



Introduction to Public Safety

The goal of Lake Forest's Public Safety Element is to reduce the risk of death, injury, property damage, economic loss, and harm due to natural and manmade disasters. This element will view risks on both a short-term and long-term basis, and will place a special emphasis on local and regional risk factors.

The Public Safety Element closely relates to the Public Facilities Element and supports the City's Emergency Management Plan. The long-term risks associated with Climate Change are also addressed in here.

Organization of Element

The Public Safety Element will address each of the topics below as they relate to Lake Forest. The goals and policies of this element are organized around the following topics:

- *Seismic and Geologic Hazards*
- *Fire Safety*
- *Flooding*
- *Hazardous Waste and Materials*
- *Emergency Operations*
- *Noise*
- *Climate Change and Resiliency Planning*

Contents:

- + Seismic and Geologic Hazards
- + Fire Safety
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GOAL PS-1 NOISE

A comfortable community environment that is free from excessive noise pollution.

PS-6 Policies

- PS-6.1 **Land Use Planning.** Require development and infrastructure projects to be consistent with the maximum allowable noise exposure criteria identified in Table PS-1 to ensure acceptable noise levels for future development.
- PS-6.2 **Noise-Sensitive Land Uses.** Ensure appropriate features are incorporated into the design of noise-sensitive land uses to prevent unacceptable noise exposure.
- PS-6.3 **Site Design.** Require site planning and project design techniques to minimize noise impacts adjacent to sensitive uses in order to comply with City standards.
- PS-6.4 **Noise Control.** Ensure that noise levels do not exceed the limits established in the Municipal Code by incorporating sound-reduction design in new construction and retrofit projects impacted by non-transportation-related noise sources.
- PS-6.5 **Roadway Noise.** Encourage nonmotorized transportation alternatives for local trips and the implementation of noise sensitivity measures in the public realm, including traffic-calming road design, lateral separation, natural buffers, and setbacks to decrease excessive motor vehicle noise.
- PS-6.6 **Highway Noise.** Continue to coordinate with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) to achieve maximum noise abatement in the design of new highway projects or improvements along I-5 and CA-241.
- PS-6.7 **Vehicles and Trucks.** Monitor and enforce speed limits and motor vehicle codes requiring adequate mufflers on all types of vehicles traveling through the City.
- PS-6.8 **Commercial Noise.** Require the use of noise attenuation measures, including screening and buffering techniques, for all new commercial development expected to produce excessive noise; in existing cases where the City's noise standards are exceeded, work with Code Enforcement to require compliance.
- PS-6.9 **Interjurisdictional Coordination.** Coordinate with neighboring cities to prevent and minimize exceedance of noise standards along the City's boundaries.
- PS-6.10 **Airplane Noise.** Maintain communication with John Wayne Airport and other relevant air transportation agencies to minimize the noise-related impacts of air travel on the City.

PS-6 Actions

PS-6a (reserved)

PS-6b To ensure that noise does not adversely affect new sensitive receptors, the City will use land use compatibility noise criteria for various land use types in Table PS-1 when making planning and development decisions. The criteria in Table PS-1 represent the acceptable noise level for new sensitive receptors.

Existing and future noise contours from transportation noise in the City are provided in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The future noise contours in Figure 2 will be used as a guide for land use and development decisions. If the noise level at a project does not exceed the outdoor activity area allowable noise level in Table PS-1, the project is considered compatible with the noise environment.

If the project will exceed the allowable outdoor activity area and interior space noise levels in Table PS-1, the project proponent shall be required to demonstrate (with an acoustical analysis) that the project is designed to attenuate noise to meet the criteria in Table PS-1, and California Building Standards Code, and California Green Building Standards Code (Title 24) interior noise standards. If the project is not designed to meet the noise criteria, noise reduction measures may be recommended in the analysis. If the analysis demonstrates that the noise criteria can be met with implementation of the noise reduction measures, the project may be approved with the noise reduction measures required as conditions of project approval.

PS-6c To ensure that noise from new development does not adversely affect existing sensitive receptors, the City will require acoustical studies for all new discretionary projects, including those related to development and transportation, which have the potential to generate stationary noise impacts which exceed the criteria identified in the Municipal Code. The studies shall include existing ambient noise measurements, estimates of projected noise levels, and noise reduction measures necessary to ensure compliance with this element.

PS-6d In making a determination of traffic noise impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a significant impact will occur if ambient noise levels have a substantial increase and the resultant noise levels are in excess of the City's criteria. Generally, a 3 A-weighted decibel (dBA) increase in noise levels is barely perceptible. Therefore, increases in noise levels shall be considered significant when the following occurs:

- When existing noise levels are between 60 dBA and 65 dBA CNEL, a 3 dBA CNEL increase in noise will be considered substantial;
- When existing noise levels exceed 65 dBA CNEL, a 1.5 dBA CNEL increase in noise will be considered substantial.

