

NOISE ELEMENT

AUTHORIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

In 1971, The State of California, in Section 6503 (g) of the Government Code, mandated that each county and general law city include a noise element as part of their General Plan. This element is to quantitatively project noise contours of major transportation factors and fixed noise generators, and to develop a statement of public policy with regard to noise.

The noise element is developed with the following problem solving technique:

- A. Identification of the problem and definition of the magnitude and extent. This involves describing existing noise environment in Hermosa Beach and identifying the extent of conflicts between the noise environment and activities of people.
- B. Identification of alternatives for solution of the problem.
- C. Evaluation of alternative solutions and impact on the local community.
- D. Selection of the alternatives for implementation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Hermosa Beach Noise Element is to:

- A. Record the goals, objectives and policies relating to local noise control and formulate a program to reduce and minimize the various sources of noise compatible with the health and welfare of the citizens of Hermosa Beach.
- B. Investigate, evaluate, and document existing noise levels within the City.
- C. Identify and analyze existing and potential noise problems.
- D. Make recommendations and serve as a guide for achieving the stated goals of the City in relation to noise elimination.

Though noise is today a difficult problem and immediate large-scale reductions in noise levels are not feasible, prospects have never been better for a more equitable long-term resolution of the problem. Recent state and federal actions show promise of significantly reducing noise levels from the two important noise sources, aircraft and motor vehicles. The National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mandate procedures that should

result in more thorough consideration of alternatives for noise abatement in airport, freeway and transit planning. Though the issue of placement of liability for noise damages has not been finally resolved in the courts, the issue should be resolved in the near future.

To take advantage of these prospects, however, the City must continue to bring legal, economic and political pressure to bear on the noise problem. Since reducing environmental costs of an action often involves increasing direct economic costs, the means must be found to force environmental costs back on the source of the problem if a balance of cost and benefit is to be achieved:

The City must also accept the responsibility of protecting residents by preventing new development where noise problems have not been resolved. It must take those actions it can within its own boundaries to prevent aggravation of noise problems and eventually reduce them to manageable levels. As noise abatement actions proceed in the area of aircraft and motor vehicle noise, other noise problems will assume greater importance.

There are a number of areas where government action is appropriate and necessary to bring an equitable resolution of environmental problems. The minimum action is that available under the police power to protect the health and welfare of residents from degradation due to noise. In addition, there has been recent recognition at the state and federal levels of government responsibility to protect and enhance the quality of the environment.

With these areas of responsibility in mind, the City's basic environmental quality goal of protecting and enhancing the environment may be broken down into three objectives depending on the state of the existing environment:

1. In those areas where the environment represents a threat to the public health and welfare, it is the objective of the city to reduce environmental hazards to levels consistent with the protection of the public health and welfare.
2. In those areas where the environment is degraded, but not to an extent that represents an immediate hazard to public health and welfare, it is the objective of the city to reduce environmental degradation as much as feasible and practical within the limits imposed by conflicting objectives.
3. In those areas where a quality environment now exists, it is the objective of the City to prevent degradation of that environment.

OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunity exists to control noise on three fronts: at the source; along the transmission path; and at the receiver. Although the control of noise at the source has been almost completely preempted by higher levels of government, the City can encourage the use of technology and further research by manufacturers and higher levels of government. This encouragement could be by political influence or by purchasing and modification of equipment which incorporates technological advances in noise suppression.

Although the greatest effort is needed in areas of surface traffic, the controlled development (using land use controls) of low density areas will enable the quiet of these areas to be preserved without large capital expenditures for noise mitigation measures. There must also be a serious consideration in terms of noise impact in circulation planning and street design.

Community, economic, environmental, and social desires and needs can be enhanced by the enactment of comprehensive noise, housing, land use, zoning, and building ordinances and policies which are consistent with the noise goals of this element. Through proper planning to minimize impact and research and application of noise suppression methods for all modes of transportation, a citywide transportation network can be developed which minimizes noise impacts and benefits all residents of this City.

