City of Stevenson
Leana Kinley, City Administrator

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To: City Council
From: Leana Kinley, City Administrator
RE: Noise Ordinance
Meeting Date: August 12, 2021

Executive Summary:

The city has received a recent complaint regarding the inability to enforce our noise ordinance. The current city ordinance for noise control is difficult to enforce in part because it relies on using tools to measure the level of noise as it is taking place. The expectation is to present a revision to the code which is reasonable and enforceable for public input at the September 16th council meeting.

Overview:

The current city code and referenced WACs are attached. The RCWs listed under section 8.08.010 have been moved and recodified and section 8.08.030 prohibiting train horns at the Russell Street Crossing predates the quiet zone and is no longer relative. The enforcement requires a person to take the measurement "only upon receipt of a complaint by a person who resides, owns property, or is employed in the area affected by the noise complained of…" This is challenging when a person complains of a barking dog which stops barking by the time an officer arrives as a recording of the noise would not be permissible for enforcement.

Skamania County recently updated their code which is based on an objective standard, such as 20 minutes continuous and/or incessant barking, rather than decibel levels. Adopting a similar code would aid in enforcement as the Skamania County Sheriff's Office enforces city code.

Other attached examples of city noise ordinances are the City of Lakewood, Chelan and Omak.

In the past the city has also received complaints about engine braking and this can be included in a draft revision for further discussion.

Action Needed:

Direction to staff on how to move forward:
- Closely mirror Skamania County's code
- Address engine braking
- Incorporate elements from other examples presented
- Leave as-is, correcting only recodified sections of 8.08.010
- Remove Russell Crossing reference