



**DATE:** March 28, 2021

**TO:** Lee Momon – Seattle Public Utilities

**FROM:** Justin Morgan, INCE– The Greenbusch Group, Inc.

**RE:** North Transfer Station – 2021 Q1 Noise Monitoring Report

Transmitted by:  Mail  Delivery  Fax  E-mail

---

## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this memorandum is to present the results of staffed sound level measurements conducted on March 10, 2021 and March 20, 2021 to document daytime and nighttime sound levels from operations at the North Transfer Station for determining compliance with applicable regulatory criteria.

## NOMENCLATURE

The auditory response to sound is a complex process that occurs over a wide range of frequencies and intensities. Decibel levels, or “dB,” are a form of shorthand that compresses this broad range of intensities with a convenient numerical scale. The decibel scale is logarithmic. For example, using the decibel scale, a doubling or halving of energy causes the sound level to change by 3 dB; it does not double or halve the sound loudness as might be expected.

The minimum sound level variation perceptible to a human observer is generally around 3 dB. A 5-dB change is clearly perceptible, and an 8 to 10 dB change is associated with a perceived doubling or halving of loudness. The human ear has a unique response to sound pressure. It is less sensitive to those sounds falling outside the speech frequency range. Sound level meters and monitors utilize a filtering system to approximate human perception of sound. Measurements made utilizing this filtering system are referred to as “A weighted” and are called “dBA”.

Common sound pressure levels are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** A-weighted Levels of Common Sounds

Sound	Sound Level (dBA)	Approximate Relative Loudness <sup>1</sup>
Jet Plane at 100 feet	130	128
Rock Music with Amplifier	120	64
Thunder, Danger of Permanent Hearing Loss	110	32
Power Mower	100	16
Food Blender at 3 feet	90	8
Busy Street	80	4
Interior of Department Store	70	2
Ordinary Conversation at 3 feet	60	1
Quiet Car at Low Speed	50	1/2
Average Office	40	1/4
City Residence, Interior	30	1/8
Quiet Country Residence, Interior	20	1/16
Rustle of Leaves	10	1/32
Threshold of Hearing	0	1/64

1. As compared to ordinary conversation at 3 feet.

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Aircraft Noise Impact Planning Guidelines for Local Agencies*, November 1972., California Department of Transportation

## Metrics

- **Equivalent Sound Level,  $L_{eq}$**

$L_{eq}$  is the A-weighted level of a constant sound having the same energy content as the actual time-varying level during a specified interval. The  $L_{eq}$  is used to characterize complex, fluctuating sound levels with a single number. Typical intervals for  $L_{eq}$  are hourly, daily, and annually.

- **Maximum Sound Level,  $L_{max}$**

$L_{max}$  is the maximum recorded root mean square (rms) A-weighted sound level for a given time interval or event.  $L_{max}$  “fast” is defined as a 125-millisecond time-weighted maximum, while  $L_{max}$  “slow” corresponds to a 1-second time-weighted maximum. All values in this report are “fast” time-weighted, which corresponds closest to the typical response time of the human ear and are used in local regulatory criteria.

- **Sound Pressure Level, SPL**

Sound pressure level correlates with what is heard by the human ear. SPL is defined as the squared ratio of the sound pressure with reference to 20  $\mu$ Pa. Sound pressure is affected by distance, path, barriers, directivity, etc.

**REGULATORY CRITERIA**

The Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.08 specifies permissible sound levels within the City of Seattle. SMC 25.08.410 defines allowable exterior sound level limits based on land use zoning, as listed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Exterior Sound Level Limits,  $L_{eq}^1$  ( $L_{max}^2$ )

District of Sound Source	District of Receiving Property		
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
Residential	55 (70)	57 (72)	60 (75)
Commercial	57 (72)	60 (75)	65 (80)
Industrial	60 (75)	65 (80)	70 (85)

