

I. NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

EXISTING NOISE ENVIRONMENT

Ambient noise levels in the PDR project area are principally affected by traffic on local streets and aircraft overflights associated with operations at LAX. The only major roadway in this neighborhood is Manchester Avenue, which supports a strip of commercial businesses in the southeastern portion of the project area. The intersection of Manchester Avenue and Falmouth Avenue in PDR lies approximately 0.75 miles northwest of the northernmost runway at LAX. Santa Monica Municipal Airport lies about three miles north of Manchester Avenue. Operations at this airport do not affect noise levels in the project area.

Aircraft overflights associated with LAX operations also affect ambient noise levels in the MDR lots. The two lots, located at the intersection of Union Jack Street and Speedway Avenue, lie approximately two miles northwest of the northernmost runway of LAX. Santa Monica Municipal Airport lies about three miles northeast of the Union Jack Street and Speedway Avenue intersection. As in PDR, operations at this airport do not affect noise levels in the project area. Unlike PDR, no major roadways run through the MDR project area. However, because the MDR lots are located directly on the Venice Beach strip, ambient noise levels in MDR are likely to be affected by ocean sounds.

The 1992 *Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Master Plan Project for Playa Vista* determined existing noise levels in the project area by modeling conditions at 23 locations within PDR and surrounding communities. Field measurements of traffic and stationary-source noise levels were compiled to verify the accuracy of the modeling results. Existing noise levels were identified based on modeling results and field measurements. Several of the modeled locations are within the project area (Chambers Group, 2000).

The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) at the six receptor locations within the project area ranged from a low of 51 A-weighted decibels (dBA)¹ at the Loyola Marymount University church to a high of 73 dBA in the vicinity of the church and YMCA facilities along Sepulveda Boulevard at 80th Street. Noise levels between 64 and 71 dBA characterize most receptor locations.

According to noise contours in the Los Angeles General Plan Noise Element, the southernmost areas of the PDR area along Manchester Avenue are very close to the 65 dBA CNEL contour for LAX.

¹ Decibels with the sound pressure scale adjusted to conform with the frequency response of the human ear. A sound level meter that measures A-weighted decibels has an electrical circuit that gives the meter the same sensitivity to sound at different frequencies as the average human ear.

SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Human response to noise varies considerably from one individual to another. Effects of noise at various levels can include interference with sleep, concentration, and communication; physiological and psychological stress; and hearing loss. Given these effects, some land uses are considered more sensitive to ambient noise levels than others. In general, residences, schools, hospitals, and nursing homes are considered to be the most sensitive to noise. Commercial and industrial uses are considered the least noise-sensitive.

The 36 project lots are primarily located within residential areas. Hence, single-family homes or apartments abut most of the project lots, with the exception of Cluster 5, which is located adjacent to commercial uses.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, PLANS, AND POLICIES

Any future development of the lots would be subject to regulations, plans, and policies developed by the State of California, the City of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission to limit noise exposure at noise-sensitive land uses. These include Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (for new multifamily residential developments), the Los Angeles General Plan Noise Element, the Los Angeles Municipal Code (Chapter XI, Noise Regulation), and the Los Angeles Airport Land Use Plan.

STATE

Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations

State regulations include requirements for the construction of new hotels, motels, apartment houses, and dwellings (other than detached single-family dwellings) that are intended to limit the extent of noise transmitted into habitable spaces. These requirements are collectively known as the California Noise Insulation Standards and are found in California Code of Regulations, Title 24 (known as the Building Standards Administrative Code), Part 2 (known as the California Building Code), Appendix Chapters 12 and 12A. For limiting noise transmitted between adjacent dwelling units, the noise insulation standards specify the extent to which walls, doors, and floor ceiling assemblies must block or absorb sound. For limiting noise from exterior sources, the noise insulation standards set forth an interior standard, called the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL), of 45 dBA in any habitable room; where units are proposed in areas subject to noise levels greater than DNL 60 dBA, the standard requires an acoustical analysis demonstrating how dwelling units have been designed to meet this interior standard. If the interior noise level depends upon windows being closed, the design for the structure must also specify a ventilation or air-conditioning system to provide a habitable interior environment. As in most jurisdictions, Title 24 standards are enforced through the building permit application process in Los Angeles.

LOCAL**City of Los Angeles General Plan Noise Element**

The City of Los Angeles General Plan Noise Element outlines guidelines for noise/land use compatibility for development and planning purposes. The Noise Element identifies compatible noise environments for different types of land uses in the city. **Table 4.I-1** contains the noise/land use compatibility guidelines for those types of land uses proposed as part of the project and the existing land uses that could be affected by project-related noise. These guidelines are to be used when evaluating the noise impacts of a proposed project.

