

Community Standards Bylaw Policy Review

The City is developing a Community Standards Bylaw (CSB). The CSB will serve to regulate and enable activities that pertain to the safety, health, and welfare of residents on private and public property.

To inform a policy discussion on each of the topics, information has been assembled in the template below on what the current local context is, what other comparator municipalities have done, Administration's recommendations concerning minimum standards, as well as potential financial and operational implications.

TOPIC NAME: Prohibited Noise (General), Decibel Limits, Continuous (NEW), and Non-Continuous Sound (NEW)

1. CURRENT SPRUCE GROVE BYLAW

[Spruce Grove Noise Control Bylaw](#) addresses excessive noise in general. It does not specifically address continuous and non-continuous sound.

[Spruce Grove Traffic Bylaw](#)

- s.1.10.1 - contains a disturbing noise definition and decibel limits that are specific to motor vehicles.

2. SPRUCE GROVE CONTEXT

The majority of non-vehicle complaints received by the City are deemed unfounded (such as children playing loudly in backyard on a Saturday afternoon). The addition of decibel limits in a bylaw would help officers address these complaints objectively by clearly demonstrating compliance or non-compliance within the prescribed limits. As education increases, this could reduce the number of complaints over time.

3. OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Edmonton

Daytime Decibel Limit - Residential

- A person shall not cause or permit any sound exceeding 65 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for residential use, between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- A person shall not cause or permit property they own or occupy to be used so that any sound coming from the property exceeds 65 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for residential use, between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

This section does not apply to sounds up to:

- (a) 70 dB(A) lasting a total period of time not exceeding two hours in any one day;
- (b) 75 dB(A) lasting a total period of time not exceeding one hour in any one day;

- (c) 80 dB(A) lasting a total period of time not exceeding 30 minutes in any one day; or
- (d) 85 dB(A) lasting a total period of time not exceeding 15 minutes in any one day.

Overnight Decibel Level - Residential

- A person shall not cause or permit any sound exceeding 50 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use as residential, before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m.
- A person shall not cause or permit property they own or occupy to be used so that any sound coming from the property exceeds 50 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use as residential, before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m.

Daytime Decibel Limit - Non-Residential

- A person shall not cause or permit any sound exceeding 75 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use other than residential, between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- A person shall not cause or permit property they own or occupy to be used so that any sound coming from the property exceeds 75 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use other than residential between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

This section does not apply to sounds up to:

- (a) 80 dB(A) lasting for a total period of time not exceeding two hours in any one day; or
- (b) 85 dB(A) lasting for a total period of time not exceeding one hour in any one day.

Overnight Decibel Level - Non-Residential

- A person shall not cause or permit any sound exceeding 60 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use other than residential, before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m.
- A person shall not cause or permit property they own or occupy to be used so that any sound coming from the property exceeds 60 dB(A), as measured at the property line of a property zoned for use other than residential, before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m. ([Edmonton CSB](#), ss. 19 - 22)

Beaumont

- A Person shall not cause or permit any Noise that annoys or disturbs the peace of any other Person.
- A Person shall not cause or permit Property they Own or Occupy to be used so that Noise from the Property annoys or disturbs the peace of any other Person between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- In determining what sound is reasonably likely to annoy or disturb the peace of others, consideration may be given to, but is not limited to, the following criteria:
 - type, volume, and duration of the sound;
 - time of day and day of week; and
 - nature and use of the surrounding area.
- A Person shall not cause or permit any construction activity on Property they Own or Occupy before 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. on a Weekday or before 9:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. on a Weekend or Holiday.

- A Person shall not collect, cause, or permit the collection of garbage with a Motor Vehicle on or adjacent to any Property zoned for residential use before 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. on a Weekday or before 9:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. on a Weekend or Holiday. ([Beaumont CSB](#), ss. 47-51)

Strathcona County

- A person shall not cause a noise, allow noise to originate from property.
- Sections re: exceptions, noise permits, permit applications and permit conditions ([Strathcona CSB](#), s. 6-14)
- No specific reference to continuous/non-continuous but does indicate an exception for sounds of “temporary or intermittent nature of noise” between specific hours. ([Strathcona CSB](#), ss. 9(d)(i))

St. Albert

- [St. Albert Noise Bylaw](#) addresses excessive noise as well as permits and penalties.
- [St. Albert Noise Bylaw](#), s.4(1) addresses daytime restrictions, quiet hours, and their respective decibel limits.

Calgary, Morinville, and Parkland County have specified decibel levels for day and night, residential and non-residential. The levels can include sound from motor vehicles.

Calgary

- Continuous sound is addressed in residential developments and downtown. This is measured in terms of decibels over a one-hour period. ([Calgary CSB](#), ss.28-29)
- Non-continuous sound is addressed in residential developments and downtown. This is also measured in terms of decibels over a 15-minute period. ([Calgary CSB](#), s. 30)

Parkland County

- Continuous and non-continuous sound is addressed. ([Parkland County Community Standards Bylaw](#), ss. 8(1)(d)(j) and 8(6)-8(8))

4. ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Minimum Standards

Administration recommends following the language from Beaumont's CSB and adding a section on specific decibel levels from Edmonton's CSB as per above. Exceptions will be as per existing process.

Committee Question: Is there desire to add decibel limits and distinctions between continuous and non-continuous noise?

Administration does not recommend adding specific sections on continuous and non-continuous noise in the CSB at this time as the recommended approach to use both Beaumont's language and Edmonton's decibel levels provides a fulsome scope for all types of noise. Additionally, it would speak to “type, volume, and duration of sound” which essentially is the same as continuous/non-continuous interpretations.

5. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

At this time, Enforcement Services believes that existing equipment can be used; however, additional equipment and training for Enforcement Services may be required depending on the Committee's direction.