

FACT SHEET

Frequently Asked Questions *Updated CEQA Thresholds for Construction Noise and Vibration*

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Background

This document provides information regarding the Department of City Planning's (Department) updated California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Thresholds and Methodology for **Construction Noise and Vibration** (Updated Noise Thresholds) and provides general responses to public comments. This summary consolidates concerns and suggestions from various stakeholders, including community members, organizations, and experts, alongside the Department's responses and explanations. The purpose of this document is to address the key issues raised during the public comment period, explain the rationale behind the proposed updates, and highlight the measures taken to ensure that the thresholds are both protective and practical.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What is the California Environmental Quality Act, commonly referred to as CEQA?**
- A.** The State Legislature enacted CEQA in 1970, establishing statewide regulations for the environmental review of discretionary projects and a process for mitigating or avoiding potential environmental impacts. The CEQA review process seeks to inform the public, applicable local agencies, and decision makers about the potential environmental impacts associated with certain development projects and planning efforts.

Q. When is CEQA review required?

- A.** CEQA review is required for “discretionary” land use applications (i.e., projects considered “ministerial” or permitted by-right do not require CEQA). “Discretionary” land use applications are required when a proposed development project is subject to a review process requiring approval by a City decision-maker. Examples of “discretionary” development projects include projects which request General Plan amendments, zone changes, conditional uses, subdivisions of land, design review, compliance with an overlay with specialized regulations, or certain deviations from the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). All discretionary projects must undergo CEQA review prior to receiving approvals from a decision-maker. There are many types of CEQA review that may be required of a given project, which range in complexity, time, and cost.

Q. What are CEQA thresholds?

- A.** Pursuant to California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21082.2 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, CEQA requires the Lead Agency (the City of Los Angeles) to determine the significance of all environmental impacts. A threshold of significance for a given environmental impact defines the level of effect above which the Lead Agency will normally consider impacts to be significant, and below which it will normally consider impacts to be less than significant.

Thresholds of significance may be defined either as quantitative or qualitative standards, or sets of criteria, whichever is most applicable to each specific type of environmental impact. For example, quantitative criteria are often applied to air quality and noise impacts, while aesthetics impacts are typically evaluated using qualitative thresholds.

Lead Agencies have the discretion to formulate their own significance thresholds. Setting thresholds requires the Lead Agency to make a policy judgment about how to distinguish significant impacts from less-than-significant impacts. Lead Agencies can set thresholds on a project-by-project basis, or they can adopt thresholds to be consistently applied to all projects. The Department last adopted the [State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G](#) as the Department’s CEQA Thresholds in 2019 (2019 Thresholds).

Q. What types of developments will the Updated Noise Thresholds be applicable to?

- A.** Most developments in the City are by-right or ministerial and are subject to the existing Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) regulations (see below **Q. Do the Updated Noise Thresholds change any existing LAMC regulations?**). Only certain developments within the City will be subject to the Updated Noise Thresholds. Specifically, the Updated Noise Thresholds will only be applicable to *discretionary* projects and land use proposals subject to certain types of CEQA

review (see **Q. When is CEQA review required?**). In those instances, the City will use the Updated Noise Thresholds to determine whether a development project will potentially exceed construction noise and vibration thresholds and result in a significant impact.

Q. Why is the Department updating the construction noise and vibration thresholds and methodology?

A. Construction Noise

The current construction noise thresholds are overly sensitive, do not recognize the generally urban nature of the City, or the reasonable expectations related to construction noise. The proposed thresholds are more suited to the generally urban nature of the City, yet still recognize the importance of human health, including sleep disruption.

An analysis of the City's current construction noise thresholds, as well as a review of best practices and thresholds used by other jurisdictions, found that the City's existing thresholds are overly conservative, especially in the context of impacts to public health. In particular, the use of a numeric threshold based on the increase in decibel levels over existing ambient conditions (e.g., a 5 dBA [A-weighted decibel] increase over ambient conditions) often results in a determination that construction noise impacts are significant, even for routine construction activities that are expected to occur in an urban environment. The increase in ambient level threshold is so low that it has the potential to show significant environmental impacts, even for activities such as the exterior remodeling of a single-family home in a residential area involving no unusual noise-producing equipment. As a result, a more appropriate construction noise threshold should be crafted in consideration that construction noise is temporary and periodic, and that while construction noise could result in human annoyance, it may not necessarily result in direct health impacts unless a certain absolute noise threshold is attained.