The willingness of the citizenry to become involved in alleviating this problem represents a positive opportunity. Noise is a problem which cannot be solved by government alone; it requires the awareness, concern, and effort of all citizens.

Through a coordinated, cooperative approach to the noise problem by citizens, Los Angeles County and the State of California, the opportunity exists to reverse the trend of increased noise in our City.

STATEMENT OF GOALS

Goals reflect broad aims and basic values. The goals of the Noise Element link the assets and opportunities and problems and issues, previously identified, with the policies and programs which follow. They establish emphasis and tone for policy and program formulation. The decisions and activities of city government should be guided by the intent of the goals set forth:

- . Reduce transportation noise to a level that does not jeopardize health and welfare
- . Minimize noise levels of future transportation facilities
- . Establish compatible land use adjacent to transportation facilities
- . Allocate noise mitigation costs among those who produce the noise
- . Alert the public regarding the potential impact of transportation noise

Protect areas that are presently quiet from future noise impact

STATEMENT OF POLICIES

The following policies provide direction for the achievement of element goals. They will be carried out through implementation programs utilizing public and private resources.

In the process of formulating policy content, several alternative policy sets were considered. These alternatives reflected various courses of action. From this, a preferred policy set was selected based on its effectiveness in achieving the goals set forth, as well as its social, political, and economic feasibility.

It is the policy of Hermosa Beach to:

1. Promote the necessary organizational adjustments within city government which identifies technological opportunities, conducts studies, assesses effectiveness of programs, sets standards, and recommends transportation noise mitigation techniques, programs, and alternatives
2. Determine and evaluate the present and future noise levels associated with all major transportation facilities in the city
3. Establish acceptable noise standards consistent with health and quality of life goals and employ effective techniques of noise abatement through such means as building code, noise, subdivision, and zoning ordinances.
4. Reduce the present and future impact of excessive noise from transportation sources through judicious use of technology, planning, and regulatory measures
5. Establish noise criteria in the specifications for vehicles and their components
6. Promote increased public awareness concerning the effects of noise
7. Coordinate with federal, state, and county governments in developing and implementing noise abatement programs
8. Seek funds from the appropriate levels of government to underwrite the costs of noise abatement programs
9. Monitor the programs and policies of the responsible special districts, regional, state, and federal agencies in order to insure that they effectively exercise their mandate to control the sources of noise for new, proposed, or existing transportation facilities, vehicles, or aircraft
10. Encourage the State Department of Transportation to conduct an active highway noise abatement program with scenic/aesthetic considerations

11. Urge continued federal and state research into the noise and recommend additional research programs as problems are identified
12. Recommend needed legislation to the state and federal government which will provide for noise abatement and the distribution of the costs of noise abatement programs among the producers of noise
13. Encourage the federal and state governments and other agencies to work for standardization and simplification of the measurement methods used in assessing noise impact

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The purpose of the Noise Implementation Program is to identify action programs which will lead to the reduction of transportation noise in the city to a level consistent with health and quality of life goals.

The program identified in this section represents the range of actions taken by the various levels of government to initiate noise abatement programs. If actions are taken through coordinated, effective programs, the goals and policies of this element can be implemented and transportation noise reduced to acceptable levels. It is not possible to eliminate all transportation noise problems on a short range basis. However, by adopting a course of action which utilizes existing programs and new complementary action programs, the noise situation can be improved in the foreseeable future. These new programs must be the result of a coordinated, comprehensive approach by the public, all levels of government, and private enterprise.

Formulation of the Noise Implementation Program involves four basic steps:

1. identification of existing programs
2. evaluation of the ability of these programs to reduce transportation noise
3. recommendations for improving existing programs or adding new ones for those areas of inadequacy identified in the evaluation
4. establishment of priorities for implementing the program recommendations by identifying the short- and long-term actions necessary.
5. adoption of the State Model Community Noise Control Ordinance.

Primary emphasis of this program is on implementation action at the local level with future efforts being directed at broadening the scope of investigations and analysis in coordination with other government agencies as well as consideration of non-transportation noise.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Following is a listing of existing programs and activities related to transportation noise.

