



City Attorney's/City Prosecutor's Department – Civil Division

**DIRECT THE CITY ATTORNEY TO PREPARE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING  
CHAPTER 9.36 OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE “NOISE RESTRICTIONS ORDINANCE” AND PROVIDE  
DIRECTION REGARDING CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF  
FURTHER AMENDMENTS**

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April 17, 2023





# Background

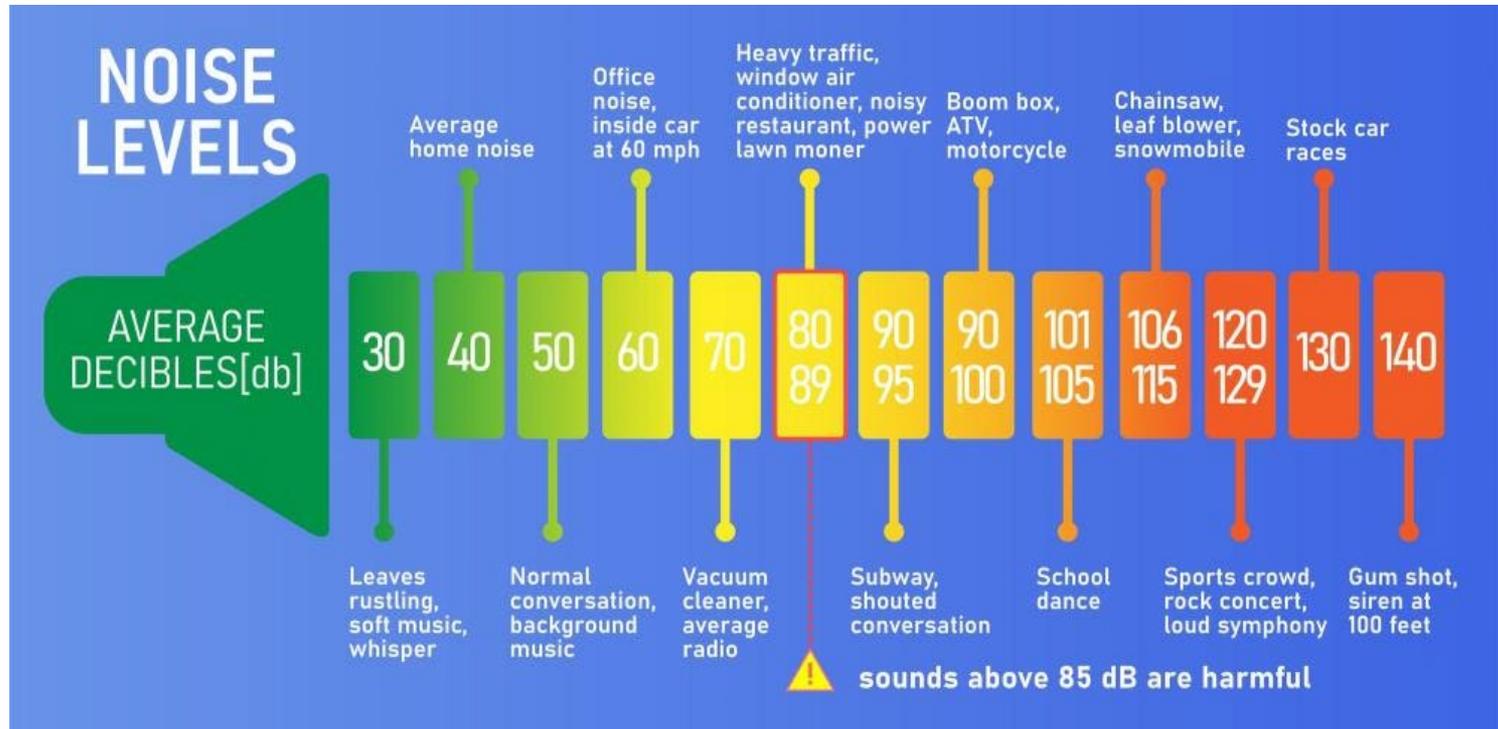
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- 2008: Noise Ordinance was last revised
  - > Outside noise cannot be more than five decibels above ambient noise level at adjacent property line
- Hotel Worker Strikes and Noise Issues
  - > Ordinance should protect First Amendment rights as well as right to quiet enjoyment of residents
- May 20, 2024 City Council Meeting
  - > City Attorney's Office was asked to return with proposed revisions to the noise ordinance



# Decibel Chart

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Source: UC Davis Environmental Health Sciences Center



# Proposed Revision – Sections 9.36.050

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- **Current Section 9.36.050 – General Noise Sources**
  - > Prohibits noise that exceeds the ambient noise level by more than five decibels
  - > Requires a measurement of the ambient noise level at the same location or at a place reasonably nearby and with the same land use



# Proposed Revision – Sections 9.36.050 (cont.)

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- **Proposed Revision: Establish Exterior Noise Standards**
  - > Set overall decibel limit without need to compare to ambient noise level
  - > Decibel limit to vary based on land use/location
  - > Decibel limit can be lower overnight
- Measurement is still taken from affected property
- Can preserve noise element for the Rose Bowl and section of Noise Ordinance related to Old Pasadena



# Proposed Revision – Section 9.36.050 (cont.)

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## Sample Exterior Noise Limits – Laguna Beach, CA

Allowable Exterior Noise Level <sup>(1)</sup>			
Noise Zone	Type of Land Use	Allowed Equivalent Noise Level, Leq. <sup>(2)</sup>	
		7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.
I	Residential	60 dBA	50 dBA
II	Commercial	65 dBA	65 dBA
III	Residential portion	65 dBA	55 dBA
IV	Downtown specific plan area— CBD1, CBD2, CBD visitor commercial, CBD central bluffs & civic arts district	70 dBA	70 dBA
V	Other uses	70 dBA	60 dBA



# Proposed Revision – Section 9.36.050 (cont.)

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- **Benefits of Exterior Noise Standards**
  - > Based on total decibel level so only one measurement is required to determine a violation
  - > Variation by land use allows for flexibility
  - > Decibel levels are objective and not based on type of noise or speech
  - > People can easily determine if they are in compliance or not



# Proposed Revision – Section 9.36.050 (cont.)

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- **Proposed process**
  - > Coordination between Departments to develop standards and specific language of the ordinance
  - > City Attorney's office advising on legal issues
  - > City Manager is coordinating with departments on specific details of exterior noise standards
  - > Return within 90 days for a first reading



# Proposed Deletions – §§ 9.36.130 and 9.36.140

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- **Current Section 9.36.130 – Hawkers and Peddlers**
  - > Prohibits persons from “shouting out loud” to sell anything in an area zoned for residential uses
  
- **Current Section 9.36.140 – Drums**
  - > Prohibits the “use of drum or other instrument or device of any kind for the purpose of attracting attention”



# Additional Revisions

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- Proposed changes are designed to address immediate concerns raised at May 20, 2024 council meetings
- Should the City Council desire discussion of additional changes, we suggest this matter be referred to a standing Council committee



# Recommendations

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1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b);
2. Direct the City Attorney to work with City Manager staff to prepare and return within 90 days with an ordinance amending Chapter 9.36 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the Noise Restrictions Ordinance; and
3. Refer to the appropriate City Council standing committee for discussion and consideration regarding the scope of any further amendments to be made to Chapter 9.36 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the Noise Restrictions Ordinance