



**To:** COUNCIL  
**Meeting Date:** 12/3/2024  
**Subject:** 24-015-CRS- Noise By-law Review  
**Submitted By:** Danielle Manton, City Clerk  
**Prepared By:** John Mattocks, Manager of Municipal By-law Compliance  
**Report No.:** 24-015-CRS  
**File No.:** C1101  
**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT Report 24-015-CRS Noise By-law Review be received;  
AND THAT; Council approve the Noise By-law attached as Appendix A  
AND THAT; Council approve the Administrative Penalty By-law Amendment attached as Appendix B  
AND THAT; Council approve the Site Alteration By-law Amendment attached as Appendix C  
AND THAT Council approve the Corridor Management By-law Amendment attached as Appendix D  
AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the draft policy attached as Appendix G

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to implement a new Noise By-law. The proposed by-law will modernize existing legislation, introduce a streamlined noise exemption process that includes notification to area residents, and supports current community standards and expectations.

#### **Key Findings**

As part of the [Municipal By-law Compliance Strategy](#) endorsed by Council on July 18, 2023, staff conducted a comprehensive review of the Noise By-law in order to identify

and develop improvements that will better meet the needs of the community. Staff identified that the existing Noise By-law is outdated, vulnerable to legal challenges and does not address our current community expectations/standards.

Staff are recommending the implementation of a new Noise By-law due to changing community expectations and feedback received through public engagement.

Residents and Businesses were consulted throughout the review process and the information gathered from the public engagement was used to influence the regulations in the proposed by-laws attached as Appendix A, B, C, and D.

Community Engagement on the Noise By-law resulted in 2,278 views, 1235 survey responses and approximately 25 residents attending in person sessions. Attached as Appendix E is a summary of survey responses.

Finally, adding the Noise By-law as a designated by-law under the Administrative penalty system allows for effective and efficient enforcement in line with [Administrative Penalty System](#) approved by Council in July 2023.

### **Financial Implications**

If the proposed Noise By-law was approved by Council, it will have minimal financial impact. Staff would also anticipate an increase in revenue with a new Noise By-law due to the additional types of noise that would now be enforceable.

### **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:**

Strategic Action

**Objective(s):** VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOOD - Promote, facilitate and participate in the development of safe and healthy neighbourhoods with a range of housing options

**Strategic Action:** Encourage safe and healthy neighbourhoods

**OR**

Core Service

**Program:** Not Applicable

**Core Service:** Not Applicable

Repealing and replacing the current Noise By-law and establishing community standards for noise aids in providing a clear, consistent, accessible, and fair approach to managing noise complaints within the City. The recommendations of this report

represent a continued support to improve the safety and livability of our community. This proposed by-law is consistent with the Strategic Plan and support the [actions](#) of:

- Create and activate spaces that offer things for people to do.
- Establish our core areas as attractive destinations.
- Enable small business to succeed.
- Encourage safe and healthy neighbourhoods.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Municipal Act 2001, S.O.2001, c. 25 (the Municipal Act) empowers municipalities to establish noise control by-laws. The current Noise By-law was passed in 2004.

Municipal By-law Compliance began reviewing the Noise By-law in 2017. A Noise By-law provides standards for noise and applies to all properties in the City of Cambridge.

In maintaining its goal of continuous improvement, municipal by-law compliance initiated a review of the current Noise By-law which indicates that By-law 32-04 is vulnerable to legal challenges and does not meet the current needs of our community.

The By-law provides that it is an offence to make “noise likely to disturb the inhabitants”. These words would require the City to demonstrate that the inhabitants in the vicinity of the noise were likely to be disturbed. In the enforcement of the by-law or a prosecution under this by-law, the opinion of a by-law enforcement officer alone would not be sufficient to establish that the noise complaint was “noise likely to disturb the inhabitants”. It is open to the court to view the by-law officer’s conclusion as a subjective conclusion whereas the words of the by-law require some form of objective review of the noise.

