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HUMBOLDT COUNTY
 PLANNING DIVISION

Chapter 20. Noise Element

20.1 Introduction

The Noise Element is one of the seven General Plan Elements required by California law (California Government Code, Section 65302). The purpose of the Noise Element is to identify and appraise noise following the guidelines adopted by the Office of Noise Control of the California Department of Health Services. The guidelines indicate that noise levels are to be considered in establishing patterns of land uses that minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

This chapter identifies the County's noise goals and establishes policies, standards, and implementation measures to manage noise levels within the unincorporated areas of the County.

I. We are offering language for the goals, policies, standards and implementation measures sections of this draft document within the narrative sections in bold text. This draft document does not provide for the comparison of the goals, policies, standards and implementation measures of the existing Framework Plan referred to by staff as "Alternative D". We would like to see the narrative from the existing Framework Plan left in place as the basis for the new Plan as it easier to read and offers more thorough background information that is still pertinent. It is included herein in bolded text and referred to as needed.

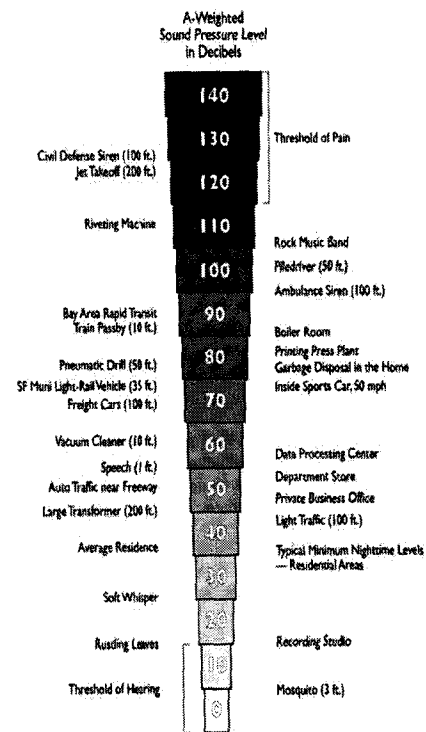
Figure 20-1: Sound Level Comparison Chart

20.2 Background

Measuring and Characterizing Noise

Assessing the community noise environment involves measuring three aspects of sound: level, frequency and variation. Sound level is the magnitude or loudness of a sound, expressed in decibels (see Figure 20-1 and the glossary at the end of this section). Frequency is a measure of the pitch of the sound, and variation is the change in noise exposure over time. When sound is disagreeable, it is considered noise.

Most community noise is produced by many distant sources, which rise and fall gradually throughout the day creating a relatively steady background sound having no identifiable source. Brief events, such as aircraft flyovers, cause spikes in community noise levels. Both steady background and noise spikes are taken into account in formulating the Community



(n ft.) = Distance in feet between source and listener

NCHB Comments

Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), a measure that describes average noise exposure over a period of time.

Because communities are more sensitive to impacts from nighttime noise, noise descriptors must specifically take this time period into account. Common measures include the CNEL and the Day-Night Average Level (Ldn). Both reflect noise exposure over an average day, with greater weight given to noise occurring during the evening and night. The two descriptors are roughly equivalent; the CNEL descriptor is more commonly used in relation to major continuous noise sources, such as aircraft or traffic, and is the reference level for California noise law.

II. We would like to see the narrative from the existing Framework Plan included in this section as it offers thorough background information that is still pertinent:

Framework Plan Section 3240 Noise:

The principal sources of noise in Humboldt County are highways, airports, rail, on-site construction, and industrial activities.

The Environmental Protection Agency identifies 45 Ldn indoors and 55 Ldn outdoors as the maximum level below which no effects on public health and welfare occur. Ldn is the Day-Night Noise Level. Ldn is the average sound level in decibels, excluding frequencies beyond the range of the human ear, during a 24-hour period with a 10dB weighting applied to nighttime sound levels.

A standard construction wood frame house reduces noise transmission by 15dB. Since interior noise levels for residences are not to exceed 45dB, the maximum acceptable exterior noise level for residences is 60dB without any additional insulation being required. Of course, this would vary depending on the land use designation, adjacent uses, distance to noise source, and intervening topography, vegetation, and other buffers.

The General Plan appendix contains noise level contours for state highways, elected county roads, and county airports. These noises contours and other available noise information are used with the noise compatibility matrix (see Figure *insert correct number here*) to establish requirements for project approval to ensure that new development is consistent with the General Plan. Fences, landscaping, and noise insulation can be used to mitigate the hazards of excessive noise levels.

Noise insulation standards have been developed by the State for application to all new multi-family residential construction.

Most of the County's noise hazards are found within incorporated cities. Figure (*insert correct number here*) lists prominent noise sources for each community.

III. We agree with Public Works Department, Land Use Division's recommendation that a discussion be included in the background section about airport noise and Federal Aviation Administration's role and jurisdiction over low-flying traffic patterns, of which the County of Humboldt has no local control.

Again, we would like to see the narrative from the existing Framework Plan left in place as it easier to read and offers a beginning for a more thorough background discussion on airport noise issues.

Framework Plan Section 3250 Airport Safety:

The Public Works Department operates nine county airports. The Department has prepared an Airports Master Plan which establishes airport land use compatibility policies, and maps the application of these policies for the Arcata-Eureka (McKinleyville) Airport, Murray Field, and Rohnerville Airport. These policies are incorporated into the General Plan. The General Plan applies these compatibility policies to the County's six other airports.

The Airport Land Use Commission (presently embodied as the Board of Supervisors) coordinates with applicable agencies in ensuring compatible land uses for areas surrounding county airports.

The principal airport/land use compatibility issues at most airports are:

Noise: Often the most significant of the adverse impacts are those of airport activities.

Airspace: The height of structures, trees, and other objects in the vicinity of an airport greatly affects the use of that airport.

Safety: Controls on land uses near airports can reduce potential risks both to people on the ground and to the occupants of aircraft.

The key policy guidance is given by an Airport Land Use Compatibility Matrix (included here as Figure *insert correct number here*).

