

NOISE ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Matt Knight, Community Development Director

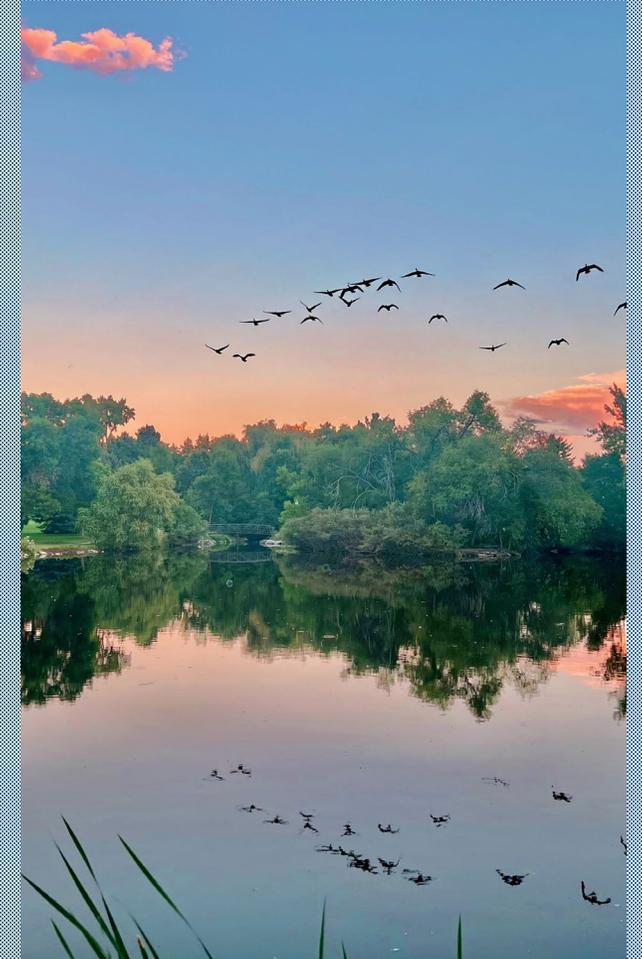
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AGENDA

- Introduction to Current Code
- Recent Noise Complaint Data
- Challenges and Goals
- Policy Considerations



INTRODUCTION TO CURRENT CODE

PERMITTED SOUND LEVELS:

SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL LIMIT dB(A)		
Use District	Day 7:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.	Night 7:00 P.M.-7:00 A.M.
Residential	55	50
Business	60	55
Industrial	75	75

SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL LIMIT dB(A)						
Use District	Monday-Thursday		Friday-Saturday		Sunday	
	7:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.	7:00 P.M.-7:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.-12:00 P.M.	12:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.-12:00 P.M.
Businesses within <u>Main Street Historic District</u>	60	55	80	55	80	55

LEVEL, NINETIETH PERCENTILE: The A weighted sound pressure level that is exceeded ninety percent (90%) of the time, or the level that is exceeded for fifty four (54) minutes in one hour, is denoted L_{90} .

LEVEL, TENTH PERCENTILE: The A weighted sound pressure level that is exceeded ten percent (10%) of the time or the level that is exceeded six (6) minutes in one hour, is denoted L_{10} .

RECENT NOISE COMPLAINT DATA

LPD CALLS FOR SERVICE NOISE COMPLAINTS JULY-DEC 2025

RESIDENTIAL CALLS FOR SERVICE TOTAL: 280

OF THESE 12 ATTRIBUTED TO STREET RACING/ROAD NOISE.

BUSINESS CALLS FOR SERVICE TOTAL: 30

OF THESE 11 ARE FROM LITTLETON BOULEVARD CORRIDOR EAST OF DOWNTOWN LITTLETON.

TOTAL: 310

CODE COMPLIANCE NOISE COMPLAINTS MAY-DEC 2025

RESIDENTIAL CALLS FOR SERVICE TOTAL: 2

BUSINESS CALLS FOR SERVICE TOTAL: 7

OF THESE 5 ARE FROM LITTLETON BOULEVARD CORRIDOR EAST OF DOWNTOWN LITTLETON.

