

Public opinions with respect to noise management

Executive Summary

By-law & Regulatory Services commissioned an external consultant to poll residents with the goal of better understanding residents concerns with respect to general noise disturbances, construction noise, snow removal and waste removal. Responses were analyzed from city-wide, urban, sub-urban and rural perspectives.

Respondents who stated they live in an “urban” part of the City are more likely to feel they are disturbed by music and shouting, construction, and car alarms compared to sub-urban residents, and especially compared to rural residents.

Priorities for reducing noise include: snow removal; construction; motorcycles; and music and shouting. However, the reduction of noise rated significantly lower than other city priorities, including transit and transportation, economic development and developing and maintaining community infrastructure.

Methodology

- Data was collected from random telephone surveys conducted between April 10 and April 13, 2017.
- A total of 800 residents completed the survey. The margin of error for this sample size is $\pm 3.4\%$, 19 times out of 20. Responses based on subgroups within this survey will have a higher margin of error.
- All respondents were over the age of 18.
- Respondents had the option of participating in English or French.
- The average survey length (for all issues) was 10 minutes and 20 seconds.
- The data has been weighted to replicate actual population distributions according to the 2016 census.
- For this study, quotas by area were established to generate sufficient data regionally for robust analysis – as such 200 interviews were completed in each of the following zones: Ottawa East, Ottawa West, Ottawa Centre and Ottawa South.

Types of Noise Disturbances (City-wide)

Residents were asked how frequently they were disturbed by different sources of noise.

Car Alarms

- Constantly 1%
- Frequently 2%
- Occasionally 15%
- Rarely 35%
- Never 47%

Construction

- Constantly 3%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 18%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 43%

Garbage Pick-up Before 7 a.m.

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 5%
- Occasionally 13%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 51%

Motorcycles

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 6%
- Occasionally 15%
- Rarely 35%
- Never 47%

Music and Shouting

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 5%
- Occasionally 13%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 51%

Snow Removal

- Constantly 4%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 25%
- Rarely 26%
- Never 37%

Types of Noise Disturbances (Urban)

Among urban residents, the frequency of noise disruption was expressed as follows:

Car Alarms

- Constantly 1%
- Frequently 3%
- Occasionally 15%
- Rarely 36%
- Never 45%

Construction

- Constantly 4%
- Frequently 8%
- Occasionally 21%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 38%

Garbage Pick-up Before 7 a.m.

- Constantly 3%
- Frequently 2%
- Occasionally 6%
- Rarely 19%
- Never 70%

Motorcycles

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 6%
- Occasionally 20%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 44%

Music and Shouting

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 8%
- Occasionally 15%
- Rarely 30%
- Never 46%

Snow Removal

- Constantly 4%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 28%
- Rarely 26%
- Never 35%

Types of Noise Disturbances (Suburban)

Among sub-urban residents, the frequency of noise disruption was expressed as follows:

Car Alarms

- Constantly < 1%
- Frequently < 1%
- Occasionally 17%
- Rarely 35%
- Never 47%

Construction

- Constantly 2%
- Frequently 6%
- Occasionally 17%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 46%

Garbage Pick-up Before 7 a.m.

- Constantly < 1%
- Frequently 2%
- Occasionally 4%
- Rarely 20%
- Never 74%

Motorcycles

- Constantly < 1%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 13%
- Rarely 31%
- Never 49%

Music and Shouting

- Constantly 3%
- Frequently 3%
- Occasionally 12%
- Rarely 29%
- Never 54%

Snow Removal

- Constantly 5%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 24%
- Rarely 25%
- Never 39%

Types of Noise Disturbances (Rural)

Among rural residents, the frequency of noise disruption was expressed as follows:

Car Alarms

- Constantly 0%
- Frequently < 1%
- Occasionally 9%
- Rarely 23%
- Never 68%

Construction

- Constantly < 1%
- Frequently 5%
- Occasionally 10%
- Rarely 23%
- Never 62%

Garbage Pick-up Before 7 a.m.

- Constantly < 1%
- Frequently 5%
- Occasionally 2%
- Rarely 17%
- Never 76%

Motorcycles

- Constantly 7%
- Frequently 7%
- Occasionally 9%
- Rarely 21%
- Never 55%

Music and Shouting

- Constantly 0%
- Frequently < 1%
- Occasionally 8%
- Rarely 22%
- Never 70%

Snow Removal

- Constantly 0%
- Frequently 13%
- Occasionally 19%
- Rarely 26%
- Never 43%

Rating City Priorities

To get a sense of how reducing noise for residents compares to other City priorities, respondents were asked to use a 10-point scale to rate how important they consider four different priorities.

Reducing noise for residents trails the other three priorities as outlined below. This priority is considered “important” (gave a rating of 8 to 10) by 29% of residents, and “somewhat important” (gave a rating of 5 to 7) by 37% of respondents and the remaining 34% gave a rating of 1 to 4 on the 10-point scale.

Perhaps not surprisingly, residents who have lodged a complaint over the past year are much more likely to consider noise reduction for residents an “important” priority (51%).

1. Providing effective transit and transportation

- Important (8-10) 75%
- Somewhat Important (5-7) 17%
- Not Important (1-4) 8%

2. Supporting and growing the local economy

- Important (8-10) 72%
- Somewhat Important (5-7) 23%
- Not Important (1-4) 5%

3. Developing and maintaining community infrastructure

- Important (8-10) 69%
- Somewhat Important (5-7) 26%
- Not Important (1-4) 5%

4. Reducing noise for residents

- Important (8-10) 29%
- Somewhat Important (5-7) 37%
- Not Important (1-4) 34%

Analysis

While the online public consultation tool is very effective for collecting resident feedback, the results are not statistically valid when it comes to understanding trends across the broader population. This public opinion research helps the City to understand, in a broad sense, a variety of resident opinions and experiences with noise disturbances.

When asked to indicate how often they are disturbed by a variety of possible disturbances, residents are most likely to feel they are disturbed by snow removal (36% at least “occasionally”), followed by construction (28% at least “occasionally”). The next most common types of disturbances would be motorcycles (23%) and music and shouting (20%). It is possible that residents were most likely to note snow removal given the timing of the survey.

Some noteworthy trends noticed through additional analysis include:

- Residents who have made service requests related to the City over the past year are 7 times more likely to indicate in our survey that they are either “constantly” or “frequently” disturbed by music and shouting compared to residents who have not lodged any noise-related complaints over the past year (35% vs. 5%). They are also twice as likely to have been “constantly” or “frequently” disturbed by construction noise (20% vs. 10%).
- Respondents who stated they live in an “urban” part of the city are more likely to feel they are disturbed by music and shouting, construction, and car alarms compared to sub-urban residents, and especially compared to rural residents. This latter group often indicated they are “never” disturbed by any of the forms of disturbances.
- Ottawa Centre residents are the most likely to feel they are disturbed by music and shouting – fully 15% feel they are disturbed either “frequently” or “constantly.” This compares to about 4% to 6% for residents in Ottawa East (4%), West (6%) and South (6%).