This objective review is usually achieved by having the inhabitants who could hear the sounds come to court and testify that the sounds were noise which disturbed them at which time the accused would find out who submitted the complaint. Often complainants state that they are willing to provide a witness statement and attend court however, when this is followed up with, they tend to no longer be willing to provide information or a witness statement which renders further enforcement action nonexistent.

## **Previous Staff Reports**

- A draft Noise By-law was originally presented to Council on April 3, 2018, with Report [No 18-013 \(OCM\)](#) Noise By-law Review. At this meeting Council members shared comments about some of the proposed definitions, Consistent start and end times for similar noise and concerns about prohibited times for construction noise. The report was referred back to staff for further review considering the feedback received.

- On April 17, 2018, Council considered Report [No 18-018 \(OCM\)](#) Review of Noise By-law. During the April 17, 2018, meeting, members of Council had raised concerns dealing with the regulation of noise generally associated with neighbours' private parties, noise associated with construction work and the consistency of hours regulating noise. Council referred the proposed new Noise By-law back to staff for further review and requested that staff discuss these concerns with the Members of Council prior to returning to council with further recommendations.
- At its meeting on June 12, 2018, Council considered Report [No 18-028 \(OCM\)](#) Noise By-law Review. The report was again referred back to staff for further review. During the June 12, 2018, meeting, members of Council raised concerns around regarding regulations such as construction noise, private party noise including noise from stereos being prohibited at all times.
- 24-015-CRS Noise By-law review is before Council for its consideration, additional engagement and consultation has occurred to bring this report forward at this time. Given the risk associated with the current by-law, and the need to update and modernize this by-law, staff propose Councils consideration of passing the proposed by-law and should there be future changes required based on enforcement of the new by-law that staff be directed at that time to bring any required amendments back to Council.

## Complaints

The Municipal By-law Compliance team receives noise complaints by phone, email and through the Waterloo Regional Police Service.

Below in Table 1 are the number of noise complaints the Municipal By-law Compliance team has received since 2017. Please also see Appendix F, heat maps attached from 2021, 2022, and 2023 to see the communities that receive the most complaints. As we return to a post COVID state, staff are seeing a gradual increase in complaints regarding noise.

**Table 1 – Number of Noise Complaints by year**

Year	# of complaints
2017	555
2018	639
2019	534
2020	358
2021	301
2022	584
2023	661
2024*	663

\*as of October 29, 2024 (10 Months)

## **ANALYSIS:**

The proposed Noise By-law address several specific noise issues such as unnecessary motor vehicle noise, construction, and the use of domestic tools. These changes contribute to simplifying the Noise By-law by aligning time constraints between similar activities, and otherwise clarifying the standards our community expects.

### **Review Methodology**

Staff initiated a comprehensive review of the Noise By-law in 2018. This work involved:

- Review of statistics related to noise complaints and enforcement.
- Municipal benchmarking and best practice research.
- Discussion with staff across various divisions to identify issues and potential improvements to the by-law.
- A web-based public survey to understand preferred community standards.
- Information booths/sessions to solicit public input on specific noise standards.

In any municipality, managing and regulating noise can be a complex undertaking.

Residents wish to enjoy their homes and environments. For some, this may mean relaxing in their backyards, for others it may be having a meal on a restaurant patio, and for others it may be attending outdoor concerts/events. A Noise By-law must balance these desires with many other factors.

The proposed by-law is intended to strike a balance in serving our residents and enabling the economic and social vibrancy of the City.

### **Jurisdictional Scan**

Staff conducted a jurisdictional scan of noise control programs in 8 Municipalities (Brantford, Burlington, Guelph, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Oakville, and Waterloo). The comparison will be shared in charts throughout this report.

The City of Cambridge's Noise By-law was the oldest dated by-law of all jurisdictions benchmarked. The City does not currently use a level of measurement to enforce types of noise emitted however, the proposed by-law does have prohibited times for noise types which is consistent with the municipalities benchmarked.

