





chapter eleven

NOISE

Low noise levels contribute to a high quality of life for people living and working in the City. Vehicle traffic is the main source of noise in Seaside, exposing residents to potentially unwelcome and unhealthy noise levels. However, noise also results from other sources, including the Monterey Airport, residences, and businesses. This chapter identifies noise issues in the community and sensitive noise environments recommended for protection. Additionally, it establishes a land use pattern that minimizes the community's exposure to excessive noise and identifies proactive solutions to address existing and foreseeable noise problems.

Topics covered in this chapter include: transportation noise, stationary noise, noise standards and land use compatibility. This chapter also includes related goals and policies.

Statutory Requirements

This Noise Element has been prepared to comply with state General Plan law and the Base Reuse Plan (BRP). California law mandates the development of a Noise Element as part of the General Plan (CGC Section 65302(f)). The Noise Element should also be consistent with guidelines contained within the California Health and Safety Code Section 56050.1. In accordance with these regulations, this Element addresses noise sources and identifies ways to reduce impacts and exposure of sensitive receptors to high levels of noise.

Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan

The Seaside Noise Element is consistent with the Fort Ord Reuse Authority's (FORA) BRP. The BRP provides guidelines to avoid or minimize conflicts that may occur as a result of incompatible noise conditions. As with other parts of Seaside, noise from roadway traffic is the primary source of noise in the former Fort Ord area. The BRP addresses the effects of transportation on the noise environment and provides strategies to limit noise-sensitive land uses. The goals and policies included with this Noise Element incorporate the BRP objectives and policies related to noise for the City of Seaside.

City of Seaside Noise Regulations

The City's Municipal Code includes detailed noise regulations intended to protect the welfare of its residents from excessive, unnecessary, or unusually loud noises by any and all sources in the community. The noise regulations in the Municipal Code include standards, prohibitions, and exemptions regarding noise. It also identifies persons deemed responsible in the event of noise complaints and violations.

The BRP, containing specific guidelines for public spaces and trails outlined in the FORA Regional Urban Design Guidelines.

Setting the Scene

Noise is best defined as unwanted sound. Seaside enjoys a generally quiet noise environment. Vehicle traffic is the primary source of noise. The highest noise levels occur along high-volume roadways, airports, and rail. Stationary sources of noise are limited, as the majority of Seaside consists of residential housing, interspersed with commercial, public/institutional uses, and open space. Commercial land uses located along arterial roadways and new construction do contribute to stationary noise sources in the city.

Transportation Noise

Vehicle traffic is the primary noise source in Seaside. The highest noise levels occur along high-volume roadways, including Highway 1, SR 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard), General Jim Moore Boulevard, Broadway Avenue, Del Monte Boulevard, Lightfighter Drive, Fremont Boulevard, Gigling Road, Hilby Avenue, and Imjin Road. Noise generated by current traffic levels in Seaside are shown in Figure 61.

As Seaside and the region grow, traffic on local roadways is expected to increase, raising noise levels and the ambient noise near roadways. Future traffic noise levels in Seaside are shown in Figure 62. Predictions are based on estimated increases in traffic due to General Plan buildout projections.

In addition to roadway noise, air traffic periodically contributes to the noise environment. Two airports are located near Seaside: the Monterey Regional Airport and the Marina Municipal Airport. The Marina Municipal Airport is located approximately two miles northeast of Seaside and is sufficiently far from the City to not contribute to the noise environment. The Monterey Regional Airport is located approximately one-quarter mile south of Seaside, with flights approaching and taking off from the east over rural areas and west over Monterey Bay. These flight patterns limit the amount of aircraft noise in Seaside. The Monterey Regional Airport Land Use Plan 2033 Noise Contours map indicates that Seaside is located outside of the 65 dBA noise contour line of the airport.

Figure 61: Existing Noise Contours from Transportation

To be added in Final Plan

Figure 62: Future Noise Contours from Transportation

To be added in Final Plan

Currently, there is no operational railroad in Seaside. However, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) owns the abandoned railway, which runs along the western edge of Seaside, parallel to Del Monte Boulevard and Highway 1. TAMC's 2014 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan includes a proposed Monterey Branch Line Light Rail, which would use the abandoned railroad right-of-way for passenger rail service.⁷¹ If this public transit improvement were to be developed in the future, increased transportation noise could be expected to occur along the western edge of Seaside.

