



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: February 20, 2008

Item 6. b.

SUBJECT: General Plan Update – Review and consideration of the Draft Noise Element

PURPOSE: Review and consider the Draft Noise Element; provide comments to staff for any amendments prior to the Draft Element being incorporated into a Public Hearing Draft General Plan

I. BACKGROUND

The Noise Element is a required element of the General Plan. The purpose of the Draft Noise Element is to limit the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels. By law the element must include measurements of existing and projected noise levels, and a discussion of noise sources. The element must also discuss the compatibility of land uses with community noise levels.

II. OVERVIEW

Changes in the Draft Noise Element deal with noise issues which have emerged since the preparation of the 1996 Noise Element, such as noise from BART and ACE trains, and noise generated by flights to and from the Livermore Municipal Airport, as well as noise related to increased volumes of traffic and potential street extensions. The Draft Element also incorporates the results of noise monitoring conducted in Fall 2006 at over 40 locations throughout the Planning Area.

III. CHANGES TO THE NOISE ELEMENT

Changes to the background text from the 1996 Noise Element include:

- General editing, updating, and reorganizing of background material from the 1996 General Plan.
- Changing the Purpose Section to state that this is a required element that guides retention of a quiet environment and minimizing unwanted sound.
- Updating and clarifying Fundamental Concepts of Environmental Noise, moving technical detail to footnotes, and adding Table 11-1: Typical Noise Levels in the Environment.
- Updating Human Response to Noise by using information from more recent studies.

- Under Existing Noise Levels adding a Traffic Noise subheading, updating information about the noisiest arterial roads, updating information regarding citywide noise monitoring studies, and updating the existing noise setting based on the most recent citywide monitoring study.
- Under Existing Noise adding a new Rail Operations subheading, updating the monitored noise level near the railroad tracks, updating the number of freight trains, adding discussion of ACE trains, adding discussion of ground-borne vibrations, adding discussion of train whistles, updating Table 11-2: 2006 Monitoring Locations and Noise Levels, and updating Figure 11-1: City-Wide Noise Monitoring Sites.
- Under Existing Noise adding a new Bay Area Rapid Transit subheading and updating discussion of BART train noise.
- In the Aircraft Noise section updating discussion of Livermore Municipal Airport use, adding information about noise levels near the airport, discussing potential expansion of the airport, and adding information regarding complaints about airport noise.
- Under Existing Noise adding an Industrial Operations subheading, adding information about existing noise due to quarry operations including the asphalt batch plant, and updating existing noise effects in the Vineyard corridor area.
- Under future Traffic Noise updating the significance level of traffic noise to 4 decibels from 3 decibels (which is barely noticeable), acknowledging new future noise sources from proposed Stoneridge Drive and El Charro Road extensions, updating Table 11-3 to indicate the distance to noise contours along highways and major streets in Pleasanton, and updating Figure 11-2 to show the locations of the noise contours at build-out.
- In the Bay Area Rapid Transit section adding information about the new West Pleasanton/Dublin BART Station.
- Deleting the San Joaquin to San Jose Train Service section as it is outdated.
- Updating the discussion of Pleasanton's purchase of a portion of the Southern Pacific rail corridor, and moving and updating discussion of noise along the Union Pacific railroad corridor.
- Updating Ongoing Noise Problem Areas to discuss: planned resurfacing of all arterial roadways with noise-attenuating pavement to lower street noise by 3-4 decibels; repairing and updating soundwalls; and continuing noise impacts to homes near the airport and homes near the Union Pacific railroad. This section also adds new Figure 11.3: Noise Contours for the Livermore Municipal Airport.
- Updating the Noise Level Projections in Pleasanton section and moving text to the Goals, Policies, and Programs section.
- Updating Noise Studies section and moving text to the Goals, Policies, and Programs section.
- Under Complaint System updating information about lodging complaints about noise from the Livermore Municipal Airport by telephone or by on-line access.
- Under Noise Mitigations, clarifying existing information.
- Changing the next title to Noise Ordinance and Other Regulations, clarifying the Noise Ordinance, and discussing conditions of project approval to address noise issues.

- Adding new section about Sensitive Noise Receptors that explains who they are and includes new Table 11-4 and new Figure 11-4 that list and locate these uses, respectively.
- Adding a new section on Land-Use Compatibility Guidelines that updates and clarifies both the text and Table 11-5 and that adds discussion of the appropriate noise environment for multi-family units.

Changes to Goals, Policies, and Programs include:

- Under Policy 1, updating and expanding Program 1.1 to explain Noise and Land-Use Compatibility Guidelines, adding new Program 1.2 to include criteria for development near railroad tracks, updating Program 1.4 (former Program 1.3) about noise studies, and adding new Program 1.5 to reduce exterior noise levels.
- Under Policy 2 adding new Program 2.1 to consider Capital Improvement Program funding for soundwall repair and maintenance and then clarifying program 2.3.
- Clarifying Policy 3 and Program 3.1 and then adding new Programs 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 to require noise-attenuation measures to ensure acceptable noise levels inside houses and other buildings.
- Updating Policy 4, moving new Program 4.2 from the Energy Element to develop a mechanical drive engine ordinance, updating Program 4.3 (former 4.2), and updating Program 4.4 (former 4.3) to reference new alternative street paving methods and materials.
- Under Policy 5, clarifying Program 5.1 and adding Program 5.2 to locate new noise sources away from sensitive land uses.
- Clarifying Policy 6 and updating Program 6.2 to enforce the use of truck routes.
- Under Policy 7, updating Program 7.1 to discuss sound-attenuating pavement and sound walls and then updating Program 7.2 to maintain collector streets at 10,000 or fewer average daily trips.
- Under Policy 8, updating Program 8.1 to coordinate with the airport and other agencies to reduce noise from sources outside of Pleasanton and then updating Program 8.2 to include joint monitoring of aircraft noise.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider the Draft Noise Element (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2) provide comments to staff prior to consolidation of the Draft Element into a Public Hearing Draft General Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Noise Element (clean copy)
2. Draft Noise Element (underline and strikeout)

Staff Planner: Janice Stern/Principal Planner/925.931.5606/jstern@ci.pleasanton.ca.us
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