**TABLE 4.I-1
GUIDELINES FOR NOISE COMPATIBLE LAND USE**

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Day-Night Average Exterior Sound Level (CNEL dBA)</u>		
	<u>Acceptable^a</u>	<u>Conditionally Acceptable^b</u>	<u>Unacceptable^c</u>
Residential	Up to 55	Up to 70	Above 70
Transient Lodging, Hotel, Motel	Up to 55	Up to 70	Above 70
School, Library, Church, Hospital, Nursing Home	Up to 55	Up to 75	Above 75
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	Up to 65	Up to 75	Above 75
Office Buildings, Business, Commercial, Professional	Up to 65	Up to 75	Above 75

^a Specified land use is satisfactory. No noise mitigation measures are required.

^b Use should be permitted only after careful study and inclusion of protective measures as needed for intended use and to satisfy policies of the Noise Element.

^c Development is not feasible in accordance with the Noise Element. Use is prohibited.

SOURCE: Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Noise Element of the Los Angeles City General Plan, February 3, 1999.

The Noise Element establishes specific programs and policies for airport, non-airport, and land use development projects. Applicable policies include the following:

- For a proposed development project that is deemed to have a potentially significant noise impact on noise-sensitive uses, require mitigation measures, as appropriate, in accordance with CEQA and City procedures. (P-11)
- Continue to plan, design, and construct or oversee construction of public projects, and projects on City-owned properties, so as to minimize potential noise impacts on noise-sensitive uses and to maintain or reduce existing ambient noise levels. (P-13)
- Use, as appropriate, the “Guidelines for Noise Compatible Land Use,” shown in Table I-1, or other measures that are acceptable to the City, to guide land use and zoning reclassification, subdivision, conditional use and use variance determinations and environmental assessment considerations, especially relative to sensitive uses, within a

CNEL of 65 dBA airport noise exposure areas and within a line-of-sight of freeways, major highways, railroads, or truck haul routes. (P-16)

Los Angeles Municipal Code Noise Regulations

The City of Los Angeles has numerous noise ordinances and enforcement practices that apply to intrusive noise and that guide new construction. The City's comprehensive noise ordinance (Municipal Code Section 111 et seq.) establishes sound measurement criteria, minimum ambient noise levels for different land use zoning classifications, sound emission levels for specific uses (radios, television sets, vehicle repairs, and amplified equipment, etc.), hours of operation for certain uses (construction activity, rubbish collection, etc.), standards for determining a disturbance of the peace, and legal remedies for violations. Its ambient noise standards are consistent with current state and federal noise standards. The standards guide building construction, equipment installation, equipment maintenance, and nuisance noise enforcement.

The project is located within the city of Los Angeles and is subject to the General Plan and noise ordinances incorporated therein. Section 41.40 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code indicates that no construction or repair work shall be performed between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on any weekday, since such activities generate loud noises and disturb persons occupying sleeping quarters in adjacent hotel dwellings, apartments, or other places of residence. No person, other than an individual homeowner engaged in the repair or construction of his single-family dwelling, shall perform any construction or repair work of any kind before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, nor at any time on Sunday.

Section 112.05 of the Municipal Code specifies the maximum noise level of powered equipment or powered hand tools. Any powered equipment or powered hand tool that produces a maximum noise level exceeding 75 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from construction and industrial machinery shall be prohibited. However, the above noise limitation shall not apply where compliance is technically infeasible. "Technically infeasible" means that the above noise limitation cannot be complied with despite the use of mufflers, shields, sound barriers, and/or any other noise reduction device or techniques during the operation of equipment.

The City's Noise Ordinance also sets limits for noise levels generated by primary noise sources in an urban environment, such as radios, televisions, and other devices, air conditioning and heating equipment, construction noise, vehicular noise, noise from garbage collection trucks, noise from places of public entertainment, and other general noise.

Under Section 112.02, noise from air conditioning, refrigeration, and heating equipment would be considered excessive if caused the ambient noise level on the premises of an adjacent occupied property to increase by more than 5 decibels.

