

York Region's Traffic Noise Mitigation Policy

Presentation to
Transportation Services Committee

Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas
Paul Jankowski
May 4, 2011



Presentation Overview

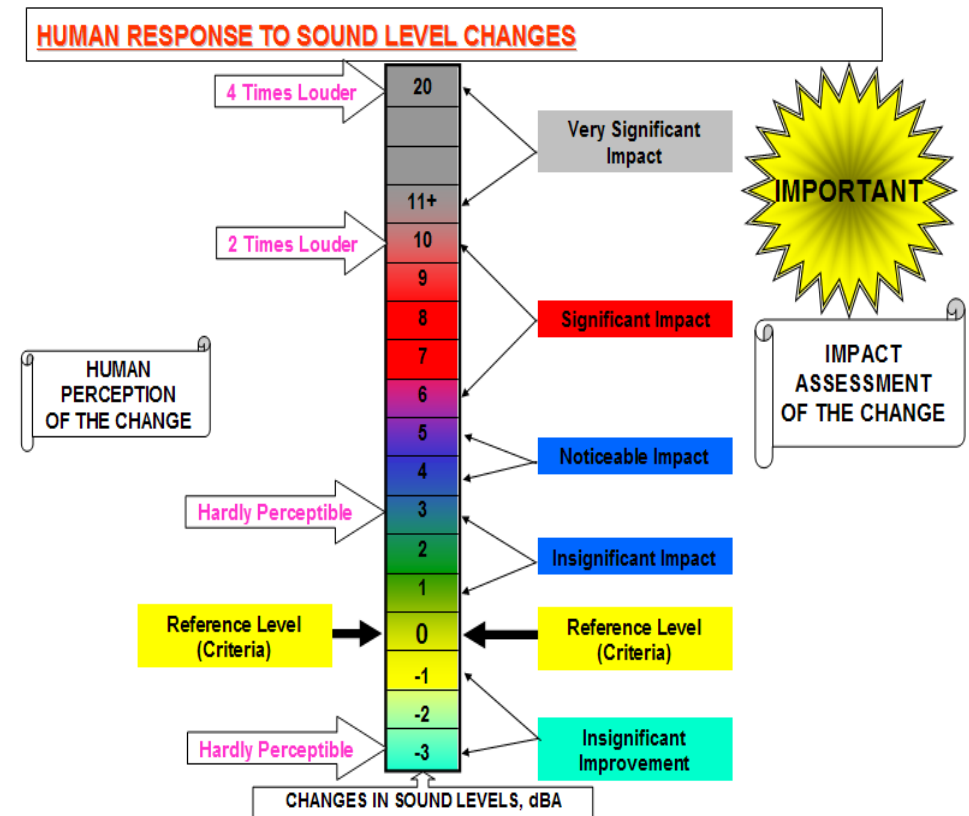
1. **2006 Traffic Noise Mitigation Policy**
2. **Quail Run Traffic Noise Assessment**
3. **Medley Court Traffic Noise Assessment**

Traffic Noise Mitigation Policy Overview

- **Approved in March 2006**
- **Extensive Public / Stakeholder Consultation**
- **Comprehensive Assessment of Traffic Noise Issues Associated with Regional Roads**
- **More Responsive to Resident Concerns**

When is a Noise Barrier Warranted:

- Warranted when the traffic noise levels exceed 60 dBA
- Effective when barrier would achieve a minimum of a 6 dBA reduction
- Only considered for backyards immediately abutting the regional right-of-way



4 Policy Category Areas

1. Regional Capital Projects:

Assessment & mitigation for regional road reconstruction and widening

2. Retrofit:

Assessment & mitigation for existing homes adjacent to regional roads where no new work is planned

3. Development:

Assessment & mitigation for new developments along road right-of-ways

4. Replacement:

Regional policy for dealing with private noise barriers that were built through earlier developments

Regional Capital Projects

- Warranted when existing or future traffic noise levels exceed 60 dBA
- Constructed when effective (minimum 6 dBA reduction)
- If noise barriers are ineffective, vegetative screening planted as a visual buffer
- Constructed in the road right-of-way
- Region responsible for construction, ownership and maintenance
- DC and Tax Levy funded



Typical Issues on Capital Projects

EA Challenges:

- Where noise mitigation may be warranted, topography could negate effectiveness
- Backyards not immediately adjacent to the Region's right-of-way
- Residents concerns that traffic noise levels are modelled rather than measured



Typical Issues on Capital Projects (Cont'd.)

