



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.