TOTAL: 9

CHALLENGES AND GOALS

Current Challenges

- Enforcement Standards
- Ambient Noise Impacts
- Impact to Residents and Businesses
- Inconsistent Time Periods

Goals for Updates

- Align with Overall Best Practices to Reduce Impacts but also Support Businesses.
- Easier to Enforce and Understand
- Streamline Definitions and Guidelines
- Make Special Event Permit Standards Clear and Enforceable

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Consider changes to enforcement approach**
- **Consider distance options with enforcement**
- **Consider changes for Commercial/Mixed-use specific zoning**
- **Consider changes to the Special Event Permits**
- **Consider alternatives to the punitive order**

ENFORCEMENT APPROACH

CURRENT:

- Code requires sound to exceed the applicable limit for **90% of an hour** (54 minutes) before it is deemed a violation. (Known as L90)

BEST PRACTICE:

- Simpler instantaneous (or shorter duration) decibel measurements.
- Majority of other municipalities in CO approach enforcement in this way.

POLICY CONSIDERATION:

- Should noise exceeding the allowed decibel limit be measured using a shorter time frame, using 5-minute intervals instead of 54-minute intervals?
 - Aligning Littleton's ordinance with these familiar, meter-based thresholds would remove an unenforceable technical hurdle, reduce the time and resources required for investigations, and offer a clear, objective standard that businesses, event planners, and residents can understand.



DISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS

CURRENT:

- Sound is measured at the approximate boundary of the property under suspected violation.

BEST PRACTICE:

- 50-ft audible standard allows enforcement officers to take immediate action on obvious nuisances (Plainly Audible), while still preserving measured decibel limits for louder, more persistent noise.

POLICY CONSIDERATION:

- Should Littleton define a violation as any noise that a person of ordinary hearing can clearly hear at least 50 feet away, in addition to using decibel limits?
 - Offers residents and businesses an easy-to-understand rule of thumb.
 - Allows tool free enforcement, when a decibel meter is unavailable.



COMMERCIAL ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

CURRENT:

- Decibel limits and time of day standards set by zone district with special allowances for the Businesses in the Main Street Historic District.

BEST PRACTICE:

- Nighttime quiet hours start at 10 pm in commercial/mixed-use zoning districts.
- Higher decibel limits for commercial focused zoning districts.

POLICY CONSIDERATION:

- Should the Main Street Historic District decibel standards be extended to include other commercial/mixed-use zoned areas?
- Should Littleton Adopt 10 p.m. quiet hours like neighboring cities?
 - Allows businesses more opportunities for normal business noises to occur without it being a violation.
 - Option to allow this on Friday and Saturday nights only.



SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT CONSIDERATIONS

CURRENT:

- Special Event Permits can include amplified sound, but does not currently give permission to exceed the permitted sound levels.
- No clear standard for businesses and residents on what is allowed and when.

BEST PRACTICE:

- Allowance for higher decibels for permitted events within specific time frames (e.g., outdoor music before 10 pm with maximum limit of 80 decibels)

POLICY CONSIDERATION:

- Should Special Event/Amplified Sound Permits have a different sound level allowance than the standard levels permitted?
 - Option to allow this during specific times (e.g., during the daytime during the week, and later for Friday and Saturday nights).



PUNITIVE ORDER CONSIDERATIONS

CURRENT:

- Noise violations carry punishment up to an including jail time for repeat violations

BEST PRACTICE:

- Most effective punishment focuses on suspension and potential revocation of business sales tax license, not jail time.

POLICY CONSIDERATION:

- Should the noise ordinance include a provision that explicitly provides for potential violation penalties that could include suspension and revocation of sales tax licenses for continued violations, but excludes the possibility of jail time?



***FURTHER DISCUSSION OR
QUESTIONS?***