Noise

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9.1 NOISE COMPATIBILITY

Introduction

The Noise Element provides goals and policies to guide compatible land uses as well as the incorporation of noise attenuation measures for new uses to protect people living and working in the Golden Hill community from excessive noise. Because the application of policies related to noise is similar across communities, the General Plan provides the main policy considerations addressing this issue.

Noise-sensitive land uses are locations where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of the land. These include residences, schools, lodging, libraries, religious facilities, nursing homes, playgrounds and parks. Golden Hill is an urban community with a variety of land uses as well as proximity to major transportation facilities. The main sources of unwanted sound in the community are related to airport and freeway operations. Heavily travelled streets as well as certain activities associated with commercial and industrial land uses also have the potential to generate unwanted noise. Figure 9-1 illustrates the future noise contours from freeways and major roads in the community. The Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan contains the noise contours for the San Diego International Airport.

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Community Noise Equivalent Level or CNEL is the noise rating scale used for land use compatibility. The CNEL rating represents the average of equivalent noise levels, measured in A-weighted decibels (dBA), at a location for a 24-hour period, with upward adjustments added to account for increased noise sensitivity in the evening and night periods. The A-weighted filter places a greater emphasis on frequencies within the range of the human ear. The General Plan provides compatibility guidelines for evaluating land uses based on noise levels. The community is largely residential so noise effects on residential land uses are a broad concern. However, noise effects on other sensitive receptors are also important. Per the General Plan, residential uses are compatible at locations with an exterior noise exposure at or below 65dB with standard construction methods attenuating interior noise below 45db. Multi-family residential may be allowed at locations with an exterior noise exposure at or below 70 dBA if additional sound attenuation measures are included to reduce the interior noise levels to 45 dB. Typical attenuation measures are addressed in the General Plan.

NOISE ELEMENT GOALS

- Noise levels adequately attenuated within new or retrofitted buildings, and also within associated useable outdoor space when feasible.

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COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

Where residential and other sensitive receptor uses are present or proposed, the potential for noise impacts from commercial activities are important to evaluate, such as deliveries during late night and early morning hours that generate noise that can affect the nearby residential uses.

MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC NOISE

Vehicle traffic noise is directly related to the traffic volume, speed, and mix of vehicles. The three freeways that surround the community (State Route 94, Interstates 5 and 15) are the primary sources of motor vehicle noise within the community. Because commercial trucks generate more noise than cars and light trucks they can have a proportionately greater noise impact. Potential sources of truck traffic are the commercial and industrial areas in the community.

AIRCRAFT NOISE

A portion of the community is within the area affected by significant aircraft noise and aircraft overflights from San Diego International Airport (SDIA). Aircraft noise can affect people living and working in the community to varying degrees, depending on a person's level of noise sensitivity. The SDIA prohibits most late night takeoffs to help limit noise impacts and maintains the Quieter Home Program to retrofit existing homes in areas above the 65 dBA noise level contour to reduce interior noise levels to an acceptable level. The community is within the Airport Influence Area, which is the boundary for the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for SDIA. The ALUCP is prepared by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for San Diego County. Aircraft noise is one of the factors that the state-required ALUCP addresses with established policies for land use compatibility, as discussed in the Land Use Element. The General Plan conditionally allows future multiple unit and mixed-use residential uses in the areas above the 65 dBA airport noise contour within the Airport Influence Area for SDIA to maintain and enhance the character and urban form.

POLICIES

NE-1.1 Utilize the Community Plan and the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan noise contours when making land use planning decisions.

NE-1.2 Ensure that future residential use above the 60 dBA CNEL aircraft noise contour include noise attenuation measures to ensure an interior noise level of 45 dBA CNEL and provide an avigation easement to the airport operator for SDIA.

NE-1.3 Reducing the effect from commercial activity noise involves site planning and integrating noise attenuation measures in new buildings that will reduce interior sound levels. Refer to General Plan Policies NE-E-1 through NE-E6.

Portions of the community are affected by freeway noise such as the area shown here along F Street adjacent to State Route 94. While the aesthetics of the area should be improved with better landscaping, physical separation from auto travel lanes can reduce noise.

Physical separation from auto travel lanes reduces freeway noise on adjacent land uses. A landscaped berm is used here at an interchange with State Route 94.

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FIGURE 9-1: *FUTURE NOISE CONTOURS*