The reader is referred to Chapters 9 and 10 of the Airports Master Plan, attached as Appendix to Hazards Policy Background Study, for a more detailed discussion of off airport land use issues and policies. *Insert the correct document name and / or appendix number here for the reader to go to for more information on airport safety.*

Close coordination ~~is-needed~~ will be maintained between the Planning and Public Works Departments of the County in making land use and zoning decisions around the airports. Specific attention to this issue will be given in the Community Plans, most importantly the McKinleyville Community Plan. Insert discussion about close coordination with the FAA here.

Principal Noise Sources

Table 20-1 lists prominent noise sources within unincorporated areas of the County. Tables 20-2 and 20-3 provide results of community noise surveys by Charles Salter Associates conducted

in April 2002 for selected areas. Additional details on County noise issues are contained in the Natural Resources and Hazards background study¹.

IV. Table 20-1 (below) is incomplete; this table should include the airports at Kneeland, Dinsmore, Shelter Cove, the Hoopa and Garberville listings should be modified to include the airports at those locals, Fairhaven should be modified to include the City of Eureka airport. Adjacent communities should be examined for over flight noise.

Also missing from Table 20-1 are gravel extraction sites. The following are County operated gravel sites that should be included: Worswick Bar on the Eel River near Fernbridge/Fortuna, PL (Dyerville) Bar on the Eel River near Dyerville, Tooby Bar on the South Fork of the Eel River near Garberville, Branstetter Bar on the Bear River near Capetown, Delaney Bar on the Klamath River near Orleans, Cook Bar on the North Fork of the Mattole River near Petrolia, Charles Bar on Larabee Creek near Blocksburg, PL Bar on the Van Duzen River near Carlotta, Bair Road Quarry near Hoopa, Brewery (Bell Springs) Quarry near Garberville/Harris, Monument Quarry near Rio Dell / Scotia, Brannon Mountain Quarry near Willow Creek, Fort Seward Quarry near Bridgeville, Hansen Quarry also near Bridgeville, Moore Quarry near Kneeland, Bald Hills #2 Quarry near Martin's Ferry / Weitchpec, and the Russ #1 Quarry near Bald Mountain area / Maple Creek.

Appendix A contains noise level contours for state highways, selected county roads, county airports, and other prominent sources.

Table 20-1. Inventory of Prominent Sources of Noise within Communities of Humboldt County

Community	Source of Noise			
	ROADS	AIRPORTS	RAILROAD*	STATIONARY SOURCES
ARCATA	U.S. 101, State Highways 299 & 255	NONE	Northwestern Pacific & Arcata/Mad River	NONE
BLUE LAKE	State Highway 299	NONE	Arcata/Mad River	NONE
CARLOTTA	State Highway 36	NONE	NONE	Gravel operations
Community	ROADS	AIRPORTS	RAILROAD*	STATIONARY SOURCES
EUREKA	U.S. 101, Myrtle Ave. Harris, Henderson & "H" St	Murray Field	Northwestern Pacific	Redwood Acres
FAIRHAVEN	New Navy Base Rd.	NONE	NONE	Mill
FERNDALE	State Highway 211	NONE	NONE	Fairgrounds
FLDDBROOK	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

¹ Dyett and Bhatia 2002. *Humboldt 2025 General Plan Update, Natural Resources and Hazards: A Discussion Paper for Community Workshops.*

FIELDS LANDING	U.S. 101	NONE	Northwestern Pacific	Shipping operations
FORTUNA	U.S. 101, Main St.	Rohnerville Airport	Northwestern Pacific	Gravel operations, mills
FRESHWATER	Freshwater Rd.	NONE	NONE	NONE
GARBERVILLE	U.S. 101	NONE	NONE	Gravel operations
HOOPA	State Highway 96	NONE	NONE	NONE
HYDESVILLE	State Highway 36, Rohnerville Rd.	NONE	NONE	NONE
LOLETA	NONE	NONE	Northwestern Pacific	NONE
MANILA	State Highway 255 (New Navy Base Rd.)	NONE	NONE	NONE
McKINLEYVILLE	U.S. 101, Central Ave.	Eureka/Arcata Airport	NONE	NONE
MOONSTONE/ WESTHAVEN	U.S. 101	NONE	NONE	NONE
ORICK	U.S.101	NONE	NONE	NONE
REDWAY	Redwood Dr.	NONE	NONE	NONE
RIO DELL	U.S. 101, Wildwood Ave.	NONE	Northwestern Pacific	NONE
ROHNERVILLE (See Fortuna)				
SAMOA	New Navy Base Rd.	NONE	NONE	Pulp mill, cogeneration plant, shipping operations
SCOTIA	U.S. 101	NONE	Northwestern Pacific	Mill
TRINIDAD	U.S. 101	NONE	NONE	NONE
WEOTT	U.S. 101	NONE	NONE	NONE
WILLOW CREEK	State Highways 299 & 96	NONE	NONE	Gravel operations

*** Note: The former Northwestern Pacific Railroad is now under the direction of the North Coast Railroad Authority. While local rail lines have not operated on a regular basis for several years, future rail usage should continue to be considered in land use planning decisions, unless the railroad right-of-ways are abandoned.**

Railroad: we would like the above note to be part of a general discussion within the Plan to accommodate all of the efforts underway locally to restore, repair and revive the local rail system for the economic health and stability of our County.

Traffic Noise

Traffic noise depends primarily on the speed of traffic, and the percentage of truck traffic, and the number of vehicle trips per day. The primary source of noise from automobiles is high-frequency tire noise, which increases with vehicle speed. In addition, trucks and older automobiles produce engine and exhaust noise, and trucks generate wind noise. While tire noise from autos is generally located at ground level, truck noise sources can be located as high as 10 to 15 feet above the roadbed due to tall exhaust stacks and high engine placement. Sound walls are not effective for mitigating such noise unless they are very tall. Sound walls are most effective when placed close to the noise source and tall enough so as to block noise transmission to the receiver such as a nearby dwelling.