### **Public Engagement**

An online public survey was conducted from November 1, 2023 – December 15, 2023, to obtain feedback from Cambridge residents and businesses in relation to noise regulations. The survey was advertised through the City's website, Engage Cambridge,

Service Cambridge Counters, Digital Ads, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email signature links and physical post cards handed out throughout the City.

Several common themes emerged from respondents and attendees. Vehicle and construction noise were identified as the most common kind of noise impacting residents. Residents expressed that there is a need for increased regulations and enforcement of noise regulations.

The online survey had 1,235 respondents which is the highest respondents to a survey for the City of Cambridge outside of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo design survey.

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the current Noise By-law, what noise currently impacts their lives, and for their opinions on potential changes. A summary of responses is attached as Appendix E.

### Key Results Included

- Respondents said they were most impacted by noise from vehicles, fireworks, amplified sound, animal noise and construction.
- There was awareness of our current Noise By-law. The survey showed that 83.3% of respondents were at least aware of the by-law.
- 66.8% of respondents felt the current by-law was not strong enough to address their concerns.
- There was support introducing additional regulations on when construction noise was permitted with 51.9% selecting either yes or maybe.
- There was support introducing restrictions on the use of domestic tools with 55.6% selecting yes or maybe.
- There was support introducing restrictions around unnecessary noise from vehicles with 89.1%.
- When it came to when should noise be permitted until, 10pm received 25% of responses with 11pm receiving 22.4% and 9pm Receiving 17.1%
- 1239 comments received through the online survey along with multiple email submissions and in person conversations.

The proposed changes to the Noise By-law address several specific noise issues such as amplified sound, noise from construction equipment and, unnecessary motor vehicle noise. These changes contribute to simplifying the Noise By-law by aligning time constraints between similar activities, and otherwise clarify the standards set for noise.

Additional changes, such as providing a defined process for noise exemption permit applications which will support the proactive mitigation of noise.

### Key Areas of Proposed Changes

Based on the research conducted to date, as summarized above, the new proposed Noise By-law was drafted based on the following key areas. The proposed Noise By-law will prohibit specific noise types based on the qualitative measure of “clearly audible”. The proposed by-law is based on more general noise categories which is intended to help provide clarity for the public while also capturing a wider variety of noise types.

**Amplified Sound**

Amplified Sound refers to sound made by any electronic device intended for the production, reproduction, or amplification of sound. The current by-law does not include any specific regulations or time restrictions regarding this type of noise.

Based on community engagement, jurisdictional scan, and consultation with entertainment districts/Business Improvement Areas, it is recommended that the permitted period for Amplified Sound be between 7:00am – 9:00pm Sunday – Thursday and 7:00am – 11:00pm Friday and Saturday. This approach aligns with the permitted periods for other common noise categories while also allowing for flexibility on weekends for outdoor events such as weddings, concerts, and sporting events. Adjusting the prohibited time on Fridays and Saturdays allows our entertainment districts to hold events and not require a noise exemption permit for every weekend. As mentioned previously, an 11:00pm time was supported by 22.4% of survey respondents and is also more inline with current community thoughts and expectations.

**Table 2 – Municipal Comparison for Amplified Sound Regulations**

Municipality	Prohibited Time Period
Cambridge (proposed)	9:00pm – 7:00am Sunday to Thursday and 11:00pm – 7:00am Friday and Saturday
Waterloo	7:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Kitchener	In such a manner as to disturb the peace, quiet, comfort or response of any person
Hamilton	If clearly audible at a point of reception. Prohibited at all times.
Guelph	At all times in a residential area and 11:00pm – 9:00am in “other”
Brantford	Prohibited at all times, if in a manner that unreasonably disturbs the peace, comfort or repose of any person

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Prohibited Time Period</b>
Oakville	5:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Burlington	11:00pm-7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
London	If clearly audible at a point of reception. Prohibited at all times.