- **Design Challenges:**
 - **Drainage, utility conflicts and foundation requirements**
 - **Vegetation removal and replacement**
 - **Impacts to private property (e.g. gates, sheds)**



Experience Since 2006:

- 2006 construction projects have been re-assessed under the new policy (9th Line, Bathurst Street, Teston Road)
- Barriers will be constructed on 9th Line & Bathurst St. in 2011
- Barrier detailed design is underway on:
 - Warden Avenue and Major Mackenzie Drive in Markham
 - Bathurst Street and 19th Avenue in Richmond Hill
 - Bathurst Street in Vaughan
 - Bloomington Road in Richmond Hill and Aurora
- Noise mitigation requirements are being assessed on all active EA's

Retrofit Requests

- Residents can request a traffic noise assessment where no work regional roadwork is planned
- Same Warrant Criteria
- Barriers considered on private property
- Property owners to be responsible for the construction, ownership and maintenance of these noise barriers
- Potential Regional funding - 50% of the capital construction cost
Tax Levy funded



Typical Issues on Retrofit Projects

- **Minimum Benefit Criteria (6dBA reduction, 5 continuous houses)**
- **Residents do not agree with assessment criteria**
- **Elevated decks not considered separately**
- **Homeowner funding and future responsibility**
- **Similar challenges as for capital road projects:**
 - **Topography**
 - **Barrier effectiveness**
 - **Impacts to private property**



Experience Since 2006

- Numerous preliminary enquiries
- To date, barriers found to meet warrants at:
 - Pioneer Lane – (Islington Ave. @ Hwy. 7 in Vaughan)
 - Manning Crescent – (Davis Dr. @ Leslie St. in Newmarket)
 - Medley Court – (Teston Rd at Cranston Park Ave. in Vaughan)
- Pioneer Lane & Manning Crescent residents are considering whether or not to move forward with implementation (funding & ownership continue to be their biggest concern)
- Medley Court backyards are not immediately adjacent to the regional right-of-way

Barriers Built Through Development

- Same warrant criteria
- Developers build barriers as a condition of subdivision approval
- Notices of noise mitigation requirements are included in developer agreements and individual purchase agreements
- Property buyers responsible for ownership and maintenance of the noise barriers
- Barriers constructed entirely on private property



Typical Issues Related to Development

- Many residents are unaware of ownership and maintenance responsibilities
- Some residents dissatisfied with level of noise mitigation



Experience Since 2006

- Minimal lengths of noise barrier now being constructed
- Reduced as a result of changing development style (e.g. window streets, minimal side/rear lot properties)
- Some residents continue to object to ownership and maintenance obligations



Existing Private Noise Barriers:

- Private barriers are responsibility of adjacent homeowners
- In the event of a safety concerns on the regional right-of-way, Region works with local municipality via the Property Standards Act to ensure that the adjacent property owners eliminate the hazard
- 59 km of such private barriers abut Regional roads (2006 replacement estimate - \$44.2M)
- Many more on local roads



Issues / Experiences:

- Many residents are unaware of, or object to, ownership and maintenance responsibilities
- Some residents continue to feel Region or local municipalities should assume responsibilities



2006 Noise Policy Costs

In March 2006, a 2.2 m high noise barrier was estimated to cost \$830 per linear meter. The cost of the Policy implementation was estimated at:

- Capital Program - \$22M
- Retrofit Program - \$10M Potential Cost (\$200K per Year)
- Development – No Regional Costs
- Replacement – No Regional Costs

Quail Run Traffic Noise Assessment

- Road was widened and reconstructed in 2006/07
- Commitment made to re-evaluate traffic noise by Council using Capital criteria and implement noise mitigation, if warranted.
- Noise study was done in 2010 and identified 7 locations that exceeded the 60dBA threshold
- 2 of these locations qualify for mitigation under current policy (3 and 6 Quail Run)



Quail Run Traffic Noise Assessment (Cont'd.)

- A noise barrier 3.0m high placed at the property line would not be effective due to topography and lot layout
- In accordance with the policy, regional staff are proceeding with vegetative screening in 2011
- The estimated cost for the vegetative screening is \$40K



Medley Court Noise Assessment

- Road widened in 2005/06
- No mitigation warranted under previous policy
- Reassessed under the 2006 policy (Retrofit category)
- 2010 assessment identified 5 properties not mitigated through development (38 Medley Court & 4 properties to the west)



Medley Court Noise Assessment (Cont'd.)

- 3.0m high noise barrier on private property would be effective at this location
- Property does not immediately abut the Region's right-of-way
- Many such situations exist along Regional roads
- Current policy addresses only properties immediately adjacent to Regional roads.

