



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATE

January 8, 2025

PRESENTED TO: Prince William County/Data
Center Ordinance Advisory Group



Photos borrowed from: <https://historicprincewilliam.org/county-history/aerial-photo-survey/>

Prince William County

NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATE

YOUR **JMT** Team

AGENDA

Recommended Updates Recap

Next Steps

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PWC NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES, RECAP

Primary changes:

- Divided the Noise Ordinance to reflect the different types of noise in residential areas.
 1. Nuisance Noise
 2. Industrial and Commercial Noise
 - Class 1 Misdemeanor
- Moved Definitions to 14-2 from 14-3
- Added definitions to provide clarification for updated information.
- Renamed 14.3 to **Excessive Sound in Residential Areas**
- Section 14.4 became **Industrial, Construction and Commercial Noise**



PWC NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES, RECAP

SOUND TABLES



This Photo by Unkr

Table 14-4.2
Maximum Permissible Median
Sound Pressure Levels (L50) for
Residential Zoning Districts

OCTAVE BAND (Hz)	DAYTIME	NIGHTTIME
31.5	65	60
63	60	55
125	55	50
250	50	45
500	45	40
1,000	41	36
2,000	38	33
4,000	36	31
8,000	35	30

Table 14-4.1

Maximum Permissible Equivalent Continuous Sound Pressure Levels (LEQ)

Zoning District Classification	Maximum dBA Daytime	Maximum dBA Nighttime	Maximum dBC Daytime	Maximum dBC Nighttime
Residential	52	47	65	60
Mixed Use District	62	57	70	65
Commercial	65	60	75	75
Industrial	79	72	80	80



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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional Legislative action required:

- Per JLARC's RECOMMENDATION 7: The Code of Virginia should be amended to clarify that local governments have the authority to require sound modeling studies by data center developers and to review and consider the results in their land use decisions.
 1. Require sound modeling for data centers proposed close to residential areas.
 2. Review study results to determine if any further action, such as sound barrier construction, should be required before approving a development project.
- Per JLARC's RECOMMENDATION 8: The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to expressly authorize local governments to establish and enforce maximum allowable sound levels for data center facilities, including (i) using alternative low frequency noise metrics and (ii) setting noise rules and enforcement mechanisms in their zoning ordinances, separate from existing noise ordinances.
 1. The County requires legislative approval and guidance to address data center modeling and noise after they become operational.
 2. Legislative approval to permit County and local governments to use phased enforcement for Noise Ordinance violations.
 3. Update state code to allow County and local governments to enforce noise limits within their zoning ordinances.

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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT.

Things to consider for addressing through County Board of Supervisors:

1. Improvements to land use decisions and zoning ordinances that can address incoming data centers and other industrial uses for best practices.
2. Consider proximity to existing residential developments, and potential/proposed residential developments when siting data centers.
3. Rely on and trust County staff to provide accurate information based on the existing Comprehensive Plan and applicable zoning when considering a rezoning or special use permit.
4. Classify data centers as an industrial use in zoning ordinance.
5. Review locations of zones currently allowing data centers by right, and adjust the zoning map if needed, while considering proximity to existing and proposed residential areas.



NEXT STEPS AND QUESTIONS



Next Steps:

1. Tour of County – January 16, 2025
2. Public Engagement Meeting