### **Yelling, Shouting, hooting, whistling, signing.**

The current Noise By-law does not include specific regulations surrounding yelling, shouting, and signing. Staff are proposing that this type of noise should not be heard outside of one’s property between 9:00pm – 7:00am Sunday – Thursday and 11:00pm – 7:00am Friday & Saturday. This aligns with the proposed regulations for amplified sound since these two noise types will typically be in unison. Table 3 below shows a municipal comparison of regulations surrounding people noise.

**Table 3 – Municipal Comparison for Yelling, Shouting, and Singing Regulations**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Prohibited Time period</b>
Cambridge (proposed)	9:00pm – 7:00am Sunday to Thursday and 11:00pm – 7:00am Friday and Saturday
Waterloo	11:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Kitchener	11:00pm – 7:00am Sunday-Thursday.
Hamilton	Not specifically regulated (Noise likely to disturb)
Guelph	11:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Friday and 11:00pm-9:00am on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.
Brantford	9:00pm – 7:00am every day
Oakville	11:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Burlington	If persistent, prohibited at all times.
London	If clearly audible at a point of reception. Prohibited at all times.



## Unnecessary Vehicle Noise

Throughout the community engagement, loud vehicles were identified by many respondents as the noise that most impacts them. While Municipal By-law Compliance staff can address noise from stationary vehicles, moving vehicles are regulated through the Highway Traffic Act and are the responsibility of Waterloo Regional Police. Municipal By-law Compliance do not have the authority to stop/pullover vehicles.

Motor vehicles are also regulated under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, 1990. Section 75 of the Act requires every motor vehicle (including motorcycles) to have a muffler in good working order and in constant operation to prevent excessive noise. It also prohibits a driver from altering a muffler to create excessive noise. These regulations are also enforced by the Waterloo Regional Police Service.

Recognized sound testing procedures for automobiles are limited and many require a closed circuit with drive by tests using several noise meters such as those employed by the Canadian federal regulators. Stationary roadside tests such as those found in publications by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) do provide testing methodology but not measurable noise limits for automobiles.

SAE international has developed roadside sound testing for motorcycles only. The creation of the street motorcycle sound measurement procedure was a top recommendation of the 2003 National Summit on Motorcycle Sound.

Staff have engaged Waterloo Regional Police and are currently developing a joint enforcement initiative which would see police officers and municipal by-law compliance officers working together and utilizing the Highway Traffic Act as well as the Noise By-law as tools to educate and enforce in an effort to reduce unnecessary vehicle noise within the City. This noise category received the highest response from survey respondents when asked "What source of noise do you find most disturbing the peace and quite in your neighbourhood?". 89.1% of survey respondents supported introducing regulations for unnecessary vehicle noise.

Introducing regulations regarding unnecessary vehicle noise is another tool in the toolbox to help address these concerns and would be available to Municipal By-law Compliance Officers and WRPS.

**Table 4 – Municipal Comparison for Unnecessary Vehicle Noise Regulations**

Municipality	Prohibited period/activity
Cambridge (proposed)	Prohibited at all times if unnecessary tire Squealing, loud speakers, use of horn when not required, Ineffective Muffler, prohibited at all

	times.
Waterloo	Not regulated
Kitchener	Ineffective Muffler, speakers/radio if audible at 8 m from vehicle
Hamilton	Ineffective Muffler, speakers/radio if audible at 8 m from vehicle
Guelph	At all times - Tire Squeal, racing, Use of horn when not required. Motorcycle exhaust outlet sound exceeding criteria set out in the Society of Automotive Engineers test procedure SAE J2825.
Brantford	Tire Squeal, racing, loudspeakers, use of horn when not required, prohibited at all times.
Oakville	Motorcycle exhaust outlet sound exceeding 92dBA
Burlington	Ineffective Muffler, Tire Squeal, racing, Use of horn when not required (prohibited)
London	Ineffective Muffler, Speakers

## Construction Periods

Through the public survey respondents were vocal about the prevalence of construction noise and expressed a desire to introduce additional restrictions on when construction could be permitted.