As illustrated in Table 20-2, Humboldt County is subject to noise impacts primarily from U.S. 101, which creates noise in areas up to 500 feet away. Differences in elevation can amplify or dampen the perceived noise level—(noise from a thoroughfare in a trough or valley between residential areas will be reflected upward and focused, as in a satellite dish, while noise from an elevated thoroughfare may dissipate and be perceived as less of an annoyance). On flat ground, a buffer (such as a sound wall or dense vegetation) will greatly reduce noise escaping to surrounding areas. The California Department of Transportation installs sound walls along state roads when new construction or widening is proposed through urban areas or impacts existing residential uses. In Humboldt County, Caltrans has not pursued sound wall construction along existing highways.

Table 20-2. Traffic Noise Levels in Humboldt County on U.S. Highway 101, April 10-11, 2002

Location	Post Mile	Measurement Distance (ft.)	CNEL	Distance to 65 CNEL (ft.)	Distance to 60 CNEL (ft.)
Richardson Grove	1.6	11	76	56	121
North of Rio Dell	55.0	23	79	186	400
Singley Rd.	64.4	30	78	323	500
Indianola cutoff	82.6	19	80	179	385
School Rd.	91.4	23	77	147	318
Westhaven Dr.	98.7	20	78	149	322
North of Orick city limits	122.0	20	73	69	149

Source: Charles Salter Associates, 2002.

Noise surveys were conducted at various locations along U.S. 101 over a 24-hour period spanning April 10 and 11, 2002 by Charles Salter Associates. They Monitored sites including incorporated, unincorporated, and rural areas of the County. Their study shows distances from the center of the highway's outer lane the 60-dB CNEL contour ranged from 121 feet at Richardson Grove (near the County's southern border) to 500 feet at Singley Road (south of the Eureka Community Planning Area).

Table 20-3 (below) lists the three sections of roadway in Arcata, McKinleyville, and Eureka with the widest 65-dB and 60-dB CNEL contours. All of these areas represent segments of U.S. 101. It is notable that in Arcata the highway is separated from surface roads in a designated right-of-way, while in Eureka the highway is part of the City's street grid.

Table 20-3. Highest-Noise Roadways in Humboldt County Communities

Community	Roadway	Distance to 65 dB CNEL (ft.)	Distance to 60 dB CNEL (ft.)
Arcata	U.S. 101, Sunset Ave. to SR 299	382	823
	U.S. 101, Samoa Blvd. to Sunset Ave.	379	816
	U.S. 101, Bayside Rd. to Samoa Blvd.	361	778
McKinleyville	U.S. 101, SR 200 to School Rd.	185	400
	U.S. 101, School Rd. to Murray Rd.	185	400
	U.S. 101, Murray Rd. to Airport Rd.	150	350
Eureka	U.S. 101, end of 5th St. to Murray Field	141	305
	U.S. 101, Sunset Ave. to SR 299	137	295
	U.S. 101, Harris St. to Wabash St.	125	270

Sources: City of Arcata General Plan EIR, 1998; City of Eureka General Plan Background Report, 1997; McKinleyville CPA EIR, 1999.

Noise Compatibility

Evaluating new development projects should be based on a comparison of the noise compatibility guidelines in Figure 20-2 with noise contours and other available information. Fences, landscaping, and noise insulation can be used to mitigate the hazards of excessive noise levels.

As shown in Figure 20-2, exterior noise levels for residences are acceptable up to 60 dB without additional noise insulation required. In areas where noise levels exceed 60dB, the need for additional noise insulation will vary depending on the land use designation, adjacent uses, distance to noise source, and intervening topography, vegetation, and other buffers. Appendix B provides standards for meeting noise insulation requirements.

20.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

N-G1. Excessive Noise. Minimize **to a reasonable extent** the exposure of community residents to excessive noise. (California Government Code, Section 65302(f)). **Modify as shown.**

N-G2. Incompatible Land Uses. Prevent **to a reasonable extent** incompatible land uses by reason of noise levels. **Modify as shown.**

V. We would like to see the narrative from the existing Framework Plan Goals section added to the above, as it is still pertinent:

Existing Framework Plan Section 3290 GOALS:

1. To reduce public exposure to natural and manmade hazards.
2. To ensure the continuity of vital services and functions.
3. To educate the community.

Policies

VI. We would like to see the narrative from the existing Framework Plan Policies section left in place as it easier to read and offers thorough background information that is still pertinent:

Framework Plan Section 3291(5) Policies regarding NOISE:

Policy A. Existing and potential incompatible noise levels in problem areas should be reduced through operational or source controls where the County has responsibility for such controls.

Policy B. Existing and potential incompatible noise levels in problem areas should be reduced through land use planning, subdivision review, building code enforcement, and other administrative means.

Policy C. The land use noise compatibility matrix (Figure insert the correct number here) shall be utilized as the standard for General Planning and zoning purposes.

Policy D. Provide for periodic review and revision of the Noise Element.

Policy E. A local inter-agency program should be developed for the general public in the nature, extent, and solutions to noise problems in Humboldt County.

Policy F. Coordinate noise control activities with those of other responsible jurisdictions.

Policy G. Identify and evaluate potential noise problem areas on a continuing basis.

N-P1. Guide to Land Use Patterns. Use current and projected noise levels as a guide for establishing patterns of land use that minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise. (California Government Code, Section 65302(f)). **Incorporate FAA flight pattern information when considering land uses designations.**

Modify as shown above: This is the noise element, and air planes are the primary source of loud noise. The goals for this document should focus on the primary noise source. Existing and proposed future airport traffic patterns are not considered or discussed, and again, may be within the jurisdiction of the FAA and out of local control. Federal Aviation Administration's role and jurisdiction over low-flying traffic patterns, of which the County of Humboldt has no local control, needs to be included in this Plan discussion.

N-P2. Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix. The Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix (Figure 20-2) shall be utilized to ensure compatibility of land uses. Development may occur in areas identified as "normally unacceptable" provided measures to reduce both the indoor and outdoor noise levels to acceptable levels are taken. **Retain.**

~~**N-P3. Periodic Review of Combining Zones.** Periodically identify and evaluate potential noise problem areas. Review and revise noise impact combining zone areas as necessary, particularly during Airport Land Use Plan updates.~~

Delete this policy. We do not support the policy as it detrimentally affects private property rights and values and adds more regulation to an already over-regulated building industry.

