

# Proposed General Plan Update Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions



## Noise and Vibration

### **Community Noise Levels and Land Use Compatibility**

**Goal NV-1** Minimize the impact of noise on people through noise reduction and suppression techniques, and through appropriate land use policies. (SJ2020 GP)

### *NV-1 Community Noise Levels and Land Use Compatibility Policies*

**Policy NV-1.1** Locate new development in areas where noise levels are appropriate for the proposed uses. Consider federal, state and City noise standards and guidelines as a part of new development review. Applicable standards and guidelines for land uses in San José include:

#### **Interior Noise Levels**

- The City's standard for interior noise levels in residences, hotels, motels, residential care facilities, and hospitals is 45 dBA DNL. Appropriate site and building design, building construction and noise attenuation techniques shall be included in new development to meet this standard. For sites with exterior noise levels of 60 dBA DNL or more, an acoustical analysis following protocols in the City-adopted California Building Code is required to demonstrate that development projects can meet this standard.

#### **Exterior Noise Levels**

- The City's acceptable exterior noise level objective is 60 dBA DNL or less for residential and most institutional land uses (Table N-1). The acceptable exterior noise level objective is established for the City, except in the environs of the San José International Airport, the Downtown Core Area, and along major roadways. For the remaining areas of the City, the following standards apply:
  - For new multi-family residential projects and for the residential component of mixed-use development, use a standard of 60 dBA DNL in usable outdoor activity areas, excluding balconies and residential stoops and porches facing existing roadways. There will be common use areas available to all residents that meet the 60 dBA exterior standard. Use noise attenuation techniques such as shielding by buildings and structures for outdoor common use areas.
  - For single family residential uses, use a standard of 60 dBA DNL for exterior noise in private usable outdoor activity areas, such as backyards.

**Table N-1  
Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Community Noise in San Jose**

Land Use Category	Exterior Noise Exposure (DNL in Decibels (dBA))					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
1. Residential, Hotels and Motels, Hospitals and Residential Care <sup>1</sup>		■			■	
2. Outdoor Sports and Recreation, Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds			■			■
3. Schools, Libraries, Museums, Meeting Halls, Churches		■			■	
4. Office Buildings, Business Commercial, and Professional Offices				■		
5. Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports				■		
6. Public and Quasi-Public Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters	■			■		

<sup>1</sup> Noise mitigation to reduce interior noise levels pursuant to Policy N-1.1 is required.



**Normally Acceptable:**

Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.



**Conditionally Acceptable:**

Specified land use may be permitted only after detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements and needed noise insulation features included in the design.



**Unacceptable:**

New construction or development should generally not be undertaken because mitigation is usually not feasible to comply with noise element policies.

