



December 31, 2020

Karen Ruggels  
KLR Planning  
San Diego, CA

**SUBJECT: Noise Memorandum for the 63<sup>rd</sup> and Montezuma Student Housing Project, San Diego, California**

Dear Ms. Ruggels;

Birdseye Planning Group (BPG) is pleased to submit this memorandum addressing operational noise levels associated with the proposed 63<sup>rd</sup> and Montezuma Student Housing Project, San Diego, California. The *63<sup>rd</sup> and Montezuma* project site encompasses approximately 0.43 acre and is currently developed with three single family dwelling units. The project site is situated on the south side of Montezuma Road and west of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street in the College Area Community of the City of San Diego. Mostly one-story residential development surrounds the project site. A five-story residential development borders the project site to the west and institutional uses (San Diego State University) are located nearby to the north and northwest.

The proposed project involves the demolition of approximately 18,751 square feet of buildings and related facilities and construction of a five-story multi-family residential development totaling 52,350 square feet. The proposed project includes a rezone of the site from the current RM-1-1 zone to RM-3-9. Construction and operational noise levels associated with the proposed project were evaluated in a Noise Report prepared by Birdseye Planning Group (April 2020). As part of the environmental review process, the City of San Diego has requested an evaluation of the most intense use that could occur on the site under the RM-3-9 zone should the proposed 63<sup>rd</sup> and Montezuma project not proceed. The most intense development is what could be developed ministerially under the proposed zone, if approved.

Because the RM zones allow limited commercial uses in addition to multi-family residential uses and due to the site's location and size, the most intense development of the project site is assumed to be a mixed-use development with 32 multi-family residential units (consistent with the proposed project) and 12,657 square feet of local-serving commercial uses. The local-serving uses could include food beverage, and groceries, convenience sales, and personal services that would serve the SDSU student

population and near-by single family neighborhoods. Eating and drinking establishments are not permitted in the RM-3-9 zone.

Short-term impacts associated with construction noise and vibration evaluated in the existing Noise Report would not change with the development of a higher intensity use. Further, the development scenario would not generate vibration during operation. Thus, this memorandum evaluates potential noise levels associated with additional traffic that would be generated by operation of the most intense use on the site should the rezone be approved.

### **City of San Diego General Plan Noise Element**

The City of San Diego requires new projects to meet exterior noise standards as established in the Noise Element of the General Plan [City of San Diego 2008, Amended 2015: Policy NE-A.4]. Sound levels up to 60 dBA CNEL are considered compatible with outdoor areas of frequent use (patios, balconies, parks, swimming pools, etc.). The building structure must attenuate exterior noise in occupied areas to 45 dBA CNEL or below. General Plan Noise Element Table NE-3: Land Use – Noise Compatibility Guidelines for multifamily residences shows that exterior noise levels of 60 dBA are typically compatible.

### **CEQA Significance Thresholds**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Significance Determination Thresholds (City of San Diego 2016) addresses traffic noise, as specified in Table K-2: Traffic Noise Significance Thresholds (dB(A) CNEL). Relevant portions are reproduced in Table 1.

### **Methodology and Significance Thresholds**

Trip generation for the project was calculated using trip rates from the City of San Diego *Trip Generation Manual*, May 2003. The 32-unit residential component of the project is estimated to generate 192 average daily trips (ADT) based on six daily trips per unit. Of the total, 15 trips would occur during the AM peak hour and 17 would occur during the PM peak hour. The commercial component would generate approximately 40 ADT per 1,000 square feet or 520 ADT. Of the total, approximately 16 would occur during the AM peak hour and 47 would occur during the PM peak hour. Trip generation is conservative as the residential element would house students and is located adjacent to the SDSU campus. The commercial trip rate does not include a reduction in new trips associated with pass by trips (i.e., trips already occurring versus new trips generated by the project).

**Table 1  
 City of San Diego Traffic Noise Significance Thresholds (dBA CNEL)**

<b>Structure or Proposed Use that would be impacted by Traffic Noise</b>	<b>Interior Space</b>	<b>Exterior Useable Space<sup>1</sup></b>
Single-family detached	45 dB	65 dB
Multi-family, schools, libraries, hospitals, day care, hotels, motels, parks, convalescent homes	Development Services Department (DSD) ensures 45 dB pursuant to Title 24	65 dB
Offices, Churches, Business, Professional Uses	n/a	70 dB
Commercial, Retail, Industrial, Outdoor Spectator Sports Uses	n/a	75 dB

Source: City of San Diego Traffic Noise Significance Thresholds, 2016

<sup>1</sup> If a project is currently at or exceeds the significance thresholds for traffic noise described above and noise levels would result in less than a 3-dB increase, then the impact is not considered significant.

Traffic volumes would be concentrated on Montezuma Road and disperse to 63<sup>rd</sup> Street to the north and east and west along Montezuma Road. Traffic noise related impacts are addressed herein based on the difference in volumes between existing conditions and peak hour trips associated with the most intense use. Because the Leq meets or exceeds than the 65-dBA exterior standard for multifamily residences, potential impacts are determined based on whether project traffic would cause the current Leq along Montezuma Road to exceed 65 dBA or cause the Leq to increase by 3 or more dBA at receivers where the 65 dBA standard is exceeded.

The roadway network adjacent to the project site (Montezuma Road and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street) was modeled using the Federal Highway Administration Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5 software. The model calculates traffic noise at receiver locations based on traffic volumes, travel speed, mix of vehicle types operating on the roadways (i.e., cars/trucks, medium trucks and heavy trucks) and related factors. Noise levels were calculated at the following receivers and are intended to represent conditions at multiple receivers within proximity to these locations:

1. Project site at 6253, 6263, and 6273 Montezuma Road;
2. Zuma Student Housing 6237 Montezuma Road (west of the site); and
3. Residences at the southeast corner of Montezuma Road and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street

Existing conditions are addressed in the Noise Report (April 2020). Peak hour traffic for the most intense development scenario was assumed to be comprised of cars/light trucks. Existing and peak hour noise levels are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Modeled Noise Levels**

Receptor	Existing Leq	Exceed Standard?	Intensive Development Leq	dBA Change	Significant Impact
Site 1	64.9	No	65.4	+0.5	No
Site 2	65.0	No	65.4	+0.4	No
Site 3	64.9	No	65.3	+0.4	No

As shown in Table 2, the peak hour average (Leq) equals but does exceed 65-dBA at the receivers modeled under baseline conditions. With the addition of traffic associated with 32 residential units and the commercial space, noise levels would increase by a maximum of 0.5 dBA. This increase would not be discernible (i.e., +3 dBA or greater) when compared to baseline conditions or the proposed project evaluated in the April 2020 Noise Report. Further, construction methods and materials would reduce interior noise levels by approximately 30 dBA. Interior noise levels would attenuate to less than the 45 dBA standard. **No significant or adverse traffic noise impact** would result from the proposed project under the most intensive development scenario.

In summary, the most intense development that could occur on the site with the proposed zoning would not exceed the City of San Diego thresholds of significance. Please let me know if you have questions or would like to discuss the findings presented. Thank you for the opportunity to support the project.

Regards,



Ryan Birdseye  
Principal