

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Quieter Yonkers Campaign Surpasses 430 Signatures as Community Rallies Against Controversial Noise Ordinance**

**YONKERS, NY** — With spring arriving and outdoor activities on the rise, Yonkers residents are speaking out against the city’s radically louder new noise ordinance. The grassroots group Quieter Yonkers ([www.quieteryonkers.org](http://www.quieteryonkers.org)) has gathered over 430 signatures on its Change.org petition (<https://www.change.org/quieteryonkers>), calling on the Yonkers City Council to reverse the November 14, 2023, decision that sharply increased allowable noise levels.

The ordinance passed with a 5-2 vote, without public hearings or expert consultation. It raised daytime noise limits to levels eight times higher than previously allowed and doubled nighttime limits — putting Yonkers at odds with cities nationwide that are working to reduce noise pollution. The measure was sponsored by Council Member Tasha Diaz (District 3), who is currently running for Yonkers City Council President. Diaz has faced prior controversy, including her removal as Council Majority Leader in early 2024 amid allegations of making threats against another council member.

Health experts warn that excessive noise damages hearing, disrupts sleep, raises stress levels, and increases the risk of heart disease. Children’s learning and cognitive development are also negatively affected. The impact is felt most in vulnerable communities already burdened by other environmental and health challenges.

Quieter Yonkers is urging the City Council to suspend the ordinance and initiate a transparent, public process with expert input to craft a science-based, community-driven noise policy.

“This ordinance was rushed through with no meaningful public discussion,” said Peter Cohn, founder of Quieter Yonkers. “It’s not just a quality-of-life issue — it’s a public health crisis. Yonkers needs responsible, informed governance.”

Local leaders are joining the call:

### **United Yonkers, consortium of 14 neighborhood associations:**

*“The Council’s decision ignores the voices of West Side communities already dealing with disproportionate environmental and public health burdens.”*

### **Park Hill Residents Association:**

*“Seventy percent of our surveyed residents identified noise as their number one concern. The Council must rethink this ordinance.”*

### **Mike Hertz, River Communities Coalition of Yonkers:**

*“Having worked with Councilmember Diaz on noise issues, I’m stunned she would support weakening protections. This must be reversed.”*

**Terry Joshi, Yonkers Committee for Smart Development:**

*“Downtown development demands stronger — not weaker — noise controls. The current ordinance fails our growing city.”*

**Anonymous Community Board Member:**

*“Permitting 85 dB — a level requiring hearing protection in workplaces — in residential areas is reckless. This law is not fit for Yonkers.”*

Cohn concluded, *“This ordinance reflects a City Council that did not do its homework. Yonkers residents deserve thoughtful, evidence-based policy making.”*

For interviews, more information, or to cover this story, visit [www.quieteryonkers.org](http://www.quieteryonkers.org) or view the petition at <https://www.change.org/quieteryonkers>. For more detailed comments from community leaders and from Cohn see following pages.

**Media Contact:**

Peter Cohn  
Quieter Yonkers  
917-974-2136  
petercohn@gmail.com

-more-

## Community Leaders Voice Support for Quieter Yonkers

*The Council's decision follows a pattern of disregard for the disadvantaged communities that make up the west side of Yonkers — specifically, neighborhoods densely populated with moderate- and low-income households that already bear disproportionate burdens of negative public health impacts, environmental pollution, and climate change.*

– United Yonkers, consortium of 14 Yonkers neighborhood associations

*When our association surveyed residents, 70% cited noise as their top neighborhood concern. Given the importance placed on this issue, we hope that the Council will reconsider its vote and work to develop a city noise policy informed by greater public input and based on a better understanding of the health impact of noise and the impact of noise on quality of life in Park Hill.*

– Park Hill Residents Association

*Having collaborated with Councilmember Diaz on multiple noise related issues in years past I was disappointed to see her sponsor the roll back of critical noise protections. Voting to weaken noise standards goes against multiple scientific studies linking excessive noise to hearing loss, hypertension and other health concerns.. Why would anyone take such a thoughtless, callous and careless action? It's time for our City Council to correct this mistake - our community's health and well being must be protected!*

– Mike Hertz, Member - River Communities Coalition of Yonkers (RCCY)

*Yonkers is undergoing a massive amount of new development, particularly in the already crowded downtown area. Noise ordinances should be in line with this critical mass of new infrastructure that unchecked and left at current levels will lead to noise disturbances and damage throughout the area on a 24 hour basis. YCSD agrees with Quieter Yonkers about the need to redress the changes passed in 2023.*

– Terry Joshi, President, Yonkers Comm. for Smart Development

*To my understanding 85 dB is the trigger for hearing protection as per OSHA regulations. It's hard to believe that this level of sound can be permitted in a residential environment. I wonder if the same rules will apply to the new Yonkers noise ordinance? When a neighbor is responsible for emitting 85 dB of noise, will they also be responsible for supplying hearing protection for their neighbors who are affected ? It's hard to believe that this is even a part of the conversation, this revised law is something I'd expect of a third world nation, but not in the city of hills.*

Anonymous Community Board Member

-more-

Comment from Peter Cohn, founder of Quieter Yonkers.

*Cohn is a writer and documentary filmmaker who has lived in the Park Hill section of Yonkers since 2003. Find out more at [petercohn.com](http://petercohn.com).*

### **How this started**

"It was never my plan to be a noise gadfly. But when I accidentally discovered that the Yonkers City Council had radically increased the city's noise limits, I was shocked. It seems inconceivable to me that any city would operate in ignorance of the very well known problems created by noise. It's an obvious quality of life issue. And if you spend about two minutes looking on a search engine, you find a massive amount of scientific evidence about the adverse health impacts. I've been personally affected by noise, but the actions of the City Council turned this into a political issue.

### **A City Council That Doesn't Know What It's Doing**

I did a little digging into how the City Council passed this ordinance, and I was shocked again. There was no public input. No research. No thoughtful discussion. The ordinance was proposed by Council Member Tasha Diaz in the fall of 2023. Diaz chairs the Council's Environmental Committee, and her presentation to the committee on Oct. 24, and the ten minutes the members spent discussing the proposal, show a misunderstanding of noise measurement and a disregard for the public interest. Diaz argued that noise limits should be raised because too many people are subject to unfair noise complaints. In my neighborhood, which Diaz represented, 70 percent of the residents say that noise is our biggest problem. I can only suspect that Diaz is seeking to serve a rather limited number of constituents, and I wonder who they are.

### **The Council's Flawed Process**

The entire City Council process displayed a troubling inattention to detail and parliamentary procedure, to the extent that the city noise code may actually be invalid. I suspect that none of the Council Members who voted for the ordinance actually read the document. Yonkers is not a small city. We have a big city budget and deal with big city problems. Our Council does not seem to be up to that task.