The existing Noise By-law sets out the prohibited time periods for construction noise which is currently from 8:00pm on a Saturday to 7:00am on a Monday. The proposed regulations maintain no construction noise on Sundays and introduces restrictions for weekdays.

If construction activities need to take place outside the permitted times, companies or individuals can apply for a noise exemption.

On November 28, 2023 Council through Staff [Report 23-254-CD](#), passed by-law 23-103 known as the Site Alteration By-law. The Site alteration by-law included times for which the work to be carried out within the by-law would be permitted. The by-law states that Noise from this activity is permitted from 7:00am – 7:00pm Monday – Saturday and prohibited on Statutory Holidays and Sundays unless a noise exemption permit has been obtained. Staff are proposing to mirror these restrictions in the new Noise By-law

for consistency and to align with our neighbouring municipalities. 51.9% of survey respondents stated yes or maybe to further restricting regulations surrounding construction noise.

To ensure consistency among other City by-laws minor amendments are required to the Site Alteration By-law and the Corridor Management By-law to align with the new Noise By-law should it be approved by Council. The amending by-laws are attached to this report as Appendix C and D.

Below in table 5 is a municipal comparison for construction noise.

**Table 5 – Municipal Comparison for Construction Noise**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Prohibited period</b>
Cambridge (proposed)	7:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Friday (8:00am on Saturday) and all day on Sundays and Statutory Holidays
Waterloo	7:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Saturday and all day on Sundays and Statutory Holidays
Kitchener	7:00pm – 7:00am, seven days a week
Hamilton	10:00pm – 7:00am, seven days a week
Guelph	7:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Saturday (9:00am on Saturday and Sundays and Statutory Holidays
Brantford	9:00pm – 7:00am, everyday
Oakville	7:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Saturday and all-day Sunday and Statutory Holidays
Burlington	9:00pm – 7:00am everyday (12:00pm on Sundays)
London	6:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)

### **Domestic tools**

The current Noise By-law is silent with regards to domestic tools (leaf blowers, lawn mowers, hedge cutters, nail guns). This category would allow for the use of power tools, including loud devices like lawn mowers and leaf blowers until 9:00pm. These time restrictions would not apply to snow removal equipment.

55.6% of survey respondents chose yes or maybe when asked “Do you support introducing regulations around the use of domestic tools” Table 6 below shows the comparison with 8 municipalities with regards to regulations around the use of domestic/power tools.

**Table 6 – Municipal Comparison for Domestic Tool Regulations**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Prohibited period</b>
Cambridge (proposed)	9:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Waterloo	(Residential Renovations) 9:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
Kitchener	Not specifically regulated
Hamilton	Not specifically regulated
Guelph	9:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Friday and 9:00pm – 9:am Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.
Brantford	9:00pm – 7:00am everyday
Oakville	9:00pm – 7:00am Monday – Saturday and 9:00pm – 9:00am on Sundays
Burlington	9:00pm – 7:00am everyday (9:00am on Sundays)
London	7:00am – 10:00pm everyday (9:00am on Sundays)

### **Noise Exemptions**

Noise exemptions are required to be sought by residents or organizations that are planning on making noise outside of the permitted periods listed in the proposed by-law. The current noise exemption process was identified by community members as being onerous, difficult to navigate and lengthy.

This section of the by-law allows for the issuance of exemptions for any source of sound outside of the permitted times. The current noise exemption process has no automatic exemption for City work and the process does not have the flexibility to meet the needs of the City.

The City Clerk will be delegated the authority to grant exemptions. Applications will be required to detail the following.

