



Ordinance 32-25 Noise Ordinance DRAFT Memo

To: President Lampke and members of Bexley City Council
From: Mayor Ben Kessler and Council Member Alex Silverman
Date: November 14, 2025

Overview

Ordinance 32-25 proposes a comprehensive modernization of Bexley's noise regulations under Section 648.11, Disturbing the Peace. Bexley's current noise ordinance dates back many decades and includes language referencing technologies, practices, and commercial activities that are no longer common. The structure is outdated and enforcement is often difficult. This ordinance provides a cleaner, more enforceable framework that aligns with community expectations for quiet residential neighborhoods while maintaining reasonable flexibility for residents, contractors, and community events.

Key Improvements and Features

1. Modernized Structure and Clearer Categories

The ordinance reorganizes noise sources into three practical categories:

- Vehicle and Mechanical Noise
- Human-Generated Noise
- Commercial or Device-Generated Noise

This structure improves clarity for residents and provides officers with a logical, enforceable framework.

2. Objective Decibel Standards

To better address modern entertainment systems and outdoor living spaces, the ordinance introduces measurable dBA thresholds:

- 70 dBA* maximum for general noise at the property line.
- 60 dBA nighttime threshold at the property line and 40 dBA within adjacent dwellings as *prima facie* evidence of nuisance.
- 45 dBA nighttime limit for homeowner construction or repair.

This provides clear, enforceable metrics that supplement the traditional "plainly audible" standard. Illustration A, included at the end of this document, provides a sample of typical dBA levels for a variety of common activities and environments.

3. Strengthened Nighttime Protections

The ordinance prioritizes community quiet hours, especially to support healthy sleep for adolescents and families:

- Weekday Quiet Hours: 9:00 pm – 7:00 am
- Weekend Quiet Hours: 10:00 pm – 9:00 am

These hours apply to amplified sound, yelling, and other disruptive activity.

4. Updated Construction and Landscape Maintenance Rules

The ordinance balances quality-of-life concerns with practical work allowances:

- Contractor work hours: 7:00 am – 6:00 pm on weekdays.
- Homeowners: allowed work until the later of 8:00 pm or sunset.
- Low Impact Contractors (all-electric equipment) have expanded hours:
 - 7:00 am–7:00 pm on weekdays
 - 9:00 am–5:00 pm on weekends

This structure supports quieter, more sustainable technologies.

5. Leaf Blower Noise Limits

The ordinance caps leaf blower noise at 70 dBA at the property line and requires gas-powered blowers to comply with ANSI B175.2. This represents a meaningful step toward reducing peak-noise landscape equipment.

6. Noise Permitting for Residential Events

Residents may apply for:

- One permit annually to extend weekend hours to midnight; and
- Up to four additional permits with adjacent neighbor consent.

These permits preserve neighbors' quiet hours while allowing flexibility for special occasions.

7. Emergency Utility Work Exemption

Essential emergency repairs—such as electric, water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, and roadway failures—are exempt from hour restrictions. Utilities must provide the City notice when feasible, and workers must minimize noise to the extent practical.

8. Chronic Violations

Properties with three or more substantiated violations within a rolling 12-month period may be deemed a public nuisance, providing a tool for addressing persistent problem locations.

9. Discretionary Enforcement Authority

The ordinance confirms that plainly audible, unreasonable noise may be cited regardless of decibel readings, preserving a common-sense enforcement mechanism that residents and officers rely on today.

Community Benefits

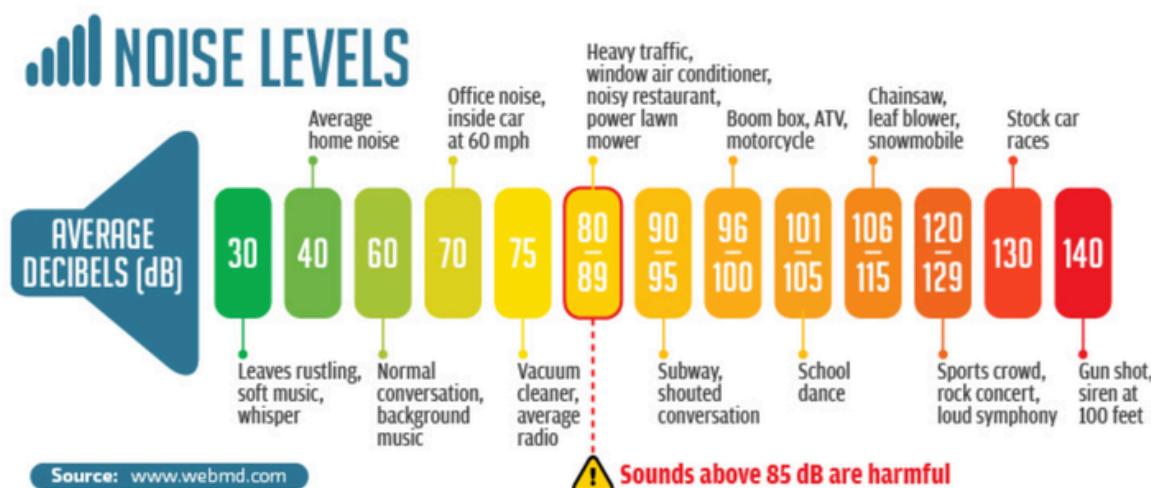
- Improves neighborhood peace and livability, especially during nighttime hours.
- Protects public health, including adolescent sleep and learning.
- Encourages sustainable, quieter equipment through expanded low-impact contractor hours.
- Provides predictable enforcement tools with objective measurements.
- Allows reasonable flexibility for resident gatherings through a clear permit process.
- Addresses chronic issues through a nuisance-violation framework.

Recommendation

The administration recommends Council's consideration of Ordinance 32-25. The ordinance reflects a balanced approach - preserving the tranquility of Bexley's residential areas while accommodating reasonable maintenance activity, construction, and community events. It provides modern enforcement tools, protects the wellbeing of residents, and better reflects current neighborhood expectations.

We welcome Council's input as the ordinance moves through the legislative process.

Illustration A



* Why is 70dBA used as a maximum at the property line?

70 dB limit is a [level the EPA identifies](#) as a point that can cause hearing loss over time and is the maximum recommended exposure for a normal day to prevent it. Most local noise ordinances use lower decibel limits, often varying by time of day and zoning, to define excessive noise.