

**NOISE**

**GOAL 6.5: ACCEPTABLE NOISE LEVELS**

**Ensure that County residents are not subjected to noise beyond acceptable levels.**

**OBJECTIVE 6.5.1: PROTECTION OF NOISE-SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**Protect existing noise-sensitive developments (e.g., hospitals, schools, churches and residential) from new uses that would generate noise levels incompatible with those uses and, conversely, discourage noise-sensitive uses from locating near sources of high noise levels.**

Policy 6.5.1.1      Where noise-sensitive land uses are proposed in areas exposed to existing or projected exterior noise levels exceeding the levels specified in Table 6-1 or the performance standards of Table 6-2, an acoustical analysis shall be required as part of the environmental review process so that noise mitigation may be included in the project design.

Policy 6.5.1.2      Where proposed non-residential land uses are likely to produce noise levels exceeding the performance standards of Table 6-2 at existing or planned noise-sensitive uses, an acoustical analysis shall be required as part of the environmental review process so that noise mitigation may be included in the project design.

Policy 6.5.1.3      Where noise mitigation measures are required to achieve the standards of Tables 6-1 and 6-2, the emphasis of such measures shall be placed upon site planning and project design. The use of noise barriers shall be considered a means of achieving the noise standards only after all other practical design-related noise mitigation measures have been integrated into the project and the noise barriers are not incompatible with the surroundings.

Policy 6.5.1.4      Existing dwellings and new single-family dwellings on legal lots of record, as of the date of adoption of this General Plan, are not subject to County review with respect to satisfaction of the standards of the Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element except in areas governed by the Comprehensive Land Use Plans for applicable airports. (See Objective 6.5.2.)

As a consequence, such dwellings may be constructed in other areas where noise levels exceed the standards of the Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element. It is not the responsibility of the County to ensure that such dwellings meet the noise standards of the Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element, or the noise standards imposed by lending agencies such as HUD, FHA and Cal Vet. If homes are located and constructed in

accordance with the Public Health, Safety, and Noise Element, it is expected that the resulting exterior and interior noise levels will conform to the HUD/FHA/Cal Vet noise standards.

- Policy 6.5.1.5 Setbacks shall be the preferred method of noise abatement for residential projects located along U.S. Highway 50. Noise walls shall be discouraged within the foreground viewshed of U.S. Highway 50 and shall be discouraged in favor of less intrusive noise mitigation (e.g., landscaped berms, setbacks) along other high volume roadways.
- Policy 6.5.1.6 New noise-sensitive uses shall not be allowed where the noise level, due to non-transportation noise sources, will exceed the noise level standards of Table 6-2 unless effective noise mitigation measures have been incorporated into the development design to achieve those standards.
- Policy 6.5.1.7 Noise created by new proposed non-transportation noise sources shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the noise level standards of Table 6-2 for noise-sensitive uses.
- Policy 6.5.1.8 New development of noise sensitive land uses will not be permitted in areas exposed to existing or projected levels of noise from transportation noise sources which exceed the levels specified in Table 6-1 unless the project design includes effective mitigation measures to reduce exterior noise and noise levels in interior spaces to the levels specified in Table 6-1.
- Policy 6.5.1.9 Noise created by new transportation noise sources, excluding airport expansion but including roadway improvement projects, shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the levels specified in Table 6-1 at existing noise-sensitive land uses.
- Policy 6.5.1.10 To provide a comprehensive approach to noise control, the County shall:
  - A. Develop and employ procedures to ensure that noise mitigation measures required pursuant to an acoustical analysis are implemented in the project review process and, as may be determined necessary, through the building permit process.
  - B. Develop and employ procedures to monitor compliance with the standards of the Noise Element after completion of projects where noise mitigation measures were required.
  - C. The zoning ordinance shall be amended to provide that noise standards will be applied to ministerial projects with the exception of single-family residential building permits if not in areas governed by the Airports Comprehensive Land Use Plans. (See Objective 6.5.2.)

<b>TABLE 6-1 MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE FOR TRANSPORTATION NOISE SOURCES</b>			
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Outdoor Activity Areas<sup>1</sup> L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL, dB</b>	<b>Interior Spaces</b>	
		<b>L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL, dB</b>	<b>L<sub>eq</sub>, dB<sup>2</sup></b>
Residential	60 <sup>3</sup>	45	--
Transient Lodging	60 <sup>3</sup>	45	--
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	60 <sup>3</sup>	45	--
Theaters, Auditoriums, Music Halls	--	--	35
Churches, Meeting Halls, Schools	60 <sup>3</sup>	--	40
Office Buildings	--	--	45
Libraries, Museums	--	--	45
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70	--	--

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> In Communities and Rural Centers, where the location of outdoor activity areas is not clearly defined, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving land use. For residential uses with front yards facing the identified noise source, an exterior noise level criterion of 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> shall be applied at the building facade, in addition to a 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub> criterion at the outdoor activity area. In Rural Regions, an exterior noise level criterion of 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub> shall be applied at a 100 foot radius from the residence unless it is within Platted Lands where the underlying land use designation is consistent with Community Region densities in which case the 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub> may apply. The 100-foot radius applies to properties which are five acres and larger; the balance will fall under the property line requirement.

<sup>2</sup> As determined for a typical worst-case hour during periods of use.