1. City Programs

Building Regulation
General Plan - Transportation Planning
Highway Construction and Maintenance
Land Division
Traffic Operations and Management
Zoning
Noise Policing
Information

2. Regional Programs

Intergovernmental Coordination (SCAG)

3. State Programs

Building Regulation
Highway Construction and Maintenance
Motor Vehicle Regulations
Traffic Operations and Management

4. Federal Programs

Code and Ordinance Standards
Highway Construction and Maintenance
Noise-Emission Standards
Operational Abatement Measures
Purchasing Incentives
Traffic Operations and Management

5. Other Implementing Activities

Community Relations
Coordination and Review
Environmental Assessments
Legislation
Private Action
Public Education
Research and Monitoring

In order to meet the objectives with regard to the noise hazard, the following programs are proposed in the Noise Element of the General Plan:

A. Reduce noise conflicts at the source through the following programs:

1. Actively advocate federal regulations for the control of aircraft noise. Recommend at least a 1500' minimum flying height over the beach area for private craft.

3. Initiate a periodic intensive motor vehicle noise regulation enforcement program.
4. Study , ^{and implement} develop^v traffic control techniques for noise abatement.
5. Study , ^{and implement} develop^v local street circulation concepts for noise abatement. Also design factors such as landscaping.
6. Actively advocate state and federal regulations for the control of equipment noise levels.
7. Actively seek state assistance in enforcement of vehicle noise problems.
8. Actively advocate federal noise labeling requirements and provide consumer information.
9. Develop noise guidelines for city purchasing policy to take advantage of federal regulations and labeling requirements.
10. Change the noise ordinance to incorporate energy-averaged noise limits on noise sources, better control of particularly annoying noises, and periodic reductions in allowable noise levels.
11. Provide quick response to complaints and rapid abatement of noise nuisances within the scope of the City's police powers.
12. Provide and maintain appropriate noise measuring equipment to accurately assess noise situations.
13. Encourage the use of landscaping and other types of permanent and temporary barriers.
14. Modify traffic patterns and street designs to mitigate noise impact throughout the city

B. Reduce noise conflicts in transmission through the following programs:

15. Consider two story development of commercial properties on Pacific Coast Highway to restrict traffic noise from carrying into residential areas.

C. Reduce noise conflicts at the receiver through the following programs:

16. Encourage a long-term development pattern which minimizes noise conflicts through planning and zoning.
17. Develop a sound insulation ordinance to extend State Insulation requirements to single-family dwellings.
18. Study and develop guidelines for noise abatement in urban design for application in site plan review.

17. Actively advocate a cooperative program with the airport to provide financial assistance for sound insulation of existing residences where such insulation is capable of reducing interior noise to levels consistent with protection of the public health and welfare.

D. Protect City employees from dangerous on-the-job noise exposure through the following program:

18. Develop a program of audiometric testing and job noise exposure evaluation, and enforce OSHA and Cal-OSHA in city work places.

E. Protect those who live and work in the City from dangerous on-the-job noise exposure through the following program:

19. Provide coordination for information on and enforcement of occupational noise requirements within the city.

F. Provide support for the above programs through the following programs:

20. Maintain and improve the City's noise monitoring system for identifying progress in meeting noise abatement objectives.

21. Maintain an awareness of actions of other agencies which will have an impact on the noise environment in Hermosa Beach.

22. Actively advocate the development of common noise measurements and interpretations for all environmental noise sources for use by all agencies.

23. Continue to study the effects of environmental noise on the community.

NOISE TOLERANCE STANDARDS

City policy should be geared to the following maximum ambient noise levels:

R-1	45 or below (also schools, hospitals, nurseries and rest homes)
R-2	50 or below (also parks and playgrounds)
R-3	55 or below
C-1	55 or below
C-2/C-3	60 or below
M	65 or below

Maximum traffic noise should be restricted in residential areas to no more than 5 dBA above ambient standard levels. In commercial and manufacturing areas, no more than 10 dBA above ambient standards. Every effort to keep the mean dBA considerably below this should be made.

