

City action on issues related to noise in Downtown Round Rock

As of Jan. 11, 2019

- In June 2010, the Downtown Master Plan was approved by City Council, establishing the vision for downtown.
- In July 2013, the downtown mixed use zoning district identified as MU-1 was approved by City Council. The previous zoning in that area was mostly commercial. Currently, noise ordinance standards are the same for MU-1 zoning and commercial.
- In 2016, City downtown staff and police officers visited with downtown businesses, and provided a copy of noise ordinance, after the City began receiving complaints from nearby residents about noise.
- In April 2017, City Council approved a cap on the number of stand-alone bars that can be located in MU-1 district.
- Beginning in 2018, City began focusing on enforcement of the current noise ordinance due to an increased number of complaints, and also began collecting data on noise downtown. Police found there were very few violations of the current ordinance. Here are specific numbers:
 - From Jan. 1 to Dec. 13: Police acted on 65 noise complaints in downtown, 25 of which were officer-initiated; La Esquina Cantina and Long Branch Saloon had the most complaints — 27 and 22, respectively.
- In spring 2018, City staff met with downtown residents and collected noise readings at various downtown properties to better understand the level and nature of noise in the area.
- Noise complaints from nearby residents have continued, and data gathered shows the existing ordinance is not effectively addressing the problem in the MU-1 district.
- In fall and winter 2018, the Police Department reviewed other noise ordinances and found there is no single, accepted standard for decibel (dB) levels; many cities have different standards for different types of zoning districts, and most newer ordinances measure dB levels at the property line.
- Beginning in October, police officers have been monitoring sound twice an hour between 8 p.m. and midnight in downtown.
- In November 2018, Round Rock voters approved standardizing mixed-drink laws throughout City limits.
- City Council voted Dec. 20 to extend alcohol serving hours to 2 a.m. throughout City limits, and directed staff to review options to amend the noise ordinance to address this specific problem in downtown. The goal was set to have a proposal to review in January.
- City staff (police, planning, legal, communications) met in late December to discuss findings of police review of other ordinances and review data collection results.
- Staff is moving forward based on the notion that MU-1 district is unique with a mix of residential and commercial properties, and thus a solution should balance the needs of both groups.
- Staff presented an overview at Dec. 18 City Council packet briefing that would significantly limit sound starting at 10 p.m. on weekdays, at midnight on weekends, and reduce noise during the day as well in the MU-1 district.
- On Dec. 19, City set up an email address, noise@roundrocktexas.gov, to accept public input on the proposal.

- On Jan. 8, the City Manager sent an email outlining the proposal to downtown area residents who have spoken at Council meetings about the issue; Communications staff sent email to downtown businesses outlining the proposal; and a letter was mailed from the City Manager to bars and restaurants in downtown outlining the proposal, including certified letters to owners of La Esquina Cantina and Long Branch Saloon, Rockey's Piano Bar and Coco's Lounge.
- Based on a Jan. 6 citizen email to noise@roundrocktexas.gov alerting staff that outside speakers directed to the public right of way are prohibited in MU-1 district, Code Enforcement officers notified eight businesses of the violation. As of Friday, Jan. 11, speakers have been removed at all eight businesses.

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