<sup>3</sup> Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

<b>TABLE 6-2 NOISE LEVEL PERFORMANCE PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR NOISE SENSITIVE LAND USES AFFECTED BY NON-TRANSPORTATION* SOURCES</b>						
<b>Noise Level Descriptor</b>	<b>Daytime 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.</b>		<b>Evening 7 p.m. - 10 p.m.</b>		<b>Night 10 p.m. - 7 a.m.</b>	
	Community	Rural	Community	Rural	Community	Rural
Hourly L <sub>eq</sub> , dB	55	50	50	45	45	40
Maximum level, dB	70	60	60	55	55	50

**Notes:**  
 Each of the noise levels specified above shall be lowered by five dB for simple tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g., caretaker dwellings).  
 The County can impose noise level standards which are up to 5 dB less than those specified above based upon determination of existing low ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site.  
 In Community areas the exterior noise level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving property. In Rural Areas the exterior noise level standard shall be applied at a point 100' away from the residence. The above standards shall be measured only on property containing a noise sensitive land use as defined in Objective 6.5.1. This measurement standard may be amended to provide for measurement at the boundary of a recorded noise easement between all effected property owners and approved by the County.  
 \*Note: For the purposes of the Noise Element, transportation noise sources are defined as traffic on public roadways, railroad line operations and aircraft in flight. Control of noise from these sources is preempted by Federal and State regulations. Control of noise from facilities of regulated public facilities is preempted by California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulations. All other noise sources are subject to local regulations. Non-transportation noise sources may include industrial operations, outdoor recreation facilities, HVAC units, schools, hospitals, commercial land uses, other outdoor land use, etc.

**Policy 6.5.1.11** The standards outlined in Tables 6-3, 6-4, and 6-5 shall apply to those activities associated with actual construction of a project as long as such construction occurs between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends, and on federally-recognized holidays. Exceptions are allowed if it can be shown that construction beyond these times is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion and safety hazards.

**TABLE 6-3  
MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE FOR NONTRANSPORTATION NOISE SOURCES  
IN COMMUNITY REGIONS AND ADOPTED PLAN AREAS—CONSTRUCTION NOISE**

Land Use Designation <sup>1</sup>	Time Period	Noise Level (dB)	
		L <sub>eq</sub>	L <sub>max</sub>
Higher-Density Residential (MFR, HDR, MDR)	7 am–7 pm	55	75
	7 pm–10 pm	50	65
	10 pm–7 am	45	60
Commercial and Public Facilities (C, R&D, PF)	7 am–7 pm	70	90
	7 pm–7 am	65	75
Industrial (I)	Any Time	80	90

**Note:**  
<sup>1</sup> Adopted Plan areas should refer to those land use designations that most closely correspond to the similar General Plan land use designations for similar development.

**TABLE 6-4  
MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE FOR NONTRANSPORTATION NOISE SOURCES  
IN RURAL CENTERS—CONSTRUCTION NOISE**

Land Use Designation	Time Period	Noise Level (dB)	
		L <sub>eq</sub>	L <sub>max</sub>
All Residential (MFR, HDR, MDR)	7 am–7 pm	55	75
	7 pm–10 pm	50	65
	10 pm–7 am	40	55
Commercial, Recreation, and Public Facilities (C, TR, PF)	7 am–7 pm	65	75
	7 pm–7 am	60	70
Industrial (I)	Any Time	70	80
Open Space (OS)	7 am–7 pm	55	75
	7 pm–7 am	50	65

**TABLE 6-5  
MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE FOR NONTRANSPORTATION NOISE SOURCES  
IN RURAL REGIONS—CONSTRUCTION NOISE**

Land Use Designation	Time Period	Noise Level (dB)	
		L <sub>eq</sub>	L <sub>max</sub>
All Residential (LDR)	7 am–7 pm	50	60
	7 pm–10 pm	45	55
	10 pm–7 am	40	50
Commercial, Recreation, and Public Facilities (C, TR, PF)	7 am–7 pm	65	75
	7 pm–7 am	60	70
Rural Land, Natural Resources, Open Space, and Agricultural Lands (RR, NR, OS, AL)	7 am–7 pm	65	75
	7 pm–7 am	60	70

- Policy 6.5.1.12 When determining the significance of impacts and appropriate mitigation for new development projects, the following criteria shall be taken into consideration.
- A. Where existing or projected future traffic noise levels are less than 60 dBA  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of residential uses, an increase of more than 5 dBA  $L_{dn}$  caused by a new transportation noise source will be considered significant;
  - B. Where existing or projected future traffic noise levels range between 60 and 65 dBA  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of residential uses, an increase of more than 3 dBA  $L_{dn}$  caused by a new transportation noise source will be considered significant; and
  - C. Where existing or projected future traffic noise levels are greater than 65 dBA  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of residential uses, an increase of more than 1.5 dBA  $L_{dn}$  caused by a new transportation noise will be considered significant.
- Policy 6.5.1.13 When determining the significance of impacts and appropriate mitigation to reduce those impacts for new development projects, including ministerial development, the following criteria shall be taken into consideration:
- A. In areas in which ambient noise levels are in accordance with the standards in Table 6-2, increases in ambient noise levels caused by new nontransportation noise sources that exceed 5 dBA shall be considered significant; and
  - B. In areas in which ambient noise levels are not in accordance with the standards in Table 6-2, increases in ambient noise levels caused by new nontransportation noise sources that exceed 3 dBA shall be considered significant.
- Policy 6.5.1.14 The County will adopt a noise ordinance to resolve neighborhood conflicts and to control unnecessary noise in the County. Examples of the types of noise sources that can be controlled through the use of a quantitative noise ordinance include noisy mechanical equipment (e.g., swimming pool pumps, HVAC units), and amplified music in commercial establishments.
- Policy 6.5.1.15 The County will establish and maintain coordination among city, county, and state agencies involved in noise abatement and other agencies to reduce noise generated from sources outside the County's jurisdiction.