

NoMoreNoise *Toronto!*

HL11.3 - Implementation Panel for Our Health, Our City:
A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and
Treatment Strategy for Toronto

March 28, 2024

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- Ingrid Buday, Founder
- Have a background in process design, data & IT
- Founded this group over 1.5 years ago after I learned that I am not the only one who is experiencing significant health issues due to noise
- I've created a data centered approach around understanding the noise we live with by
 - measuring sound from people's homes with meters for over 2 years
 - Collecting crowdsourced "Not 311" Noise Reports to fill the gaps that exist in the 311 reporting process
- We are interested in collaborating with city divisions to make for a healthier Toronto by reducing Noise Pollution



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Definition of Noise:

Unwanted and / or harmful sound

[American Public Health Association](#)

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How does Noise Pollution fit with OHOC?

There are 7 Strategic goals and noise applies to two of them:

#4 Advance community safety and wellbeing for everyone

#7 Proactively identify and respond to emerging mental health and substance abuse issues.

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#4. Advancing Community Safety & Wellbeing for Everyone

People who live with vision loss:

- Noise muffles the cues they need to navigate
- They should be able to navigate the city without fear and have safe and accessible journeys.

People with cognitive impairments:

- Aggressive, sudden and loud sounds trigger our fight or flight response and can cause adverse reactions

Everyone

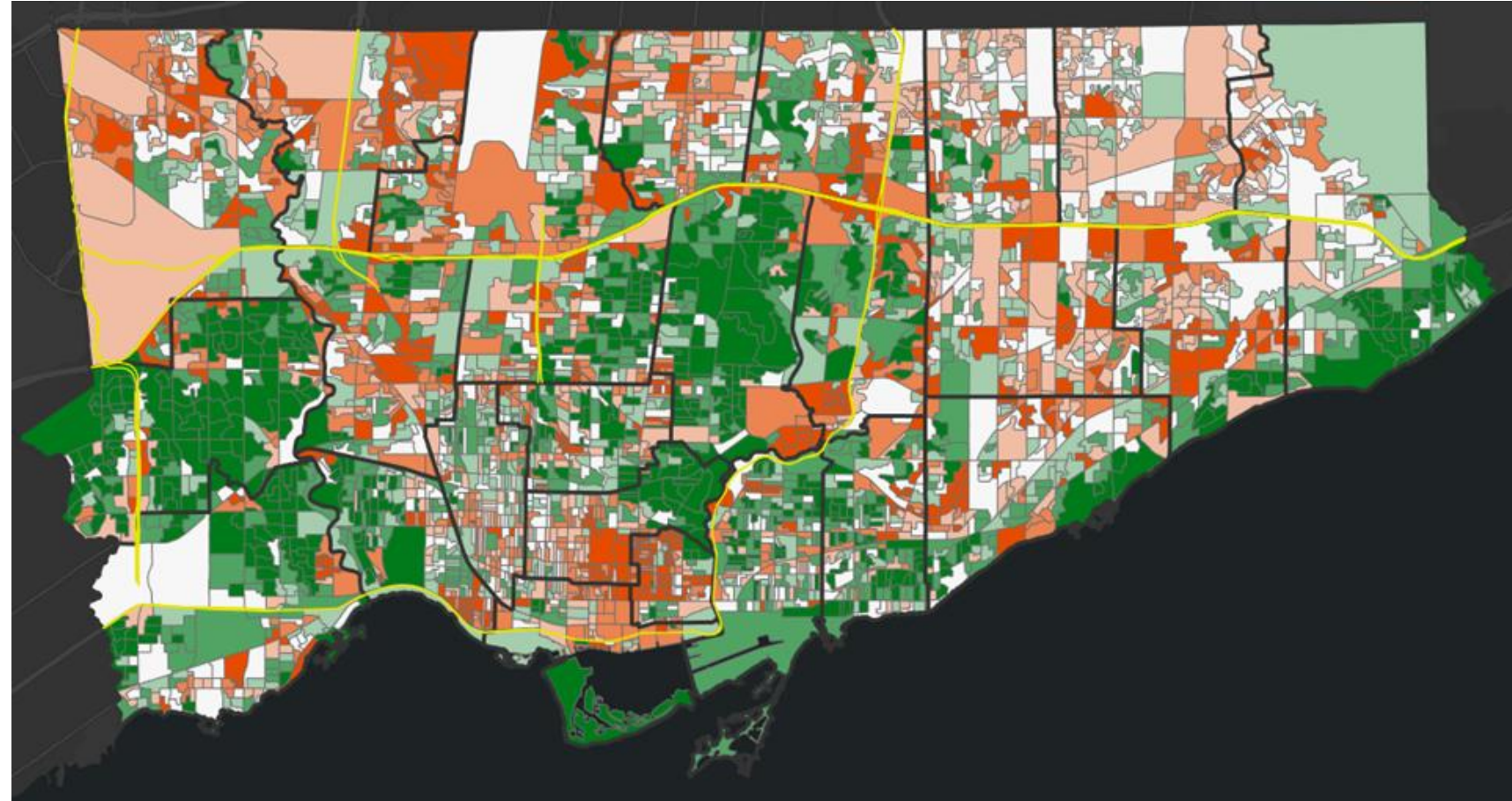
- People should be able to walk our streets without being assaulted by loud vanity noise from cars and motorcycles
- Our homes should be places of rest. Some are exposed to amplified sound at all hours, from which they have no escape from.