While CEQA requires the City to identify significant impacts to the environment, an overly conservative threshold, which identifies less than significant impacts as significant, results in unnecessary expense and delay on beneficial developments, such as urgently needed housing. This is due to the need to prepare unnecessary environmental impact reports (EIRs) that can add more than a year on average to project approvals and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to prepare.

The proposed thresholds will identify significant impacts from construction noise and vibration by accounting for reasonable expectations for construction during daytime and nighttime hours and also including absolute noise levels that are intended to protect human health. The thresholds have been proposed based on input from Department staff, a Technical Advisory Committee made up of more than a dozen noise experts and environmental consulting firms, as well as a review of thresholds used by other State and local agencies.

The thresholds are focused on impacts to sensitive uses including single-family and multi-unit dwellings, long-term care facilities (including convalescent and retirement facilities), dormitories, motels, hotels, transient lodging, and other residential uses; places of assembly including churches or houses of worship; hospitals; libraries; schools; auditoriums; concert halls; outdoor theaters; nature and wildlife preserves; recording studios; and parks, and recognize the importance of human health by including absolute noise levels that are intended to protect public health. Under the proposed thresholds, if a discretionary project's construction noise exceeds 80 dBA Leq(8-hour) (equivalent continuous sound level for an 8-hour period; see **Q. What is Leq and why do the Update Noise Thresholds utilize an averaging of noise levels?**) during daytime hours for sensitive uses (as measured from the property line with outdoor uses or at the exterior of the building), including outdoor public recreational areas, the impact would be considered significant. In addition, during nighttime hours, construction noise impacts would be considered significant if construction noise exceeds 5 dBA Leq (one-hour) above the ambient noise level at a sensitive use, or if absolute noise levels exceed specified maximum levels ranging from 55 dBA Leq to 70 dBA Leq at a noise sensitive use. If significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures would be required, to the extent feasible, and unmitigated impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Construction Vibration

The Department currently utilizes the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines set forth in FTA's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* to evaluate potential impacts related to construction vibration for both potential building damage and human annoyance. In practice, use of the FTA guidance regarding human annoyance from vibration has proven to be too rigid as most typical construction activities during daytime hours within an urban environment would exceed the 72 vibration decibels (VdB) threshold if a sensitive use is nearby (i.e., within 80 feet). Similar to construction noise, construction vibration is reasonably anticipated in an urban environment, like that found in the City, and such vibration levels would not be anticipated to result in health impacts or substantially affect the activities of the general public during daytime hours. The guidance regarding building damage has been more reasonable in practice.

Regarding human annoyance, the City is an urban area where intermittent human annoyance from construction activity is commonplace and expected during daytime hours. The FTA provides ground borne vibration impact criteria ranging from 72 VdB (frequent vibration events) to 80 VdB (infrequent vibration events) for residences and buildings where people normally sleep. The FTA vibration criteria are specified for long-term operations. However, since project construction activities are temporary, the 80 VdB criteria for infrequent vibration events would be appropriate as an updated vibration threshold for human annoyance during nighttime hours. In addition, vibration due to mat concrete pour activities would be

minimal (below 80 VdB), as concrete trucks and concrete pumps do not generate excessive vibration levels. Therefore, mat pour activities with a limited duration of up to five days are exempted from this updated threshold and are not expected to result in significant construction vibration impacts.

Regarding building damage, the proposed thresholds are consistent with California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) criteria that are based on specific building types, allowing the City to better tailor thresholds to multiple building types.

Q. Do the Updated Noise Thresholds change any existing LAMC regulations?

A. No, there are no changes proposed to the LAMC regulations which govern allowable construction hours or allowable construction noise or vibration levels. With regard to construction noise, the City's Noise Ordinance (LAMC Section 112.05) sets forth a maximum noise level for construction equipment of 75 dBA at a distance of 50 feet when operated within 500 feet of a residential zone. Compliance with this standard does not apply where compliance is technically infeasible. "Technically feasible" means that the established noise limitations can be complied with at a project site with the use of mufflers, shields, sound barriers, and/or other noise reduction devices or techniques employed during the operation of equipment. In addition, LAMC Section 41.40 (Noise Due to Construction, Excavation Work - When Prohibited) prohibits construction between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, before 8:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday or any national holiday, and at any time on Sunday (i.e., construction is allowed Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays and national holidays between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.). Construction may be permitted outside of these hours if a temporary noise variance is approved by the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners.

