

SOUNDS OF OUR CITY

SOUND/MUSIC/NOISE
IN
TORONTO

Urban Noise

- The readings today all highlight the long history of approaches to noise in urban locations. They highlight that the definition of noise depends on a number of factors:
 - The function of the noise (is it for work, pleasure, etc.)
 - The source of the noise (who is being noisy? Who is complaining?)
 - The policing of noise is not just about physics (i.e. sound), but social relations.

Noise Control

- A number of major cities, including those mentioned in the article, have dedicated significant efforts to monitoring and managing noise.
 - The city of New York has a division dedicated to [“Noise Complaints”](#) in its division of environmental protection.
 - Paris has [an office](#) that both monitors complaints and the ambient noise in the city. It both informs citizens about noise laws and shows the distribution of sound in the city.

Noise Control



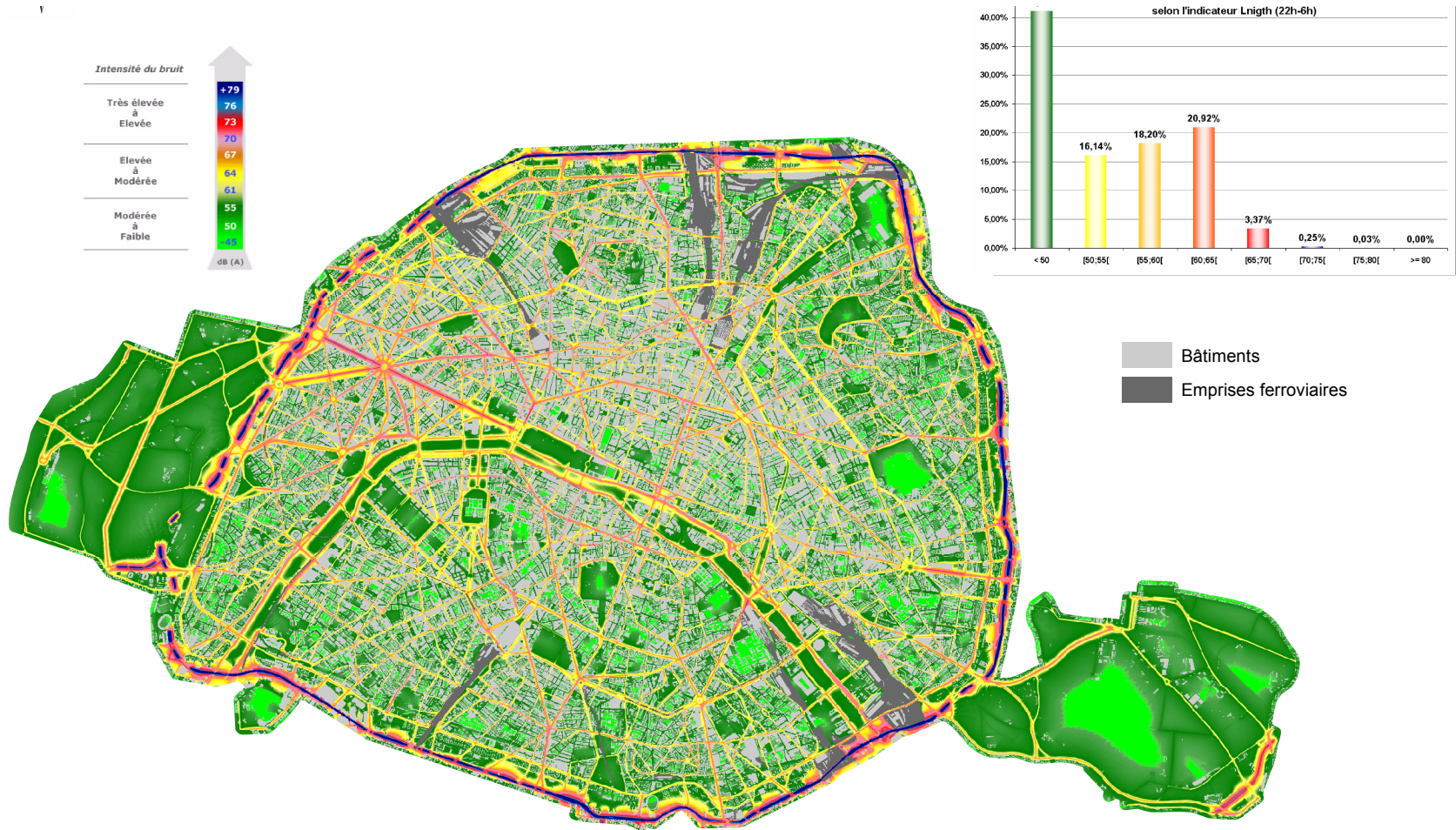
Map of "bruits" in Paris by Day.

