



Memo to Council

Date: May 28, 2024
Subject: UBCM Advocacy: Provincial Noise Camera Pilot Project – Motion Served by
Councillors Agtarap and Dilworth

Motion Served

Notice of the following motion was provided at the May 14, 2024, Regular Council meeting:

THAT the memo dated May 16, 2024, from the offices of Councillors Agtarap and Dilworth regarding UBCM Advocacy: Provincial Noise Camera Pilot Project be received for information.

AND THAT Council advance the following resolution to UBCM for the 2024 convention:

WHEREAS noise pollution has wide-ranging and well documented negative effects on public health and well-being and social connectedness, and vehicular noise pollution, from such sources as aftermarket exhaust systems are a particularly acute source of noise pollution, and these impacts disproportionately affect residents living near major thoroughfares, which are often more affordable housing types;

AND WHEREAS many jurisdictions have sought to address the numerous challenges to the effective monitoring and enforcement of existing vehicular noise regulations through conventional law enforcement approaches by deploying noise cameras;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM ask that the Province of British Columbia explore the feasibility of using noise cameras to effectively enforce vehicular noise regulations through the creation of a noise camera pilot project for municipalities to opt into.

Background

The adverse effects of noise pollution on public health and well-being are well documented, and there is a growing understanding that noise pollution also adversely impacts community connectivity. Noise pollution can originate from several sources in an urban environment. One particularly pernicious source comes from vehicles, especially those equipped with aftermarket exhaust systems that breach legal limits.

The Motor Vehicle Act (MVA) includes provisions regulating noise emissions from vehicles.¹ The MVA sets the maximum allowable dBA from motor vehicles operating in the province as 83 dBA for light duty vehicles, 88 dBA for gasoline-powered heavy-duty vehicles, 91 dBA for motorcycles, and 93 dBA for diesel-powered heavy-duty vehicles. Enforcing these regulations are challenging, and as a result, vehicular noise pollution in the municipalities persist.

In response, jurisdictions across Canada and elsewhere have explored the use of new technology to improve monitoring and enforcement. This resolution proposes the implementation of a noise camera pilot, to explore the possibility of adopting an innovative and effective solution to address vehicular noise pollution in BC municipalities.

Noise pollution has wide-ranging negative effects on public health and well-being. Prolonged exposure to high levels of noise has been linked to increased stress, sleep disturbances, and cardiovascular issues. Noise pollution also has a negative impact on community, beyond the adverse physical and psychological health impacts. Even moderate levels of noise can limit or interfere with the ability to conduct daily tasks and activities, such as having an ordinary conversation, enjoying leisure activities, resting, sleeping, concentrating, or getting tasks done.

Given the relationship between vehicle speed and noise generation, those living near busy roads, major thoroughfares, and highways may be disproportionately affected by vehicular noise pollution. As a result of the construction of more affordable housing options near major corridors, research indicates that lower-income residents may be exposed to increased levels of noise pollution.

Noise cameras offer an innovative and efficient alternative to our current enforcement approach, one that can continuously monitor and identify vehicles in real-time, providing a cost-effective solution to enforcement challenges. Noise cameras are traffic cameras “that are equipped with a high-definition camera and audio sensor that are triggered by cars and other vehicles that exceed pre-defined noise limits.”²

Municipalities across Canada have explored the use of noise cameras:

- Calgary, Alberta deployed free noise cameras as part of a pilot to validate the technology in 2011. The city was considering deploying noise cameras again in September 2022.³

¹¹ Government of BC (2010). *Motor Vehicle Act Regulation*. B.C. Reg. 26/58, O.C. 1004/58. Available at https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/loo83/loo83/26_58_04

² Rosenbaum, D. (2023 February 15). “‘Noise cameras’ aim to address vehicle nuisance complaints on city streets.” *Smart Cities Dive*. Available at <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/noise-cameras-address-vehicle-nuisance-complaints-city-streets/642575/>

³ Bowman, Z. (2022 November 15). “Calgary ready to adopt sound-activated noise camera to automatically ticket loud vehicles.” *Auto Blog*. Available at <https://www.autoblog.com/2011/11/15/calgary-ready-to-adopt-sound-activated-noise-camera-to-automatic/>; and see Thomas, B. (2022 September 29). “Councillor wants crackdown on loud vehicles, calling it a ‘quality of life’ issue.” *Calgary Herald*. Available at

- Cambridge, Ontario recently conducted a noise bylaw review and was contemplating the use of noise cameras.⁴
- Edmonton, Alberta, ran a pilot starting in 2018.⁵