1. Measurement time is 1-minute minimum for a constant sound source, 1-hour for a non-continuous sound source.

2. During measurement intervals,  $L_{max}$  may exceed  $L_{eq}$  limits by no more than 15 dBA.

Source: SMC 25.08.410 Exterior Sound Level Limits

Modifications to the exterior sound level limits set forth in Table 2 above are outlined in SMC 25.08.420. These modifications are for certain times of the day, classification of receiving properties, and the type of sound generated. These modifications to the exterior sound level limits include the following reductions:

- 10 dBA during the nighttime hours between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM during weekdays and 10:00 PM and 9:00 AM on weekends and legal holidays when the receiving property is within a Residential district.
- 5 dBA for sources that carry a pure tone component.
- 5 dBA for impulsive sources not measured with an impulse sound level meter.

These modifications are cumulative and independent of one another. Therefore, the permissible nighttime exterior sound level in a Residential district for an impulsive, tonal source would be 20 dB less than the exterior sound levels described in Table 2 above.

The area surrounding the Transfer Station is a mix of Residential (SF 5000) to the North and East, Commercial (C2) to the North, East and Southwest, and Industrial Commercial (IC-45) to the West and South. The Site is zoned Industrial Buffer, Industrial Commercial as well as Commercial, however the community agreement requires that for the evaluation of compliance with Noise Code, the entire site is considered a Commercial zone. The permissible daytime sound level limits for the Transfer Station at receiving property lines are summarized in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Transfer Station Sound Level Limits,  $L_{eq}$  ( $L_{max}$ )

Time Period	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
Daytime	57 (72)	60 (75)	65 (80)
Nighttime	47 (62)	60 (75)	65 (80)

## SOUND LEVEL MEASUREMENTS

Staffed sound level monitoring took place between 8:00 AM and 5:30 PM on Wednesday March 10, 2021 and from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM on Saturday March 20, 2021. The measurements on March 10<sup>th</sup> were made for the duration of the station's operating hours and coincided with the facility's peak operating times based on information provided by Seattle Public Utilities. The measurements on March 20<sup>th</sup> were conducted to assess compliance with nighttime SMC sound level limits while the station operates between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM on weekends, when nighttime sound level limits apply.

During both measurement periods, sound levels were monitored concurrently near two residential properties north and east of the station. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the temperature ranged between 43- and 58-degrees Fahrenheit and on March 20<sup>th</sup> the temperature was 44-degrees Fahrenheit. The wind speed on March 10<sup>th</sup> averaged two miles per hour from the West and four miles per hour on March 20<sup>th</sup>. There was no precipitation during either monitoring period.

Monitoring staff were stationed near the sound level meters to document specific on-site noise events. Measurements were conducted in general accordance with the most recent version of ASTM E1503.

### Measurement Equipment

Sound level measurements were conducted using ANSI Type 1 instrumentation calibrated by a certified laboratory within one year of the measurement date. Equipment used during the measurements are identified in the Table below.

**Table 4.** Measurement Equipment

Make and Model	Description	Serial
Svantek 971	Sound level analyzer	72542
Arco Pacific 7052E	Microphone	68284
Svantek SV18	Preamplifier	72239
LD CAL200	Acoustic Calibrator	16827
Svantek 307	Sound level analyzer	78646
Svantek ST30	Microphone	78327
LD CAL200	Acoustic Calibrator	16827

