

**From:** [Wufoo](#)  
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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

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Organizational Affiliation, if any	Rock Creek Palisades Citizens Association
What district in Montgomery County do you live in? If you do not know, please see the <a href="#">County District Map</a> *	District 6

Question/Comment for the Policing Advisory Commission \*

I would like to testify at today's meeting. Below are my written comments.

My topic of concern is the dramatic increase in the number and volume of vehicles with modified mufflers. These vehicles are so loud that they disrupt conversations even inside my house, let alone in my backyard, and wake us up at 4am. Recently the problem has arisen at my office as well, where, despite thick glass windows, the frequent noise of these vehicles interrupts my concentration and reduces productivity.

It is even worse for pedestrians next to these vehicles without the protection of a sound barrier – when these vehicles accelerate it is like being assaulted with sound. The County wants to encourage walking with the Pedestrian Master Plan and "Pedestrian Level of Comfort" analyses, but who wants to risk a deafening encounter with a motorcycle?

Those of you listening now may not encounter these vehicles very often – once in a while on 495 or in a shopping center parking lot. Please understand, though, that this problem is much worse in specific areas, for example on Newport Mill Rd, Connecticut Ave. and Parklawn Dr. But since vehicles are of course mobile, anyone on any street is vulnerable to the thunder of a passing pickup truck.

Muffler manufacturers, for example Flowmaster, even tout how their designs allow for conversations inside the car, while outside producing an "aggressive" sound "announcing your arrival":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhQRh87wvqk>

Based on my correspondence with the County, existing law does address this problem: Section 22–609 of the Maryland Transportation Article specifically prohibits a person from modifying an exhaust system, or operating a motor vehicle with a modified exhaust system on any highway in this State. According to the State Police, Diesel Noise Team, any Police Officer certified by the Maryland Police Training Commission can issue a citation for exceedingly loud vehicle exhaust noise under §22–609 without the need for a noise meter.

As far as I know, however, no action is currently being taken. I propose two actions:

The first is to publicize the law and remind people that it is not acceptable to leave a wave of noise as they drive. The simplest actions may be to put up "Modified Mufflers Illegal" signs, such as Rockville has, and to send flyers to every household, as has been done for the ban on herbicide use on lawns and many other issues, with a message such as "Respect your neighbors, keep your vehicle quiet – Modifying your vehicle's muffler is illegal and results in a fine."

A wide range of demographic groups now seem to think that driving a loud vehicle is fun and cool, and the purpose of the above announcement is to give notice and stigmatize that behavior.

The second action is to work with police to start enforcing the law. The reasons police have given for not ticketing people include a) not having enough personnel, b) the time consumed if person fights the ticket and difficulty winning the case, and c) not having sound meters. I would ask that the police develop a plan to overcome these issues and that the County provide the resources to implement the plan, for example additional personnel or money for sound meters. But I've been told that sound meters are not required if an officer has proper training, and I would argue that common sense says if you can hear a vehicle a block away it is too loud.

The idea of having limits on how loud a vehicle can be is not new. In past years police departments would actually have checkpoints for the purpose of ticketing loud vehicles. Today, a variation could be to have police parked and monitoring certain intersection, as is done currently for enforcement of rush-hour Do Not Enter restrictions. An additional process could be to allow residents to submit the license plate number of loud vehicles. Finally, there are even automated "noise cameras", for example being used in London <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8818895/Chelseas-noise-cameras-snared-130-drivers-loud-engines-11-days-switched-on.html>

Five years ago when I contacted County Executive Leggett about this problem, I may have been the only one. But the problem has grown and is now widespread enough that many people in my neighborhood are aggravated and asking for action.

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