- Activity and Type of Exemption Required. Applicants will be required to provide a description and location of the activity as well as the sources of sound that an exemption is being sought for. For instance, a community street festival may include amplified sound, loading and unloading and yelling and shouting.
- Public Notification Process that will notify area residents within a 120-metre radius in advance of the exemption date

If the application is deemed to be a Municipally Significant Event and would require a City of Cambridge special events permit, staff will refer the application to Council for a decision, in which case Council shall have the same powers to approve or deny the application.

Applicants will be required to provide a description and location of the activity as well as the sources of sound that an exemption is being sought for. There will also be a public notification process. Requirements will include of a flyer or letter to all properties within a 120-meter radius. This is intended to notify area residents/businesses of the event and noise exemption and allow them to make the appropriate arrangements or plans necessary. Notifying area residents is also anticipated to reduce noise complaints for approved events. Staff worked with members of our Technical Services Team to develop an easy user-friendly online process for applicants to gather a list of addresses that are within a 120-meter radius of their event.

Requiring noise exemption applicants to notify residents within 120-metres of the location serves several important purposes:

- It ensures that residents are aware of potential disturbances and can voice their concerns or objections, promoting transparency and accountability in the decision-making process.
- Noise exemptions can significantly impact the quality of life for nearby residents. Notification allows them to prepare for any disruptions or take necessary measures to minimize the impact.
- It treats residents fairly by involving them in matters that directly affect their living environment, fostering a sense of community engagement and trust.
- Residents can provide feedback that might highlight concerns or suggest ways to mitigate the noise, leading to better-informed decisions and potential adjustments to the exemption conditions.

By implementing such a requirement, staff can better balance the needs of applicants with the rights and well-being of the community.

**Table 7 – Municipal Comparison for Noise Exemptions**

Municipality	Notification Distance/Cost
Cambridge (proposed)	Exemptions provided by application at least 45 days before event. Applicant shall notify all residents within 120 metres of event location. Fee of \$200
Waterloo	Exemptions provided by application submitted at least 60 days before event. Public provided opportunity to provide comments or concerns. Fee of \$398.22
Kitchener	Exemptions provided by application submitted 7-10 days prior to event. Exemptions not approved past 11:00pm.
Hamilton	Exemptions provided by application submitted at least 60 days prior to event. Fee \$193 if received 60 days prior to event or \$291 if received less than 60 days from event date.
Guelph	Exemptions provided by application submitted 90 days before event. Fees may apply as the City recovers the cost of notices and advertisements letting people know where and when to expect uncommon noises and activities.
Brantford	Exemptions provided by application submitted at least 60 days prior to event. Applicant shall provide written notice to all residents within 120 metres of event location. Fee of \$100.
Oakville	Exemptions provided by application submitted 30 days before event. Applicant shall notify all residents within 120 metres of event location. Residents are provided a two-week period to submit comments or concerns. Applicant provides a copy of the mailing list indicating where the “Notice of Noise Exemption” was delivered. Fee of \$194
Burlington	Exemptions provided by application. Fee of \$175.
London	Exemptions provided by application. Approved noise exemptions posted on website. Fee \$175.

**Enforcement**

One of the themes that emerged from the comments section of the survey was a desire for increased enforcement and investigation of noise complaints. Residents are dissatisfied with the current service levels and indicated they would like a quicker response time to complaints and easier ways to report concerns after hours.

Staff reviewed existing processes related to noise investigations and enforcement to streamline efforts and to ensure consistency in response. Changes being implemented include changing the language and processes of submitting noise complaints to make it more straightforward and easier to do online, updating standard operating procedures for responding to and closing complaint files.

Staff are also proposing an amendment to the Administrative Penalty By-law (Attached as Appendix B) to incorporate Noise By-law offences into the Administrative Penalty System (APS) which is consistent with the Municipal By-law Compliance Strategy endorsed by Council in July 2023.

### **Decibel Limits**

During the discussions by Mayor and Council during the 2018 council meetings decibel limits were discussed and suggestions were made that if a reading exceeded the threshold stated in the by-law, fines would be issued.

