

## Follow-up on EC27.2 Review of Street Vending and Artists: Addressing Non-Busker Amplified Disturbances Near Residential Areas and Sankofa Square

**Date:** May 15, 2026

**To:** City Council

**From:** Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

---

Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 591, Noise (“Noise By-law”) balances the city’s vibrancy with the needs of residents and visitors by providing time restrictions and sound level limits for various types of noise. The Bylaw works to set out clear and enforceable noise rules across the City, while providing flexibility to meet local needs.

In April 2026, City Council adopted EC27.2, *Review of Toronto’s Street Vending and Artists By-laws*, which amended Chapter 740 to provide that, beginning in March 2027, buskers and sidewalk artist permit holders will be permitted to use amplification between noon and 8:00 p.m. each day, with some street excepted from this permission. All emission of noise must be in accordance with the Noise By-law, and permit holders will be required to display permit information to ensure they are identifiable. The report also outlined the City’s enforcement approach to busking-related noise complaints, which are addressed under Chapter 591, Noise.

In considering enforcement of amplified sound from street performers, Council also directed the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to report on options to dissuade amplified disturbances in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods and Sankofa Square, where no donations are requested or no money changes hands. This activity is not regulated by Chapter 740.

The purpose of this report is to clarify that the Noise By-law applies to amplified sound regardless of whether donations are solicited, and MLS will continue to take progressive enforcement action as required to address illegal amplified noise disturbances as it arises in Sankofa Square and elsewhere.

As part of the broader implementation of the updated Chapter 740 approved by Council, staff will report back in Q4 2027 on implementation progress, including general monitoring of related noise complaints.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommend that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information identified in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

---

On April 22 and 23, 2026, City Council adopted [EC27.2 - Review of Toronto's Street Vending and Artists By-laws](#), and directed the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to report directly to the May 20, 21, 22, 2026 meeting of City Council on options to dissuade amplified disturbances in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods and Sankofa Square, where no donations are requested or no money changes hands.

On February 6, 2024, City Council adopted [EC9.6 - Implementation Review of the Noise By-law](#), which made amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591, Noise, including updating definitions, amending decibel limits for amplified sound, and updating fees and charges.

## **COMMENTS**

---

### **Purpose**

This report responds to direction from City Council for Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) to report on options to dissuade amplified disturbances in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods and Sankofa Square, where no donations are requested or no money changes hands.

The direction relates to amplified activity by street performers who are not soliciting donations, which falls outside the scope of the street vending and busking by-laws but within scope of the Noise By-law (Chapter 591).

## **Background**

Amplified sound is regulated by City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591, Noise (the “Noise By-law”), which generally regulates noise in Toronto by establishing time restrictions and sound level limits for various noise sources. The Noise By-law is intended to balance Toronto’s urban vibrancy with the need for a livable and reasonably peaceful environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Noise By-law includes specific provisions for amplified sound, including decibel limits that are measured at a point of reception, and vary depending on the time of day; more restrictive limits apply overnight between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., including weekends and statutory holidays.

Chapter 740 of the Toronto Municipal Code regulates street vending and artist activity on City streets, including buskers. Beginning in March 2027, the following changes will be enacted:

1. Buskers and sidewalk artist permit holders will be permitted to use amplification between noon and 8:00 p.m. each day, with some street excepted from this permission. All emission of noise must be in accordance with limits set in the Noise By-law.
2. While performing or emitting music, a busker should maintain a minimum separation distance of 50 metres from other sources of amplified sound, including other buskers and nearby businesses, and
3. Buskers will be required to publicly display their permit to be easily identifiable.

As Chapter 740 regulates only street vending activity, amplified noise by persons soliciting donations falls within the scope of Chapter 740. Noise by performers not soliciting donations does not fall under the scope of Chapter 740. Noise is generally regulated by the Noise By-law regardless if the noise comes from vending on a street or not.

