

# Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JUNE 10, 2002

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: UPDATED GENERAL PLAN NOISE ELEMENT

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that after the public hearing the City Council:

1. Adopt the Initial Environmental Study and Final Negative Declaration and make the appropriate findings (Attachment 5); and
2. Receive the *Existing and Future Conditions* report (Attachment 1), as amended (see Attachment 3), as the basis of the updated *Noise Element*; and
3. Approve a Resolution (Attachment 4) adopting the updated *Noise Element* (i.e., the *Objectives, Policies, and Implementation* report - Attachment 2), as amended (see Attachment 3); and
4. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game (Attachment 6) with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission considered the proposed amendments at its regular meeting of April 24, 2002, and unanimously voted to recommend approval of the updated *Noise Element* with the following changes:

1. Revise policies regarding traffic noise to recognize the City's limitations on controlling such noise;
2. Clarify the City's commitment to working to reduce traffic noise on residential streets;
3. Include a cross-reference to Implementation Measure 13 in Policy 3b.
4. Revise policies regarding aircraft noise to recognize the City's limitations on controlling such noise;
5. Add an additional policy regarding the Rose Bowl to minimize noise when the *Noise Restrictions Ordinance* (P.M.C Chapter 9.36 – see Attachment 8) is suspended;
6. Add an additional policy regarding the Rose Bowl to require annual reporting on noise complaints;

7. Commit the City to updating the *Noise Restrictions Ordinance* (P.M.C Chapter 9.36 – see Attachment 8) within one year and revise it every three years thereafter; and
8. Commit the City to requiring mitigation from light rail noise.

Staff proposes to incorporate Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8, and to modify Recommendation No. 7 (see Attachment 3).

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The *General Plan Noise Element* is required by State law. Pasadena's *Noise Element*, which was last adopted in 1985, is being updated to reflect changes in the built environment, such as increased traffic volumes, mixed-use development, and light rail, over the last 15 years. The updated *Noise Element* is based on technical analysis, extensive public outreach and input, current land uses, and projected future land uses and traffic volumes. Primary issues identified by the community during the outreach effort include traffic noise, aircraft noise, noise from activities in the Central Arroyo, and nuisance noise (i.e., barking dogs, loud parties, etc.). Policies, objectives, and implementation measures are identified to minimize these noise sources. Overall, the updated *Noise Element* will protect Pasadena's unique neighborhoods, its residents, and visitors from extensive noise.

### **BACKGROUND**

The *Noise Element* provides policy-level direction to limit people's exposure to noise. The City's existing *Noise Element* (see Attachment 7) was last revised in 1985. Enforcement of the noise levels in the City is contained in the *Noise Restrictions Ordinance* (*Pasadena Municipal Code*, Chapter 9.36 – see Attachment 8), and other local, State, and federal regulations.

The *Noise Element*, which is required by State law (*California Government Code*, Chapter 3, Article 5, Section 65302), should analyze and quantify, to the extent practicable, current and projected noise levels for (1) highways and freeways; (2) major streets; (3) passenger, freight, and rapid-transit rail (4) aircraft, heliport, and airport operations; (5) local industrial plants, and; (6) other stationary noise sources. The *Noise Element* also should include implementation measures and possible solutions for existing and foreseeable noise problems, and should serve as a guideline for compliance with the State's noise insulation standards.

The *Noise Element* update is proceeding within the larger context of the *Land Use and Mobility Elements* updates, the *Zoning Code* revision, the *City-wide Design Guidelines*, the *Central District Specific Plan*, and the *Safety Element* update. The *Noise Element* will complement these efforts by providing data, formulating policies that take into account noise, and minimizing potential noise impacts.

Staff notified individuals and organizations that have participated in previous discussions about this hearing. Staff has worked extensively with the Police Department, the Environmental Health Department, and the Rose Bowl Operating Company (RBOC) throughout the update effort. On March 13, 2001, a community workshop was held to solicit input about the *Noise Element*. Background information was presented to the Planning Commission on November 14, 2001. Staff also met with several neighborhood associations and RBOC representatives in January, February, and March to discuss the update effort and solicit additional input. Primary issues identified during the outreach effort include traffic noise, aircraft noise, noise from activities in the Central Arroyo, and nuisance noise. Issues raised by the community tended to be specific to geographic area.

## **ANALYSIS**

The *Existing and Future Conditions* report (Attachment 1) summarizes the community noise study, identifies primary sources of existing noise issues, and projects future transportation-related noise levels. The *Objectives, Policies, and Implementation* report (Attachment 2) describes how the City will approach noise at the *General Plan* level. Upon City Council approval, the latter document will be reformatted to become the updated *Noise Element*.

Below is a brief summary of the primary noise factors identified in Attachment 1 and the implementation measures outlined in Attachment 2 that are intended to address these issues:

### ***Vehicular Traffic***

Noise from vehicular traffic is the most common type of urban noise. Existing and future traffic noise contours, or lines corresponding with particular noise levels, were developed using information on existing and projected traffic volumes developed for the *Mobility Element* update. Based on the consultant's estimates, freeway noise currently exceeds 75 dBA Ldn<sup>1</sup> (i.e., similar to a passenger car traveling 65 miles per hour from 25 feet away). In areas where the freeways are depressed, elevated, or otherwise shielded from nearby development, the extent of high noise areas is less pronounced. High noise levels in close proximity to freeways are projected to increase slightly in the future. The increase will be most pronounced along Interstate 210 north of the Ventura Freeway.

