



NOISE BYLAW REVIEW

Public Meeting 2 – Motor Vehicles Summary

Metro Hall Room 310, 55 John St
January 29, 2019, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

On Tuesday, January 29, 2019, the City of Toronto hosted the second of five public meetings to share and seek feedback on options being considered by Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) as part of the City’s Noise Bylaw Review. Sixteen members of the public participated, including two people representing different resident associations, twelve unaffiliated residents and two people signing into the meeting without identifying an affiliation. Representatives from MLS and Toronto Public Health also participated.

This summary was written by the third party facilitation team from Swerhun Inc., and was subject to participant review before being finalized.

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 on the Criteria to Consider when Updating the Noise Bylaw

Participants said that the criteria used by the City to assess the potential Noise Bylaw updates seem reasonable, and the “jurisdiction / legal authority” criterion needs to be given priority to ensure the bylaws are enforceable by the City. There was also support for the “enforceable”, “reduced impact on residents”, “objective”, and “reasonable” criteria. They also said:

1. **Addressing noise needs to be framed within a public health narrative.** The impact of noise on public health should be a key priority in developing updates to the Noise Bylaw, with some participants looking to see a public health framework come first, and then updating of the Noise Bylaw within that framework. A participant suggested analyzing data related to health impacts of noise, including the use of sleep medication, rates of insomnia, depression and anxiety in parts of the city with different noise levels to better understand how noise impacts health of residents. Immediate actions are required to reduce the negative impacts noise is having on public health, and public education is required to help people understand the negative impact that noise has on public health.
2. **The “reasonable” criterion:**

- **Needs to recognize that while the city grows, the increase in noise comes along with an increase in the number of people affected by noise.** It is also important to remember that what's "reasonable" may differ between downtown and the suburbs.
 - **Is unclear.** Participants suggested that MLS use the World Health Organization's definition of "reasonable ambient noise" in the list of criteria.
3. **It is important that bylaws are easy to understand, follow, and enforce.** To make bylaws truly objective, include concrete, measurable metrics / numbers to define excessive noise and identify technologies and methodologies to measure these numbers.
 4. **Take a comprehensive approach in developing the bylaw.** The more the City can regulate, the more noise complaints it can address.

Feedback on Options being Considered for Bylaw Updates

1. **MODIFIED OPTION: Preference for Option 2 with the addition of specific decibel limits.** Participants agreed with the suggestions made by the Toronto Noise Coalition (TNC) representative, which suggested identifying a decibel limit in the bylaw to ensure objective measurement of noise. A limit of 82 dB was suggested (when measured 50 cm away from the exhaust when idling), and a limit of 86 dB for any RPMs other than idling. Revving of engines should not be permitted. The TNC representative also said that a standard equipment muffler on Harley-Davidson motorcycles produce about 80 dB, which supports the suggested decibel limit.* Option 2 is also preferred by residents in attendance because it promotes cooperation and coordination of enforcement efforts between Toronto Police Service (TPS) and bylaw enforcement. *MLS noted that Caledon and Oakville have limits of 92 dB 50 cm from the exhaust when idling, and 96 dB at 2,000 RPM.* Participant note added after the meeting: the decibel limits set for Caledon and Oakville should not be applied to Toronto as Toronto has more tall buildings that could permit sound to bounce around.
2. **Option 3 should not be considered because participants are not prepared for the City to abandon this tool supporting noise bylaw enforcement on moving vehicles.** With the re-direction of TPS efforts through the Transformational Task Force recommendations (see MLS staff presentation slides sent to participants separately), participants are not confident that enforcing the noise bylaws under the Highway Traffic Act would be a priority for the TPS if it is not included in the City's Noise Bylaw.
3. **NEW OPTION: Modified vehicles of any type should not be allowed on the roads (i.e. stop the noise at source).** This means banning motorcycles with modified mufflers and cars with "sport mode" due to concerns that it increases noise. However, some participants flagged that "sport mode" only increases the torque (not sound emitted) so it should not be banned.

Other Feedback

1. **The City should lead by example** by regulating noise from City-employed vehicles (e.g. TTC vehicles, garbage trucks, street sweepers, maintenance vehicles, excavation trucks contracted by the City, etc.), and making all efforts to reduce noise it produces. *The City understands the sentiment and it is continually working to improve its efforts to reduce noise produced from City operations. That being said, some of these services may be identified as "necessary municipal*

*Correction provided by participant after the meeting summary was complete.

work” that must be completed outside the bylaw hours in order to minimize disruption to residents (e.g. road closures, rush hour traffic).

2. **Increase public education and awareness regarding noise and the Noise Bylaw.** There should be more focus on raising public awareness of the City’s rules and regulation around noise and the impact of noise on people’s health. Participants suggested a number of ways to educate the public, including: doing a multi-day enforcement blitz (an organized effort by bylaw enforcement officers and TPS to go in the community in a particular day and time to enforce the bylaw); publicizing the City’s efforts to address noise issues; and posting large and prominent signs about noise regulations, especially in residential areas.
3. **Consider removing the provision for free motorcycle parking.** The City now has the technology (mobile app) that allows motorcycles to pay for parking without the risk of their ticket being stolen. If motorcycles have to pay for parking, perhaps they’ll come into the core less.
4. **Stop noise resulting from operation of equipment that has no utilitarian purpose.** Some types of noise are a result of a utilitarian purpose (e.g. infrastructure construction, garbage trucks, street sweepers, etc.). However, other types of noise (e.g. noise from modified mufflers) is unnecessary and should be prohibited.
5. **Notify the public of expected, disruptive noise.** This would be helpful to residents as they are informed ahead of time, instead of the noise being random.
6. **The City needs more bylaw enforcement officers.** With the current number of bylaw enforcement officers and re-direction of TPS efforts, there were concerns expressed about insufficient enforcement.
7. **Increase fines for infractions.** First time offences should be increased from \$155 - 305 to \$350 - \$400, and fines should increase after the first offence for repeat offenders. *Setting fines is under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Court of Justice, not the City, but the City will take this suggestion under advisement.*
8. **Consider options to reduce noise generated by emergency vehicles** (where it is safe and possible). Explore how loud the sirens need to be, especially in residential areas and at early hours (e.g. 3:00 am). *Note of clarification added by MLS staff after the meeting: the practice of using sirens is managed through the individual emergency services’ operational protocol. MLS will share this feedback with Fire Services, Paramedics and TPS for their considerations.*

Next Steps

The City thanked participants for coming and reminded people of the opportunity to share additional comments with MLS by February 28, 2019, to be considered as part of the consultation for the review. MLS will bring forward a staff report with recommendations to Economic and Community Development Committee in April 2019. The Swerhun third-party facilitation team committed to sharing a draft summary of feedback for participants to review before it is finalized.