## **Enforcement of Noise Bylaw**

### *Noise-related Service Requests*

Residents wishing to submit a noise complaint about street performers (who are soliciting donations or not) can submit the complaint through 311 using online, phone, or mobile channels, by selecting the appropriate noise-related service request category (in this case, amplified noise). Service requests are then triaged and routed to MLS for action.

311 data supports a priority and risk-based response model, allowing service requests to be triaged based on urgency, frequency, and potential health and safety impacts. In addition to being used to respond to specific service requests, noise data is used to identify trends, problems and locations needing targeted or proactive enforcement, through use of data dashboards, mapping and data visualization.

## *Enforcement Approach*

Noise enforcement is carried out by Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS). Noise complaints are received through 311 and are prioritized based on frequency and impact, with a focus on persistent or recurring noise issues rather than isolated events.

The Noise Enforcement Team utilizes a responsive enforcement model where most of their work is responding to service requests, undertaking sound level measurements given a complaint, and providing education to promote compliance. By-law enforcement officers are not emergency responders and do not attend noise complaints on an emergency basis, nor do they have the authority to immediately stop a noise event. Actions taken in response to violations follow a compliance-based framework that often begins with education and may include other enforcement like issuing orders or charges.

Under the Noise By-law, amplified sound and other noise sources are regulated through prescribed sound level limits and time-based restrictions. Amplified sound is subject to maximum decibel limits measured at a point of reception, including both indoor and outdoor living areas. Where existing ambient sound levels exceed the prescribed limits, amplified sound is not permitted to exceed the ambient sound level. More restrictive limits apply during nighttime hours, including reduced decibel thresholds for amplified sound measured from indoor points of reception between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

When investigating a complaint involving amplified sound, officers may exercise a range of assessment options, including identifying the source of the sound, its proximity to the complainant's location, and whether the sound is audible, measurable and/or violates the Noise By-law at the point of reception. Officers may use sound-level measuring equipment to determine compliance with applicable limits set out in the Noise By-law.

Where appropriate, officers may engage directly with the individual responsible for the amplified sound to provide education on Noise By-law requirements.. This can be done after a complaint is made, or proactively (for example, through notices to licenced or permitted businesses or individuals in an area). Officers may also take further enforcement action under Chapter 591, as appropriate, including issuing orders to comply or charges, as warranted.

## *Noise Enforcement Data*

The Noise Enforcement Team at MLS consists of 40 staff, including 30 Bylaw Enforcement Officers, 4 Supervisors and 1 Manager.

From January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2025, the City's Noise Enforcement Team received 51,832 complaints related to amplification. The Public Spaces team, which responds to complaints for buskers and sidewalk artists using amplification, received 825 over this time period (i.e. 1.6% of all complaints for amplified sound).

In 2025, there were 1,167 noise complaints in Ward 13 – the ward in which Sankofa Square is located – which represented 6.5% of all complaints in the City. Of the noise complaints in Ward 13, 42% (487 complaints) were regarding amplified sound.

## **Next Steps**

Municipal Licensing and Standards is monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Noise By-law, including its application to amplified sound in public spaces such as Sankofa Square and in proximity to residential areas. Staff will continue to apply available enforcement options within the current education-first, compliance-based framework, while monitoring complaint and enforcement trends.

MLS will also keep working with local Councillors, community stakeholders, and affected residents and businesses to address location-specific concerns and support compliance with the Noise By-law.

As part of the broader implementation of the updated Street Vending and Artists bylaws approved by Council, staff will report back in Q4 2027 on implementation progress, including general monitoring of related noise complaints.

## **CONTACT**

---

Joanna Hazelden, Director (Acting), Policy and Strategic Support, Municipal Licensing and Standards, 416-392-9830, [Joanna.Hazelden@toronto.ca](mailto:Joanna.Hazelden@toronto.ca)

Anna Fernandes, Director, By-law Enforcement, Municipal Licensing and Standards, 416-396-8221, [Anna.Fernandes@toronto.ca](mailto:Anna.Fernandes@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Sean McGowan  
Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards