

# 7. Noise Element

## Introduction

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The Noise Element is intended to maintain the rural atmosphere that attracts visitors and residents to Calaveras County while establishing consistent and predictable noise standards for new development. The Noise Element provides a framework for addressing potential noise conflicts between existing and proposed new land uses and serves as a guide for compliance with California's noise insulation standards.

## Organization

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- NOI 1.1      Background and Setting, Associated Plans and Documents**
- NOI 1.2      Goals and Policies**
- NOI 1.3      Implementation Programs**

### **NOI 1.1 Background and Setting, Associated Plans and Documents**

Primary noise sources in Calaveras County are roadway traffic, airports and heliports, industrial uses and other stationary sources. Vehicular traffic on local roads and state highways is the most common noise source in Calaveras County. Noise sources not analyzed, as they are inapplicable in Calaveras County, include: railroads, military installations and their associated aircraft operations. Noise sensitive land uses in Calaveras County include residential development, schools, hospitals, convalescent homes, place of worship, and libraries.

#### Associated Plans and Documents

The County maintains the following text, maps and diagrams analyzing the current and projected noise levels that were used in preparing the Noise Element. Text, maps and diagrams are updated on a regular basis and current versions are available at the Calaveras County Planning Department at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, CA 95249, unless otherwise noted.

- Transportation Related Noise: Maps identifying noise levels generated along highways and freeways, primary arterials and major local streets with existing noise levels and, where applicable, projected noise levels stated in dB/Ldn (General Plan Background Report)
- Non-Transportation Related Noise: Maps identifying noise levels generated by stationary noise sources (e.g., airports, heliports, industrial sites, and other ground stationary noise sources) with existing noise levels and, where applicable, projected noise levels stated in dB/Ldn (General Plan Background Report)
- State Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control /State Office of Planning and Research Noise Criteria and Guidelines (Summary - General Plan Background Report)
- California Noise Insulation Standards - [California Title 24 Noise Standards. Cal. Adm. Code Title 24, Chap. 2-35 <http://ccr.oal.ca.gov/>]
- Housing and Urban Development Noise Standards - (HUD Circular 1390.2 – General Plan Background Report).
- Caltrans/Federal Highways Administration Noise Standards [23 CFR Chapter 1, Part 772, Section 772.19 – Summary in General Plan Background Report]

- Calaveras County Code Chapter 9.02, Noise Control

**Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP).** Prepared by the Calaveras County Airport Land Use Commission, the ALUCP establishes noise standards for development in and around the Calaveras County Airport. The ALUCP is updated periodically. The current version of the ALUCP is available on the Calaveras County website and at the Calaveras County Planning Department.

## NOI 1.2 Goals and Policies

### Goal

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**NOI-1** County noise levels consistent with the County's rural atmosphere and that maintain compatibility between differing land uses.

### Policies

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**NOI 1.1** Locate and design sensitive noise-receiving land uses so they are not exposed to noise levels exceeding adopted County noise standards.

**NOI 1.2** Evaluate the potential impacts of noise on and from existing and planned land uses and public and private transportation facilities during the land use review process using adopted noise thresholds.

**NOI 1.3** Determine that a potentially significant adverse noise-related impact exists when a non-transportation related project (excluding temporary initial construction noise) has the potential to increase the overall ambient noise levels at the receiving land use by 3 dB or more when the ambient noise levels exceed the standards in Table Noise-2.

**NOI 1.4** Determine that a potentially significant adverse noise-related impact exists when a project generating transportation noise (excluding temporary initial construction noise) has the potential to do one or more of the following:

- Where existing traffic noise levels are less than 60 dB  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a +5 dB  $L_{dn}$  increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant; and
- Where existing traffic noise levels range between 60 and 65 dB  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a +3 dB  $L_{dn}$  increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant; and
- Where existing traffic noise levels are greater than 65 dB  $L_{dn}$  at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a + 1.5 dB  $L_{dn}$  increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant.

**NOI 1.5** Design and orient noise-sensitive land uses proposed adjacent to existing transportation noise sources to incorporate noise reduction techniques so that the new noise-sensitive development will not be affected by noise that exceeds the limits in **Table Noise -1**.

**NOI 1.6** Design and locate new roads creating transportation noise sources so that existing noise-sensitive land uses will not be exposed to noise levels that exceed the standards shown in **Table Noise-1** or **Policy NOI 1.4**.

**NOI 1.7** New development of noise sensitive land uses adjacent to existing stationary noise sources or land designated on the General Plan Land Use Maps as industrial or mineral resource production shall be designed to avoid exposure to noise levels in excess of those in **Table Noise-2**.

**NOI 1.8** Single event impulsive noise shall not exceed a peak linear overpressure of 122 dB, or a C-weighted Sound Exposure Level (SEL) of 98 dBC. The cumulative noise level from

impulsive sounds such as gunshots and blasting shall not exceed 60 dB LC<sub>dn</sub> or CNELC on any given day. These standards shall be applied at the property line of a receiving land use.

- NOI 1.9** Minimize noise-sensitive development in identified high noise areas surrounding the Calaveras County Airport and ensure that potential new property owners are made aware of existing and anticipated noise levels associated with the airport.
- NOI 1.10** Integrate the goals, policies and programs of the Calaveras County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan in planning decisions as necessary to insure compatibility between noise-generating and noise-sensitive land uses.
- NOI 1.11** Continue to maintain a County noise ordinance that addresses, at a minimum, the protection of public health, safety, and welfare relative to noise; establishes maximum noise generation levels for new noise sources and receptors; addresses construction noise; identifies exemptions from noise standards, and establishes standard practices for reducing noise levels from Transportation Noise Sources and commonly occurring Non-Transportation Noise Sources.
- NOI 1.12** Recognize the right of legally pre-existing noise-generating operations to continue operating.

