- **Enforcement of By-laws is unclear and lacks transparency.** Too much is left up to individual interpretation by By-law officers.
- **Concerns that the onus is on residents to track non-compliance.** Residents do not feel their complaints are heard or tended to. They said that it feels like 311 officers and City staff are trained to dissuade them from making a complaint rather than helping address the complaint, and others said they don't feel like By-law officers take complaints seriously when complaints are coming from Scarborough.
- **dBA is not a sufficient unit for measuring sound, in particular vibrations.**

In addition to the concerns listed above, participants identified the following sources of noise they find concerning.

- **Hours of operation** – Large equipment operating 24 hours a day; early morning dump trucks (arriving at 6am); starting before 7am with delivery and refueling trucks.
- **Specific activities and tools** – Air horns; very loud backup beepers; unshielded generators; front end loaders; augers; etc.
- **Persistent noise from transit or major infrastructure projects, including those conducted by government agencies** (e.g. construction noise and operational noise from Metrolinx).

Feedback on the potential refinements

Participating residents had some suggestions on the potential refinements (see below), and the construction industry had concerns about the impact of the potential By-law refinements being considered. Participants representing small home renovators and large construction firms flagged concerns about any changes that would impact their work. Small home renovators discussed the importance of context as there are differences between home renovations and large site construction, especially with more people working from home.

Suggestions

Listed below are the suggestions participants would like the City to consider:

Suggested refinement to the By-law

- **Use clear and more accessible language** to communicate what is permitted instead of what is not permitted.
- **Specify the difference between infill and small scale renovations.**
- **Require the use of broadband reversal alarms** to limit the “beeping” and alarm tones from reversing trucks to be directed only at those in danger (and safer for construction workers).
- **Have tighter constraints in areas with single family homes.** Smaller construction projects should have tighter constraints because they’re right beside residents.
- **Clarify that delivery times should be aligned with permitted construction times.**
- **Protect Sundays and Statutory holidays** as zero construction.
- **Consider embedding noise prevention into zoning considerations.** By-laws should be drafted to anticipate longer-term noise and be linked to zoning considerations and approvals to consider the possible impact of construction noise on residents.

Noise monitoring

- **Use multiple permanent noise meters and don’t average the readings.** This eliminates the spikes in sound which have the most impact.

Potential refinements being considered

The table below outlines the potential refinements MLS discussed during the Construction Noise meeting.

1. Appropriateness of existing time constraints
2. Appropriateness and need for separate construction noise regulations (different time prohibitions) for infill housing and/or smaller scale home renovations

- **Measure noise at the point of origin** instead of the point of reception and measure ambient noise.
- **Consider measuring noise using dB(Z).** *Note of clarification from the City: there are no decibel limits for construction.*
- **The City to hire more acoustical experts and acquire more** acoustical equipment required to measure noise.

Noise mitigation

- **Mitigation (e.g., sound absorption panels) should be a requirement** for construction management plans in the same way that construction sites put up visual panels on sites.
- **Make noise mitigation plans available to the public** for consultation and input since these are a requirement for permits.
- **Need Councillors to consult with enforcement officers;** Councillors only have 14 days to respond, and participants do not think this is enough time.

Transparency and education

- **Provide more information clarity on when and why exemptions are being provided,** including the duration of the exemption, what the exemption is being provided for, and the conditions that must be followed.

- **Clarify who is exempt from the By-law** as the regulations do not apply to Metrolinx and City projects.
- **Publicly share the step-by-step enforcement process** to help everyone understand the process and be able to follow it, including where does each complaint go, who deals with it, who decides how they are enforced.
- **Publicly share construction noise mitigation plans.**

Enforcement

- **Need for much higher fines and sufficient consequence for non-compliance.** Participants do not see sufficient consequences for big developers working outside designated hours and/or using very loud machines.

Feedback on Exemption Permits

The following points summarize participant feedback on Exemption Permits. They are drawn from all six meeting summaries as there was an opportunity to discuss Exemption Permits at each meeting. These points should be read in conjunction with the meeting summaries found in Attachment 4.

Experience with Exemption Permits

Participants had mixed opinions on their experience with noise coming from those who applied for exemption permits.

Concerns

- **Concern about the number of exemption permits granted** (though it's better than 2019), particularly exemptions granted for construction activity. Participants requested for the City to share additional data on exemptions.
- **Frustration with the current exemption permit process**, with specific feedback that Councillors should not be involved in the process, as it's not fair that the City Councillor can overturn the advice of City staff.
- **Concern that the process of getting an exemption permit is being weaponized against community event organizers.** It is unclear why an exemption permit is required for community events that have to amplify sound beyond ambient noise but still staying within allowable amplified sound limits. In addition to fees, the exemption permit also requires the exact number of attendees, which is very difficult to estimate with community events.

Feedback on the potential refinements

The wording of the potential refinement is too vague.

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Specify what is high or low impact.**
- **Add a definition of what is considered the “source”** when the by-law says “Sound levels emitted from any equipment shall not exceed a sound level of 85 dBA when measured 20 metres from the *source*.” This is important because without a definition it is left up to interpretation, and creates confusion between MLS By-law Enforcement Officers, property owners, and event organizers.

Potential refinements being considered

The table below outlines the potential refinements MLS discussed during various meetings related to noise exemption permits.

1. Update provisions
2. Update provisions + introduce exemption permit categories that prioritize low and high impact

Suggestions

Listed below are the suggestions participants would like the City to consider:

- When considering exemption permits for events, **ensure the venue has enough space/capacity to accommodate the potential higher volume of noise** that will be generated.
- **Make noise mitigation plans mandatory** for anyone requesting an exemption permit.
- **Minimize the number of exemption permits granted.**
- **Exemption permit applicants should provide notice to affected residents.**
- **Noise By-law violations incurred during an exemption permit should be registered** and inform any/all future requests for exemptions.

Appendices

Attachment 1: Participating Organizations



The vast majority of the 750 participants in the consultation process did not identify an organization or group that they were affiliated with. Those that did sign in with an affiliation are identified below.

City of Toronto

Councillor Ausma Malik and staff
Noise By-law Enforcement Officers

Industry

Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario
Dundas Festival
French Festival

Resident Association

Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association
King and Portland Neighbours Against Noise
Playter Area Residents Association
Regent Park Neighbourhood Association
Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association

Organizations

ArtsAgency.com
For Our Grandchildren
No More Noise Toronto
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Toronto Island Noise Committee
Toronto Noise Coalition

Other

University of Toronto

Attachment 2: Example Participant Agenda & Worksheet



The participant agenda and worksheet used in all six meetings were identical to the one shown below, except for the: meeting title, location, date, By-law category in focus, and potential refinements being considered.

Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw Public Meeting 1 (of 6) – General Noise

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

7 to 9 pm

Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Room 308/309



Proposed meeting agenda

Land Acknowledgement

7:00 PM

Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

Mitchell Thibault, City of Toronto

Nicole Swerhun, Third Party Public

7:10

Overview Presentation

Mitchell Thibault and Diana Tsui, MLS

Questions of clarification

7:45

Small Group Discussion

1. Has your experience with General Noise in the city changed over the last 4 years? If so, how?
2. Do you think the potential refinement(s) will improve your experience with noise in the city? Do you have any suggestions you would like the City to consider?
3. Do you have any other advice for City staff to consider as they develop their recommendations to Council?

8:30

Report Back and Plenary Discussion

8:55

Wrap-up and next steps

9:00 PM

Adjourn

The Noise Bylaw balances the city's vibrancy with the needs of residents and visitors and provides time restrictions and sound level limits for various types of noise.

Meeting purpose

- To seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019
- To present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw

How to give feedback

You can also submit additional feedback after the meeting to mlsfeedback@toronto.ca by October 15, 2023.

WORKSHEET

1. Has your experience with General Noise in the city changed over the last 4 years? If so, how?

NOTE: We encourage you to use the time in this meeting to provide feedback on General Noise. If you have comments on other Noise Bylaw Review topics (Amplified Sound, Construction Noise, and Motor Vehicle Noise), you can join us at those meetings and/or provide written feedback to MLSFeedback@toronto.ca by October 15, 2023.

Section in the Bylaw	Has your experience with noise in the city changed in the last 4 years? (check one)	If your experience has changed, how has it changed?
Unreasonable and persistent noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Waste collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Power device (e.g. leaf blowers)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Exemption Permits	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Other?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	

2. Do you think the potential refinement(s) being considered will improve your experience with noise in the city? Do you have any suggestions you would like the City to consider?

NOTE: We encourage you to use the time in this meeting to provide feedback on General Noise. If you have comments on other Noise Bylaw Review topics (Amplified Sound, Construction Noise, and Motor Vehicle Noise), you can join us at those meetings and/or provide written feedback to MLSFeedback@toronto.ca by October 15, 2023.

Potential refinements being considered*	Do you think the potential refinement(s) will improve your experience with noise in the city?	Do you have any suggestions you would like the City to consider?
<p><i>*See Reference Sheets for more details on the refinements*</i></p> <p>Unreasonable and persistent noise: 1- Permit category to be used when there are multiple noise sources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>Waste collection noise: 1- Remove waste collection exemption</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>2- Maintain waste collection exemption, but move out of “Safety and government work” to a separate section under “Loading and Unloading”, and introduce a definition for waste collection</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>Power device noise: 1- Consider appropriateness of status quo time constraints</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>2- Amend definition</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>3- Amend definition and add decibel limits</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>Exemption Permits: 1- Update provisions</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
<p>2- Update provisions + introduce exemption permit categories</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	



Attachment 3: Potential Refinements Reference Sheet

The reference sheet on the potential By-law refinements that are being considered was also posted on the [City's Noise By-law Implementation Review webpage](#).