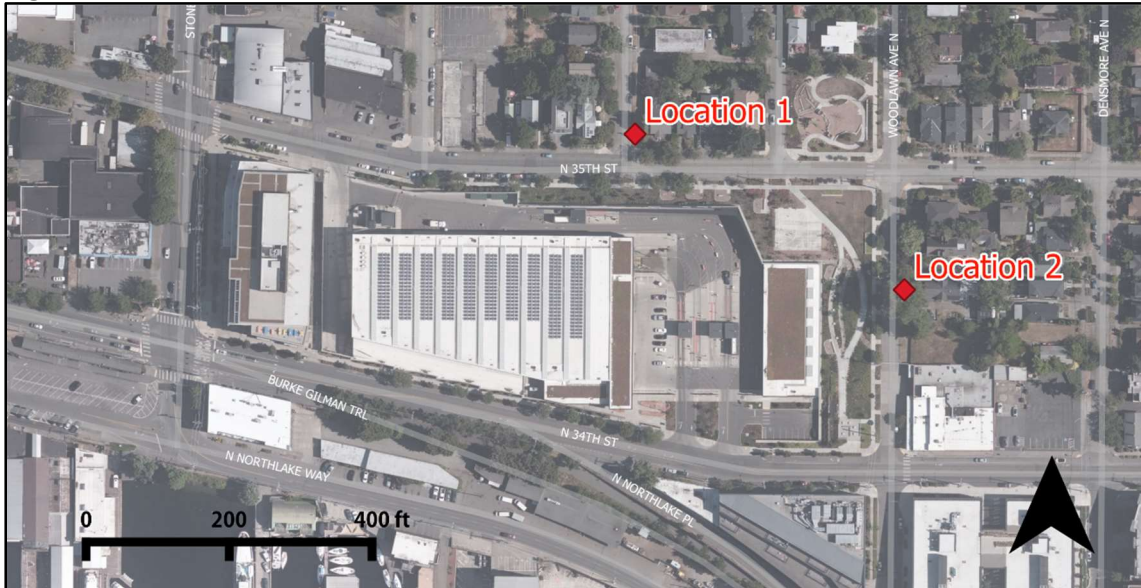
Field calibrations of monitoring equipment were performed before the measurements and verified after the measurements were completed. Audio recordings were made at both monitoring locations to allow for sound source identification after the measurements were completed. One-second and hourly average ( $L_{eq}$ ) and maximum ( $L_{max}$ ) sound levels were collected during the monitoring.

### Measurement Locations

Sound levels were measured at two residential properties near the station. Microphones were positioned as close to residential property lines as feasible at approximately 10 feet above grade. Measurement locations and nearest addresses are provided below.

- Location 1: 3512 Ashworth Avenue North (approximate)
- Location 2: 3420 Woodlawn Avenue North

**Figure 1. Measurement Locations**



Photos of the sound monitoring equipment at the two monitoring locations are provided in Photos 1 and 2 below.

**Photo 1. Equipment at Location 1**



**Photo 2. Equipment at Location 2**





**RESULTS**

Measurement data was reviewed to identify noise events associated with SMC exceedances. Due to the high number of off-site sound sources at the monitoring locations, average sound levels (hourly  $L_{eq}$ ) from the Transfer Station were not able to be determined, therefore the analysis was restricted to maximum sound levels (hourly  $L_{max}$ ) only. Off-site sound sources included vehicle traffic, car horns and doors, aircraft, pedestrians, wildlife, and construction. Figures illustrating the measured  $L_{max}$  sound levels and identifying all events above the SMC  $L_{max}$  sound level limit are provided in the Appendix.

**Seattle Municipal Code Exceedances**

During the measurements, a combined total of 1,956 seconds of data were above SMC limits. These events all resulted from off-site sound sources including vehicle traffic, car horns and doors, aircraft, pedestrians, wildlife, and construction activities as summarized in Table 5 and the Appendix.

**Table 5.** Number of Seconds Sound Sources Exceeded SMC  $L_{max}$  Limits

Event	March 10, 2021		March 20, 2021		Total Events
	Location 1	Location 2	Location 1	Location 2	
Vehicle	100	45	247	72	464
Car Horn	8	2	0	1	11
Plane	69	50	114	119	352
Pedestrian	5	0	1	4	10
Car Door	5	2	2	0	9
Construction	975	67	0	0	1,042
Animal and Birds	0	12	35	21	68

It was noted during the measurements on March 10<sup>th</sup> that the station’s generator was being tested at 11:30 AM. Sound levels exceeding SMC limits during this time were the result of off-site sound source and not the generator. A photo of the generator is shown in Photo 3.