Noise Control



Map of “bruits” in Paris in the evening.

Noise Control



Map of "bruits" in Paris at night.

Noise in Toronto

- Toronto doesn't seem to have a single division dedicated to the management of noise. Rather it handles it as part of the enforcement of "noise by-laws."
- [Information](#) about noise in the city primarily involves informing citizens how to make complaints.
- As the city continues to grow, there are a number of places where conflicts and stresses are beginning to become clear around issues of noise. We are going to discuss two of these:
 - The expansion of the Toronto Island Airport
 - The limits on the development of 'hospitality' businesses in certain neighbourhoods downtown.

The Island Airport Expansion

- Last year, Porter Airlines announced that it was ordering a fleet of jets that would allow it to expand its routes.
- As part of this proposal, the airline was requesting the right to extend the runway at its main hub, Toronto Island Airport, by 168 meters.
- Residents in the area were immediately concerned that the jets would significantly increase the noise being produced by the airport.

The Island Airport Expansion

- There have long been concerns about the expansion of the island airport to service commercial flights. In 2010, a [noise study](#) was commissioned that looked at the effect of the airport on the surrounding area.
- Earlier this year, [another study](#) was commissioned to look at the environmental impact (including noise) more generally.

Entertainment Districts and Restaurant Moratoriums

- While there are certain areas of the city where there are a high concentration of entertainment venues (King Street/Queen Street), there have been a number of moves to limit some of these developments:
 - November 2009: A twelve month moratorium on restaurants and bars along Ossington Ave between Dundas and Queen.
 - November 2012: A twelve month moratorium on the opening of new “hospitality businesses” in Parkdale (Queen St between Dufferin and Roncesvailles”)

Entertainment Districts and Restaurant Moratoriums

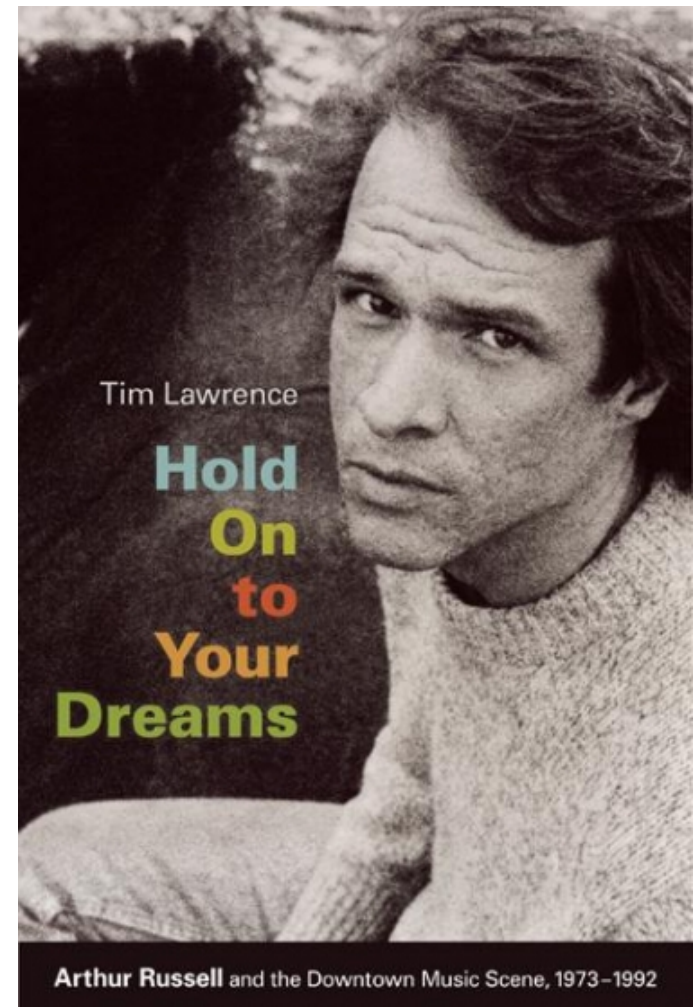
“Similar planning studies regarding restaurants and associated uses have been completed on another portion of Queen Street West (between Dovercourt Road and Gladstone Avenue), on Ossington Avenue (between Queen Street West and Dundas Street West) and on College Street (between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue).