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Noise Vulnerability Map

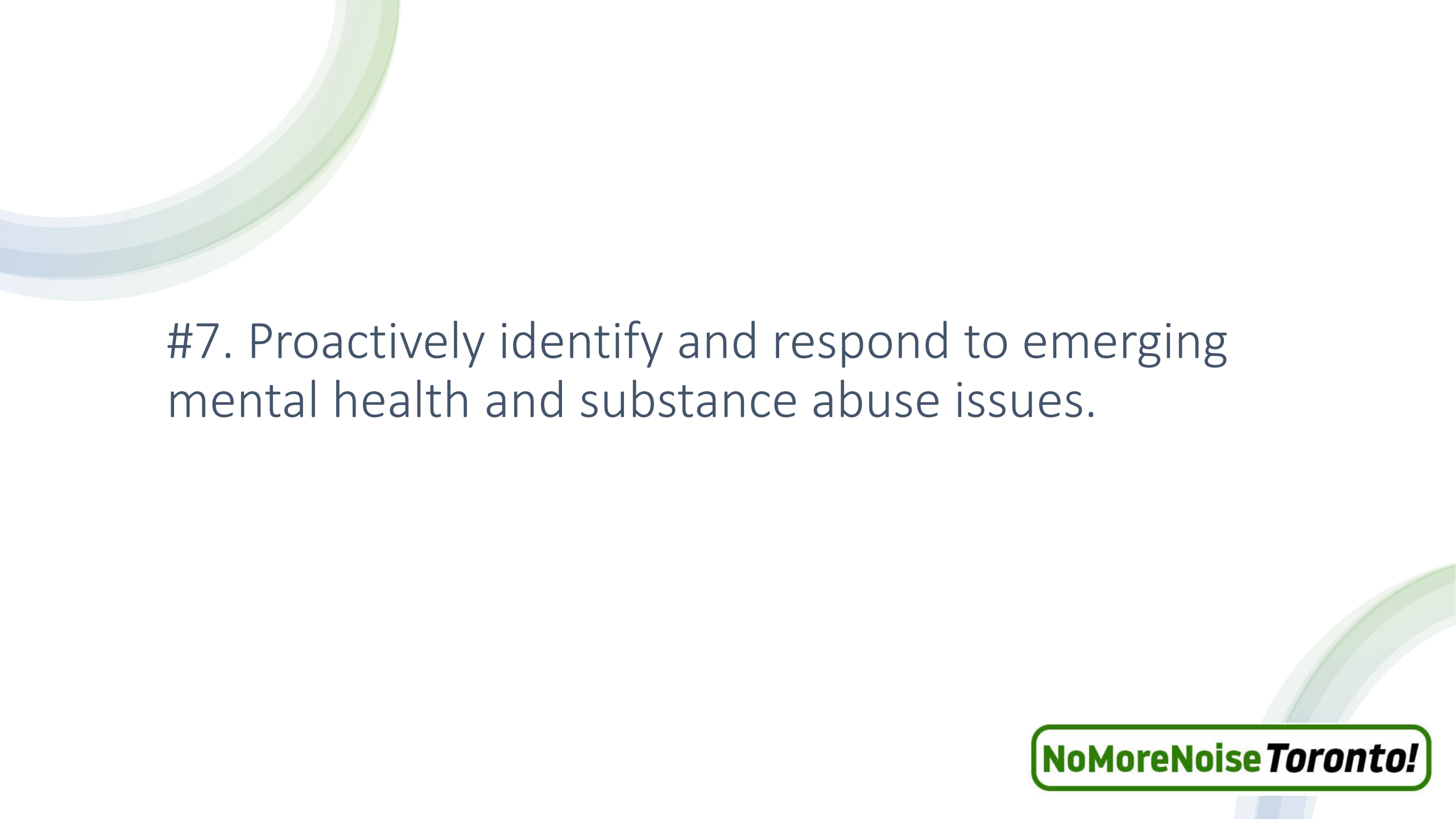
To further understand how Toronto residents are influenced by noise, a noise vulnerability index map was produced to visualize the disparities within communities.