Implementation Review of Noise Bylaw - Reference Sheet for Potential Refinements being Considered

The purpose of this Reference Sheet is to outline the potential bylaw refinements being considered by the City together in one document for ease of reference.

Current Bylaw	Potential refinements being considered		
<p>§ 591-2.1. Amplified sound.</p> <p>A. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of continuous amplified sound, measured with a sound level meter at a point of reception in an outdoor living area:</p> <p>(1) That has a sound level exceeding 50 dB(A) or 65 dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or 55 dB(A) or 70 dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.; or</p> <p>(2) Where the ambient sound level at a point of reception exceeds the maximum sound level permitted, that has a sound level equal to or exceeding the ambient sound level.</p> <p>B. If not reasonable to measure from a point of reception in an outdoor living area, then no person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of continuous amplified sound, measured with a sound level meter at a point of reception in an indoor living area:</p> <p>(1) That has a sound level exceeding 45 dB(A) or 60 dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or 50 dB(A) or 65 dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.; or</p> <p>(2) Where the ambient sound level at a point of reception exceeds the maximum sound level permitted, that has a sound level equal to or exceeding the ambient sound level.</p>	<p>1- Lower decibel levels</p> <p>Acoustical consultant to support on reasonable decibel levels – the proposed are from provincial MECP guidelines</p> <p><u>Example</u> Outdoor living area: - 50 45 dB(A) or 65 60 dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or 55 50 dB(A) or 70 65 dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.</p> <p>Indoor living area: - 45 35 dB(A) or 60 50 dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or 50 40 dB(A) or 65 55 dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.</p>	<p>2- Lower decibel levels + consider additional enforcement pathway</p> <p>Keep outdoor and indoor living area measurements from points of reception</p> <p>Permit an additional pathway that specifies additional decibel levels measured from the property line of a point of reception</p> <p><u>Example</u> "That has a sound level measured at the property line of the point of reception exceeding 55 dB(A) or 70 dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or 50 dB(A) or 65 dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m."</p>	<p>3- Introduce separate sections for commercial and living area amplified sound</p> <p>Living area – neighbour to neighbour complaints</p> <p>Commercial – music or entertainment from a bar or live music venue</p> <p>Commercial and living area sections could have different decibel limits to reflect context of disturbance</p>
<p>§ 591-2.3. Construction.</p> <p>No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound resulting from any operation of construction equipment or any construction that is clearly audible at a point of reception:</p> <p>(1) from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. the next day, except until 9 a.m. on Saturdays; and</p> <p>(2) all day on Sundays and statutory holidays.</p>	<p>1- Appropriateness of existing time constraints</p> <p>Any amendment to the time constraints should ensure flexibility for construction activity, while balancing resident concerns about excessive noise</p>	<p>2- Appropriateness and need for separate construction noise regulations (different time prohibitions) for infill housing and/or smaller scale home renovations</p> <p>Some jurisdictions set different time prohibitions for construction noise related to infill housing construction (i.e., building and renovating in established neighbourhoods) or smaller scale home renovations (e.g., minor interior or exterior alterations to residential buildings)</p>	

Current Bylaw	Potential refinements being considered		
<p>§ 591-2.4. Loading and unloading (Waste Collection). A. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound resulting from loading, unloading, delivering, packing, unpacking, and otherwise handling any containers, products or materials from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. the next day, except until 9 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays.</p> <p>B. In accordance with section 115.1 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, Subsection A does not apply to the delivery of goods to the following, except as otherwise authorized by a regulation made under that section: (1) Retail business establishments. (2) Restaurants, including cafes and bars. (3) Hotels and motels. (4) Goods distribution facilities.</p> <p>§ 591-3.1. Safety and government work. Despite any other provision of this chapter, it shall be lawful to emit or cause or permit the emission of sound from... E. Waste collection. Note: no definition is provided in the Bylaw for waste collection</p>	<p>1- Remove waste collection exemption</p> <p>Private waste collection would be required to meet Loading and Unloading time prohibition (11 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays, 11 p.m. to 9 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays)</p>	<p>2- Maintain waste collection exemption</p> <p>If keeping exemption, move out of 'Safety and government work' and to a separate section under Loading and Unloading, and introduce a definition for waste collection</p>	
<p>§ 591-2.5. Motor vehicles. A. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound resulting from unnecessary motor vehicle noise, such as the sounding of a horn, revving of an engine, squealing of tires, banging, clanking or any like sound that is clearly audible at a point of reception.</p> <p>B. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound resulting from the repairing, rebuilding, modifying or testing of a vehicle if the sound is clearly audible at a point of reception from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. the next day, except until 9 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays.</p> <p>C. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound from a motorcycle, if the motorcycle emits any sound exceeding 92 dB(A) from the exhaust outlet as measured at 50 cm, while the motorcycle engine is at idle.</p>	<p>1- Clarify City's authority with unnecessary motor vehicle noise provision</p> <p>Bylaw Enforcement Officers do not have the authority to stop moving vehicles. This authority originates under the Highway Traffic Act and is designated to the Toronto Police Service (TPS)</p> <p><u>Example</u> "Unnecessary motor vehicle noise, such as sounding of the horn, revving of engine, squealing of tires, banging, clanking or any like sounds, when vehicle is stationary"</p>	<p>2- Introduce stationary motor vehicle noise decibel limit</p> <p>Note: only stationary limits can be applied as assessment of moving vehicles by Bylaw is not possible.</p> <p>Numerical sound limits and test procedures to be assessed with acoustical consultant, including limits with vehicles at idle or at a specific level of revolutions per minute (RPM) (while vehicle remains stationary)</p>	<p>3- Consider amending motorcycle noise decibel limit</p> <p>Note: only stationary limits can be applied as assessment of moving vehicles by Bylaw is not possible.</p> <p>Additional numerical sound limit and test procedure at a specific level of revolutions per minute (RPM) (while vehicle remains stationary) to be assessed with acoustical consultant. Could replace or be added to the existing 92 dB(A) measurement at idle</p>

Current Bylaw	Potential refinements being considered		
<p>§ 591-2.6. Power devices. A. No person shall emit or cause or permit the emission of sound from a power device from 7 p.m. until 8 a.m. the next day, except until 9 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays. B. Subsection A does not apply to a power device used to maintain a golf course or public park or carry out City operations including services contracted by the City.</p>	<p>1 – Consider appropriateness of status quo time constraints Any amendment to the time constraints should ensure flexibility for the reasonable use of power devices, while balancing resident concerns about excessive noise</p>	<p>2 – Amend definition Consider minor amendment to capture additional property tools, including pressure/power washers used for maintenance of private property</p>	<p>3 – Amend definition + Add decibel limits Acoustical consultant to support on assessment of reasonable decibel levels (clearly audible from a point of reception) as well as practical limitations</p>
<p>§ 591-2.9. Unreasonable and persistent noise. A. No person shall make, cause or permit noise, at any time, that is unreasonable noise and persistent noise. B. Subsection A only applies to sound or noise that is not described in § 591-2.1 through § 591-2.8. C. Despite Subsection B, an exemption permit may be required under § 591-3.2., at the discretion of the Executive Director, if the Executive Director determines that there is unreasonable and persistent noise during otherwise permitted hours as described in § 591-2.1 through § 591-2.8.</p> <p>§ 591-2.10. Most restrictive provision applies. Where a source of sound is subject to more than one provision of this article, the most restrictive provision applies.</p>	<p>1- Permit category to be used when there are multiple noise sources Consider additional language so that the section can be used when multiple noise sources are causing a disturbance. In some cases, the presence of multiple sources could reduce the effectiveness of a specific prohibition</p>		
<p>Exemption Permits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 85 dB(A) limit measured 20 metres from the source over a 5-minute period - Councillors have opportunity to comment, if Councillor(s) does not respond within 14 days, permit is approved - Appeal process involving Community Councils and notice of hearing sent to all nearby residents. - Authority to revoke a noise exemption permit if non-compliant - Authority for MLS to add conditions to the permit, including a Noise Mitigation Plan or mandatory noise monitoring by MLS staff 	<p>1- Update provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dBC limit in addition to dBA - Require permits be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to event, with a late fee if submitted after deadline - Clarify Councillor has 14 calendar days to respond and object to permit issuance - Consider setting a limit for how long an exemption permit lasts (3 or 6 months) - Consider waiving permit fees for not-for profit organizations 	<p>2- Update provisions + consider graduated exemption permits</p> <p>Introduce exemption permit categories: (1) Low impact or (2) High impact to support prioritization</p> <p>Low/high impact to be defined based on number of attendees, type of equipment being used, duration of event, and location of event to neighbouring areas</p> <p>High Impact Events must also provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rationale for granting exemption; and b) A Noise Mitigation Plan addressing measures to mitigate or manage noise from planned activities; or a statement of measures that will be taken to minimize the noise or sound level. c) A qualified statement for any sounds that are not technically or operationally feasible to control 	

Current Bylaw	Potential refinements being considered	
<p>Other</p>	<p>1- Add tonal penalties Tonal elements are noise disturbances that include a hiss/hum/music; some jurisdictions add a + 5dB penalty for any measurement with a tonal component</p> <p>“Where warranted by the presence of pure tones or other unusual characteristics in the sound, the sound shall be subject to a + 5dBA adjustment/penalty or the applicable criterion shall be reduced by 5 dBA”</p>	<p>2- Amend related fees Changes to exemption permit application and noise monitoring fees will be proposed in the staff report (subject to additional analysis), the report will also include consideration of a late fee for exemption permit applications</p> <p>Exemption permit fee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fee is required for each application - Current amount is \$100 (not adjusted annually) - Fees do not differ depending on impact of event and updated analysis is needed to ensure full cost recovery per the City’s User Fee Policy <p>Noise monitoring fee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If monitoring is required as a condition of the exemption permit, staff must be made available - Current amount is \$60 per staff per hour (not adjusted annually) - Per hour calculation is not reflective of current salaries or staff overtime and updated analysis is needed to ensure full cost recovery per the City’s User Fee Policy

Attachment 4: Individual Public Meeting Summaries



See following pages for individual public meeting summaries.

Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 1 (of 6) General Noise (In-Person)

Metro Hall, 55 John Street
Room 308/309
Tuesday, September 12, 2023



On Tuesday, September 12, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the first of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on General Noise, including unreasonable and persistent noise, waste collection, and power device. 46 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Bylaw Enforcement team, also participated.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority. Responses from MLS are *in italics*.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Most participants were at the meeting because of frustration with increased noise in the city.**
2. **Many participants expressed concern that noise complaints aren't logged by 311 if the City can't enforce.** As a result, participants expressed concern that there are more noise issues than reported.
3. **Waste collection noise is a serious problem for many participants.** Most would like the City to remove the exemption for private companies, though a handful disagreed.
4. **Noise from leaf blowers is a major irritant,** with support expressed for the ban on the use of two-stroke small engine equipment.
5. **Frustration with 311 and concerns about enforcement.**
6. **Concern about the number of exemption permits granted.**
7. **Other comments** noise from waterfront party boats, air conditioners, sirens, and delivery trucks; noise as an equity and health issue, how the city can be designed to proactively minimize noise, the need for more education, etc.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. **Most participants were at the meeting because of frustration with increased noise in the city.** Participants understand that the City is growing, and they don't want the vibrancy of the city to go away, but quality of life has been deeply and negatively impacted the last four years. A participant flagged that there are no decibel limits referenced for "Unreasonable and persistent noise" (Bylaw 591-2.9), which makes it unclear what noise levels residents are expected to live with. They noted that for amplified sound there are decibel limits that can be enforced, noting that sound does not need to be amplified to disrupt quality of life. Decibels are not always the best measurement for noise because when compared to ambient noise, the difference can be significant enough to disrupt peaceful living and yet still be under the Bylaw threshold.
2. **Many participants expressed concern that the noise complaints aren't logged by 311 if the City can't enforce.** This was provoked by the noise complaints data shared by the City during the meeting, which participants said understates the issue because of the noise-related calls that are not counted. There was support for the City to collect and report on all noise complaints data.
3. **Waste collection noise is a serious problem for many participants.** Most would like the City to remove the exemption for private companies, though a handful disagreed.
 - Council's granting of the waste collection exemption without public consultation was shocking to many.
 - Waste collection noise is impacting participants in the overnight hours, with frequent references to midnight, 1am, 2-4am, with noise lasting 20-40 minutes at a time, as many as 6-7 nights per week.
 - There were participants who said that GFL trucks are louder than other companies.
 - Use of quieter vehicles was suggested.
 - Those that disagreed with removing the exemption identified two concerns, (i) that waste collection costs would increase if vehicles were forced to operate when roads are busy (as opposed to overnight), and (ii) this could hurt private companies that are already struggling to come back from the pandemic.
4. **Noise from leaf blowers is a major irritant,** with support expressed for the ban on the use of two-stroke small engine equipment, and support for encouraging the use of alternatives like electric leaf blowers and rakes.
 - Concerns about impacts on shift workers, young mothers, people with debilitating illnesses and mental health issues, and pedestrians.
 - Golf course exemptions for leaf blowers make it unbearable for those living in houses nearby.
 - Support for banning commercial leaf-blowers, starting with limits on their use during shoulder seasons only, and not in the summer.
 - Concerns about commercial leaf-blowers that produce a lot of noise. Landscaping lobby seems more powerful than the voice of residents.
 - Concerns about corollary air pollution and dust from gas leaf blowers.
5. **Frustration with 311 and concerns about enforcement.**
 - Several participants expressed frustration with their experiences with 311, including the process for registering complaints and waiting days or weeks for enforcement officers.
 - Concern that the current system of managing noise is contributing to tensions between neighbours and between neighbours and businesses. A better system is needed for managing these tensions, outside of legal avenues.
 - Strong support for additional resources dedicated to enforcement, including enforcing 24/7 and hiring more Bylaw enforcement officers and investing in technology, including:
 - Use apps to crowdsource data that could inform enforcement efforts.
 - Employ "sound sensors" that specifically target leaf blowers that routinely violate Noise Bylaws.
 - Enforcement officers should take action proactively when a noise violation occurs, and need not depend on complaint calls only.
 - Use a multi-pronged lens to enforcement, including environmental, physical health, and mental health. Interest in seeing the City study the effect of noise on residents from these perspectives.

- Link business licensing to requirement to abide by Noise Bylaws.
- Create opportunities for community groups to deal with noise complaints as a collective rather than requiring enforcement officers to resolve situations.
- Increase fines for those who break the rules. Serious fines are the only way to deter people from ongoing noise violations.
- Support for sound monitoring at the source/point of origin or closest possible to the source, not the point of reception.
- Support for allowing noise violations to be reported on public properties such as streets or public realm.

6. Concern about the number of exemption permits granted.

- Noise Bylaw violations incurred during an exemption permit should be registered and inform any/all future requests for exemptions.
- Need continuous monitoring and enforcement, not just one-time.
- Concern too many exemptions are being granted (though it's better than 2019). Request that the City share data on exemptions.
- Suggestion that the City let people in the surrounding neighbourhood know when an exemption has been granted. *This is an existing City of Toronto requirement.*
- Frustration with the current exemption permit process. Councillors should not be involved. It's not fair that the City Councillor can overturn the advice of City staff.

7. Other concerns raised included:

- Waterfront noise related to party boats that disrupting residents at all times of the day, and especially late in the night. Request that the City license, regulate, and monitor this activity regularly, with consequences for non-compliance. There was also a suggestion to relocate the party boats away from the residential area of Queens Quay.
- Air conditioner noise was a problem for several participants. Suggestion that the City consider incentives to reduce noise (e.g., with loud air conditions, provide financial incentive/rebate to the neighbour to buy a new air conditioner).
- Noise is an equity issue and a health issue. Health and safety need to be considered when this report goes to Committee, not just

economic issues. Excessive noise is a health hazard and an equity issue. Medical authorities should recommend permitted decibel levels. It's proving to be an issue for some participants, worsening their mental health. It's an accessibility and equity issue for those with vision impairments. Also, not all people have the opportunity to be able to get away from noise sources or move into different neighbourhoods when noise gets worse. Concern that City Council makes decisions driven by economic factors over community impact (as done with the 2022 bylaw change without public consultation).

- Designing the city to prevent noise, not just enforce it. This means proactive noise prevention, including new technology that provides quieter alternatives (like replacements for back-up beepers on vehicles) and designing new buildings with better soundproofing, and using better construction materials. Also think about how noise is considered in new development and especially in taller constructions.
- The need for more education about the Noise Bylaw, including raising awareness of any restricted hours. The bylaw should use words that people understand, like "infringe on reasonable enjoyment of home" as opposed to decibel levels which might not make sense to everyone. It's a real human issue, not just numbers. Clarity on who is responsible for resolving noise issues, whether that falls on landlords (TCHC), police, or bylaw officers. As well as clarity on noise issues from government activities.
- Sirens from emergency vehicles and police at 4am (is it an option to lower the volume in the evenings when the streets are empty)
- Delivery trucks at 3am are a problem.
- Street racing is an issue.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City's website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.



Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 2 (of 6) Amplified Sound (Virtual)

Via Zoom
Wednesday, September 13, 2023

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

On Wednesday, September 13, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the second of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on Amplified Sound. 166 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Enforcement team, also participated.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority. Responses from MLS are *in italics*.

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Many residents reported an increase in issues with amplified sound since 2019**, especially from bars, special events, concert venues, party boats, restaurants/clubs, AirBnBs, and buskers.
2. **Many participants focused on the impacts of vibration** and want to see vibration measured and limitations placed.
3. **Concerns were raised about enforcement, with many who said they consider it ineffective.** Stiffer penalties and other consequences were suggested, along with more resources for enforcement.
4. **Several suggestions focused on how businesses and residents can better co-exist.**
5. **There were different perspectives on the potential refinements shared by the City.** Some support lowering the decibel limits and others do not (Refinement 1). Some support measurement at the source, while others disagreed (Refinement 2). Refinement 3 was unclear to many.
6. **Suggestions related to exemption permits** focused on minimizing the number issued and making noise mitigation plans mandatory.
7. **Other feedback** related to the need for more education and several areas covered in the other five consultation meetings.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. Many residents reported an increase in issues with amplified sound since 2019.