With regard to vibration, LAMC Section 91.3307.1 states, "Adjoining public and private property shall be protected from damage during construction, remodeling, and demolition work. Protection must be provided for footings, foundations, party walls, chimneys, skylights, and roofs. Provisions shall be made to control water runoff and erosion during construction or demolition activities." These regulations continue to apply citywide. The Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) enforces provisions of the City's Noise Regulations relative to construction hours and equipment, and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) enforces provisions relative to noise generated by people.

Q. How did the City develop the Updated Noise Thresholds and engage with stakeholders?

A. To establish the proposed thresholds, the City solicited input and technical expertise from a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of noise experts and environmental scientists from various consulting firms with extensive experience practicing in the areas of environmental noise and vibration. These

individuals have many years of practical experience dealing with noise and vibration impacts under CEQA and employing thresholds set by various government agencies. Their consulting experience includes working with both private developers and government agencies on a variety of project types. The TAC provided valuable expert opinion and input to the City regarding the proposed thresholds. After more than two years of development and consultation with the TAC, the City formulated thresholds based on these discussions, and the proposed thresholds were released for public review on December 8, 2023. The Department held a public hearing on December 20, 2023. Two 30-day extensions of time were granted to allow for additional public input until February 19, 2024. All public comments were reviewed and considered. As a result, modifications and updates to the thresholds have been made where applicable. The City is committed to transparency and public engagement, and the Updated Noise Thresholds reflect changes which address community concerns and expert recommendations.

Q. What is Leq and why do the Updated Noise Thresholds utilize an averaging of noise levels?

A. Equivalent continuous sound level (Leq) is a measurement of the average sound pressure level over a period of time, or the steady sound pressure level that has the same total energy as fluctuating noise. It's also known as the time-averaged sound level. The thresholds are based on an Leq(8-hour), meaning they are based on measured noise levels over an 8-hour period. This does not limit construction activities to an 8-hour day. Construction activities are permitted to occur pursuant to construction hours identified in the LAMC. Some public comments were received which expressed concerns that the use of Leq as a measurement can obfuscate loud noise levels because it averages out the total noise levels throughout a period of time, so there may be extremely high noise levels that are disturbing for a short period of time, but if it is reasonably quiet the rest of the day, then the Leq number can be low. While it is correct that the averaging of noise levels means that there can be some louder and some quieter sounds throughout a time period, the average (Leq) is a noise standard and widely used noise metric, used by the City and numerous other government agencies; e.g., Caltrans, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and FTA in preparing environmental noise studies. This metric is used by the EPA to address human health relative to noise, such as hearing loss and sleep disturbances. Hearing loss can occur from a one-time exposure to an intense sound, such as an explosion, or by continuous exposure to loud sounds over an extended period of time. Construction activities do not typically release single intense sounds leading to hearing loss, although a single intense sound level may pose an annoyance. The City is considered an urban area where potential human annoyance from general construction activity is expected during daytime hours. The averaging metric is typically used by agencies to establish impacts to public health to analyze continuous exposure to construction noise during the daytime or nighttime hours. Nonetheless, noise levels associated with construction activities are considered short-term, and people would

generally not be exposed to the construction noise levels for a continuous extended long-term duration.

Q. Do the Updated Noise Thresholds protect public health?

- A.** Yes, the Updated Noise Thresholds would continue to protect public health by ensuring that noise analyses of construction activities would be focused on evaluating whether those activities would exceed noise levels which could result in hearing loss or sleep disruption, and that vibration levels would continue to protect against sleep disruption. Multiple commenters from the public expressed concerns that the proposed thresholds would weaken noise protections for residential areas and benefit developers at the expense of residents, emphasizing that current protections are crucial for maintaining the quality of life in residential neighborhoods, particularly in areas with significant open spaces and lower ambient noise levels such as hillside areas, and for residents living in older buildings.

However, the proposed thresholds continue to be health protective, as they were developed based on established guidelines from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the State's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), and the EPA, which consider noise levels that could cause hearing loss and sleep disturbance. The proposed 80 dBA Leq(8-hour) threshold for daytime construction noise is also intended to be protective, yet practical, taking into account typical noise environments throughout the City. This threshold is below the OSHA/CalOSHA 90 dBA Leq limit for potential hearing loss, and is similar to the 75 dBA at 50 feet criteria for residential uses set forth by the LAMC when adjusting for distance.

Generally, quantifying noise pollution's contribution to other specific health problems (such as heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke, ulcers, and other digestive disorders), remains a challenge because of poor measuring and monitoring. Therefore, the Updated Noise Thresholds focus on areas where quantifiable links have been proven related to a certain noise level and a specific health impact (such as hearing loss and sleep disturbance).