Additionally, the noise contours do not explicitly state or illustrate distance assumptions from the source of the noise for entitlement verification purposes thereby effectively cutting values of property within those contours to ZERO. If the County wishes, it can easily draft a recordable indemnification document whereby property owners are effectively noticed of the sound issues, and advising them they are building at that location “at their own risk”, removing the County from any liability for future ownerships.

Figure 20-2

LAND USE / NOISE COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS



LAND USE CATEGORY	Maximum Interior Noise Levels*	LAND USE INTERPRETATION FOR Ldn. VALUE				
		50 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	91+
Residential Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	45					
Residential Multiple Family, Dormitories, etc.	45					
Transient Lodging	45					
School Classrooms, Libraries, Churches	45					
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	45					
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Music Shells	35					
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports						
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks						
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Rec., Cemeteries						
Office Buildings, Personal, Business & Professional	50					
Commercial: Retail, Movie, Theaters, Restaurants	50					
Commercial: Wholesale, Some Retail, Ind., Mfg., Util.						
Manufacturing, Communications(Noise Sensitive)						
Livestock Farming, Animal Breeding						
Agriculture (except Livestock), Mining, Fishing						
Public Right-of-Way						
Extensive Natural Recreation Areas						

*Due to exterior sources

(Source: Bolt, Beranek, and Newman, Inc., 1974)

CLEARLY ACCEPTABLE: The noise exposure is such that the activities associated with the land use may be carried out with essentially no interference. (Residential areas: both indoor and outdoor noise environments are pleasant.)

NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE: The noise exposure is great enough to be of some concern, but common constructions will make the indoor environment acceptable, even for sleeping quarters. (Residential areas: the outdoor environment will be reasonably pleasant for recreation and play at the quiet end and will be tolerable at the noisy end.)

NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE: The noise exposure is significantly more severe so that unusual and costly building constructions are necessary to ensure adequate performance of activities. (Residential areas:

barriers must be erected between the site and prominent noise sources to make the outdoor environment tolerable.)

CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE: The noise exposure at the site is so severe that construction costs to make the indoor environment acceptable for performance of activities would be prohibitive. (Residential areas: the outdoor environment would be intolerable for normal residential use.)

~~**N-P4. U.S. 101 Surface Maintenance.** The County, through its representation on the Humboldt County Association of Governments and by other means, shall request the Department of Transportation (CalTrans) prioritize roadway surface maintenance on U.S. 101 in the vicinity of Arcata and McKinleyville in order to minimize roadway noise impacts, and, if feasible, consider use of special noise-reducing surface treatments.~~

Delete this policy. Unenforceable. The County can only advocate for such work to be paid for and completed by CalTrans. Worded as a goal, not a policy.

~~**N-P5. U.S. 101 Speed Limits/ Noise Barriers.** Should roadway surface maintenance fail to prevent significant noise impacts on U.S. 101 in the vicinity of Arcata and McKinleyville, consideration should be given to requesting from CalTrans a speed limit reduction (65 to 60 mph) or installation of noise barriers.~~

Delete this policy. Speed Limit: Per CalTrans, unless the speed limit is reduced by 21 m.p.h., there will not be a significant decrease in the noise through this corridor generated by traffic on U.S. Highway 101. Further, CalTrans states that spot speed reduction of highway traffic to this degree is likely to result in significant and unacceptable traffic safety and operational concerns, outweighing any noise abatement benefits gained at this location. CalTrans does not anticipate the approval of any request from the County proposing to reduce speed limits on Route 101 as a noise reduction measure. CalTrans requests this policy be deleted, and we agree with, and support that request.

Noise Barriers: Per CalTrans, they do not finance or construct noise barriers for developments approved after the highway's initial development, unless mitigating for significant noise impacts created by subsequent CalTrans' highway projects. It is the responsibility of local land use agencies to prevent incompatible land uses and establish patterns of development minimizing a community's exposure to excessive noise.

If noise barriers or walls are to be suggested as potential mitigation along highways, we would like to see the noise contours mapping for those noise impact combining zone areas should be produced using CalTrans formula standard methods based on the combination of average daily traffic, speed, heavy load truck traffic. The noise contours should also state or illustrate *distance assumptions from the source of the noise* for entitlement verification purposes to facilitate easier processing by staff and the Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis so that inequity is ruled out in the project condition of approval and decision making process (landscape screens or fencing vs. walls to mitigate for example).

We support the CalTrans method of determination of sound levels of vehicular traffic noise versus lines drawn on staff generated GIS based mapping. However, there are no contour maps included in this document for adequate review of all Plan noise impact combining zone areas. No distance assumptions are included on the sample mapping, and if this

method is incorporated into the Plan, the gates of controversy will open up for projects in proximity to areas in noise impact combining zone areas over potential expensive conditions of approval based on staff or the commission having to guess the location of the noise contour boundary lines.

VII. Why is the text / narrative discussion for N-P6, and N-P7 out of sequential order? Those items are in the tables, but not in order here?

Standards

~~N-S1. Noise Impact Combining Zones.~~ The 20 year projected noise contours of Appendix A shall be used to identify noise impact combining zone areas to indicate where special sound insulation measures may apply. **Delete this standard. As discussed above, we do not support the policy as it detrimentally affects private property rights and values and adds more regulation to an already over-regulated building industry. Additionally, the noise contours do not explicitly state or illustrate distance assumptions from the source of the noise for entitlement verification purposes thereby effectively cutting values of property within those contours to ZERO. If the County wishes, it can easily draft a recordable indemnification document whereby property owners are effectively noticed of the sound issues, and advising them they are building at that location "at their own risk", removing the County from any liability for future ownerships.**

~~N-S2. Environmental Review Process.~~ For noise sensitive locations ~~areas~~ where noise contours do not exist, the environmental review process required by the California Environmental Quality Act shall be utilized to generate the required analysis and determine the appropriate mitigation per state standards. Future noise levels shall be predicted for a period of at least 10 years from the time of building permit application. (Source: Title 24, Appendix Chapter 12, §1208A.8.2)

Delete this standard. Duplicative. CEQA review is already required for all projects. There is no definition of 'noise sensitive locations' and we find it too subjective of a term, therefore that term should be eliminated. The 10 year prediction requirement is too unrealistic and arbitrary, overly vague, and calls for unquantified, unenforceable techniques of determination.