Mobile sources of noise are exempt from local ordinances, but are still subject to CEQA review, and would be significant if the project generates a volume of traffic that would result in a substantial increase in mobile-source-generated noise. Because most people can readily hear a change of 5 dBA in an exterior environment, this value was established for the project as the CEQA criterion for substantial change.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Based on the CEQA Guidelines, a project may be deemed to have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in:

- Exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;
- Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels;
- A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;
- A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;
- Exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise, for a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not yet been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport; or
- Exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise, for a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Impact I.1: Future development on the lots could expose people to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the Los Angeles General Plan and Los Angeles Municipal Code. (Less than significant with recommended mitigation)

The sale of the lots would not expose people to or generate noise levels in excess of the local General Plan and noise ordinance standards. However, future development of the 36 lots could lead to increased noise levels in the area that could, in turn, affect existing land uses during construction and after construction (from additional traffic). Construction noise levels, at and near locations of the future developments, would fluctuate depending on the particular type, number, and duration of use of various types of construction equipment. The effect of construction noise and vibration would depend upon how much noise would be generated by construction, the distance between construction activities and the nearest noise-sensitive uses, and the existing noise levels at those uses. Typical noise levels generated by construction of commercial buildings at Cluster 5 (worst case scenario) range from 84 dBA during ground clearing to 105 dBA during pile driving (should this be required). These noise levels would be in excess of the City's noise ordinance standards discussed earlier in the Setting section. Monitored noise levels in the project area range from 51 dBA in the "acceptable" category to 73 dBA in the "unacceptable" category for residential uses. Therefore, construction associated with future development of the lots could potentially lead to significant, though temporary, impacts caused by noise and associated vibration.

Recommended Mitigation Measure I.1a: Limit construction activities to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. On weekends, construction would be limited to the hours between 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in accordance with the City of Los Angeles Noise ordinance. (Recommended for Future Development)

Recommended Mitigation Measure I.I-1b: To reduce daytime noise impacts due to construction, construction contractors shall implement the following measures:

- **Equipment and trucks used for project construction shall utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment redesign, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures and acoustically-attenuating shields or shrouds);**
- **Impact tools (e.g., jack hammers, pavement breakers, and rock drills) used for project construction shall be hydraulically or electrically powered wherever possible to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically powered tools. However, where use of pneumatic tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust shall be used; this muffler can lower noise levels from the exhaust by up to about 10 dBA. External jackets on the tools themselves shall be used where feasible, and this could achieve a reduction of 5 dBA. Quieter procedures shall be used, such as drills rather than impact equipment;**
- **Stationary noise sources shall be located away from sensitive receptors, and they shall be muffled and enclosed within temporary sheds or incorporate insulation barriers;**
- **Signs shall be posted at the construction site that include permitted construction days and hours, a day and evening contact number for the job site, and a day and evening contact number for the City in the event of problems;**
- **An onsite complaint and enforcement manager shall be posted to respond to and track complaints. The manager should be responsible for responding to any complaints regarding construction noise and for coordinating with the adjacent land uses. The manager should determine the cause of any complaints and coordinate with the construction team to implement measures warranted to correct the problem. The telephone number of the coordinator shall be posted at the construction site and provided to neighbors in a notification letter. The manager shall be trained to use a sound level meter and shall be available during all construction hours to respond to complaints; and**
- **A preconstruction meeting shall be held with the job inspectors and the general contractor/on-site project manager to confirm that noise mitigation and practices are completed prior to the issuance of a building permit (including construction hours, neighborhood notification, posted signs, etc.).**

(Recommended for Future Development)

Recommended Mitigation Measure I.1c: The future developers of the 36 lots proposed for sale shall notify adjacent neighbors of expected construction periods at least two week prior to the commencement of construction activities. (Recommended for Future Development)

Significance after Recommended Mitigation: Less than significant.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Impact I.2: Future development of the lots could result in long-term traffic increases and could cumulatively increase noise levels. (Less than significant)

Noise impacts from future development in the PDR and MDR area would primarily occur from increases in motor vehicle traffic. Future development of the lots would most likely result in a modest number of trips which would be added into the existing neighborhoods of PDR and MDR, see Section IV.J, *Transportation and Traffic*. Noise impacts that could result from occupation of the residential homes that are anticipated to be constructed at the lots would be minimal. Although this impact cannot be quantitatively assessed until future development is defined and a traffic study (recommended as Recommended Mitigation Measure J.1) is conducted, noise impacts of future development of the 36 lots proposed for sale would not be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation: None required.

REFERENCES – Noise

City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles General Plan Noise Element*, February 1999.

City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter 11 - Noise Regulation*, January 31, 2004.

Chambers Group, *Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the SoCalGas Proposed Sale of Lots*, 2000.