

Issues

- Noise is necessary part of everyday life, but if not managed properly, noise levels can cause annoyance and disturb activities undertaken by people
- Because different zones have different roles, functions and values, conflicts can arise from noise at the boundary between more noise sensitive zones and higher noise producing zones
- Some important infrastructure, such as the State Highway, Railway Corridor and the Port, provides important services and facilities to the community, but by its nature can generate higher noise levels. This can lead to the potential for reverse sensitivity effects to arise when noise sensitive activities are located in proximity to such infrastructure.

Operative District Plan Approach

The Operative Plan generally seeks to minimise situations where there is conflict between higher noise emitting activities and other more noise sensitive land uses. This is achieved through what activities are encouraged or limited in different zones, and through setting noise limits. The limits differ depending on the sensitivity of the zone, but in some cases only apply at the boundary between zones; not at boundaries within zones. Specific rules also control noise associated with construction noise; blasting; temporary military training activities; bird scaring devices; and noise from aircraft engine testing and aircraft operations at the Timaru Airport.

A noise contour is also provided for the Timaru Airport and the Timaru Raceway, with related provisions seeking to avoid noise sensitive land use activities and further subdivision within the contours, in order to protect the functioning of these particular activities.

Draft Plan Approach

The approach taken seeks to build on the Operative Plan approach by continuing to minimise conflict between higher noise emitting activities and other more noise sensitive land uses, through controls on what activities are encouraged or limited in different zones, and through setting noise limits. The specific noise limits applied to each zone are largely unchanged, but in all zones will apply at boundaries between sites, not only at the zone boundary. It is also proposed to slightly reduce the existing noise limit for the evening period (7pm to 10pm). Rules for specific activities will be retained, but updated or rationalised where appropriate. It is also proposed to update all rules and noise limits to reflect technical best practise.

Provisions intended to manage potential for reverse sensitivity to arise are strengthened and extended to apply to additional infrastructure. In particular, it is proposed to require acoustic insulation and ventilation for noise sensitive activities within a specified distance of established noise generating activities (the State Highway and Rail Corridor) or higher noise generating zones (commercial and industrial zones).

Changes

Key changes include:

All activities must achieve the specified noise limits at the boundary of adjoining sites. The limits are determined by the zoning of the adjoining site

There are specific noise limits for some specified activities – temporary events; Temporary Military Training Activities; construction noise; bird scaring noise; aircraft engine testing and aircraft operations at the Timaru Airport; and helicopter landing sites

Noise sensitive activities within: 40m of a State Highway or the Railway Corridor; a commercial zone; and a residential zone that is 20m or less from the boundary of an industrial zone, are required to meet specified acoustic insulation requirements, while still providing appropriate ventilation.

Reasons for the Provisions

In general, minor updates from the approach taken in the Operative Plan are intended to provide a clearer and easy to administer set of provisions to manage noise within the Timaru District. These have been informed by technical advice and are considered to follow best practise.

The inclusion of acoustic insulation requirements in proximity to established noise generating activities or higher noise generating zones is consistent with provisions included in other district plans and reflects the best practise approach to managing potential reverse sensitivity.

What it Means in Practice

Where a new land use activity is being established, or an existing activity changes, it will need to meet the noise limits at the boundary of adjoining sites, or obtain approval through a resource consent process. Activities with specific noise standards (such as bird scarring devices) will need to meet those standards.

Where a new noise sensitive activity is proposed within 40m of a State Highway of the Rail Corridor, or within a commercial zone, it will need to be designed, constructed and maintained to achieve the specified noise reduction level. In practise, this means that it will cost more to construct a complying building. This is estimated to represent about 10-15% of the build cost.