Freeway noise exceeding 65 dBA Ldn (i.e., similar to the noise from an electric typewriter from 10 feet away) currently can be found within about a half mile of most freeways. Again, areas within the 65 dBA Ldn contour are expected to grow slightly in the future, with a greater increase projected adjacent to Interstate 210 north of the Ventura Freeway.

The *Objectives, Policies, and Implementation* report identifies means to minimize the effects of traffic noise. Corresponding with Objectives 2 and 3, Implementation Measures 4, 5, 6, and 7 specifically address traffic noise. For example, Measure 4 specifies that the City will consider using alternative paving materials to reduce traffic noise. Measure 5 reaffirms the City's commitment to implementing traffic calming when feasible. Measure 6 requires the City to coordinate with Caltrans to install sound walls along freeways.

### ***Land Use Decisions***

Noise compatibility issues are a potential source of noise conflicts. The 1994 *Land Use Element* encourages mixed-use development in the Central District and other Specific Plan areas, a policy the current *Land Use Element* update continues. Mixed-use development may result in conflicts between more noise-sensitive uses, such as residences, and less sensitive uses, such as commercial development. Commercial activities may also affect sensitive receptors nearby.

The *Guidelines for Noise Compatible Land Use* provide a tool to address noise compatibility issues. These *Guidelines* will be used by the City when identifying potential noise/land use issues for proposed projects. The *Guidelines* provide a range of noise levels that may be appropriate for sensitive land uses, such as residences, to account for different settings throughout the City. In all cases, interior noise levels at noise-sensitive uses must meet standards required by the State and in the Building Code.

For existing development, Objectives 6 and 7 will limit commercial and nuisance noise on sensitive receptors. Other implementation measures will limit noise in existing and future residential development from adjacent industrial, commercial, and recreational land uses. Implementation Measures 21, 23, and 26 in particular address these types of potential noise conflicts.

### **Central Arroyo**

Recreation activities, Rose Bowl events, the Aquatics Center, and other special events in the Central Arroyo Seco and Brookside Park periodically result in high noise levels. Elevated noise levels also may result from activities at the future Kids Space Museum. Therefore, the objectives, policies, and implementation measures work to minimize noise from these activities by committing the City to monitoring noise in the Central Arroyo and coordinating events to limit noise. For example, Policy 5a requires the City to take into account noise reduction for facilities in the Central Arroyo.

### **Light Rail**

The Gold Line light rail will result in a new noise source in the City. Although light rail in general is quieter than the former AT&SF train operations on the same right-of-way, noise from horns can affect nearby sensitive receptors. Objective 3 addresses light rail noise and commits the City to working with regional transit agencies to address that noise. Accordingly, Implementation Measures 12 and 13 stipulate that the City will continue monitoring light rail noise to ensure that mitigation measures for the Gold Line are implemented.

### **Aircraft**

Noise from aircraft overflights may be an irritant to City residents. Commercial and public airplanes and helicopters are the primary sources of aircraft noise. Aircraft flight patterns and noise standards are primarily regulated by the State and federal governments. However, the implementation measures in the *Objectives, Policies, and Implementation Report* commit the City to working with regulatory agencies to reduce aircraft noise and limit disturbances in noise-sensitive areas. In particular, Measure 14 indicates that the City will work with the Federal Aviation Administration to identify appropriate altitude standards for helicopters, and Measure 25 commits the City to continue working to limit aircraft overflights in the vicinity of the Rose Bowl.

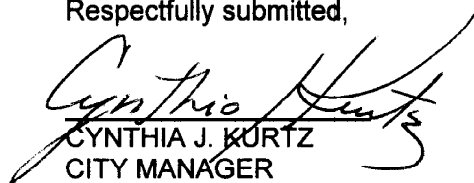
### **Environmental**

Pursuant to the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA – Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), a draft Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the *Noise Element* was prepared and circulated for public review. No written comments were received. The final Negative Declaration (see Attachment 5) concludes that adoption of the *Noise Element* will not result in significant impacts on the physical environment. No adverse impact on fish and/or wildlife is anticipated (see Attachment 5).

## FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the proposed Noise Element is expected to require additional staff to perform monitoring of mitigation measures, revise ordinances and policies, and perform analysis of potential additional mitigation measures. These positions are not being requested at this time and will be brought before City Council in the future when needed. Implementation of the Noise Element may also incur hard costs for materials and equipment, however, these costs cannot be quantified as this time.

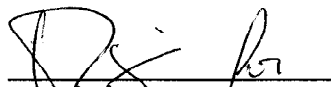
Respectfully submitted,

  
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<sup>1</sup> Sound usually is measured by its sound pressure in a unit called a decibel (dB). To account for human perception of sound that varies at different frequencies, the dB measurement may be A-weighted, which is denoted as dBA. Since sound may be more noticeable the longer it lasts, additional scales are widely used to average sound energy over time. The two most common scales are the Day/Night Noise Level (Ldn) and the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). These scales include a penalty for noise during the evening and nighttime hours, and for all practical purposes are equivalent.

Attachments:

1. *Existing and Future Conditions Report*
2. *Objectives, Policies and Implementation Report*
3. *Proposed Amendments to Noise Element Documents*
4. *Resolution Adopting Updated Noise Element*
5. *CEQA Findings, Final Negative Declaration, and Initial Study*
6. *Notice of Determination, Certificate of Fee Exemption*
7. *Existing Noise Element*
8. *Noise Restrictions Ordinance and Leaf-Blowing Machines Ordinance*