**Photo 3.** Generator



**Photo 4.** Construction Activities



March 28, 2021

Page 7

North Transfer Station –First Quarter 2021 Noise Monitoring Report

## **CONCLUSION**

All operations at the North Transfer Station complied with daytime and nighttime Seattle Municipal Code  $L_{max}$  sound level limits during the measurement periods.

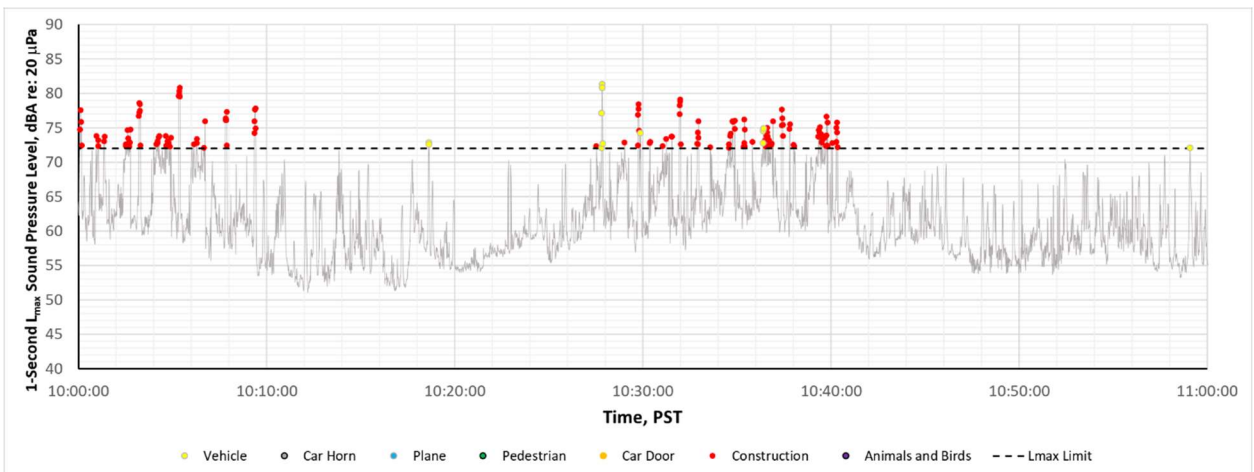
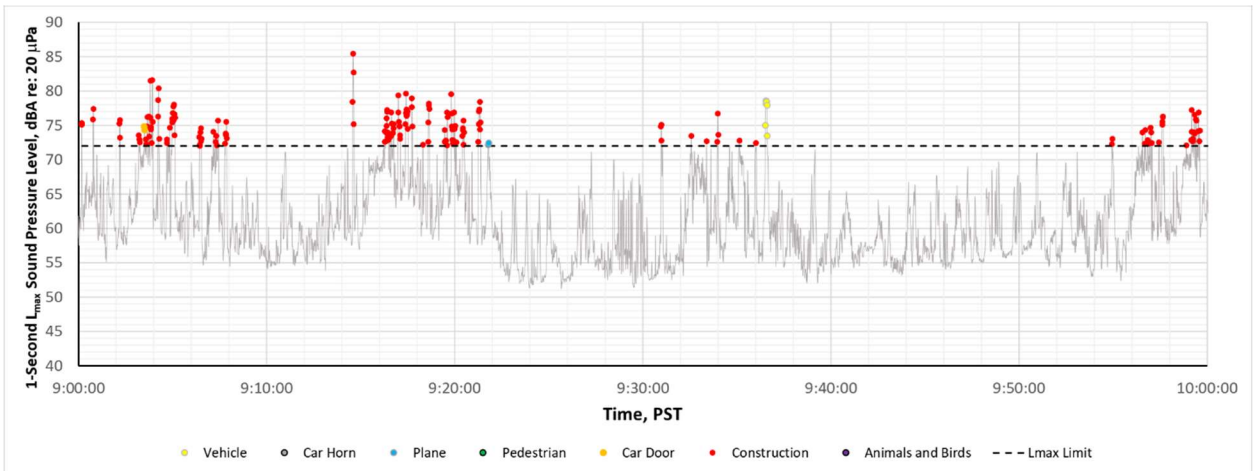
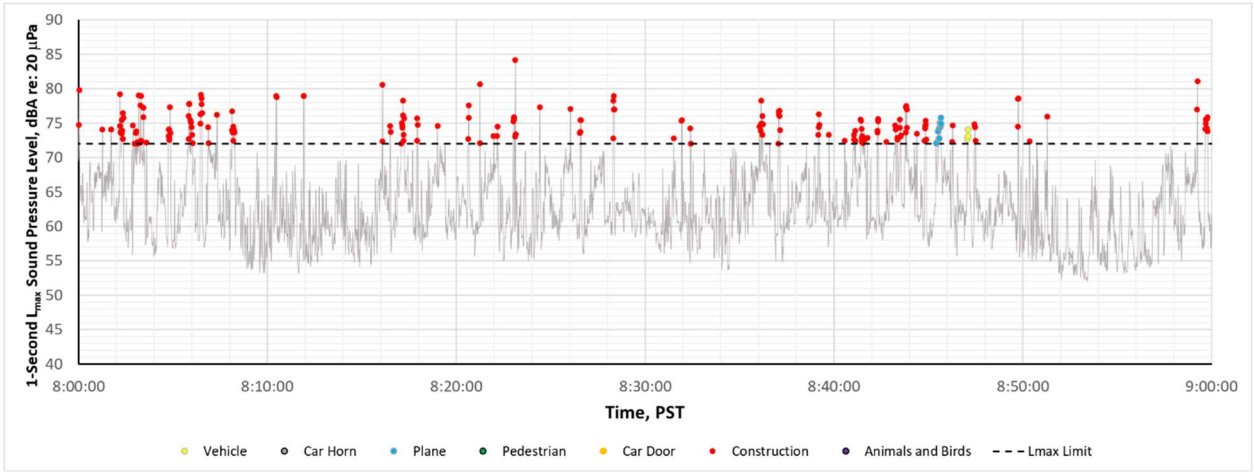
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Morgan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

