CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

All-America City

90-Day Noise Pilot Data Summary

Between January 2024 and March 2024, the Community Enhancement and Compliance Division (Division) conducted a 90-day citywide pilot study for noise. The goal of the pilot was to gather data that could be used in modifying the existing maximum permissible sound limits in Chapter 17 – Noise Control of the Ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale. The Division proactively visited 40 commercial properties with a history of noise complaints. The methodology and findings of the pilot study are below.

Total number of noise readings: 155

Complaint-driven: 14

Proactive: 141

Proposed Limits: In addition to taking readings at the current maximum permissible sound limits, the Division also took additional readings for dBC. The dBC limit applied was 10 decibels higher than the current dBA limits.

Procedures for Commercial Noise Measurements:

Complaint-driven measurements were taken at the complainant's property line with a sound meter. Only dBA limits were applied to complaint-driven measurements.

The current ordinance does not have an established maximum permissible sound limit for proactive measurements. For this reason, Community Enhancement took measurements five (5) feet from the from the building, structure, or establishment from which the sound is emanating. Since the measurements were taken closer to the building, code officers applied an additional 10 decibels to the maximum permissible sound limit in Table 1 (65 dBA). This means that a commercial establishment would have to exceed 75 dBA or 85 dBC to be in violation of the noise ordinance if the proposed changes are adopted.

Findings:

1. Two (2) of the 14 complaint-driven readings resulted in a violation of the current maximum permissible sound limits.

2. Seventy-one (71) of the 141 proactive readings exceeded 75 dBA or 85 dBC and would have resulted in a violation of the proposed maximum permissible sound limits.

Conclusion

- The current maximum permissible sound limits in Chapter 17 are appropriate for the current mix of businesses and activities operating in the City.
- Decreasing decibel levels would likely lead to a significant number of venues facing continuous noise violations.
- Maximum permissible dBC limits should be added to Table 1 to account for low frequency sounds such as bass.
- A methodology for taking proactive measurements should be added to Chapter 17 – Noise Control.

TABLE I
MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE SOUND LEVEL LIMITS dBA

(proposed dBC level amendments are bolded)

USE	TIMES	OUTDOOR	INDOOR
Residential	7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	60 dBA* **70 dBC*** 50 dBA **60 dBC**	45 dBA **55 dBC** 35 dBA **45 dBC**
Commercial	24 hours	65 dBA **75 dBC**	55 dBA **65 dBC**
Industrial	24 hours	75 dBA **85 dBC**	65 dBA **75 dBC**

*If the residential use is within a commercial, industrial, or mixed use, or within two hundred (200) feet of such use, the outdoor sound level limit is sixty-five (65) dBA **or seventy-five (75) dBC** between 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.