Q. It is very noisy where I live due to existing conditions such as businesses, construction, or other operations. How do the Updated Noise Thresholds address noise pollution currently existing in the urban environment?

- A.** CEQA thresholds are implemented when a "project" is proposed and CEQA review is required. Therefore, the Updated Noise Thresholds would only be applied to determine how a proposed project subject to CEQA would contribute or exacerbate existing noise conditions. In addition, any existing businesses, construction, or operation is subject to the City's existing LAMC regulations for noise. If the business or operation is in violation of any LAMC regulations, a Code Enforcement complaint may be submitted to LADBS [here](#).

Q. How do the Updated Noise Thresholds for construction consider the existing noise levels throughout the various parts of the City?

- A.** The Updated Noise Thresholds for construction take into account the existing ambient noise levels in the City. As measured for various projects within the City, existing daytime ambient noise for uses along major roadways is in the range of 65 to 70 dBA and along quiet residential streets is between 55 and 60 dBA. During the daytime, there are various activities that produce noise, which residents of urban areas such as Los Angeles encounter, including road noises from cars, children playing at schools and parks, people talking outdoors, emergency vehicle sirens, landscaping equipment, as well as temporary construction noise. As discussed in the thresholds, construction noise can increase ambient noise levels from 10 to 25 dBA and higher from time to time during daytime hours. Such increases from construction noise, as discussed above, would not result in significant impacts unless they exceed the absolute limit of 80 dBA Leq(8-hour) during daytime hours because again, construction noise is temporary and reasonably expected in an urban environment.

Even residential areas in the City, including hillsides, are urban in nature, as the City of Los Angeles is built up and construction activities in residential areas are typical activities in developed areas, as houses are remodeled and rebuilt, and vacant lots are built on. The City of Los Angeles encounters a large amount of construction projects, including in residential and hillside areas. There were approximately 173,000 permits applied with LADBS for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Therefore, the daytime noise threshold sets a maximum of 80 dBA Leq(8-hour) to identify noise sources that would be objectionable and have the potential to result in health impacts such as hearing loss.

The nighttime thresholds are focused on sleep disturbance and address this via two standards: a maximum absolute sound level of between 55 to 70 dBA Leq, as well as a maximum increase over ambient noise levels of 5 dBA Leq. These absolute sound level limits occur on a sliding scale from 55 to 70 dBA Leq to be sensitive to residential areas, including hillside areas, to ensure minimal impact on sleep and health, with a more stringent noise limit and lower exterior noise levels for sensitive uses within older buildings (with single-glazed windows) than for new buildings (with double-paned windows). Both the daytime and nighttime thresholds are protective of public health and based on substantial evidence.

As part of the noise impact analysis, any special and unique environmental conditions such as canyon effects would need to be evaluated based on the project site specific topographic and upon the surrounding sensitive receptors.

The City has also considered other studies provided from the public regarding the existing ambient noise levels. For example, noise maps were provided based on a National Park Service (NPS) nationwide assessment (Mennitt et al. 2014).

However, the submitted studies were not representative of the existing setting in the City. In the NPS example, the study was based on a predictive algorithm, based on sound data from national parks and not an urban setting. This is unlike the actual measured real-world data used by the City in its analysis and development of the thresholds.

Q. How does this change affect noise analysis and restrictions in single-family and hillside neighborhoods?

- A.** As previously mentioned, the Updated Noise Thresholds would only apply to projects which are considered discretionary and require CEQA. As such, the construction of single-family residences or development in low-scale areas would generally not be affected, as these types of developments often do not require discretionary actions, and if they do, they often do qualify for Exemptions under CEQA (see **Q. When is CEQA review required?**).

In addition, all developments, including those which do not require CEQA analysis, are still subject to the City of Los Angeles Noise Regulations provided in Chapter XI of the LAMC and, if there is a discretionary approval, are subject to Conditions of Approval (see **Q. How will standardized protections like conditions of approval be implemented?**), thus leading to a more logical and predictable review process that still provides protections from excessive noise.