The previous studies all identified conflicts between restaurants and the surrounding neighbourhood areas and subsequently resulted in zoning by-law amendments that limited restaurant and related uses to the ground floor of a building and prohibited rear yard and rooftop patios in the study areas. As well, in conjunction with the commencement of the Ossington Avenue restaurant study, at its meeting on May 26, 2009, City Council adopted a one- year interim control by-law prohibiting the establishment of new restaurants and related uses along Ossington Avenue.

The portion of Queen Street West between Roncesvalles Avenue and Dufferin Street appears to be experiencing many of the same concerns related to restaurants and associated uses as has been seen in these other parts of the City. Mainly, the proliferation of restaurants which function more as bars, lounges and nightclubs have generated community concerns with respect to noise, vandalism, disruptive behaviour, late night activity and parking congestion. Over the last couple of years a number of new restaurants have been established on the street and there have also been applications to expand existing restaurants from the ground floor onto upper storeys and outdoor patios.”

Entertainment Districts and Restaurant Moratoriums

- Historically, we might look at ways in which some kinds of musical activities have fled from urban centers in order to have more space.
 - The Meat-Packing District/ Downtown Scene (New York, 1970s)
 - The Early House Scene (Chicago, 1980s)
 - Raves in the UK/Warehouse parties (1990s)



Entertainment Districts and Restaurant Moratoriums

- Toronto is not unique in this regard. Other cities have struggled with balancing the needs of residents with the desire to develop urban spaces as centres of nightlife.
 - In Paris, for example, a project titled “Quand la nuit meurt en silence” was started in 2009 with the goal of protecting the city as place for public life after dark.
 - In the words of the petition, “au cours des dix dernières années, les lieux parisiens de diffusion musicale (bars, salles de concert, clubs) ont encore payé un lourd tribut à l'aspiration grandissante des parisiens à toujours plus de tranquillité.”
 - More recently, the city has worked to remedy this image. In the words of the deputy mayor of Paris: “Paris aime la nuit. La vie ne s'arrête pas à 20 heures. On entend régulièrement que Paris n'est plus la ville branchée qu'elle fut et qu'on ferait mieux la fête dans certaines autres capitales. On veut prouver le contraire ! Les nuits parisiennes font partie intégrante du patrimoine culturel mais aussi économique de Paris.”

Music City Canada?

- Last week, the Mayor visited Austin Texas to explore some of the ways that it has used music to promote economic development.



- Talking about the Austin City Limits Festival, he said: “We’re going to have this happen in Toronto,” he told reporters. “We’ve just got to find a venue; it might not be this big, but what I’ve seen today — look at what it does for the economy, look at what it does for tourism, look at what it does for jobs. This is a win-win-win right around.”

Noise and the City: Now and Forever?

- There are two key questions being asked about the significance of noise related to the airport:
 - Are there any issues related to noise in the first place? If so, how are these going to be defined?
 - Do the economic benefits of the airport expansion outweigh the issues related to noise?