






City Manager's Office
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WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

Date: May 1, 2025
To: Mayor and City Councilmembers
Through: Kelly DiMartino, City Manager 
From: Rupa Venkatesh, Assistant City Manager 
Kristy Volesky, Assistant Chief of Fort Collins Police Services 
Subject: April 22, 2025 Work Session Summary: Sounds of the City

BOTTOM LINE

The purpose of this memo is to document the summary of discussions during the April 22, 2025 Work Session, "Sounds of the City." All Councilmembers were present.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

- Discussed types of sound that current regulations are effective in enforcing when they become noise issues to include chronic animal sounds, construction activities, house parties, lawn care activities, etc.
- Discussed regulations that staff are recommending amendments to in order to enforce certain types of sounds more effectively including agricultural operations, fireworks and traffic/vehicle sounds. These recommendations can be brought forward more immediately in Phase 1.
- Discussed types of sounds, including ambient and amplified, that would require more staff research and neighborhood engagement before bringing forward information and recommendations for Council consideration. This is Phase 2.
- Recommended bringing forward Phase 1 amendments to the May 20th not May 6th Council meeting in order to give more time to realize implications of HB 1147 should it pass.
- For Phase 1, feedback was provided to explore educational opportunities with driver's education programs and ASCSU; and local shops that do modifications.
- For Phase 1, feedback to explore potential vehicle quiet zones to be established downtown.
- For Phase 2, feedback provided to look at the application for block parties, particularly any questions that require people to know decibel levels
- For Phase 2, feedback to research other comparable cities that are similar in size and culture

NEXT STEPS

- Staff will bring forward amendments to Municipal Code related to agricultural exemptions, unreasonable traffic noise, mufflers, and fireworks for Council consideration on first reading on May 20th.

- Staff will conduct general outreach and noise level readings this summer through fall with the intention of providing findings and recommendations to Council during an October 2025 Work Session. Depending on feedback, first reading of proposed Code changes could be considered in November 2025.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

In the Agenda Item Summary, it was stated that automated noise level tracking through red-light camera technology is currently prohibited under Colorado state law. This was not accurate as current state law does not prohibit use of this technology; however, state law has not authorized the use of automated devices for traffic violations that carry DMV consequences outside of speeding and redlight violations as outlined in the current AVIS statute and Municipal Code.

The City could draft a Municipal Ordinance to allow the use of noise cameras to detect decibel sound violations since those do not carry state DMV consequences. However, as outlined below staff believe adding a sound detection system is something that should be considered in the future based on some challenges for implementation now.

There have been a couple pilot projects done in Colorado and one in New York using automated noise detection traffic enforcement devices. In Colorado, the City of Longmont conducted two 30-day tests of a noise meter and camera system installed adjacent to a roadway. During those time periods, when the noise meter detected a noise above 85 decibels, the camera took a photo of the vehicle and license plate.

Throughout the testing periods, the city discovered several issues, including:

1. The readability of license plates was not very good. The device could only read about 50% of the vehicles passing through the area and the issue became more problematic at night. Only about 2% of license plates on motorcycles were able to be read.
2. The system showed an inability to distinguish which vehicle was the violator when more than one vehicle was in proximity.

Reportedly, those issues have been resolved, and Longmont is planning on running another test trial.

There are several additional considerations regarding using this type of technology to impact sound:

- The ability of the system to obtain necessary information from the noise meter and camera at this time and whether improvements in technology over time will occur.
- A review of the current allowable decibel levels in Fort Collins and whether adjustments need to be made.
- An understanding of where this technology best fits – police services vs. code compliance.
- An understanding of technology limitations of these systems such as location, speed limits, multi-lane roadways, other ambient noise, etc.
- Cost associated with implementation of a new camera system and vendor.

Based on the current challenges faced by other cities who utilize or have conducted studies of the sound detection systems, staff recommend gathering additional information and research as more reliable technology becomes available in the future.