A number of implementive policies and programs have been suggested. Community decision makers will have to establish priorities among these items.

A. Criteria for Establishing Priorities

- Problems which have a negative impact on health (existence of unacceptable noise levels in noise-sensitive areas).
- Prevention of noise intrusions into "quiet" areas.
- Desirability of taking advantage of an opportunity before it is lost.

The above criteria are structured to handle the entire range of noise problems. First priority areas were selected on the basis of action programs which would effectively achieve significant noise reductions. Second priority areas include standardization and improvement of noise abatement programs as well as secondary solutions which can be effected after the primary solution has realized its maximum benefit.

B. First Priority Action Areas

1. Control of Noise at the Source

Since control of noise at the source protects the vehicle operator and passenger as well as the non-participant, it presents the most reasonable and effective means of reducing transportation noise. Hermosa Beach should encourage the state and federal governments to set reasonable noise limits which are consistent with health and quality of life goals. Also, legislation should be requested at the state and federal level which provides for the assessment of the costs against the producers of the noise and provides funds to Hermosa Beach to enforce the regulations.

2. Centralization of Noise Studies and Abatement Measures

The Planning Director of Hermosa Beach should be given the overall responsibility for noise programs, including a community noise study which identifies additional noise sources and promulgates acceptable noise levels for the commercial, industrial, residential areas. In the interim, standards based on existing technology should be considered for adoption.

3. Purchasing Procedures

The city should specify acceptable noise levels for the purchase of all future vehicles, maintenance equipment, including the equipment necessary for the maintenance of such vehicles.

4. Noise Regulation

The building code, subdivision, and zoning ordinances should be amended as needed to reflect the latest noise abatement techniques, and be consistent with this element and the city noise ordinance.

5. Enforcement of Noise Regulations

The Police Department of Hermosa Beach should develop the necessary procedures, as well as acquire the necessary noise-monitoring equipment, to rapidly enforce the regulations.

6. Public Education

The city government must make the public more aware of the effects of noise and inform it of what is being done to combat noise. As the public becomes more aware of this problem, it can become a great influence in achieving the ultimate solution by demanding a quieter Hermosa Beach.

C. Second Priority Action Areas

1. Additional Studies and Recommendations

A noise element is an ongoing process; it must be constantly updated and upgraded. This should be the responsibility of the Planning Department. This department would be responsible for developing new noise abatement programs and assessing the effectiveness of and enforcing existing programs. It also would initiate additional studies as the needs are determined, recommend legislation, and research technological and funding opportunities.

2. Coordination with Other Governmental Agencies

The city should join with the other governmental agencies in a cooperative, coordinated effort to carry out the programs of the higher levels of government, as well as to seek additional methods of abating noise and enforcing the noise levels established by the city, state and federal governments. This will require that either the law enforcement personnel become conversant with noise law and monitoring equipment or a special noise inspector officer be appointed to encourage and, where necessary, enforce the suppression of noise within the community.

3. Standardization of Programs

A cooperative program should be initiated to standardize the noise laws and methods of noise measurement. This program will have to be coordinated with the federal, state and regional agencies so that costly duplication and wasted effort will be avoided.

4. Coordination with Multi-Governmental Organizations

Cooperative transportation and planning organizations such as the Metropolitan Transportation Engineering Board (MTEB) and Los Angeles County Association of Planning Officials (LACAPO) should discuss, standardize, establish, and recommend acceptable noise levels for transportation sources and land use for inclusion in the noise ordinances of the separate jurisdictions. In addition, by working through the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG),

a uniform approach to the noise problem can be initiated. In this regard, county, city and regional governments can be influential in advising the higher levels of government on legislation and standardization in the fight against noise in Hermosa Beach.

Control of noise is a crucial function for the community if it is to create an enjoyable and healthy environment for its citizens. The problem is readily apparent to every citizen in his daily life. Solutions to the most hazardous and annoying aspects are possible by the city and should be vigorously undertaken now.