~~N-S3. Uniform Building Code.~~ Use the Uniform Building Code as adopted for California (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Appendix Chapter 12) for determining required noise separation requirements for buildings.

Delete this standard. Duplicative of UBC requirements that is already implemented by the Building Division of Humboldt county and reviewed and revised regularly by the State of California and the International Code Council.

~~N-S4. Noise Standards for Habitable Rooms.~~ Noise reduction shall be required as necessary to achieve a maximum of 45 CNEL interior noise levels in all habitable rooms per California building standards.

Delete this standard. Duplicative of the requirements set forth for all projects in the UBC that is already implemented by the Building Division of Humboldt county and reviewed and revised regularly by the State of California and the International Code Council.

~~**N-S5. Noise Reduction Standards for Habitable Rooms.**~~ Noise reduction standards in Appendix B of this Element shall be used to identify building construction assemblies to achieve acceptable interior noise levels in noise impact areas. **Delete this standard. Duplicative of UBC and CEQA. This language duplicates standards and requirements called for by state law in all project applications via the California Environmental Quality Act and the environmental review process.**

~~**N-S6. Noise Reduction Guidelines for Exterior Areas.**~~ The Noise Guidebook published by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov) shall be used to guide appropriate exterior noise reduction measures in noise impact areas. For residential areas, a usable outdoor living area at least 200 square feet in size per dwelling unit that meets the 60 CNEL standard shall be maintained somewhere on the property.

Delete this standard. We do not support adopting another tool to implement more standards that are duplicative of those already in existence per state laws, codes and statutes (that are already within the regulatory jurisdiction of other County, State or Federal agencies), that add unnecessary costs to an already overburdened and heavily regulated industry and process that would directly affect the cost of housing and general construction that would be counter productive to affordability. When only 12% of Humboldt County residents can afford a home, making more stringent requirements could eliminate new jobs through residential construction, and widen the gap between housing prices and affordability. Not being able to afford a home directly affects the efforts by the Cities and various Economic Development Departments to attract new employers to our area, or for existing employers to retain their workforce.

The language that discusses regulating usable outdoor living area is counter productive to accommodating infill, and in many cases would eliminate the opportunity all together, and would likely effect entitlements held by the owners of small parcels. We do not support this language.

Implementation Measures

VIII. The existing Framework Plan narrative discussing Implementation Programs goes a long way in providing clarity for the reader who is trying to put all of the pieces of the General Plan together in a workable fashion. We would like to see the language from the existing Framework Plan Chapter 5 included in this draft document to provide understanding of the planning process and how it all fits together. We would anticipate any text that is no longer pertinent to be removed, and any new applicable information added herein.

Chapter 5 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS - 5010 OVERVIEW

This chapter contains the tasks to carry out or implement the General Plan Volume I-Framework. Included here are both those implementation measures from previously

adopted plan elements as well as those recommended through this revision of the General Plan. In addition, other items have been included where policy language of the General Plan implies action not otherwise identified as a specific implementation measure. The purposes and applications of a General Plan Implementation Program are:

1. As an information device to assess and select the most suitable and cost effective means of implementing the General Plan.
2. As a foundation for the preparation of departmental program budgets and the annual General Plan Progress Report.
3. As an aid to County Departments, local governments and citizen groups to more easily identify other opportunities for cooperative and complementary efforts.
4. Satisfies state planning requirements which stipulate that certain components of the General Plan are to be carried out by specific adopted implementation programs.

5020 DEFINITION - The term "implementation" is defined as a Key Term in Section 1420 and in the Glossary as well; however, it is important to understand the relationship between the plan as a policy statement and the implementation of the plan. The implementation measures, collected together as a program to carry out the plan, are essentially a listing of tasks.

The requirement for internal consistency (see Section 1330) indicates that the completion of these tasks must be consistent with the plan as a whole. While individual implementation tasks may be associated with a specific policy, the completion of that task, as in the approval of any development project, must take a comprehensive view of all relevant plan policies. In this manner, the result (the action taken) must further the overall intent of the plan, and it is the comprehensive statement of policy that guides the effort to complete the implementation tasks.

5030 ORGANIZATION

The implementation measures are presented in the same general order as the plan. Each set of implementation measures is identified by topic and a five digit reference number identical to the number series of the relevant policy section in the plan text except that the first digit is always a five (5) meaning Chapter 5.

Implementation programs from previously adopted plan elements which have been incorporated directly or by reference includes the following: 1. Trails Plan Section 5-4300, 2. Parks and Recreation Section 5-4400, 3. Housing Element Appendix A, 4. Jacoby Creek Community Plan Appendix B, 5. Solid Waste Management Plan Appendix C.

Each implementation measure in the text of this chapter is followed by a series of comments covering responsibility, priority, schedule and cost and supplemented as

necessary by remarks to clarify further the intent of the implementation measure.
Comments always follow the same sequence as given above.

Responsible Agency includes Department, Commissions, and Committees, but does not preclude some level of support and coordination from other departments.

Priority Group represents relative rather than absolute priorities and range from 1 to 4 with 1 generally indicative of more pressing time constraints in carrying out the major plan policies. Some of the basic criteria used to assign a high priority to the implementation measures are:

1. Necessary to complete the General Plan Work Program.
2. Fulfilling the consistency requirements to bring other activities into conformance with the General Plan.
3. Satisfying state mandates.

Schedule: Where known, established and ongoing periodic activities are presented here. Schedules " to be determined" are abbreviated as TBD.

Cost: Usually presented in terms of staff effort and abbreviated as follows: M/M = Man Month, M/W = Man Week, M/D = Man Day

5040 Summary

The tasks for those activities listed in the text of this chapter are collected in Figure 5-1. This collection of implementation measures has been organized into the following programs:

Community Plan Preparation
Further Planning
Ordinance Revisions
Data Base
Procedures
Committees
Education
Parks and Recreation
Trails System
Other Measures

Figure 5-2 summarizes the costs associated with each of the programs listed above. The cost estimates in Figure 5-2 are based on the conversion of man weeks (M/W) to man months (M/M), assuming 4 M/W per month. Dollar estimates are based on an approximate average burdened rate of \$3000 per man month. More detailed cost estimates and specific schedules for completion of work are developed annually as part of the County budget process.