These participants said:

- They're experiencing more noise since the pandemic especially from bars, special events, concert venues, party boats, restaurants/clubs, AirBnBs, and buskers. Concert and festival venues are much louder, and festivals are not appropriate in residential areas (especially those that are densely populated).
- Concerns were raised about an increase in noise from monster homes squeezed into small lots and the increased number of high rise buildings. This means that noise is bouncing much louder and further making it difficult to identify the source.
- They have concerns related to increasing noise across the city, with the waterfront (low-beats and sound that carries on the water), King-Portland/King-Bathurst, along with Ossington and Queen, and the southwest area of Scarborough (noise by the water and at night) mentioned most frequently.
- Concern that the densification of the City is out-pacing noise bylaw changes with some considering that the updates from 2019 are already obsolete.
- Impacts from multiple sources of sound are creating a disturbance, including noise from clients on the sidewalk or noise from an open door.
- Concern was raised that the City is advancing the notion that "vibrancy" requires residents to tolerate harmful noise pollution when the onus should be on certain business owners to make the investments required to mitigate the problem.
- It was suggested that noise levels be reduced in line with the World Health Organization suggested levels for health reasons.

Some participating business owners said their experience has improved because the decibel levels introduced four years ago have brought clarity to the limits. Other operators expressed concern that the City is too strict on noise and less friendly to music producers and those in the live music industry, which is especially hard post-pandemic because there are significantly fewer music venues in the city today. One

participant said that the regeneration of King Street, for example, has become more residential at the expense of the music scene.

It was noted that most participants at the meeting were residents and not business operators. It was also observed that not many artists and cultural organizations were participating.

2. Many participants focused on the impacts of vibration and want to see vibration measured and limitations placed.

They reported that bass-heavy noise can be heard and felt in living rooms, bedrooms, in the vibration of walls, windows, and furniture, etc. Vibration was referred to, by some, as a sonic weapon, and it was suggested that low frequency sound also be measured.

3. Concerns were raised about enforcement, with many who said they consider it ineffective.

- Any bylaw changes are only meaningful if coupled with effective enforcement.
- There needs to be more enforcement of businesses not in compliance.
- Concern was expressed about the poor availability of bylaw officers and the restricted hour they work (noting that noise issues often occur outside of these hours).
- There is no mechanism for addressing noise disturbances from boats because they often cannot be identified without help from marine police, also because marine police do not have a mechanism to measure noise decibels. As a result, there is no way to hold party boats accountable.
- There was support for larger and more immediate issuing of fines, as well as an increase in enforcement staff.
- It was suggested that the City consider an option where residents can book noise monitoring in advance, when there's a pattern of disturbing noise every weekend.
- Consider more significant consequences for offending businesses, including suspension of licenses, larger fines for repeat offenders, scaling fines to the size of the venue and whether its commercial or residential, and/or a "three strikes and you're out" option.

4. There were suggestions on how businesses and residents can better co-exist, by:

- Requiring businesses to close their doors and windows by 11pm. Some participants

said that they live next to patios with DJs that are playing outside until 3am.

- Use better sound proofing in new residential buildings to protect from amplified sounds (e.g., laminated windows, soundproofing insulation).
- Condo owners and landlords need to know and apply the “agent of change” principles where landlords are required to let tenants know they are living in the entertainment district and the associated levels of noise they’re likely to experience (so they’re not surprised).
- Addressing situations where businesses apply for a restaurant license and misuse the license to operate clubs that are open until 3am immediately underneath condos. It was suggested that these licenses should be revoked for misuse. It was also noted that many businesses follow the rules, so the focus should be on the few that continually break them.

5. There were different perspectives on the proposed refinements shared by the City.

There were participants who supported Refinement 1 (lowering the decibel levels), however others do not because the existing range gives business owners in the entertainment district good parameters to work from. There were participants, including a senior consultant specializing in noise, vibration, and acoustics, who noted that:

- Lowering decibel limits will not resolve ongoing noise complaint issues because their experience is that ambient sound levels throughout the city are, in most cases, greater (or significantly greater) than the proposed limits.
- It is not practical to separate out amplified noise from all the other noise caused by a business, including noise from patrons on the business’ patio, noise on the immediate sidewalk, increased car traffic, honking, etc.

Related to Refinement 2 (creating an additional enforcement pathway), there were different opinions on where to measure sound.

- Some support measurement at the source because entering private property, especially at night, was perceived as an invasion of privacy. There was also a concern that the burden of dealing with excessive noise is currently on the complainant and little is expected of the business owner – noting that it is not

reasonable for the City to conclude that excessive noise is only adversely affecting the people that complain since there are many reasons someone may not complain (e.g., some neighbours said that they are not comfortable filing a complaint because they are afraid of retaliation).

- Others disagreed, with a preference for measuring at the point of reception – noting that if the sound doesn’t bother anyone, there should be no need to enforce. Two participating event producers that work on concerns and festivals explained that the current bylaw which measures sound 20 metres from the source with a limit of 85 dBA is not considered to be an acceptable concert audio level of the audience or the talent on stage (with a suggestion that a reasonable limit would be 85 dB at the perimeter of the site or 100db at 30 meters from the source). They explained that audio technicians can become targets of hostility from the audience. The potential danger of the bylaw, as currently written, should be considered.

There were a range of comments related to proposed refinement 3 (separate sections for commercial and living areas) including:

- Confusion about how this proposed refinement would work (i.e., would separate noise standards or limits be based on actual land use or zoned use?).
- Some support for separating commercial and living area requirements, but only if that lowers the noise that residents are subject to. It was also suggested that there be no difference between commercial and residential area decibel levels because sound travels and bounces off large/tall buildings.
- It was suggested that parks be considered residential, not commercial; however, one participant considers this commercial/residential framework misconceived and that public space should be one of the City’s main considerations.
- Consider differentiating how the bylaws apply to music-specific events versus general commercial uses.
- Add parks and streets to the bylaw categories. These are public spaces that should be enforced and measured, with one participant noting that public space needs to be protected from noise pollution everywhere (e.g., speakers outside stores,

loudspeakers mounted on sidewalks rather than in backyards, loudspeakers in some places of worship, and residents blasting sound from porches or balconies.

- Consider adding a separate section for “Quiet areas” where decibel levels would be lower than residential (e.g., for nature, park areas).

Other comments related to the refinements:

- Interest in clarity on how bylaws apply to mixed use buildings, particularly for buildings where people sleep right on top of patios and restaurants that act as night clubs and said the City should not allow these uses to disturb the comfort of living at any time.
- Some suggested the City modify the bylaw to better reflect the importance of the context in which noise is experienced. They suggested different decibel limits for the entertainment district, parks, the waterfront, and residential areas.

6. Suggestions related to potential refinements to exemption permits included:

- Add a definition of what is considered the “source” when the by-law says “Sound levels emitted from any equipment shall not exceed a sound level of 85 dBA when measured 20 metres from the *source*.” This is important because without a definition it is left up to interpretation and at a music festival, for example, the source could be ambient noise from the crowd, food trucks, generators, in addition to the speakers. Without the definition, confusion is created between MLS Noise Monitoring Officers, property owners, and event organizers.
- Minimize the number of exemption permits.
- Make noise mitigation plans mandatory for anyone requesting an exemption permit.
- Concern that the process of getting an exemption permit is being weaponized against community event organizers.

7. Other feedback included:

- A request that the City report the number of unique callers to 311 with noise complaints, and not just the total number of calls (since many may come from the same people).
- It was suggested that a general provision for amplified sound be re-instated. Participants with this concern explained that changes to the Bylaw made in 2019 have taken the City a step backwards, now permitting noise

24/7 that was illegal until 2019. Amplified sound from patios open to the street is a problem that falls between two stools: limiting the levels of sound that “leaks” out of businesses and what should be a complete prohibition of piping amplified sound into a public space (except with a permit for an event). Patios likely require very low decibel limits and a restriction of hours.

- There’s a need for more education and awareness on sound regulations in the city.
- Interest in understanding how the Night Economy Review overlaps with the Noise Bylaw, with a suggestion that a Noise Control Plan be a requirement as an operator in the Night Economy.
- Interest in more information on the noise coming from commercial businesses versus house parties.
- Interest in seeing music venues protected just like culture and heritage sites are protected.
- Interest in seeing leaf blowers banned.
- Interest in seeing low flying helicopter impacts being addressed (at Harbourfront).
- Strengthen enforcement of after-market modifications to cars to increase noise. Also strengthen enforcement of car racing noise by working with Toronto Police Services.
- Ambulance noise addressed, including interest in seeing the City explore alternatives during certain times of day.
- Seniors that “age in place” can end up being “trapped” in their homes when new loud uses are introduced.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City’s website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.



Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 3 (of 6) Motor Vehicle Noise (Virtual)

Via Zoom
Monday, September 18, 2023

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Most participants said their experience with motor vehicle noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago,** however there were some who said there was no change and a few that said their experience had improved.
2. **Lack of enforcement was a frustration raised repeatedly,** with a long list of suggestions shared, with many focused on better use of technology, more cooperation with the Toronto Police Service and other levels of government, more enforcement resources, and stiffer penalties.
3. **Public health impacts from motor vehicle noise are concerning.** Participants referenced WHO reports that 55 dB of noise impacts mental and physical health, which many cars far exceed. Suggestions that the City should educate the public on the harms of noise at high levels, including signage, media campaigns, etc.
4. **Calling 311 is tedious and frustrating to many,** especially since the data is not collected because the City can't enforce noise from moving vehicles. *Note that [311 complaints on moving motor vehicle noise are being collected](#) as of June 2023.*
5. **Protecting space for car enthusiasts is important.**
6. **Many, but not all, supported the proposed bylaw refinements.**
7. **Other comments** focused on vibration, large trucks, the building code, etc.

On Monday, September 18, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the third of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on Motor Vehicle Noise. 296 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Enforcement team, also listened in.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority. Clarification from MLS are *in italics*.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. **Most participants at the meeting said their experience with motor vehicle noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago**, though there were a few participants who said that their experience with motor vehicle noise had not changed, and a few who said that their experience had improved. The biggest issues relate to motorcycles, modified exhausts from all types of vehicles (referred to as “vanity noise”), speeding cars, blaring music from cars, and emergency vehicle sirens. Noise in the middle of the night is especially problematic. Some noted that night-time motor vehicle noise worsened during the COVID isolation period and continues to this day. Participants came from all parts of the city, from Etobicoke and Scarborough to North York and Downtown. Some people have had to invest thousands of dollars for soundproof windows. It was noted that it is impossible to over-estimate the roars of engines audible at some residential buildings (e.g. Avenue Road); the sound is terrible, grating, and stomach-churning.

The few participants who said their experience had improved noted that one of the reasons was construction causing accidental traffic calming. The slow speeds and narrow lanes greatly reduced traffic noise even during rush hour.

There were a few participants who questioned the need to address noise in a busy city and said that there are other issues that are more important to address with the City’s limited budget and resources.

There were also participants who said that modified cars are a form of self-expression “like tattoos and haircuts” and these participants were against modifying noise regulations.

2. **Lack of enforcement was a frustration raised repeatedly.** Because vehicles are moving, the sound lasts 5 seconds and then it’s gone. Some participants expressed general disillusionment due to doubts that enforcement is possible. There are also concerns that police are not enforcing exhausts modified illegally. Some reported that there seems to have been an increase in the number of modified vehicles. Suggestions included:

- Increasing resources to support enforcement.

- Target enforcement in particularly noisy areas. Consider working with police to surveil hot spots in the City, like Broadview and Pottery Road, for one to two evenings, when the motor vehicle noise rises.
- Add signs at traffic lights that specify noise limits.
- Apply similar rules and noise limits for motorcycles, cars, and all trucks (waste collection, construction, delivery, trailer trucks) (considerable support for Refinement #2).
- Connect noise regulation with vehicle registration and licensing. For example, a “Drive Quiet” initiative where licensing is linked to knowledge about the noise bylaw (similar to the “Drive Clean” program).
- Reduce siren limits.
- Learn from other jurisdictions that have successfully cracked down on motor vehicle noise (e.g., Brampton).
- Install noise cameras (see examples in Paris, the UK, Miami, New York, Edmonton, Albuquerque). The cost of noise cameras could be cost-neutral to the City depending on the level of fines. The cost of equipment and use could be covered by ticketing revenue.
- More training for enforcement officers.
- Work with other levels of government to ensure vehicles are manufactured to meet bylaws.
- Create a task force with the City and Police to address this. Portable sound measurement technology exists and should be used by police.
- Consider regular noise blitzes to raise awareness of the bylaws.
- Focus on initiatives like “Project Erase” that can help address the bad actors.
- Don’t measure dB at idle, measure when the vehicle is “red lining”.
- Issue stiffer fines and demerit points. Consider fines that reflect the seriousness of the infraction and escalate with repeat offenders. Others had concerns about demerit point deductions because of noise.
- Clarify who is responsible for what so it is clear to residents.
- More heavily regulate the supply of new modified parts coming into the market.
- Monitor and identify shops/mechanics that are modifying cars to exceed noise limits and crack down on repeat offenders. There were participants who flagged that some

luxury cars are designed to have modes that are quiet and “sport” modes that are noisy – which are not visible as exhaust modifications.

- Immediately ticket motorcycles and vehicles with modified exhausts.
- Consider lots for motorbikes outside of the city where people can park and take public transit into the city (could partner with the province for this).
- Proactive traffic calming to limit speeds (e.g., speed humps, narrow lands, pylons, etc.).
- Explore funding enforcement from a health-based perspective by identifying funds available to support better community health outcomes and determinants of health. Provide better training to 311 staff.

3. **Public health impacts from motor vehicle noise are concerning.** The WHO reports that 55 dB of noise impacts mental and physical health and many cars far exceed that (a participant measured a Lamborghini at 150 dB). Another participant noted that even the Tesla Model 3 is over 70 dB.

Another participant noted that there are a multitude of health issues caused by sleep deprivation, often due to noise, that would be very costly to the budget of the healthcare system. Furthermore, being chronically tired increase the possibility of arguments, which seem to be on the rise along with violence in the City.

Suggestions that the City should educate the public on the harms of noise at high levels, including:

- Signage at intersections;
- A media campaign to highlight negative impacts of motor vehicle noise on mental and physical well-being;
- What efforts can be made to decrease noise; and
- Inform the public of standard noise measurement decibels and enforcement processes.

4. **Calling 311 is tedious and frustrating to many participants** who remain unclear if the City collects data on complaints related to vehicles. Given that the City can't enforce noise from moving vehicles, people stop calling 311 to complain about it, resulting in under-reporting of complaints in official statistics. As such, it doesn't help to refer to 311 data for motor vehicle complaints. Suggestion that the City

share the 311 noise complaints data through the Open Data Portal. *Note that [311 complaints on moving motor vehicle noise are being collected](#) as of June 2023.*

5. **Protecting space for car enthusiasts is important**, noting that they are trying to enjoy their vehicles and not seeking to hurt others. There was discussion about the importance of respecting each other and the need for finding a balance between different interests to support the well-being of all people. Many members of the motor-enthusiast community are responsible and make noise in appropriate places (e.g., tracks).
6. **There were differing levels of support for the potential bylaw refinements.** Some supported all the refinements, and many were supportive of refinement #2 (introducing stationary motor vehicle noise decibel limit) and refinement #3 (amending the motorcycle noise decibel limit). Others did not think the current refinements were sufficient to deal with their issues. 92 dB(A) is too high, and instead 80 dB(A) should be used. Some thought the wording was too vague and don't address the real problem of bad actors. Consider changing “or” to “and” in Refinement 3 (i.e., “consider limits at idle or at a specific level of RPM while vehicle remains stationary”).
7. **Other feedback** included:
- Vibration from motor vehicle sound is an issue, including low frequency noise and noise from subwoofers.
 - Noise from large trucks is an issue, including waste collection trucks, private and public delivery trucks, large tractor trailers (up to 24 wheels) and construction vehicles. Construction trucks arrive at 5:30 am when construction work is only permitted to start at 7am. The large tractor trailers use residential roads (e.g. Coronation Drive in Scarborough) throughout the day and evening and the noise they emit is loud.
 - Remember that loud motorcycles contribute to the safety of motorcyclist's on the road.
 - Using the Building Code to better protect residents from the impacts of noise.
 - Cooperation between MLS and other City Divisions (like Transportation Services) could help align noise reduction with other City priorities like improving road safety.

- Some participants were very thankful for the opportunity to learn about and share feedback on the bylaw.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City's website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.

Note from the facilitation team:

There were xenophobic and ageist remarks shared during at least one of the small group discussions that caused participants to be visibly upset. Other participants addressed the comment and spoke directly in a respectful manner. The participant was also reminded by the facilitator to use respectful language moving forward and not to generalize.



Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 4 (of 6) General Noise (Virtual)

Via Zoom
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

On Tuesday, September 19, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the fourth of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on General Noise, including unreasonable and persistent noise, waste collection, and power device. 141 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Enforcement team, also attended.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority. Responses from MLS are *in italics*.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Most participants said that their experience with noise in the city has changed for the worse since 2019**, with many references to the stress and health issues noise creates.
2. **Many concerns related to the city's growth**, with interest in seeing the City require back-up beepers to be replaced with broad band reversing alarms, take more proactive measures to address noise through the Building Code, re-route heavy truck, clarity on how the Night Economy Review overlaps with the noise bylaw, etc.
3. **Stronger enforcement is necessary**. Crowd sourcing data collection for disturbing noise, increasing fines, and several other suggestions were made.
4. **The exemption granted for private garbage collection negatively impacts many**, with support for its removal.
5. **The vibration component of sound is a big problem**, and it needs to be addressed in the bylaw.
6. **Noise from leaf blowers has reached excessive levels**, with support for the ban on 2-stroke engines.
7. **Harbourfront noise is horrible** and needs addressing.
8. **Other comments focused on a range of issues**, from considering noise an equity issue to private and public trucks, including overnight delivery trucks, noise from modified vehicles, festivals, air conditioners and stationary sources, and support for having this section of the bylaw address sound from multiple sources.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. **Most participants said that their experience with noise in the city has changed for the worse since 2019.** Many said noise pollution is very stressful and that refinements and change are needed now. There is also concern that there are many types of noise that impact residents that the City does not have the power to regulate. Daytime noise can be challenging for shift workers and those working from home. Some focused on noise as a health issue, with impacts on physical and mental health, career, and social life.