The proposed construction noise threshold identifies 80 dBA (Leq[8-hour]) as the maximum threshold when measured from sensitive uses during daytime hours. 80 dBA is an *absolute number* whether you are located in a canyon, hillside, or flat area. Noise measurements would be taken at the project site and at the sensitive receptor, so while construction noise at the project site could measure 80 dBA, the noise as measured at the sensitive receptor may be less. In addition, the analysis will also consider other potential projects that are occurring in the area that could cumulatively contribute to a noise impact. For Projects which require a noise analysis in the hillside area or other unique situations, the hillside topography or unique circumstance is factored into the model when determining if the noise threshold at the *sensitive receptor* is exceeded. This would include properties that are subject to a canyon effect in which noise can reverberate off surrounding hillsides. As a result, noise studies that are prepared can take into account site-specific characteristics such as hillside topography or localized circumstances that may affect the noise analysis.

Therefore, most construction activities in single-family and hillside neighborhoods would not be affected by the Updated Noise Thresholds, and continue to be subject to LAMC regulations and Conditions of Approval which are protective of public health. Noise measurements and studies for hillside neighborhoods would consider the unique topography and other special circumstances of these areas. These thresholds are designed to be used for discretionary development projects

citywide across a wide range of contexts and topographical conditions, including in hillside areas. If warranted by especially unique conditions, beyond solely being located in a hillside or low density area, CEQA also provides that project-specific thresholds of significance may be used at the discretion of the lead agency, if supported by substantial evidence.

Q. How do the Updated Noise Thresholds for daytime construction consider people that are working from home or night shift workers that need to sleep during the day?

- A.** The City acknowledges the recent increase in the number of people working remotely and from home during daytime hours. The Updated Noise Thresholds continue to identify residential areas as sensitive receptors to noise, whereas commercial areas and offices which also have daytime workers continue to not be considered sensitive receptors. Therefore, residential areas with at-home workers are required to be considered for noise analyses, while commercial areas with in-office workers are not considered. It should also be noted that the thresholds focus on impacts to public health, related to continuous exposure to construction noise and hearing loss, rather than human annoyance from construction activities. Both the previous and Updated Noise Thresholds do not require analyses of construction noise impacts for human annoyance for office workers.

The City also acknowledges that there are night shift workers in the City which may be sleeping during daytime hours. Residential areas where night shift workers would be sleeping continue to be identified as sensitive noise receptors. However, the lower nighttime noise thresholds to protect against sleep disturbance are not applied during the daytime because these workers represent a small percent of the total population, and the proposed noise thresholds are provided for the general population, a much larger group. It would not be practical for the City to utilize lower nighttime thresholds for sleep protection during daytime hours, as it would create an unnecessary environmental review for construction activities, a normal and expected occurrence necessary for the City to accommodate growth and jobs. As discussed above, daytime noise levels are higher and people who sleep during the day will reasonably expect to encounter greater levels of noise.

In addition, the Updated Noise Thresholds identify noise levels at the exterior of a building. The construction noise level at the interior of a building would further be reduced. Construction noise primarily occurs at the ground level, which is further attenuated with distance and intervening buildings between the construction site and sensitive receptors, as well as typical building attenuation (e.g., walls and windows) at the sensitive receptor itself. For the daytime noise threshold, the interior of a building is unlikely to be exposed to the 80 dBA noise level for an extended duration; i.e., more than 8 hours continuous per day. Per Caltrans, the noise reduction provided by a typical building with windows open would be 10 dBA. As an example, the proposed 55 dBA nighttime noise threshold at the exterior

would result in a noise level of 45 dBA inside the building, which is consistent with the EPA guidelines for sleep disturbances.

While the City is responsible for identifying significant noise impacts and for protecting the residents, citizens, and visitors of the City from excessive and harmful noise, the City is also responsible for not requiring unnecessary environmental review which delays and poses unnecessary economic hurdles on urgently needed housing and economic development projects. In addition, the City has citywide regulations to protect public health and address construction noise for all development projects.

Q. Are the Updated Noise Thresholds consistent with those of other local jurisdictions?

A. Yes, the development of the Updated Noise Thresholds included a review of scientific literature and studies and a comparison of noise thresholds and regulations utilized by other cities. Although the City of Los Angeles is larger in size compared to other surrounding jurisdictions, health impacts from noise exposure are based on the general population, and changes in ambient noise settings are highly localized in nature. Therefore, the size of the population of a whole city is unlikely to impact the potential impacts of what a local noise limit would be.