Unfortunately, there are many steps required to implement decibel readings into a by-law and taking an accurate and consistent decibel reading that would be admissible as court evidence is highly technical and must be conducted by properly trained individuals under precise circumstances.

At this time decibel limits are not being considered however may be recommended to be considered at a future time. Introducing decibel limits requires technical expertise to establish the appropriate decibel limits, determine investigative practices, identify equipment needs and training for staff. Further consultation would be required and would include financial costs for hiring a sound engineer, training and equipment with re-training every few years. It is estimated that training costs are \$3,000 - \$5,000 per officer and requires refresher sessions every few years. The equipment required can cost up to approximately \$10,000 plus annual calibration and certification per unit.

It can be more successful to use the “Clearly Audible” test from the observations of Municipal By-law Compliance Officers when discussing offences relating to noise. Not having a decibel limit allows for witnesses to easily provide evidence that could lead to a ticket being issued after the fact if an officer was not able to respond quickly.

Should Council wish for Municipal By-law Compliance to pursue the use of decibel limits, staff would be required to bring this to a future budget process for Council to consider.

Although the City's Noise By-law may not currently include decibel limits within its regulations, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) through document NPC-300 provides clear guidelines and standards for acceptable noise levels from stationary sources, ensuring noise impacts on the community are managed.

The draft Noise By-law will cover various community noise sources that affect residents' quality of life but do not fall under stationary industrial or commercial classifications.

These include:

- **Construction Activities:** Limits on operating hours for construction equipment to control noise impact in residential areas.
- **Domestic Sources:** Regulation of noise from loudspeakers, musical instruments, and amplified sound from private residences or vehicles.
- **Public Disturbances:** Restrictions on yelling, shouting, and other loud sounds in public spaces, especially at night.
- **Equipment Use:** Restrictions on lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and other outdoor power equipment, specifying permissible hours for operation.

Document NPC-300, provided by the MOECC, sets out technical guidelines specifically for stationary sources of sound and is more applicable to industrial and commercial noise. Examples include:

- **Industrial Equipment:** Standards for sound emissions from machinery at factories, processing plants, and warehouses.
- **Commercial HVAC Systems:** Noise limits for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in commercial buildings, which can generate continuous noise.
- **Loading Docks and Delivery Areas:** Noise control for activities in commercial zones, like loading or unloading trucks, that may have sustained noise impacts on adjacent properties.
- **Power Generators and Compressors:** Noise regulations for stationary generators or compressors, often associated with commercial or industrial operations.



## **Next Steps**

Staff will begin work on the following to engage members of our community and provide education on the new Noise By-law regulations:

- New Release
- Ads through local news outlets
- Social Media Posts (awareness campaign)
- Update to website
- Education through City owned screens at Service Cambridge Counters, Arenas and Recreation Centres

It is recommended that awareness and education activities be undertaken to improve public awareness of the new Noise By-law provisions and permitted times and to encourage residents to be courteous to their neighbours. These activities will take a phased approach and begin with digital materials, then printed materials and if necessary, materials specific to certain activities, such as vehicle noise or weekend construction. Activities in this phase will be undertaken using existing budget.

Staff would also begin the first few weeks issuing warnings and educating the public when noise complaints are received.

### **EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):**

The city currently has Noise By-law #04-032 that was approved in 2004.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

If the proposed Noise By-law was approved by Council, it will have minimal financial impact. The noise exemption application fee will remain at \$200 as per the Municipal Fees and Charges By-law for 2024, this fee reflects a complete cost recovery of staff time and resources. Staff would also anticipate an increase in revenue with a new Noise By-law due to the additional types of noise that would now be enforceable.

### **PUBLIC VALUE:**

Public Value is about ensuring that we are always considering the 'big picture' impact of our work on the community and communicating back to the public. For both Strategic Actions and Core Services.

### **Leadership:**

This report is an important step in moving the City of Cambridge forward with respect to achieving a community that is intended for all and encourage safe and healthy neighbourhoods. The updated Noise By-law will contribute to residents' pride of place by developing clear regulations around acceptable times noise is permitted.