There were exceptions, with a small number of participants who said their experience with noise had improved since 2019.

2. **Concerns that the city is getting noisier as it grows.** Several participants talked about densification as a problem because sounds of entertainment are so close to housing. There is also:

- More noise from alarms, back-up beepers, construction, and wind echoing that impacts new condo developments.
- Noise from air conditioners and other stationary sources was also raised as a public health concern. It was suggested that the City propose revisions applying to air conditioner and stationary sources.
- Activities such as CafeTO and festivals make the city noisier.
- The night economy may be good for business but it's terrible for some residents. People spill out into the street and there are big noise impacts, including restaurants that are functioning as night clubs. For some, it means having to move rather than stay and live in an unpeaceful situation. Specific areas mentioned with noise issues included: Trinity-Spadina Parkette, King and Portland, King and Niagara.
- There was a participant who reported an ongoing unbearable noise issue in Scarborough with a factory operating 24/7 and means she is barely able to sleep.

Suggestions included:

- Clarity on how the Night Economy Review overlaps with the noise bylaw, including the requirement for establishments to create a Noise Control Plan.
- The City should require broad band reversing alarms instead of backup beepers.

- Use the Building Code to minimize noise in new builds, especially given the trend to live in closer quarters with our neighbours. For example, the City should be proactive in requiring soundproof windows and doors as part of the building code for bars and restaurants. Look to New York as a resource for ways to reduce sound and work with surrounding communities.
 - Do more to limit noise from air conditioners and exhaust fans, including those at restaurants.
 - Find alternate routes where heavy traffic of large diesel trucks can be rerouted for some days of the week so that there are some respite days for all neighbourhoods.
 - Developers should be asked to provide noise mitigation plans that consider tall buildings and noises above the fourth floor. They should also be asked to provide compensation for high-noise construction activities since it seems that they're thriving and making profits from activities which put physical health, mental health, and reasonable enjoyment at risk.
 - Apply a universal design approach to reducing noise and vibrations.
 - A participant with an event programmer's perspective noted that they appreciate the City's ability to cultivate art and culture. They suggested including organizations and artists in these consultations because many have their own professional dB readers and respond to community feedback.
3. **Stronger enforcement is necessary.** This was a major theme in the feedback received, with many frustrations related to the experience of reporting noise complaints and not receiving adequate enforcement responses. Some feel the Noise Bylaw is adequate and the refinements are good, but they will only look good on paper if there isn't effective enforcement. There were participants who said that reporting noise violations felt like a part-time job and affected their mental health, especially when they had to connect to multiple departments (311, fire, police) and wait for days for enforcement officers to respond to persistent noise requests.

Several participants suggested that the City consider crowd sourcing data collection for disturbing noise, with standardized ways that residents can monitor and report noise. Take pressure off the City's enforcement team and

the police by having community members measure noise, especially when there is persistent noise from neighbours. The iPhone dB reader is pretty accurate. The City should consider creating a system where residents take photos and collect audio info and then send to 311.

Other participants focused on the fact that fines are too cheap. The consequences need to be higher. Small fines are insufficient to deter repeat offenders. Construction companies are working on Sundays and holidays without regard for the rules because they can afford to pay the fines. Suggestion to create escalating fines with increased consequences, for example, the first fine would be \$500, the second fine \$700, the third fine \$1,000, and the fourth fine \$10,000.

Additional suggestions included:

- More clearly defining unreasonable and persistent noise.
 - Measure sound at the source and at property limits, not just at the point of reception.
 - Consider automated noise and vibration measurement systems.
 - Address business transfers as they are a huge loophole when owners want to avoid paying fines.
 - Increase the number of Noise Bylaw enforcement officers.
 - Provide clarity on who is responsible for what.
 - Have enforcement officers available at 1am. *Officers are available until 2am during certain shifts.*
 - Have City enforcement respond in the moment, not after the fact. 72 hours is too long to wait for enforcement.
 - Create a proactive, solution-based model, with teams actively monitoring noise by patrolling different neighbourhoods and monitoring noise proactively, without having to rely on residents to make complaints.
 - Any noise longer than 10 minutes should be considered persistent and unreasonable.
 - Concern technology being used by enforcement officers do not pick up sound accurately, particularly related to persistent noise. No refinements to the Bylaw will help if equipment is not effective.
 - If modified exhausts are illegal, why are police not cracking down on drivers?
- Some said they did not want to have to call police for noise issues. It was also suggested that Noise Bylaw officers should be the first responders to non-emergency noise complaints.
 - Make data transparent. Strong interest in knowing how many complaints are being made, even if they are outside the mandate of bylaw enforcement officers.
4. **The exemption granted for private garbage collection negatively impacts many, with support for removing the exemption.** Many participants said that they are consistently being consistently deprived of sleep from overnight waste collection. They said:
- Picking up and putting down dumpsters is very noisy – both the sound (banging and clanking) and vibration wake people up. This is a mental health and physical health issue.
 - It was surprising to learn that the exemption was granted because of “safety”, which made them wonder about whether anyone considered that the negative impact of waste collection noise on sleep and well-being was also considered as a safety issue – and if not, it should have been.
 - GFL waste collection trucks are very noisy. The waste collection industry benefits from the revenues they receive from residents and taxpayers, so they should have to use some of that money to invest in noise-dampening.
 - The statistic in the City’s presentation that said 60% of residents surveyed are ok with waste collection noise at night was questioned by some participants who wondered if these are people who experience this noise.
 - The City should consider prohibiting waste collection in residential areas overnight.
 - Garbage collection trucks should be subject to the same regulations as motor vehicles, due to their loud banging, clanking, noises from hydraulic lift, truck bed shaking, revving of the truck engine, and other related noises.
5. **The vibration component of sound is a big problem.** Several participants raised concerned about the vibration component of noise, in addition to sound. They raised concerns with base frequencies in general, and specifically subwoofers from bars and clubs, the moving and dropping of large free weights in gyms, and

windows shaking and furniture moving because of these vibrations. Some expressed support for adding tonal considerations to the bylaw.

6. Noise from leaf blowers has reached excessive levels.

Many participants expressed appreciation for the ban on 2-stroke engines, including leaf blowers. Concerns were raised about consistent noise from landscaping in the Spadina and St. Clair area, Monday to Friday, all day, disturbing nearby neighbours. The City should consider mufflers for leaf blowers to reduce noise. It was suggested that cleaning machines also be considered power devices and given time constraints/reasonable hours for their use. Some also emphasized that noise from leaf blowers and other lawn equipment during the day and at 'reasonable hours' can still be a disruption to those working remotely from home, and a total ban or decibel limits would be a better solution.

7. Harbourfront is horrible now. It is difficult to sleep due to noise, lights, and waste collection. Party boats, and noise from Helitours out of Billy Bishop. The City needs to work with the Port Authority and others to address these noise sources. The Harbourfront Centre stage is disturbing to residents in the surrounding condos. Sound noisier over water

8. Other comments included:

- The need for the City to consider noise as an equity issue. Noise makes it difficult for people with accessibility requirements to function, especially for people with low vision or blindness.
- Delivery trucks noise is a problem, especially overnight. They cause noise, vibration, and pollution when they idle.
- Festivals are great but create a lot of noise so the City should consider moving them out of residential areas. Nuit Blanche is especially bad because it runs overnight.
- Support for updating the bylaw to apply to multiple sources.
- Support to use dBC and dBA limits for noise. *The City uses both dBC and dBA limits.*
- Issues with noise in Regent Park related to waste collection and noise from sidewalk cleaning equipment. There should not be exemptions for this type of noisy activities.
- Snow clearing, outdoor swimming pools, and illegal backyard fireworks are

problematic noise generators for some participants.

- Airplane noise is an issue, including from the airshow (which can be shortened in duration from 5 to 3 days and planes directed to fly over the lake rather than residential neighbourhoods), and from commercial planes accessing Pearson.
- Noise from vehicles including noise from stunt racing and modified exhausts. Screeching streetcar noise is very unpleasant and persistent. Loud beeps when some cars are locked and unlocked are also a problem.
- Construction noise in various areas of the city is a problem.
- Concern about exemptions granted for construction activity, and the need for applicants to provide notice of their request for exemption directly to the affected residents.
- City should increase its public education efforts with respect to noise and the Noise Bylaw.
- Noise from the diesel engines of GO trains which run through residential areas in the city was expressed as an issue for some participants.
- It was suggested that garbage trucks use sound mufflers.
- Consider having different Noise Bylaws and standards for different areas of the city, since different areas have different needs and noise levels.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City's website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.

Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 5 (of 6) Construction Noise (Virtual)

Via Zoom
Wednesday, September 20, 2023



FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Most participants said their experience with construction noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago**, mainly due to the significant increase in construction in the city.
2. **Need to balance the goals of building more housing and transit in the city with the effects of noise on the mental and physical health of residents.**
3. **It seems like the construction industry is not considering the noise impacts it has on residents' health.** Construction seems to be happening at all hours of the day and night, 7 days a week, with noise only stopping when an inspector arrives.
4. **Participants from the construction industry shared insights on what is happening in the industry.**
5. **The construction industry had concerns about the impact of the potential bylaw refinements being considered.**
6. **Voluntary compliance is not sufficient; enforcement must consider bad actors/bad behaviour and there needs to be enough of a consequence for violations.**
7. **Enforcement of bylaws is unclear and lacks transparency**, and too much is left up to individual interpretation by bylaw officers.
8. **There are concerns that the onus is on residents to track non-compliance.**
9. **Many suggested changes to the proposed bylaw refinements**, particularly using clear and more accessible language.
10. **The government should lead by example and be subject to the same requirements as others.**

On Wednesday, September 20, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the fifth of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on Construction Noise. 63 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Enforcement team, also participated.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

- 1. Most participants said their experience with construction noise in the city is worse than 4 years ago**, mainly due to the significant increase in the number of developments and residential construction in the city.

Participants consisted of residents from across the city, people from the construction and real estate industry, including small construction builders and members of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO). Some participants who live in quieter residential areas are more concerned with small-scale construction.

- 2. Need to balance the goals of building more housing and transit in the city with the effects of noise on the mental and physical health, careers, and social lives of residents.**

Participants said that sleep is essential, and noise is detrimental to people's health, with some saying that they haven't had a decent sleep in years due to overnight and early morning construction noises, and others have considered moving out of the city.

- 3. It seems like the construction industry is not considering the noise impacts it has on residents' health.**

Construction seems to be happening at all hours of the day and night, 7 days a week, with noise only stopping when an inspector arrives. Some participants said that the construction/renovation industry is only interested in profits with no consideration of the impact on neighbourhoods. Types of construction noise participants mentioned that are causing frustration included:

- Hours of operation – Large equipment operating 24 hours a day; early morning dump trucks (arriving at 6am); starting before 7am with delivery and refueling trucks.
- Specific activities and tools – Air horns; very loud backup beepers; unshielded generators; front end loaders; augers; etc.
- Metrolinx – construction noise and persistent operational noise (e.g., announcements can be heard 2 blocks away).

- 4. Participants from the construction industry shared insights on what is happening in the industry**, including:

- Pressure on the industry because Toronto needs the infrastructure.

- Pandemic exemptions allowed 24/7 construction.
- Workers don't want to disrupt neighbourhoods and they want to leave neighbourhoods as fast as possible. At the same time, building too fast can result in a lower quality of work.
- There have been supply issues with equipment so some companies are using older equipment that is louder because that's all that's available.

- 5. The construction industry had concerns about the impact of the potential bylaw refinements being considered.** Participants representing small home renovations and large construction firms flagged concerns about any changes that would impact their work. Small home renovators discussed the importance of context as there are differences between home renovations and large site construction, especially with more people working from home.
- 6. Voluntary compliance is not sufficient; enforcement must consider bad actors/bad behaviour and there needs to be enough of a consequence for violations.** Participants do not see sufficient consequences for big developers working outside designated hours and/or using very loud machines. Fines for non-compliance need to be much higher.
- 7. Enforcement of bylaws is unclear and lacks transparency.** Some participants said that too much is left up to individual interpretation by bylaw officers. Clarity on enforcement steps is necessary for bylaw officers and complainants. A publicly available step-by-step process would help everyone understand the process and be able to follow it, including where does each complaint go, who deals with it, who decides how they are enforced. Sharing construction management plans publicly would also be helpful. Others said to clarify who is exempt from the bylaw as the regulations do not seem to apply to Metrolinx, big developers and City projects.
- 8. There are concerns that the onus is on residents to track non-compliance**, so residents do not feel their complaints are heard or tended to. Participants said that it feels like 311 officers and City staff are trained to dissuade them from making a complaint rather than helping address the complaint. Others said

that residents in Scarborough don't feel like bylaw officers take complaints seriously and "they don't want to come out here". Some participants said that when calling 311 to report persistent noise issues, a complainant may get different advice. In one example, after calling multiple times, a complainant was informed that they had to record a video of the persistent noise, which puts a significant onus on the complainant to keep track of violations. Participants suggested making logs of 311 calls and see the trend/frequency of calls on this issue. The documentation would be helpful in future to know which bylaws to be revised/consulted on and create a smoother process of implementation.

9. **Many suggested changes to the proposed bylaw refinements, particularly using clear and more accessible language.** There were suggestions that the bylaw should be refined to create clearer and more accessible language to communicate what is permitted instead of what is not permitted. Some felt that the wording of the suggested refinement on exemption permits is much too vague, noting a need to specify what is high or low impact. Other suggested refinements to the bylaw include:

- The difference between infill and small scale renos should be specified, since small changes (deck renovations etc.) should be differentiated from larger projects.
- Use multiple permanent noise meters and don't average the readings. This eliminates the spikes in sound which have the most impact.
- Require the use of broadband reversal alarms to limit the "beeping" and alarm tones from reversing trucks to be directed only at those in danger (and safer for construction workers).
- Have tighter constraints in areas with single family homes. Smaller construction projects should have tighter constraints because they're right beside residents.
- If construction hours begin at 7 am, then deliveries should begin at 7 am not earlier.
- Protect Sundays and Statutory holidays as zero construction.
- Need Councillors to consult with enforcement officers; Councillors only have 14 days to respond, and participants do not think this is enough time.
- Hire more acoustical experts to meet demands. Participants were surprised by

what they see as the City's lack of technical knowledge and expertise related to measuring noise; there was also a concern about limited access to the acoustical equipment required to measure noise. *Staff go through mandatory training with engineers and have access to sound level measuring equipment.*

- Mitigation (e.g., sound absorption panels) should be a requirement for construction management plans in the same way that construction sites put up visual panels on sites.
- Make noise mitigation plans available to the public for consultation and input since these are a requirement for permits.
- Consider embedding noise prevention into zoning considerations. Bylaws should be drafted to anticipate longer-term noise and be linked to zoning considerations and approvals to consider the possible impact of construction noise on residents. For example, if a building is zoned for 7 storeys but is now being considered for a new 30-storey build, the increased and prolonged noise impacts should be considered as part of the zoning process.
- Measure noise at the point of origin instead of the point of reception.
- Measure and consider ambient noise.
- dBA is not a sufficient unit for measuring sound, in particular vibrations. At other meeting participants suggested using dB(Z) instead to measure sound.
- Provide more information clarity on when and why exemptions are being provided, including the duration of the exemption, what the exemption is being provided for, and the conditions that must be followed. There was concern about the number of exemptions being provided by the City.
- Look to other jurisdictions for ideas.

10. **The government should lead by example and be subject to the same requirements as others.** Elected officials need to advocate on behalf of their constituents to other levels of government if construction noise from a project is outside of municipal jurisdiction. Government construction projects should be subject to the same requirements as others, with the same accountability mechanisms. Many participants raised concerns with Metrolinx noise, including both construction and operational noise. They said that construction noise needs to be addressed regardless of jurisdiction. Currently,

government projects (such as LRT and those companies contracted by the government) are permitted any time of day to conduct construction but regular construction sites must comply with the noise bylaws. Provincial construction should adhere to municipal bylaws.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City's website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.

Implementation Review of the Noise Bylaw

Public Meeting 6 (of 6) Amplified Sound (In-person)

Metro Hall, 55 John Street
Room 308/309
Thursday, September 21, 2023



On Thursday, September 21, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted the sixth of six public meetings to seek public input into the successes and challenges of implementing the Noise Bylaw amended in 2019, and to present and seek feedback on draft potential refinements to the Noise Bylaw. This meeting focused on seeking feedback on Amplified Sound. 38 members of the public attended the meeting. Representatives from Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), including the Noise Enforcement team, also attended. Councillor Ausma Malik also attended.

This summary was written by Third Party Public Inc., the engagement team retained by the City to facilitate the public meetings. It was subject to participant review before being finalized. It reflects the points discussed verbally, as well as written comments received at the meeting.

The intent of this summary report is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Municipal Licensing and Standards or the City of Toronto.

Note that the numbering of the points is intended for ease of reference only and not intended to imply any type of priority. Responses from MLS are *in italics*.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The points below summarize the overall feedback received at the meeting. More details related to each point follow.

OVERALL

1. **Most participants said their experience with amplified sound in the city is worse than 4 years ago**, with a few who were unsure if it has changed, and a few who said no.
2. **There needs to be a balance** among having music and liveliness in the city, economic viability and livelihood of artists and performers, and reasonable enjoyment of life for residents, especially in mixed use areas.
3. **A range of concerns with the bylaw were shared**, including different parts of the Noise Bylaw not working well together, difficulty attracting performers, etc.
4. **Many supported the proposed bylaw refinement 3** (introduce separate sections for commercial and living area amplified sound).
5. **Mixed opinions on how noise impacts should be measured.**
6. **Many suggested general refinements to the proposed bylaw**, including measuring using db(Z), making the bylaw language simpler, adding clear definitions, and many more.
7. **Mixed opinions on experience with noise coming from those who applied for exemption permits.**
8. **Need for stronger enforcement of the bylaw**, including better real-time enforcement, proactive enforcement by adding noise mitigation requirements (e.g. soundproofing), and many more.
9. **Improve the complaint process**, including more training for 311 operators to provide complainants better information, creating a public app to help with tracking of noise issues and enforcement.
10. **Increase transparency with the public**, including sharing more information on training of bylaw officers, complaint process, number of days it takes to dispatch enforcement after a complaint is made, etc.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. Most participants said their experience with amplified sound in the city is worse than 4 years ago, with a few who were unsure if it has changed, and a few who said it hasn't.

