Plano City of Excellence | Memorandum

Date: November 20, 2017

To: City Council

From: Rachel C. Patterson, Director of Environmental Health & Sustainability

Subject: Noise Ordinance Update

Since the noise ordinance was introduced and tabled in June 2017, Environmental Health Division staff have been working to meet with the public, gather comments, and address the public's concerns within the body of the ordinance. Additionally, the Division engaged an environmental noise consultant, David Marsh, on this project who has many years of experience working both nationally and internationally on environmental noise projects.

The direction of council was to revisit the ordinance and consider the comments received at the June meeting. Additionally, specific direction was to gather further public comment and consider districts for noise thresholds in order to meet both resident and business needs and interests.

A presentation was given to the Neighborhood Leadership Council on October 13, followed by two public meetings on October 23 and October 26. Notifications of these meetings were sent through Plano City News, Facebook, and Nextdoor. A newsflash was also added to the Department website along with a draft of the ordinance and summary of changes document.

The website newsflash was visited a total of 1,190 times. Of those that clicked on an article in the Plano City News, 44% opened the noise article within the email. The Facebook post reached over 7,000 people and garnered a number of comments, which were recorded. We had a total of 26 at the Neighborhood Leadership Council and 27 at the two public meetings held. Over 60 comments and/or questions were received through email, at the meetings, and through social media.

Major themes included

- decibel thresholds throughout the city
- daytime versus nighttime hours
- motor vehicle concerns (mufflers, horns, etc.)
- commercial property noise adjacent to residential properties
- threshold for A/C units
- enforcement of the ordinance

Of course, there were other miscellaneous comments and requests for clarification. This revised ordinance has taken into consideration the council and public's concern with keeping the noise levels low, especially in the residential areas while considering the needs of our business and industrial areas within the city. Major changes include:

- Added definitions for further clarity throughout ordinance.
- Lower decibel thresholds for residential areas to 65 db (or lower, depending on background levels), and 55 dB at night.
- Addition of decibel thresholds for commercial/mixed use and industrial areas
- Includes provision that where commercial or industrial properties affect residential properties, the most restrictive threshold shall apply

- Includes language to address impulsive noise where 5 dB would be subtracted from the maximum allowable limit if the noise is impulsive in nature.
- Keeps day and night hours the same as is currently defined (7:00 am – 10:00 pm) for each day, with no change on weekend nights.
- Includes a provision for loud vehicles
- Incorporates evidence-based recommendations for A/C units based on a study by our consultant
- Provides solid enforcement provisions, including provisions for repeat/habitual offenders.

I look forward to presenting the revised noise ordinance to the city council on November 27. I believe this ordinance is even stronger than the last and based on comments we have received, reflects the desires of the vast majority of our residents.