- Household Income from [Statistics Canada](#),
- Household Ownership from [Statistics Canada](#)
- Racial Marginalization from [Ontario Marginalization Index](#)



Orange is high probability, low is green.

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#7. Proactively identify and respond to emerging mental health and substance abuse issues.

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Urban Noise is the #2 Urban Environmental Health Hazard

In 2017 Toronto Public Health published “How Loud is Too Loud”

- Almost 93% of residents are exposed to noise over the WHO guideline of 45 dBA
- 54% exposed to noise above 55dBA where health impacts are known to occur.
- Some of these health impacts are increases in:
 - Heart disease
 - Heart failure
 - Diabetes
 - High blood pressure
- Annoyance and sleep disturbance cause these and many other health issues such as depression, anxiety, and impair learning in children and loss of concentration and focus for adults.



[Click image for report](#)

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My Story

- I have lived in the same location for 10 years.
- Started to notice vanity vehicle noise in 2019, adding to the motorcycle noise
- After the first month of the pandemic drivers discovered the empty streets and I was kept up or woken up until 2 and 3 am - this started my noise journey
- Summer of 2022 employer wanted me to return to the office with a 1 hour commute
- I had to quit and decided to deal with the noise pollution
- I have no escape from the vehicle noise in my condo it is present everywhere.
- This has resulted in substance abuse, medications, constant emotional management, chronic fatigue, increased depression and anxiety.

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Other people's stories

People are being involuntarily exposed to a harm and many are suffering and tell me of their frustration, chronic fatigue and reduced quality of life.

- Increase in medications and substance abuse
- Pushed further to “the edge” rather than being supported
- If they are trying to recover or reduce drug dependency, noise makes it even more difficult.
- Those with mental issues and /or challenges are more impacted.
- They feel helpless

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Reduction and Prevention

Have meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience.

- Involve people who are impacted – many have creative, inexpensive solutions
- Involve people living with vision loss, brain injuries or cognitive illnesses they have needs and perspectives that must be addressed
- Noise bylaws need to protect people's health, i.e. reduce the number of exemptions
- Stop prioritizing other things (like expediency or traffic flow) over our health
- Review the recommendations [Noise Control Plan](#) created in 2019
- Make reducing Noise Pollution a Strategic Priority

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Reducing Noise supports:

- Public Health
 - Health impacts are well understood and documented
- TransformTO:
 - Modified mufflers increase GHG emissions
 - Force use of closing windows and using air conditioning (if lucky enough to have that)
- CafeTO
 - Makes our streets more pleasant places to linger and support local businesses
- Vision Zero
 - Drivers who have illegal modifications are also, most often engaging in activities that are known to cause Killed and Serious Injury (KSI) Collisions*
- Night Economy
 - Ensures that residents have a good sleep, night workers can sleep during the day
- Statement of Commitment to Accessibility
 - Noise creates an additional barriers for those living with vision loss or have brain injuries
- Streetscape Improvement Program
 - create safe and attractive retail areas
- Strong Neighbourhoods

Sources:

- TPS report to TPSB January 16, 2023
- ** Toronto Public Health Report: How Loud is Too Loud, 2017

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Creating a Better Toronto by Reducing Noise

www.nomorenoisetoronto.com