PS-6e (reserved)

PS-6f The City should require new residential projects located adjacent to rail lines to follow applicable vibration criteria from the FTA, Caltrans, or other appropriate agency to ensure that residential uses are not exposed to vibrations exceeding annoyance thresholds. This shall be accomplished through a vibration study estimating vibration levels at the habitable buildings of the vibration-sensitive use and providing reduction measures necessary to ensure compliance with appropriate criteria.

Table PS-1: Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environment ^{5, 6}

Land Use ¹	Outdoor Activity Areas ^{2, 3}	Interior Spaces	
		Ldn, dB	Leq, dB ⁴
Residential	60	45	–
Motels/Hotels	65	45	–
Mixed-Use	65	45	–
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	60	45	–
Theaters, Auditoriums	–	–	35
Churches	60	–	40
Office Buildings	65	–	45
Schools, Libraries, Museums	70	–	45
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70	–	-
Industrial	75	–	45
Golf Courses, Water Recreation	70	–	–

1. Where a proposed use is not specifically listed, the use shall comply with the criteria for the most similar use as determined by the City.

2. Outdoor activity areas for residential development are considered to be the private exterior living area of single-family homes and the main common areas where people generally congregate for multi-family and residential components of mixed-use developments. Outdoor activity areas for non-residential developments are the common areas where people generally congregate, including community centers, pool areas, and outside lunch facilities. New multi-family developments and residential components of mixed-use developments with balconies or patios that are exposed to noise that exceeds the outdoor criteria in this table are required to provide occupancy disclosure notices to all future tenants regarding potential noise impacts.

3. In areas where it is not possible for a new project to reduce exterior noise levels to achieve the outdoor activity area criteria using a practical application of the best noise-reduction technology, as determined by a qualified acoustician, an increase of up to 5 CNEL over the outdoor standard will be allowed provided that available exterior noise reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

4. Determined for a typical operating hour during periods of use.

5. In accordance with Policy PS-6b, this table shall be used for land use compatibility noise criteria or when making planning and development decisions. These criteria represent the acceptable noise level for new sensitive receptors. These criteria are not to be retroactively applied for existing uses. These criteria are also not generally intended for use as CEQA significance thresholds for noise generated by new projects to existing receptors; that purpose is achieved by compliance with Municipal Code standards.

6. Abbreviations: dB = decibel; Leq = equivalent noise level; Ldn = Day-Night Average Level; CNEL = community noise equivalent level.

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GOAL PS-2 Goal PS-5 Emergency Operations

A community that is highly prepared and equipped to handle emergency situations, in order to minimize loss of life, injury, property damage, and disruption of vital services.

PS-5 Policies

- PS-5.1 **Critical Facilities.** Coordinate with service providers to ensure the resilience of critical facilities, lifeline services, and infrastructure, and plan for the use of critical facilities during post-disaster response and recovery.
- PS-5.2 **Emergency Preparedness Plans.** Maintain an updated Emergency Operations Plan specific to Lake Forest.¹
- PS-5.3 **Local Coordination.** Coordinate with local key stakeholders (officials, schools, businesses, and organizations) within the community to make them aware of their role in the emergency plan and the necessary requirements in case of emergency.
- PS-5.4 **Automatic and Mutual Aid.** Continue to participate in automatic and mutual aid agreements with adjacent service providers to ensure efficient and adequate resources, facilities, and support services during and after emergencies.
- PS-5.5 **Communications.** Evaluate the potential to utilize a comprehensive emergency communication system that allows for efficient connection in case of emergency.
- PS-5.6 **Emergency Evacuation Routes and Access.** Work with the Orange County Fire Authority and the Orange County Sheriff's Department to maintain, update, and regularly exercise emergency access, protocols, and evacuation routes to assess their effectiveness.
- PS-5.7 **Emergency Shelters.** Periodically coordinate with emergency shelter providers to ensure that necessary equipment supplies are available in case of emergency.
- PS-5.8 **Community Training Programs.** Continue to support community-based emergency training programs as a valuable asset to the community.
- PS-5.9 **Public Awareness.** Prepare residents for emergency situations by making emergency strategies, including evacuation routes, publicly-known and easily accessible.
- PS-5.10 **School Safety.** Coordinate with local schools related to their programs and practices regarding emergency preparedness.

PS-5 Actions

- PS-5a Explore grant funding for the preparation of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for the City of Lake Forest.
- PS-5b Regularly practice implementation of the City's Emergency Operations Plan and update it regularly.
- PS-5c Regularly review County and State emergency response procedures that must be coordinated with City procedures.

¹ [The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan \(LHMP\) for the City of Lake Forest was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 \(DMA 2000\) and followed FEMA's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The LHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The LHMP is a separate document adopted into the Safety Element of the General Plan by Resolution No. 2024-36, in compliance with AB 2140. It is available electronically at https://lakeforestca.gov/en/LHMP.](https://lakeforestca.gov/en/LHMP)