Stationary Noise

The majority of Seaside is designated for residential land use, interspersed with public/institutional and open space for recreation uses, and commercial land use focused on arterial roadways. Seaside currently has no industrial development, but the current zoning does allow for light manufacturing and assembly in several commercial corridors along Del Monte Boulevard. This area is buffered from residential development by less intensive commercial designations. Other uses currently exist, including entertainment venues, nightclubs, outdoor dining areas, gas stations, car washes, fire stations, drive-thru restaurants, schools, and parks. Athletic and music events are also sources of noise. These are local events and typically only affect their adjacent neighbors.

Construction activity in Seaside can also be an intermittent source of noise. Construction noise can be significant for short periods of time at any particular location as a result of public improvement projects, private development projects, and additions or remodeling. Heavy equipment use, such as backhoes, dump trucks, and paving machines can cause significant short-term spikes in noise.

Noise Standards and Land Use Compatibility

Noise is problematic when it disrupts or interrupts activities associated with a given land use. Uses that are most affected by noise include residences, schools, hospitals, religious meeting spaces, and recreation areas. Conflicts between noise sources and noise-sensitive land uses occur when noise-sensitive land uses are permitted in areas with high ambient noise levels. These conflicts can be avoided through consideration of noise sources and the future noise environment when making land use planning and development decisions. Table 18 presents the maximum acceptable noise level allowed at each land use.

Table 19 provides the noise compatibility guidelines that help determine whether a proposed land use is compatible with the existing noise environment or may be required to implement additional noise reduction measures, including noise barriers, substantial building insulation, and sound buffers.

Former Fort Ord lands are subject to additional requirements in the BRP. New development within these areas must meet the compatible criteria as shown in Table 20.

In addition, land uses in the former Fort Ord Planning Area are subject to the non-transportation noise standards, provided in Table 21.

Table 18: Interior and Exterior Noise Standards

Land Use	Exterior (CNEL)	Interior (CNEL)
Residential	65 dBA	45 dBA
Mixed Use Residential	70 dBA	45 dBA
Commercial	70 dBA	--
Office	70 dBA	50 dBA
Industrial	75 dBA	55 dBA
Public Facilities	70 dBA	50 dBA
Schools	50 dBA	50 dBA

Table 19: Noise/ Land Use Compatibility Matrix- Noise Contours and Noise Impact Areas

Park Name	Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)						
	55	60	65	70	75	80	
Residential – Single Family, Multifamily, Duplex	A	A	B	B	C	-	-
Residential – Mobile Homes	A	A	B	C	C	-	-
Transient Lodging – Motels, Hotels	A	A	B	B	C	C	-
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	A	A	B	C	C	-	-
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters, Meeting Halls	B	B	C	C	-	-	-
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports, Amusement Parks	A	A	A	B	B	-	-
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	A	A	A	B	C	-	-
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Cemeteries	A	A	A	A	B	C	C
Office and Professional Buildings	A	A	A	B	B	C	-
Commercial Retail, Banks, Restaurants, Theaters	A	A	A	A	B	B	C
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Wholesale, Service Stations	A	A	A	A	B	B	B
Agriculture	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

Source: Taken in part from Aircraft Noise Impact Planning Guidelines for Local Agencies, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, TE/NA-472, November 1972.

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

B- Conditionally Acceptable- New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

C- Normally Unacceptable- New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If it does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

- Clearly Unacceptable – New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Table 20: Land Use Compatibility Criteria for Exterior Community Noise for Land within the Former Fort Ord

Park Name	Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)			
	I	II	III	IV
Passively used open spaces	50	50-55	55-70	70+
Auditoriums, concert halls, amphitheaters	45-50	50-65	65-70	70+
Residential-low density single family, duplex, mobile homes	50-55	55-60	70-75	75+
Residential-multi-family	50-60	60-65	70-75	75+
Transient lodging-motels, hotels	50-60	60-70	70-80	80+
Schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes	50-60	60-70	70-80	80+
Actively used open spaces-playgrounds, neighborhood parks	50-67	---	67-73	73+
Golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, cemeteries	50-70	---	70-80	80+
Office buildings, business, commercial and professional	50-67	67-75	75+	---
Industrial, manufacturing, utilities, agriculture	50-70	70-75	75+	---

Source: Fort Ord Reuse Plan Table 4.5-3

Notes:

Noise ranges are applicable at the property line.