Q. Why weren't alternate noise standards from other agencies used instead?

A. The City has considered suggestions from the public regarding the use of Cal/OSHA and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) exposure limits for workers and requirements for hearing protection, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) limits, and other standards. However, these limits only apply for workers with continuous and direct exposure to noise levels and occupational exposure, not to environmental noise exposure outside of the workplace. Other suggested thresholds from the public included U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), EPA, or FTA 24-hour average noise levels that include nighttime hours. The EPA 24-hour noise limit is based on long-term noise exposure, such as a continuous 24-hours per day over a 40-year period exposure, which is not applicable to short-term construction activities. HUD and FTA 24-hour noise limits are also noise limits for long-term operational noise impacts that are not applicable to short-term construction activities. The suggested use of Caltrans/FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria from 23 CFR 772 would also not be appropriate, as the standards are for long-term operation noise impacts, not for short-term construction noise impacts. The Updated Noise Thresholds for daytime construction are consistent with the FTA's current daytime construction noise criteria.

Q. How are construction noise and vibration impacts evaluated on wildlife and habitats?

A. Noise impacts associated with biological resources (i.e., wildlife) would be evaluated under the biological resources analysis of the CEQA document. The Biological Resources section of a CEQA document would identify the types of wildlife and habitats present at and around a project site, and would provide more detailed analysis regarding the sensitivity and impacts of human intrusion (such as light and noise) on wildlife and habitat resources. Typically, a biological resources analysis would include considerations regarding the interference with habitat such that normal species behaviors are disturbed to a degree that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species. The construction noise and vibration thresholds focus on impacts to human health, while impacts to other species are considered under a different set of thresholds and analysis in the Biological Resources section.

Q. How will the updated vibration thresholds impact historic resources?

A. For vibration, the proposed limits were aligned with FTA and Caltrans standards, which are designed to prevent both structural damage to buildings and human annoyance. The City acknowledges the importance of protecting historic resources and the proposed thresholds include considerations for historic buildings. The vibration limits present a tiered approach, which differentiate between different building types of historic structures. In general, there are buildings within the City that are registered as “historic”, but are not considered extremely susceptible to vibration damage, such as a historic concrete structure. A threshold of 0.25 peak particle velocity (PPV) for historic building structures is based on the criteria established by Caltrans, which specifically applies to “historic” structures. This limit is further reduced to 0.1 PPV for “fragile” buildings, which is consistent and more conservative than the FTA limit of 0.12 PPV. “Fragile” buildings are buildings which are extremely susceptible to vibration damage would include existing unreinforced masonry buildings, existing wood-frame multi-story buildings with soft, weak or open front walls, and existing non-ductile concrete buildings. Therefore, depending on the construction material and type of the historic structure, the appropriate vibration threshold would apply, ensuring the protection of the City’s valuable historic resources.

The vibration thresholds limit ground-borne vibration from construction equipment so as not to damage adjacent buildings. Regarding other construction activities which may impact historic resources, such as excavation, existing LAMC regulations require that adjoining private property be protected from damage during construction, remodeling and demolition work and for the control of water runoff and erosion during construction or demolition activities. The topography or risk of landslides is a separate environmental issue to be evaluated by a licensed engineering geologist and/or a licensed soils engineer, and is evaluated under

other environmental topics of CEQA, such as indirect impacts to historic resources or project geology and soils.

Q. Why is the adoption of Updated Noise Thresholds not subject to its own CEQA review?

A. The Updated Noise Thresholds were prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines to implement CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The consideration of the proposed thresholds involved data collection and review of scientific literature, including studies on noise-induced health impacts and environmental noise standards. The thresholds were developed with input from noise and vibration experts and were reviewed against current best practices and standards from agencies such as the EPA, OSHA, and FTA. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(b), thresholds are to be supported with substantial evidence, which is defined in the CEQA statute to mean “facts, reasonable assumptions and expert opinion supported by facts.” The proposed updated construction and vibration thresholds have been developed with input from a TAC as well as several published documents, guidelines, and criteria related to noise and vibration from numerous agencies. As such, substantial evidence has been fully considered per the CEQA Guidelines in the development of the thresholds.

Q. How will standardized protections such as conditions of approval be implemented?

A. The Updated Thresholds recognize the future use of Environmental Protection Measures (EPMs) and/or standard “Conditions of Approval” to require noise protective measures of individual projects. Some examples of EPMs include: requirements for power construction equipment to be equipped with noise shielding and muffling devices, a prohibition of impact pile driving equipment, or the installation of temporary sound wall barriers. The EPMs can be found on page 19 of [this document](#). EPMs will be mandatory requirements on any projects subject to Chapter 1A zoning. Standard Conditions of Approval, if used, are imposed as conditions on project entitlements and are enforceable as such.

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