

Board of Health

From: Lesley Monette <civiciinput@newmode.org>
Sent: July 5, 2024 2:44 PM
To: Board of Health
Subject: [External Sender] Reducing noise pollution benefits everyone

Categories: Communication

Dear City Division Board of Health,

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the July 8, 2024 Board of Health meeting on item 2024.HL14.1, Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

In addition to our neighbourhood being terribly impacted by continuous noise and air pollution from the Billy Bishop Airport, including not only planes but also all the ground equipment, we have additional noise cause by all the cars that come to drop off travellers and so many trucks, vans and buses and diesel oil tankers who deliver to the airport and line up for the ferry.

The ferry is extremely noisy as vehicles go over the metal ramps to and from the loading area, and these noise begin well before the standard city time regulations and well before the 6:44 first time for planes to take off often about 6 am..

I'd add to this - fireworks esp. after 11 a.m. On July 1st they were going off well into the night, I think stopping only after 3 a.m.

Party boats are a huge problem going through the western gap after 11 p.m with huge bases booming. They use their loudspeakers, and play amplified music, while entering the western gap and into the harbour.

Police and ambulance sirens are a real problem. Since we are next to a shelter, they go off frequently. An examination about protocol for using sirens from Fire, Ambulance and Police could use a review to see how some could be reduced.

In addition I would add motorcycles and cars with those noisy (and think illegal) mufflers that roar down Lake Shore late at night as well. They often start at about midnight.

Finally, we have an elementary school, daycare, childrens playgrounds, a community park right up against the pier edge to the island and one of the most densely populated areas in the city.

Add to that a marina with boats playing music into the evening, and parks sometimes with people playing amplified music and on weekends in particular and all day, especially in the spring/summer/fall months we must stay inside and keep all our windows closed just to tolerate the noise.

The City Dept of Health really needs to address these issues that have a huge impact on human health

We are asking for the Board of Health to direct the Medical Officer of Health to address indoor and outdoor noise health issues as part of Toronto Public Health's Strategic Plan. Noise pollution is on the rise and there are no biological defenses for sound. This reduces the health of people and ecosystems and increases the impacts of climate change – it impacts everyone and everything

Noise is a serious public health issue.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified Noise as the # 2 urban environmental health hazard (after air pollution which is # 1). Some of the noises that disturb us can be easily eliminated or prevented with proactive actions such as educating residents and elected officials, better bylaws and using modern technologies in enforcement and materials in construction.
- As Toronto Public Health (TPH) mentioned, in their own 2017 report ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE STUDY IN THE CITY OF TORONTO¹, almost 93% of Toronto residents must try to sleep in an environment above the WHO guideline of 45 dBA. Since that report was produced sound levels have increased. Unmitigated, unnecessary noise overburdens healthcare and necessitates medical treatments that would not be needed if noise was regulated properly.
- Indoor noise due to poor construction and maintenance allows noise from other areas and from outside to penetrate our homes, providing no place for rest and recovery.

Noise is also a climate issue.

- Buildings are the # 1 producer of GHG's in the city. Our inability to open our windows to cool ourselves due to the noise outside becomes a health hazard in the summer. And when we turn on our air conditioning, we increase our emission of GHGs even more.
- Transportation is the #2 producer of GHGs. It is also the most ubiquitous source of noise. Of course, all this noise forces us to go inside, and (if we are lucky enough) to turn on our AC (see above!).
- To make matters worse, too many Torontonians modify the exhaust systems of their vehicles (which is illegal). This reduces or eliminates the emissions controls intended to reduce climate change and creates a lot of unnecessary noise.

Noise is also a serious equity issue

- As the TPH report noted, those in the lowest income quartile are 11 times more likely to live in loud places.
- Those who are blind, have disabilities and cognitive impairments are also physically and mentally more impacted.

As Toronto Public Health is creating their Strategic Plan for the next 4 years, you have a new opportunity to dust off the 2019 Noise Action Plan². From this document, objectives could be developed and workplans implemented with results evaluated for effectiveness. We also encourage you to work with Community groups, such as No More Noise Toronto, to learn about the impacts and find solutions.

We are asking you to give indoor and outdoor noise pollution the attention that it deserves

Sources:

1: ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE STUDY IN THE CITY OF TORONTO: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/8f4d-tph-Environmental-Noise-Study-2017.pdf>

2: 2019 TPH Noise Action Plan: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-138868.pdf>

Sincerely,
Lesley Monette
Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association Board Member Noise Representative