Policy NV-1.2	<p>Minimize the noise impacts of new development on land uses sensitive to increased noise levels (Categories 1, 2, 3 and 6) by limiting noise generation and by requiring use of noise attenuation measures such as acoustical enclosures and sound barriers, where feasible. The City considers significant noise impacts to occur if a project would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause the DNL at noise sensitive receptors to increase by five dBA DNL or more where the noise levels would remain “Normally Acceptable”; or</li> <li>• Cause the DNL at noise sensitive receptors to increase by three dBA DNL or more where noise levels would equal or exceed the “Normally Acceptable” level.</li> </ul>
Policy NV-1.3	<p>Nonresidential land uses will mitigate noise generation to 55 dBA DNL at the property line when located adjacent to existing or planned noise sensitive residential and public/quasi-public land uses. (SJ2020 GP)</p>
Policy NV-1.4	<p>Include appropriate noise attenuation techniques in the design of all new arterial streets projected to adversely impact noise sensitive uses. (SJ2020 GP)</p>
Policy NV-1.5	<p>The City will encourage the State Department of Transportation and County transportation agencies to provide sound attenuation devices which are visually pleasing on all new and existing freeways and expressways. (SJ2020 GP)</p>
Policy NV-1.6	<p>Continue to regulate the effects of operational noise from existing and new industrial and commercial development on adjacent uses through noise standards in the City’s Municipal Code.</p>
Policy NV-1.7	<p>Construction operations within the City will be required to use available noise suppression devices and techniques and continue to limit construction hours near residential uses per the City’s Municipal Code. The City considers significant construction noise impacts to occur if a project located within 500 feet of residential uses or 200 feet of commercial or office uses would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve substantial noise generating activities (such as building demolition, grading, excavation, pile driving, use of impact equipment, or building framing) continuing for more than 12 months.</li> </ul> <p>For such large or complex projects, a construction noise logistics plan that specifies hours of construction, noise and vibration minimization measures, posting or notification of construction schedules, and designation of a noise disturbance coordinator who would respond to neighborhood complaints will be required to be in place prior to the start of construction and implemented during construction to reduce noise impacts on neighboring residents and other uses. (SJ2020 GP Updated)</p>
Policy NV-1.8	<p>Commercial drive-through uses will only be allowed when consistency with the City's exterior noise level guidelines and compatibility with adjacent land uses can be demonstrated. (SJ2020 GP)</p>
Policy NV-1.9	<p>Noise studies are required for land use proposals where known or suspected loud intermittent noise sources occur which may impact adjacent existing or planned</p>

land uses. For new residential development affected by noise from heavy rail, light rail, BART or other single-event noise sources, mitigation will be implemented so that recurring maximum instantaneous noise levels not exceed 50 dBA  $L_{max}$  in bedrooms and 55 dBA  $L_{max}$  in other rooms. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

Policy NV-1.10 The City should monitor Federal legislative and administrative activity pertaining to aircraft noise for new possibilities for noise-reducing modifications to aircraft engines beyond existing Stage 3 requirements. In addition, the City should monitor the ongoing FAA study group discussions pertaining to land use around airports and oppose Federal policies pre-empting local land use authority. The City should continue to encourage the use of quieter aircraft at the San José International Airport. (SJ2020 GP Updated)

Policy NV-1.11 Continue to require safe and compatible land uses within the International Airport noise zone (defined by the 65 CNEL contour as set forth in State law) and encourage aircraft operating procedures that minimize noise. (SJ2020 GP)

Policy NV-1.12 Continue to encourage the Federal Aviation Administration to enforce current cruise altitudes that minimize the impact of aircraft noise on land use. (SJ2020 GP)

#### ***NV-1 Noise Actions***

Action NV-1.13 Update noise limits and acoustical descriptors in the Municipal [*Zoning*] Code to clarify noise standards that apply to land uses throughout the City.

#### **Vibration**

##### **Goal NV-2**

Minimize vibration impacts on people and business operations.

#### ***NV-2 Vibration Policies***

Policy NV-2.1 Near light and heavy rail lines or other sources of ground-borne vibration, minimize vibration impacts on people and businesses through the use of setbacks and/or structural design features that reduce vibration to levels at or below the guidelines of the Federal Transit Administration. Require new development within 100 feet of rail lines to demonstrate prior to project approval that vibration experienced by residents and vibration sensitive uses would not exceed these guidelines.

Policy NV-2.2 Require new sources of ground-borne vibration, such as transit along fixed rail systems or the operation of impulsive equipment, to minimize vibration impacts on existing sensitive land uses to levels at or below the guidelines of the Federal Transit Administration. Require new development within 100 feet of such sources to demonstrate prior to project approval that vibration experienced by residents and vibration sensitive uses would not exceed these guidelines.

Policy NV-2.3 Require new development to minimize vibration impacts to adjacent uses during demolition and construction. For sensitive historic structures, a vibration limit of 0.08 in/sec PPV (peak particle velocity) will be used to minimize the potential for cosmetic damage to the building. A vibration limit of 0.20 in/sec PPV will be used to minimize the potential for cosmetic damage at buildings of normal conventional construction.