



Meeting Minutes and Question and Answer: Noise Management Discussion

Date and Time: December 12, 2023

Agenda:

1. Introduction and Objectives
2. Basics of Noise and Decibels
3. Measurement Techniques
4. Noise Barriers
5. Outdoor Noise Exposure
6. Indoor Classroom Acoustics
7. Concerns and Discussion
8. Action Items

Meeting Highlights:

1. Introduction and Objectives:

- MPP Peter Tabuns joined the meeting and expressed the intention to address indoor, outdoor, and school play areas.
- Frank Babic outlined the educational nature of the discussion, emphasizing the need for a common language.

2. Basics of Noise and Decibels:

- Frank explained the concepts of source, path, and receiver in noise analysis.
- There was a detailed discussion on decibels (dB), including average, maximum, and peak levels.

3. Measurement Techniques:

- Overview of measuring noise using calibrated equipment, highlighting the importance of laboratory-quality instruments.

4. Noise Barriers:

- Discussion on how noise barriers work, emphasizing the mass and height of the noise barriers and the importance of line of sight.
- Examples were provided of noise barrier effectiveness, with considerations for height and material.

5. **Outdoor Noise Exposure:**

- Consideration of noise exposure scenarios for children during different time intervals were outlined.
- It was noted that the Health & Safety plan created for Pape Junior Public School is in line with the noise levels allowed by World Health Organization (WHO) and Toronto Public Health (TPH) standards.

6. **Indoor Classroom Acoustics:**

- It was noted that indoor noise levels in classrooms, would aim for construction noise levels below 55dBA.
- An approach was outlined to adopt an 80dBA Leq with a 10 minute limit to ensure 55dBA noise limits are achieved with the school's windows closed and to minimize impact to classrooms.

7. **Concerns and Discussion:**

- There was an expressed concern about relying on averages over the period of 7AM to 6PM (11 hours), emphasizing the impact on students over extended exposure (through years of construction)
- Concerns were raised about the potential impact on children's ability to focus and concentrate. This concern is a consideration beyond physical impact on the hearing of children.
- Questions about the TDSB consultant measurements were raised, where Metrolinx identified they rely on their own independent measurements and could not comment to the TDSB consultant measurements.

Questions:

1. **Real-time Monitoring:** Who is responsible for real-time monitoring of noise levels, and who responds to alerts?

Answer: Metrolinx and its noise contractor monitor the noise levels on a daily basis. Metrolinx is responsible for responding to alerts and actioning those alerts.

2. **Measurement and Response:** Clarification was requested on the use of sound monitoring equipment and Metrolinx's responses to noise overages and how these are connected with the Health & Safety plan.

Answer: Noise monitoring must be done with lab quality noise monitoring equipment. If there are overages these will be addressed by Metrolinx.

3. **Peak Noise Levels:** Clarification was requested on the reliance on peak noise levels and the role of the school's Principle in identifying noise problems.

Answer: Peak noise levels are one measure used by Metrolinx to monitor and address impacts on hearing. While the Principle and others may communicate to Metrolinx about noise concerns, Metrolinx is proactively monitoring these as well.

4. **Impact on Students:** Concerns were raised about the long-term exposure of students to construction noise during typical construction times and questions were raised about the choice of operating a school near construction, which was directed to the TDSB.
5. **Learning from Experience:** Community members also emphasized the need to learn from past experiences and adjust construction schedules accordingly.

Answer: Metrolinx continues to learn from past experiences and improve its approach to noise concerns from construction. In addition, construction schedules have been adjusted to pause work during pick-up and drop-off time for students.

6. **Daycare Outdoor Space:** There were also acknowledgement of the concerns about the daycare's outdoor space needs.

Answer: The Daycare outdoor space is addressed in the same manner as the general playground area with respect to construction noise impacts.

7. **Noise Impact Measurement:** Seeks clarification on the impact of noise levels over time on children's hearing and their ability to focus on lessons. This was acknowledged as a concern.

Answer: The TDSB noise limit of 55dBA has been identified as an acceptable limit in the classroom. This limit should be acceptable for student's focus on lessons.

8. **Information Disconnect:** There were concerns about the lack of information regarding the TDSB's noise consultant, the ongoing review, and the need for context and a timeline for a response. There was a mention of discrepancies in methodology and calibration efforts between teams. Did Metrolinx respond to the TDSB's noise report?

Answer: Metrolinx has provided our response to the TDSB consultant related to their measurements and recommendations. This is with the consultant to review and respond.

9. **Noise levels in a classrooms:** There were concerns raised about the noise levels in a classroom with open windows once the permanent noise wall has been installed. What noise levels can be expected with windows open in the classroom?

Answer: For the Toronto Hydro construction work, Metrolinx expects noise levels in the playground area not to exceed 69dBA based on our noise predictions with the noise barrier.

Background noise levels inside classrooms without any construction activities is about 50 dBA. When construction activities occur, and with the noise wall installed, we can expect indoor noise to be limited to 55 dBA during Toronto Hydro construction work, which falls within the TDSB guidance on indoor noise in the classroom.

Overall, the community raised questions and concerns about real-time monitoring, the impact of noise on students, the efficiency of construction operations, and the communication and coordination between different stakeholders. Additionally, there are concerns about the ongoing review process involving the TDSB's noise consultant and the need for more transparent communication regarding assessment methodologies and timelines for responses.

Action Items

- Following discussion of TDSB's investment in a noise consultant, in which concerns about transparency were noted Metrolinx will:
 - Finalize its review of discrepancies between the Metrolinx and TDSB assessments.
 - Work to bridge the gap in understanding of the assessment between the TDSB audio assessment and the Metrolinx audio assessment.

Closing Remarks: The meeting concluded with a commitment to address the concerns raised and ensure ongoing communication between everyone. Future meetings will be scheduled to track progress and implement necessary changes to mitigate noise-related issues in the community and school areas.