

## **Noise Updates within the 2016 MAP Guide**

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### **Noise**

- Airports within 15 miles of the project should be evaluated for noise concerns.
- Major roads within 1,000 feet of the project:
  - May need to consider roads that have an annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume of less than 10,000
  - Need to classify vehicles from the AADT into cars, medium trucks, and heavy trucks
- Active aboveground railroads within 3,000 feet.

### **Levels of Acceptability**

- Pursuant to 24 CFR 51.101, noise acceptability categories are classified as follows:
  - Acceptable < 65 DNL (decibel noise level)
  - Normally Unacceptable 65-75 DNL
  - Unacceptable > 75 DNL
    - Acceptable threshold may be shifted to 70 dB in special circumstances pursuant to § 51.105(a) – project must receive Special Environmental Clearance and concurrence of the Environmental Clearance Officer and satisfy other requirements (basically there can be no better options and the project must be consistent with HUD goals)

### **Normally Unacceptable...**

- For new construction, noise levels in the normally unacceptable zone are typically easily able to be mitigated on the interior by the selective choice of building materials
  - This is typically achieved by performing Sound Transmission Characteristic (STC) calculations on the proposed wall/window/door ensemble. HUD's on-line Sound Transmission Classification Assessment Tool (STraCAT) can be accessed at <https://www.hudexchange.info/stracat/>. However, Figure 19 sheets from the HUD Noise Guidebook should be utilized in conjunction with the on-line calculations as the options available to select are typically not what would be utilized in construction today. If the on-line tool is not

utilized, the Figure 17 graph from the HUD Noise Guidebook would be required to accompany the Figure 19 sheets.

- For exterior noise sensitive uses (i.e. pool, playground, basketball courts, walking paths, dog parks, etc.), the noise levels need to be reduced to below 65 dB. This can be achieved by strategic placement of these areas behind proposed structures or mitigating the areas utilizing berms or sound walls.
- There is no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required for projects in the Normally Unacceptable zone with the exception of those in largely undeveloped areas (24 CFR 51.104(b)(1)(i)). The EIS required by 24 CFR 51.104(b)(2) only applies to new construction in the Unacceptable zone.

### **What about my balcony? Is it a noise-sensitive use?**

- In regards to balconies, previous implementation has placed no prohibition on balconies in the Normally Unacceptable noise zone. **However, this policy is presently being enforced differently in different regions and is currently being reviewed by HQ.**
- Project proponents should carefully consider the “need” for balconies in high-noise areas. Applying HUD assistance to construct amenities that cannot be used to their fullest due to known environmental constraints should be avoided to the greatest extent possible. It is typically recommended to forego full-depth balconies or include mitigation that reduces the exposure in these high-noise areas. However, OEE’s Director and the HUD Regional officers may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- Juliet-style balconies are not considered a noise-sensitive use and the noise regulations would not apply to those areas.
  - A Juliet balcony is an outdoor space with a maximum, net depth of 24”. This includes the ground-level equivalents (i.e. patios).
  - The Juliet-style balcony would also not be allowed to access the bedroom or be used at a 0-Bedroom dwelling in order to qualify as a non-noise-sensitive use.

### **Unacceptable...**

- New construction or conversions of existing structures to residential housing in the Unacceptable Noise Zone, where outdoor noise levels are above 75 dB, are prohibited. If the Regional Office wants to consider such a proposal, it must:
  - Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If the Regional Office believes that the proposal is acceptable based on the EIS, it must then obtain project approval, including approval of noise mitigation measures, from the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development; or

- o If the Regional Office determines that noise is the only environmental issue and no outdoor noise sensitive activity that is not mitigated to below HUD's 65 dB standard will take place on the site, it may request a waiver of the EIS Requirement by the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development.