Noise Range I- Normally acceptable: Specified land use is satisfactory, based on the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Noise Range II- Conditionally acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

Noise Range III-Normally unacceptable: New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Noise Range IV-Clearly unacceptable: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Table 21: Noise Level Performance Standards for Non-Transportation Noise Sources for Land within the Former Fort Ord

Cumulative Number of Minutes Allowed in Any One-Hour Time Period	Exterior Noise Level Standards, dBA	
	Daytime	Nighttime
	(7:00 AM-10: 00 PM)	(10:00 PM-7:00 AM)
30	45	40
15	50	45
5	55	50
1	60	55
0	65	60

Source: Fort Ord Reuse Plan Table 4.5-4

Note: Noise Ranges are applicable at the property line.

Goals and Policies

Goal N-1: Appropriate noise environments that are compatible with existing and proposed land uses based on guidelines provided in the Noise Element.

Intent: To regulate the noise environment and to protect the health and welfare of Seaside residents and visitors. Some land uses are more sensitive to noise than others. Elevated noise levels affecting sensitive land uses can be disruptive and adverse to quality of life for residents and visitors. To achieve this, the City will ensure that the noise environment is appropriate for proposed land uses and that noise sensitive land uses are not exposed to high noise levels.

Policies:

- **Noise standards.** Adopt, maintain, and enforce planning guidelines that establish the acceptable noise standards identified in Table 1.
- **Compatible development.** Assess the compliance of individual developments, including new development and reuse/revitalization projects, with noise land use compatibility standards in Table 2. Where proposed projects are not located in an area that is “clearly compatible,” the City may require that an acoustical study be prepared as a condition of building permit approval demonstrating compliance with the noise standards shown in Table 1.
- **Compatible development on former Fort Ord lands.** Ensure that new development in the City’s portion of the former Fort Ord lands complies with the noise guidelines presented in the FORA Base Reuse Plan (Table 3) such that it does not adversely affect existing or proposed uses.
- **Noise sensitive land uses.** Protect noise-sensitive land uses or sensitive receptors, including residences, schools, hospitals, libraries, established religious gatherings, convalescent homes, community open spaces and recreation areas, and sensitive wildlife habitat on former Fort Ord lands, from high noise levels emitted by both existing and future noise sources.
- **Noise guidelines and local coordination.** Participate with other local jurisdictions in the FORA planning area to establish a consistent set of guidelines for controlling noise.
- **Enforcement of stationary noise standards.** Review and enforce the noise limits and construction and operation regulations contained in this Noise Element and in the City’s Municipal Code.
- **Non-transportation related noise.** Encourage reduction of stationary noise impacts from commercial and industrial land uses, activities, events, and businesses on noise-sensitive land uses.
- **Limit on hours of operation.** Limit delivery or service hours for stores and businesses with loading areas, docks, or trash bins that front, side, border, or gain access on driveways next to residential and other noise sensitive areas, such as residences, schools, hospitals, religious meeting spaces, and recreation areas.

Goal N-2: Minimal transportation-related noise impacts.

Intent: To minimize transportation-related noise, which is the primary source of noise in Seaside. Transportation noise increases with increased development and can be of concern due to the high number of individual events. This goal seeks to reduce the impact transportation noise has in Seaside, particularly on noise sensitive land uses.

Policies:

- **Transportation-related noise.** Work with Caltrans and other agencies to enforce and reduce noise impacts associated with motorized vehicles.
- **Traffic and truck noise.** Regulate traffic flow to enforce speed limits to reduce traffic noise. Periodically evaluate and enforce established truck and bus routes to avoid noise impacts on sensitive receptors.
- **Noise enforcement.** Promptly investigate noise complaints and abate any noise impacts associated with commercial and other activities.
- **Noise reduction strategies.** Research and implement innovative noise reduction measures, such as asphalt rubber and living “green” noise barriers, to reduce noise on high volume streets in Seaside.
- **Coordination with Airport Land Use Commission.** Work with the Monterey County Airport Land Use Commission, the Marina Municipal Airport, and Monterey Regional Airport to monitor aircraft noise and make future updates to noise contours in Seaside.
- **Airport Master Plan.** Provide input on any update to the Monterey Peninsula Airport Master Plan, County Airport Land Use Plan, or California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook. Review and revise as necessary the goals, policies, and noise standards within the General Plan Noise Element to correspond with updates to the Airport Master Plan.
- **Noise barriers along future rail.** Should passenger rail service be initiated, the City shall work with TAMC to address noise and vibration considerations adjacent to the rail corridor.

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