Globally, several jurisdictions have successfully implemented pilot projects deploying noise cameras. These include:

- Great Yarmouth, Bradford, Bristol and Birmingham, UK, October 2022.⁶
- Kingston and Chelsea, London, UK, September to December, 2020.⁷
- New York, USA (December 2023)⁸
- Paris, France deployed noise cameras in 2023.⁹

While noise cameras have been successfully piloted in several jurisdictions around the world and across Canada, they have yet to be piloted in BC. A pilot project will provide valuable data on the effectiveness of noise cameras in enforcing vehicular noise regulations. The data

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/councillor-wants-crackdown-on-loud-vehicles-calling-it-a-quality-of-life-issue>

⁴ McGinty, J. (2023 July 26). "City councillor wants to quiet loud cars in Cambridge." *Cambridge Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.cambridgetoday.ca/local-news/city-councillor-wants-to-quiet-loud-cars-in-cambridge-7328276>; and see Doucet, B. (2023 December 9). "City of Cambridge moving toward more airtight noise bylaw." *Cambridge Times*. Available at https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news/city-of-cambridge-moving-toward-more-airtight-noise-bylaw/article_1af035be-e907-55cf-87fa-758938546b92.html

⁵ Mertz, E. (2018 September 13). "Edmonton turns off 4 vehicle noise displays after complaints of stunting, intentional noise." *Global News*. Available at <https://globalnews.ca/news/4446261/edmonton-vehicle-noise-lcd-displays-complaints/>; see also Stolte, E. (2018 August 15). "'Photo radar for noise': Electronic displays, cameras being tested in eight spots." *Edmonton Journal*. Available at <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/photo-radar-for-noise-electronic-displays-cameras-being-tested-in-eight-spots>; and Riebe, N. (2018 August 15). "Noise-control technology now on Edmonton streets, listening and watching." *CBC News*. Available at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-photo-radar-noise-monitoring-cameras-1.4787069>

⁶ Khan, A.J. (2022 October 18). "Noise cameras to be trialled in England to tackle 'boy racers.'" *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/18/noise-cameras-boy-racers-trial-road-users-legal-limits> (accessed August 3, 2023).

⁷ Khan, A.J. (2022 October 18). "Noise cameras to be trialled in England to tackle 'boy racers.'" *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/18/noise-cameras-boy-racers-trial-road-users-legal-limits> (accessed August 3, 2023).

⁸ CBC News. (2023 January 23). "Obnoxiously loud car? A traffic camera might be listening." Available at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/noise-cameras-new-york-1.6722843> (accessed August 3, 2023); Eyewitness News. (2023 December 6). "NYC approves new measure for citywide noise cameras to crackdown on loud cars." Available at [https://abc7ny.com/new-york-city-council-traffic-laws-noise-cameras-loud-cars/14147382/#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20CITY%20\(WABC\)%20%2D%2D,break%20the%20city's%20noise%20limit](https://abc7ny.com/new-york-city-council-traffic-laws-noise-cameras-loud-cars/14147382/#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20CITY%20(WABC)%20%2D%2D,break%20the%20city's%20noise%20limit;); and see Nolan, E. (2023 December 5). "Quiet, please: New York's 'Noise Cameras' are listening." *New York Times*. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/nyregion/nyc-noise-cameras.html>

⁹ Mietlicki, C., & Mietlicki, F. (2018). "Medusa: a new approach for noise management and control in urban environment." *Euronoise 2018*, Crete. Available at [2018 - Medusa.pdf \(bruitparif.fr\)](2018 - Medusa.pdf (bruitparif.fr))

collected during the pilot project will assist in assessing the impact of noise camera enforcement on the overall compliance with noise regulations.

Requested Timeline

<u>Level</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Staff Turnaround Time</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulatory or interjurisdictional requirements• Major and immediate risk and/or financial impact	< 3 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Time-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant impact to the community• Significant financial impact	3-6 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-urgent	All other work	< 12 months
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	No staff time required. Resolution for UBCM.	

Council Strategic Plan Alignment

This motion aligns with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Strategic Goal 3.3 – Enhance Community Well-Being
 - Facilitate Community Well-Being Through Programs and Long-Term Planning

Corporate Project Plan Alignment

This motion aligns with the following Corporate Project(s):

- Community Well-Being Guidelines.

Council Options

The following responses are available for Council consideration:

1. Receive for information.
2. Refer to staff to bring back a report (staff will determine if the nature of the work warrants a project proposal or a staff report, and will include considerations with respect to feasibility, resources, timeline, strategic plan alignment, and legislative analysis).
3. Other.