It must be noted that all estimates are subject to substantial variation, particularly where there are outside factors involved (i.e., public participation, and legislative changes) or where the time frame is extended beyond reasonable application of forecasting techniques.

N-IM1. Noise Impact Combining Zone. Utilize Noise Impact Combining Zone designations to flag where existing standards need to be applied. **Retain.**

~~**N-IM2. Environmental Review.** Use review required by the California Environmental Quality Act to implement policies for noise impacts.~~

Delete this implementation measure. CEQA is already required for all projects within the State of California. Duplicative.

IX. Section 20.4, below, “staff analysis and alternatives” is apparently to be dropped out of the final draft version of the Noise element. We therefore support its elimination now. The inclusion of this section here in the draft only serves to add confusion to the readers’ interpretation of this complex document.

Text can be moved to another section of the document; like the background section of a given chapter or element, or be included as open analysis within the discussion portion for any one given item. Should the reader desire to view more background materials, they can visit the County’s website to view the existing Framework Plan, the Critical Choices Report, etc.

We do not support using the Staff Analysis and Alternatives section as a forum for analysis as justification for a policy, goal, standard or implementation measure because the analysis and alternatives section will be removed from the final draft document. This removal opens up the potential for language within the resulting policy, goal, standard or implementation measures to be different in the draft Plan itself, to not have adequate justification, or to not be accurately representative of the original analysis.

~~NOTE: the section below will fall out of the ‘final’ version found in the GP, but will be critical to the process of review.~~

~~20.4 Staff Analysis and Alternatives~~

~~State Requirements~~

~~California Government Code Section 65302(f) sets out the components of the Noise Element:~~

~~The noise element shall recognize the guidelines established by the Office of Noise Control in the State Department of Health Services and shall analyze and quantify, to the extent practicable, as determined by the legislative body, current and projected noise levels for all of the following sources:~~

- ~~(1) Highways and freeways.~~
- ~~(2) Primary arterials and major local streets.~~
- ~~(3) Passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems.~~

~~(4) Commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation.~~

~~(5) Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards.~~

~~(6) Other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.~~

~~Noise contours shall be shown for all of these sources and stated in terms of community noise equivalent level (CNEL) or day-night average level (Ldn). The noise contours shall be prepared on the basis of noise monitoring or following generally accepted noise modeling techniques for the various sources identified in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive.~~

~~The noise contours shall be used as a guide for establishing a pattern of land uses in the land use element that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.~~

~~The noise element shall include implementation measures and possible solutions that address existing and foreseeable noise problems, if any. The adopted noise element shall serve as a guideline for compliance with the state's noise insulation standards.~~

Staff Recommendation

The noise policies in the current Framework General Plan date back to the original 1977 Noise Element. The policies are vaguely stated and have warranted this rewrite. The noise compatibility standards from the 1977 Element, however, are still the current accepted standards for land use planning, so no change is warranted in the basic regulations, found in Figure 20-2.

The noise section of the McKinleyville Community Plan adopted in 2002 reflects a more current approach in policy, and forms the basis of staff's recommended revisions to its plan. The McKinleyville Community Plan includes mapped noise contours and standards contained in a Noise Combining Zone, whereby mapped noise contours are used to flag locations where the existing standards need to be applied. This treatment of noise hazard mitigation provides a more consistent application of the noise standards, and can effectively streamline the permit process for new development rather than relying on site-specific noise studies.

The Critical Choices Report, used as background for this Element, recommends performance standards for noise hazard mitigation. Staff's recommendations address this issue in Standard N-S1 and Implementation Measure N-IM1 with adoption of a Noise Combining Zone.

Alternatives

X.

Plan Alternative A includes Policy N-P6 (New Noise Generators), Industrial Performance Standards (N-IM3 and N-S7) and a Noise Ordinance Implementation Measure (N-IM4) to further protect residents from exposure to excessive noise hazards. It also includes IM-5 to encourage CalTrans to allow sound walls to be constructed within the highway right of way in all Urban Study Areas, and IM-6 (Exterior Noise Reduction Standards) to mitigate noise impacts along highways and exterior settings within noise impact areas.

N-P6 New Noise Generators. New noise generators may be allowed in areas where projected noise levels are "conditionally acceptable" only after an analysis of possible noise reduction

~~measures is made and indoor and outdoor noise mitigation features are included in the project design such that noise impacts from the project are less than significant.~~

Delete this policy. Duplicative.

This language duplicates standards and requirements called for by state law in all project applications via the California Environmental Quality Act and the environmental review process.

Industrial Performance Standards

~~The County Coastal Zoning Code includes Industrial Performance Standards that limit noise as well as lights, dust, vibrations and traffic. These standards could be added to the Inland Zoning Code as well. Performance standards for cottage industry and home occupation use already exist in both the inland and coastal zoning code.~~

~~**N-S7 — Industrial Performance Standards.** Add the Industrial Performance Standards currently contained in the County Coastal Zoning Code to the Inland Zoning Code as well.~~

Delete this Standard. Standards for the Coastal Zone are overly restrictive, and would add counter-productive, exorbitant costs to housing and other development projects and are not needed in the inland portion of the County. Nor is the imposition of the requirements of yet another State agency in an already overburdened process. Duplicative. We do not support adopting another tool to implement standards that are duplicative of those already in existence per state laws, codes and statutes that are already within the regulatory jurisdiction of other County, State or Federal agencies. When only 12% of Humboldt County residents can afford a home, making more stringent requirements could eliminate new jobs through residential construction, and widen the gap between housing prices and affordability. Not being able to afford a home directly affects the efforts by the Cities and various Economic Development Departments to attract new employers to our area, or for existing employers to retain their workforce.

