

3-1-2022

Greetings city leaders,

Sarasota is not the only city experiencing noise pollution problems. The [Stetson Law Review](#) observed "as Florida cities expand to meet increasing population demands, municipalities must meet the challenge of effectively abating harmful noise pollution in a way that balances the often conflicting interests of residents, business owners, and developers. and the noisemaker's right to free expression and the unwilling listener's right to peace and tranquility."

Mixed use urban planning sounds great in theory, but is often less harmonious in practice, because living, working and playing in the same location is inherently problematic when one person's nightclub is only a few dozen feet from another's bedroom.

Over the last three years, the same sort of live-work-play tensions and outcry from residents have prompted Bradenton, St. Pete, Tampa, Orlando, and Tallahassee to review and revise their sound ordinances.

During that last 36 months, the Sarasota Police Department has fielded **3,800** separate **911 noise reports**. I have done some rough analysis of the complaints and distilled the listing into the attached table of Sarasota's "**Top 75 noise problem spots**". I picked 75, because those locations had at least 7 separate reports, and because that is roughly the [decibel level when sound turns to harmful noise](#).

A perusal of this list confirms what most know either anecdotally (or aurally if they happen to live near these areas): that the conflicts and issues stem largely from the co-location of bars and entertainment areas with residential uses and the co-mingling of vacation rentals with single family homes.

Compounding this issue for Sarasota is the fact that our existing sound ordinance contains conflicting measures of what constitutes noise, some of which require specialized training and equipment to calculate and enforce which SPD does not possess.

Some cities in Florida, like St. Petersburg, solely use "**plain audibility**" (whether an unaided human ear can detect the sound at a X distance *from* its source) to regulate noise, whereas others, like Bradenton, use audibility as the *primary* measure, with decibel as an *optional* backup for repeat offender enforcement and for setting limits for permits.

Please hear the outcry of citizens whose lives are being adversely impacted by Sarasota's growing noise problem and move toward using the simpler intuitive measure of **plain audibility at 50 feet** that is already in our code to begin **enforcing the unreasonable sound prohibitions** of our ordinance.

Thank you for listening,

Sarasota Citizen