**Table NOISE-1/h/  
Noise Exposure Levels for Sensitive Land Uses adjacent to Existing Transportation Noise  
Sources ( other than Aviation-Related Noise Sources) /a/**

Land Use	Outdoor Activity Areas /b/	Interior Spaces /f/	
	L <sub>dn</sub> /CNEL, dB	L <sub>dn</sub> /CNEL, dB	L <sub>eq</sub> , dB/c/
Residential	60 /d/	45	--
Transient Lodging /g/	65 /e/	45	--
Hospitals, Nursing Homes /e/	60 /d/	45	--
Theaters, Auditoriums, Music Halls	--	--	35
Churches, Meeting Halls,	60 /d/	--	40
Office Buildings	--	--	45
Schools, Libraries, Museums	--	--	45
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70	--	--

/a/ This table applies to noise exposure levels resulting from a transportation noise source other than an aircraft. Aircraft related noise exposure is governed by the ALUCP. For existing receiving land uses, consideration shall be given to the noise exposures from new transportation noise sources during the design and approval of the new transportation project. In the case of existing transportation noise sources, projects or consideration of land use changes involving noise-sensitive land uses shall address the noise exposure environment and use these standards as thresholds. Evaluations of existing transportation noise sources shall include an analysis of projected future noise levels based on future estimated traffic levels for the transportation noise source.

/b/ An outdoor activity area is a location outside of the immediate structure where formal or informal activities are likely to happen. For example, anywhere on a residential property could be an outdoor activity area, while the outdoor activity area for a school could be a playground or sporting fields, and for a hospital could be an exterior patio or exercise area. Where the location of an outdoor activity area is unknown, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied at the property line of the receiving land use. Where it is not practical to mitigate exterior noise levels at patio or balconies of apartment complexes or similar land uses, a common area such as a pool or recreation area may be designated as the outdoor activity area.

/c/ As determined for a typical worst-case hour during periods of use.

/d/ Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

/e/ Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 65 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 70 dB L<sub>dn</sub>/CNEL may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

/f/ In a high noise environment, special construction techniques may be necessary to reduce the interior noise level to the standard.

/g/ Transient lodging includes overnight accommodations usually intended for occupancy by visitors or other short-term paying customers (e.g., hotels, motels or homeless shelters). Transient lodging, for the purpose of this application, excludes bed and breakfast establishments located in rural areas, campgrounds or at guest ranches. In the case of hotel/motel facilities or other transient lodging, where outdoor activity areas such as pool areas are not be included in the project design, only the interior noise level criterion will apply.

/h/ The County can impose noise level standards that are more restrictive than those specified in the following tables upon determination of existing low ambient noise levels. The daytime or nighttime value should not be exceeded as determined at the property line of the noise-sensitive land use. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g., caretaker dwellings).

**Table Noise -2/a/  
Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure from Stationary Noise Sources**

Noise Level Descriptor	Daytime (7 a.m. – 10 p.m.)	Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
Hourly L <sub>eq</sub> , dB /b/	55	45

/a/ The County can impose noise level standards that are more restrictive than those specified in the following tables upon determination of existing low ambient noise levels. The daytime or nighttime value should not be exceeded as determined at the property line of the noise-sensitive land use. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g., caretaker dwellings).

/b/ Each of the noise levels specified above shall be lowered by five dB for simple tone noises (e.g., noises consisting primarily of speech or music), or for recurring impulsive noises (e.g., humming sounds, outdoor speaker systems).

Stationary noise sources typically of concern include, but are not limited to: Commercial HVAC systems, cooling towers/evaporative condensers, pump stations, lift stations, emergency generators, boilers, steam valves, steam turbines, generators, fans, air compressors, heavy equipment, conveyor systems, transformers, pile drivers, grinders, drill rigs, gas or diesel motors, welders, cutting equipment, outdoor speakers, blowers.

Uses that may typically produce noise sources described above include industrial facilities, pump stations, truck operations, tire shops, auto maintenance shops, metal fabricating shops, shopping centers, drive-up windows, car washes, loading docks, public works projects, batch plants, bottling and canning plants, recycling centers, electric generating stations, race tracks, landfills, mining, sand and gravel operations and athletic fields.

## **NOI 1.3 Implementation Programs**

### **NOI 1-A**

#### **County Noise Ordinance**

Update Calaveras County Code Chapter 9.02 to:

- Incorporate the noise standards established for *non-transportation related noise* pursuant to the California Noise Insulation Standards and the State Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control;
- Incorporate the noise standards applicable to affordable housing projects funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Implement the policies of the General Plan Noise Element; and
- Add standards for when noise studies shall be required, study content, and qualifications for professionals conducting acoustic analyses.

### **NOI 1-B**

#### **Uniform Noise Management Standards**

Adopt standardized noise management requirements, including (as feasible) standardized conditions of project approval, for activities requiring issuance of a discretionary permit as necessary to reduce potentially significant impacts pursuant to CEQA to a level of less-than-significant. In addition to noise management techniques for residential, commercial, industrial and other commonly occurring land uses; include standards addressing:

- Noise-reducing design techniques for new development along roadways
- Special events and temporary land uses (e.g., concerts, festivals), which may temporarily exceed the maximum allowable decibel level (e.g., establishing maximum levels of amplification for sound systems).

### **NOI 1-C**

#### **Transportation-Related Noise**

Coordinate with the Calaveras County Public Works Department and Council of Governments to evaluate truck route plans and continue to gather input from local communities and businesses to minimize truck travel through residential and visitor-serving centers.

### **NOI 1-D**

#### **Best Management Practices**

Make noise-management standards for new construction/remodeling available on the County website and/or at the public counter of the Planning Department.

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