~~**N-IM3 — Adoption of Performance Standards.** Adopt Industrial Performance Standards Countywide.~~

Delete this implementation Measure. Local industry has a tough time staying in operation due to burdensome regulations. Duplicative. We do not support adopting another tool to implement standards that are duplicative of those already in existence per state laws, codes and statutes that are already within the regulatory jurisdiction of other County, State or Federal agencies.

Noise Ordinance

~~While Humboldt is a largely rural county, a Noise Ordinance allowing for the establishment of noise standards based on local standards that are tied to land use designations and zoning districts can protect public health and welfare in more heavily populated unincorporated areas. Sample noise ordinance language is attached.~~

~~Such a Noise Ordinance would codify noise limits for residential, commercial, office, and industrial zones, similar to what is found in Figure 20-2. The main difference would be that it would be applied at the building permit level, ensuring all (new) uses would comply with the standards, not~~

~~just discretionary uses where environmental review is required, or where mapped noise contours triggered the application of the Noise Impact combining zone.~~

~~Considerable concern was expressed early in the General Plan Update process and during the development of the McKinleyville Community Plan regarding nuisance type noises such as gunfire, loud music, cars and power equipment. The sample noise ordinance discussed above includes provisions to address these issues.~~

~~**N-IM4. Noise Ordinance.** Adopt a noise ordinance based on current zoning districts, tailored to community noise standards.~~

Delete this implementation Measure. Duplicative. We do not support adopting another tool to implement standards that are duplicative of those already in existence per state laws, codes and statutes that are already within the regulatory jurisdiction of other County, State or Federal agencies. When only 12% of Humboldt County residents can afford a home, making more stringent requirements could eliminate new jobs through residential construction, and widen the gap between housing prices and affordability. Not being able to afford a home directly affects the efforts by the Cities and various Economic Development Departments to attract new employers to our area, or for existing employers to retain their workforce.

Sound Walls In CalTrans Right of Way

~~Presently, CalTrans allows construction of sound walls in highway right of way in rural areas only as a last resort, and McKinleyville is considered a rural area. It is not clear how CalTrans defines rural areas, and what would be necessary to change the designation for property in the Urban Study Areas. The proposed implementation measure would attempt to encourage CalTrans to allow sound walls to be constructed in the highway right of way, not only as a last resort but for other reasons as well.~~

~~**N-IM5. Sound Walls in CalTrans Right of Way.** Encourage CalTrans to allow sound walls to be constructed within the highway right of way in all Urban Study Areas.~~

Delete this policy. Speed Limit: Per CalTrans, unless the speed limit is reduced by 21 m.p.h., there will not be a significant decrease in the noise through this corridor generated by traffic on U.S. Highway 101. Further, CalTrans states that spot speed reduction of highway traffic to this degree is likely to result in significant and unacceptable traffic safety and operational concerns, outweighing any noise abatement benefits gained at this location. CalTrans does not anticipate the approval of any request from the County proposing to reduce speed limits on Route 101 as a noise reduction measure. CalTrans requests this policy be deleted, and we agree with, and support that request.

Noise Barriers: Per CalTrans, they do not finance or construct noise barriers for developments approved after the highway's initial development, unless mitigating for significant noise impacts created by subsequent CalTrans' highway projects. It is the responsibility of local land use agencies to prevent incompatible land uses and establish patterns of development minimizing a community's exposure to excessive noise.

If noise barriers or walls are to be suggested as potential mitigation along highways, we would like to see the noise contours mapping for those noise impact combining zone areas

should be produced using CalTrans formula standard methods based on the combination of average daily traffic, speed, heavy load truck traffic. The noise contours should also state or illustrate *distance assumptions from the source of the noise* for entitlement verification purposes to facilitate easier processing by staff and the Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis so that inequity is ruled out in the project condition of approval and decision making process (landscape screens or fencing vs. walls to mitigate for example).

We support the CalTrans method of determination of sound levels of vehicular traffic noise versus lines drawn on staff generated GIS based mapping. However, there are no contour maps included in this document for adequate review of all Plan noise impact combining zone areas. No distance assumptions are included on the sample mapping, and if this method is incorporated into the Plan, the gates of controversy will open up for projects in proximity to areas in noise impact combining zone areas over potential expensive conditions of approval based on staff or the commission having to guess the location of the noise contour boundary lines.

Exterior Noise Reduction Standards

~~The existing general plan identifies acceptable noise levels, but it does not specify how to achieve acceptable noise levels in exterior areas. Adopting the following implementation measure would clarify which portions of a lot are most important for acceptable noise levels, provide design standards for sound walls, and set standards for noise reduction techniques using landscaping:~~

~~**N-IM6. Exterior Noise Reduction Standards.** Adopt standards specifying appropriate measures to reduce exterior noise levels in noise impact areas. Standards shall consider the portion of a lot where noise level reduction measures would apply, acceptable sound wall designs, and standards for achieving noise level reductions through effective site planning techniques.~~

Delete this implementation measure. We do not support adopting another tool to implement more standards that are duplicative of those already in existence per state laws, codes and statutes (that are already within the regulatory jurisdiction of other County, State or Federal agencies), that add unnecessary costs to an already overburdened and heavily regulated industry and process that would directly affect the cost of housing and general construction that would be counter productive to affordability. When only 12% of Humboldt County residents can afford a home, making more stringent requirements could eliminate new jobs through residential construction, and widen the gap between housing prices and affordability. Not being able to afford a home directly affects the efforts by the Cities and various Economic Development Departments to attract new employers to our area, or for existing employers to retain their workforce.

The language that discusses regulating usable outdoor living area is counter productive to accommodating infill, and in many cases would eliminate the opportunity all together, and would likely effect entitlements held by the owners of small parcels. We do not support this language.

~~Plan Alternative C differs from the recommended alternative because it does not include adoption of a Noise Combining Zone nor does it consider adoption of a noise ordinance. It also does not~~

include Policy N-P4 (Hwy 101 Surface Maintenance), nor Policy N-P5 (U.S 101 Speed Limits/ Noise Barriers). Also, Plan Alternative C includes the following policy:

N-P7. Modification or Waiver of Noise Insulation Requirements. Where full mitigation in accordance with the policies and standards of this Noise Element is not feasible, the Planning Commission may modify or waive such policies or standards to enable reasonable use of the property, provided that noise levels are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. **Retain. We would support this policy.**

Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart

The "Vote" column is provided for the user to indicate a policy preference. Enter a **Retain**, **Delete** or **Modify**.