## **Collaboration:**

Collaboration will involve working in partnership with the community, Waterloo Regional Police, Business Improvement areas, and staff as we implement a new nuisance Noise By-law and develop future recommendations.

## **Transparency:**

To ensure transparency, regular updates on this by-law review will be shared with members of our community via email and social media channels. Staff will also be promoting compliance and the rules so that members of our community are informed.

An APS will provide for the same open, transparent, and impartial process as is currently in place with the POA system, maintaining the fundamental principles of open court and due process. Updates on this project have been shared with the effected divisions and aligns with work being done within the Region.

## **Engagement:**

Public involvement was held in person and virtually throughout the duration of the by-law review. Hearing and checking in with our community partners at regular intervals will be an important part of the implementation and ensures we stay relevant and fresh should further amendments be required.

We will Invests in ongoing community engagement to ensure we continue to be responsive to emerging local concerns while ensuring inclusive participation.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:**

**Advisory Committees Consulted:** Not Applicable.

## **PUBLIC INPUT:**

As part of the Council approved [Municipal By-law Compliance Strategy](#), Municipal By-law Compliance implemented a new public engagement approach with respect to by-law reviews to increase awareness of by-laws and solicit feedback from our community members. Our commitment to the public was to keep them informed, listened to, acknowledge their concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the recommendations brought forward in the draft by-law.

A specific webpage was created on [Engage Cambridge](#) to promote the by-law review. A survey was the primary tool for collecting feedback and comments which was available online and hard copy if requested. The survey was promoted to the community through multiple channels and received 1,235 responses. Advertising channels included:

- Social Media – X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram

- Post Card – On display at all Service Cambridge, Recreation Centre counters
- Email signature – Available at the bottom of all Municipal By-law Compliance staff email signatures
- Open House – Two in Person open houses (City Hall & W.G. Johnson Centre)
- Digital Screens – Digital media screens at all City facilities
- Meetings with:
  - Business Improvement Areas (BIA's)
  - Local businesses
  - Waterloo Regional Police Service
  - Internal staff (Transportation, Recreation, Economic Development)

Include a summary of feedback - received with key themes or trends and how it has been taken into consideration for this report.

The survey showed that there were respondents from all 8 wards with the largest percentages coming from wards 4 and 5 however, the difference is marginal and all wards except for ward 7 were very close in comparison.

#### **INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

Staff consulted with Transportation Services, Recreation and Culture, Legal Services, and Clerks on this by-law review.

Business Improvement areas (BIA's) were consulted along with members of our Special Events team and our Gaslight District.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The primary purpose of a Noise By-law review was to identify and develop program requirements to better meet the needs of Council and the community. Thorough community engagement revealed that noise is a significant issue for many of our residents. A modernized by-law will provide clarity for staff, Council and the community, and allow for more effective enforcement.

Staff recognize that unnecessary noise has become a concern in our community and that changes to our current Noise By-law are required to meet the needs of our community. The proposed by-law is intended to strike a balance in service to residents and enabling the economic and social vibrancy of the City.

#### **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **Yes**

Budget Amendment: **Yes**

Policy: **Yes**

**APPROVALS:**

**This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:**

**Director**

**Deputy City Manager**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**City Solicitor**

**City Manager**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 24-015-CRS Appendix A – Draft Noise By-law
2. 24-015-CRS Appendix B – Draft Administrative Penalty By-law Amendment
3. 24-015-CRS Appendix C – Draft Site Alteration Amending By-law
4. 24-015-CRS Appendix D – Draft Corridor Management Amending By-law
5. 24-015-CRS Appendix E – Summary of Survey Results
6. 24-015-CRS Appendix F – 2021-2023 Noise Complaint Heat Maps
7. 24-015-CRS Appendix G – Draft Policy for the Administration of Noise Exemption Requests