Participants consisted of residents mostly from downtown, establishment operators, festival/music events staff, and street performers/musicians. Many participants shared their negative experience with amplified sound in the city, including:

- Noise from bars and nightclubs, especially between 10am-3am.
- Excessive volume from amplified sound
- Noise from businesses/activities taking place in live/work buildings, especially in older buildings that do not have proper soundproofing.
- Vibration from music and bass, particularly for new buildings as participants said the building code does not require acoustical separation.
- Events or establishments operating without a permit or license (e.g., clubs in basements, DJ'd events in parkettes, autobody shops or restaurants not licensed as bars).
- Neighbourhood parties with loud DJs and sound systems, some in laneways.
- Noise from patios.
- Noise from street performers.
- Noise from party boats, especially from parties after 11pm.
- Summer festivals operating until 3am.
- Events lasting several days.
- Large events including protests and parades that make it difficult to do everyday activities.

2. There needs to be a balance between having music and liveliness in the city, economic viability and livelihood of artists and performers, and reasonable enjoyment of life for residents, especially in mixed use areas. Toronto is a world class artistic city. Many said that they like music and events and that noise is part of living in the city, however, when the volume of music is too high, it is a problem. Participants said that the sound can be heard through closed windows and residents have to wear ear plugs and headphones at all times to have quiet in their homes, making life unbearable. To some residents, it seems that commercial interests

are prioritized over residents' interests, which is an issue especially in mixed use areas with residents and in particular the entertainment district. Many said that people living in these mixed-used properties should be the priority.

3. A range of concerns with the bylaw were shared, including:

- Different parts of the Noise Bylaw not working well together. Specifically, rules around amplified sound trump rules about unreasonable and persistent noise and that is not good.
- Difficulty attracting performers to Toronto because of the noise regulations.
- Exemption permits being "limited to 85 dBA 20 metres from the source" was a concern because it applies the same rules for every circumstance (e.g., for one performer/busker and for a big concert) and that should not be the case.
- Discrimination against the use of amplification devices in the City's regulations for busking and street performing when noise from drums/brass instruments emitting the same or louder sound is permitted. This is a particular concern for performers who need amplification devices to do their work. There's concern that all street performers are then being blanketed as creating noise when many are complying with bylaws and it's those who do not follow rules that create a bad reputation. It also does not make sense to penalize street performers for using amplification devices when the area has many sources of noise (e.g., Yonge & Dundas).

4. Many supported the proposed bylaw refinement 3 (introduce separate sections for commercial and living area amplified sound), with one supporting refinement 2 (lower decibel levels + consider additional enforcement pathway). The one participant who supported potential refinement 2 said they liked the additional enforcement pathways and that refinement 3 would negatively impact those who live in mixed use areas. Some shared suggestions to refinement 3, including:

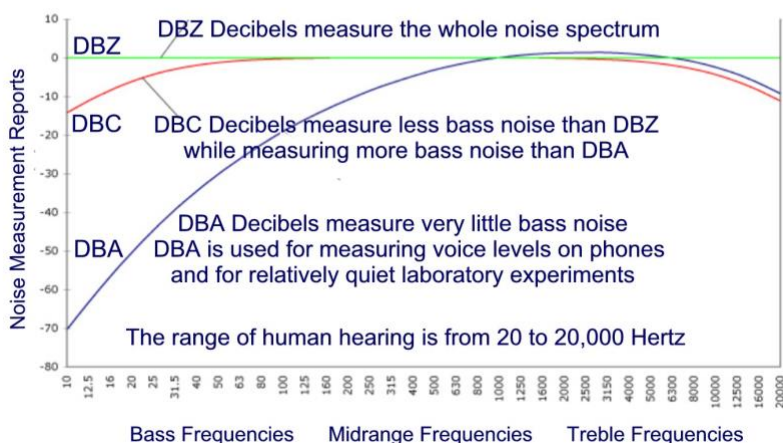
- Defining commercial properties/uses based on commercial activities conducted (e.g., having a liquor licence, special occasions permit, etc.).
- Adding public spaces as a criteria.
- Clarify the regulations for mixed use areas.

5. **Mixed opinions on how noise impacts should be measured.** Many said it should be measured at the source instead of point of reception, while others said to measure noise at reception and the ambient noise in relation to it. Some said the City is avoiding responsibility by measuring only at the source. *Clarification: The City measures at point of reception for many Noise Bylaw categories.* Others said to be cautious of measuring impact only by decibels as impact should also be based on people's experience and how it impacts their quality of life. However, others said that quantitative measures should be used because qualitative experiences are subjective.

6. **Many suggested general refinements to the proposed bylaw including:**

- Strong support from some participants to measure using dB(Z). These participants said that dBA is not a sufficient unit for measuring amplified sound, including bass. See chart shared by a participant below.

Comparing DBA, DBC & DBZ Decibels



- Make language in the bylaw simpler. Include clear and specific definitions for “persistent noise” – what is it and how is it enforceable.
- Include language to provide an indication of what decibels mean to a regular person (e.g., what does 45 dBA sound compare to?)
- Address vibration from amplified sound.
- Consider different decibel level limits/points of reception for different events. It's difficult to set a single standard baseline where everyone will agree.
- Go back to previous bylaw by removing decibel/volume restrictions and go back to

restricting any/all amplified sound beyond the property line.

- Coordinate the bylaw refinements with the Night Economy Review.
- Do not allow amplified speakers on patios of businesses.
- Consider making bars and clubs close their doors if the sound is above a certain decibel.
- Take the context of the event into account to provide a way to navigate the complexities of the bylaw. Many establishments, events, and performers are willing to work with the City to find a reasonable path forward and penalize only those who intentionally want to disturb.

7. **Mixed opinions on experience with noise coming from those who applied for exemption permits.** Some said their experience is worse than 4 years ago, others were unsure. When considering exemptions for events, ensure the venue has enough space/capacity to accommodate the potential higher volume of noise that will be generated.

8. **Need for stronger enforcement of the bylaw.**

There was a recognition from participants that enforcement resources are limited, however bylaws become weak when real-time enforcement is not possible, especially at night when a lot of disruptions happen. The current enforcement model relies heavily on discussions with violators and does not work or translate into change from those who create amplified noise. Enforcement needs to be more proactive by adding requirements to include soundproofing and proper acoustical barriers of restaurants, bars, and clubs. *Participant comment after reviewing the draft summary: Sound proofing is not pro-active enforcement of the Noise Bylaw. It may be a proactive measure to stave off a noise complaint but it should not be used in the context of enforcement.*

Others said enforcement was better before the Bylaw amendments because of discretion given to officers. Other suggestions included:

- Need more enforcement on the volume of amplified devices.
- Increase fines to deter offenders.
- Hire more enforcement officers. A team of 27 officers cannot cover an entire city. Others said the response from bylaw officers have declined (quick response before, but 3-5 business days wait now).

- Consider scaling fines. Fines should be related to the value of the property or business and what they bring in (i.e., the fine should hurt and not be part of doing business – existing fines seem like a drop in the bucket). An example shared was a venue in King-Portland which has 32 noise complaints with no fines to date.
 - Consider allowing for community-level responses to noise complaints. Permit residents to compile information and assist when there is non-compliance (e.g., appoint a person who can ask loud neighbours to quiet down).
 - Publicly identify venues that have multiple infractions (like health inspection posters)
 - Go after building owners/directors. If clubs are charged with violations, they just change their name.
9. **Improve the complaint process.** There needs to be more training for 311 operators so they have better information to provide to people making complaints (what is/is not allowed, what will happen with complaint, etc.). Others suggested the City to create an app that measures decibel levels and records sound. Members of the public could download the app and upload recordings to help with tracking of issues and enforcement.
10. **Increase transparency with the public,** including sharing more information on the training that bylaw officers receive, acoustical engineering report and process/formula used by bylaw officers for determining ambient noise. Interest in understanding things like whether the loud asphalt plant in Ward 12 has an exemption; the number of days it takes to dispatch enforcement after a complaint is made; whether the complaint process is anonymous (since there have been cases where participants called and filed complaints and neighbours shared that the officer said that they had made the complaint); whether accommodations are made for buskers and live performances on patios; and whether amplified noise on patios is banned in the bylaw.

- The City needs to have distinct/different rules for what is allowed for essential construction (e.g. building housing) versus renovations done by property owners to increase value of their property.
- Time limits for construction should not just be time-of-day. The City also needs to look at restrictions around the length of construction projects (e.g., 9 months of straight construction).
- Consider requirements for soundproofing to mitigate noise (especially in live-work units).
- Concern about condo boards not acting on noise complaints within the condo.

NEXT STEPS

The City thanked participants for attending and reminded them of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by October 15, 2023, to be considered as part of the Review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in the coming months. To subscribe for e-updates about the Implementation Review, add your email on the City's website www.toronto.ca/noisereview.

Other comments:

- Share a link to the Night Economy Report. *Updates on the Night Economy Review can be found on the City's webpage [here](#).*
- Unreasonable and persistent noise should not be its own category; it should overlap with other noise categories.