Table 20-4. Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart					
Plan Alternative			Goals and Policies	Staff Remarks	Vote: R, D, M
A	B	C	N-G1. Excessive Noise. Minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise. (California Government Code, Section 65302(f))		R
A	B	C	N-G2. Incompatible Land Uses. Prevent incompatible land uses by reason of noise levels.		R
A	B	C	N-P1 Guide to Land Use Patterns. Use current and projected noise levels as a guide for establishing patterns of land use that minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise. (California Government Code Section 65302(f)).)). Incorporate FAA flight pattern information when considering land uses designations.	Modify as shown. Federal Aviation Administration's role and jurisdiction over low-flying traffic patterns, of which the County of Humboldt has no local control needs to be included in this Plan discussion.	M
A	B	C	N-P2 Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix. The Land Use/Noise Compatibility Matrix (Figure 20-2) shall be utilized to ensure compatibility of land uses.		R

A	B		<p>N-P3 Periodic Review Of Combining Zones. Periodically identify and evaluate potential noise problem areas. Review and revise noise impact combining zone areas during Airport Land Use Plan updates.</p>	<p>Delete this policy. We do not support the policy as it detrimentally affects private property rights and values and adds more regulation to an already over-regulated building industry.</p>	D
A	B		<p>N-P4. Hwy 101 Surface Maintenance. The County, through its representation on the Humboldt County Association of Governments and by other means, shall request CalTrans prioritize roadway surface maintenance on U.S. 101 in the vicinity of Arcata and McKinleyville in order to minimize roadway noise impacts, and, if feasible, consider use of special noise-reducing surface treatments.</p>	<p>Unenforceable. The County can only advocate for such work to be paid for and completed by CalTrans. Worded as a goal, not a policy.</p>	D

<i>Plan Alternative</i>		<i>Goals and Policies</i>	<i>Staff Remarks</i>	<i>Vote: R, D, M</i>
A	B	<p>N-P5. U.S 101 Speed Limits/ Noise Barriers. Should roadway surface maintenance fail to prevent significant noise impacts on U.S. 101 in the vicinity of Arcata and McKinleyville, consideration should be given to requesting from CalTrans a speed limit reduction (65 to 60 mph) or installation of noise barriers.</p> <p>Discussion: CalTrans input states a 21 m.p.h. speed limit reduction would need to be implemented for a noticeable decrease in noise in this specific corridor, and adds that any speed limit decrease would present more threats to public health and safety that overrides the noise abatement issue and asks that this policy be deleted. We agree. See discussion on pages 10 and 11, above.</p>	<p>Delete this policy. See discussion at left.</p>	D

A			<p>N-P6. New Noise Generators. New noise generators may be allowed in areas where projected noise levels are “conditionally acceptable” only after an analysis of possible noise reduction measures is made and indoor and outdoor noise mitigation features are included in the project design such that noise impacts from the project are less than significant.</p>	<p>Delete this policy. This language duplicates standards and requirements called for by state law in all project applications via the California Environmental Quality Act and the environmental review process. Duplicative.</p>	D
		C	<p>N-P7. Modification or Waiver of Noise Insulation Requirements. Where full mitigation in accordance with the policies and standards of this Noise Element is not feasible, the Planning Commission may modify or waive such policies or standards to enable reasonable use of the property, provided that noise levels are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.</p>		R
<i>Standards</i>					
A	B		<p>N-S1. Noise Impact Combining Zones. The 20 year projected noise contours of Appendix A shall be used to identify noise impact combining zone areas to indicate where special sound insulation measures may apply.</p> <p>Delete this standard. As discussed above, we do not support the policy as it detrimentally affects private property rights and values and adds more regulation to an already over-regulated building industry. Additionally, the noise contours do not explicitly state or illustrate distance assumptions from the source of the noise for entitlement verification purposes thereby effectively cutting values of property within those contours to ZERO. If the County wishes, it can easily draft a recordable indemnification document whereby property owners are effectively noticed of the sound issues, and advising them they are building at that location “at their own risk”, removing the County from any liability for future ownerships.</p>	<p>Delete this standard. See discussion at left.</p>	D

A	B	C			
<i>Plan Alternative</i>	<i>Standards</i>		<i>Staff Remarks</i>	<i>Vote: R, D, M</i>	
			<p>N-S2. Environmental Review Process. For noise sensitive locations areas where noise contours do not exist, the environmental review process required by the California Environmental Quality Act shall be utilized to generate the required analysis and determine the appropriate mitigation per state standards. Future noise levels shall be predicted for a period of at least 10 years from the time of building permit application. (Source: California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Appendix Chapter 12, Section 1208A.8.2)</p>	<p>Modify as shown. There is no definition of 'noise sensitive locations' and we find it too subjective of a term, and should be eliminated. CEQA is already required. The 10 year prediction requirement is too unrealistic and arbitrary, and calls for vague unenforceable techniques of prediction determination.</p>	<p>M</p>

A	B	C	<p>N-S3. Uniform Building Code. Use the Uniform Building Code as adopted for California (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Appendix Chapter 12) for determining required noise separation requirements for buildings.</p> <p>Duplicative of UBC that is already implemented by the Building Division of Humboldt county and reviewed and revised regularly by the State of California and the International Code Council. Additionally, there is no language “subject to current State regulations”. The UBC is changing as we speak; to what extent is as of yet unknown, and will become effective 1/2008.</p>	<p>Delete this standard. Duplicative. See discussion at left.</p>	D
A	B	C	<p>N-S4. Noise standards for habitable rooms. Noise reduction shall be required as necessary to achieve a maximum of 45 CNEL interior noise levels in all habitable rooms per State building standards.</p>	<p>Delete this policy. Duplicative of UBC and CEQA. This language duplicates standards and requirements called for by state law in all project applications via the California Environmental Quality Act and the environmental review process.</p>	D