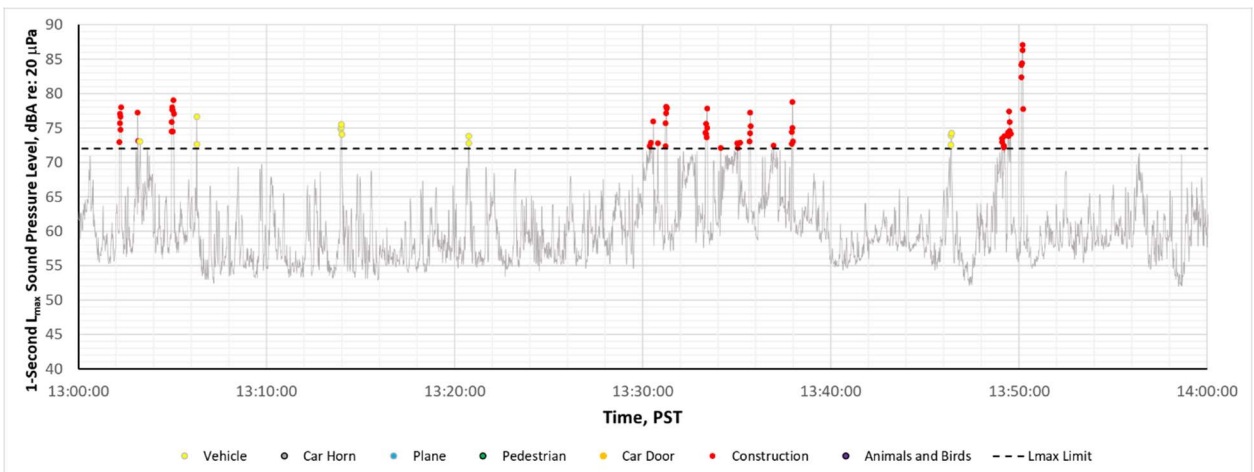
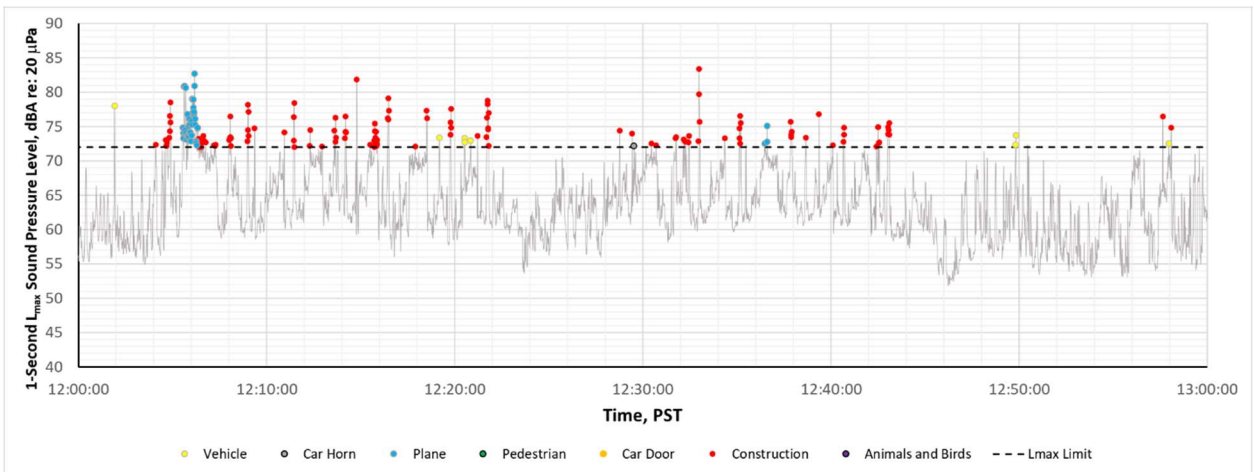
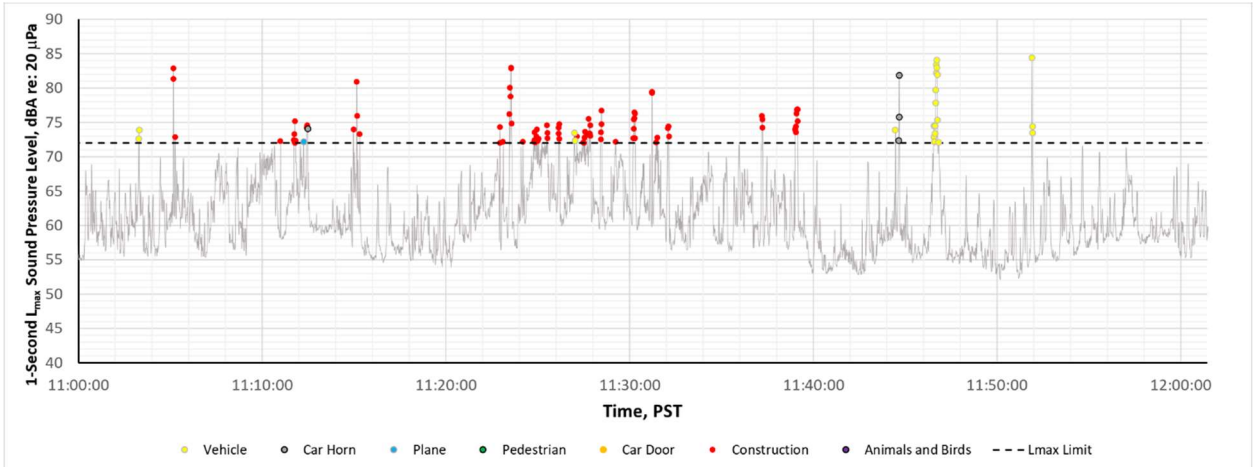
Justin Morgan, INCE  
Lead Acoustician

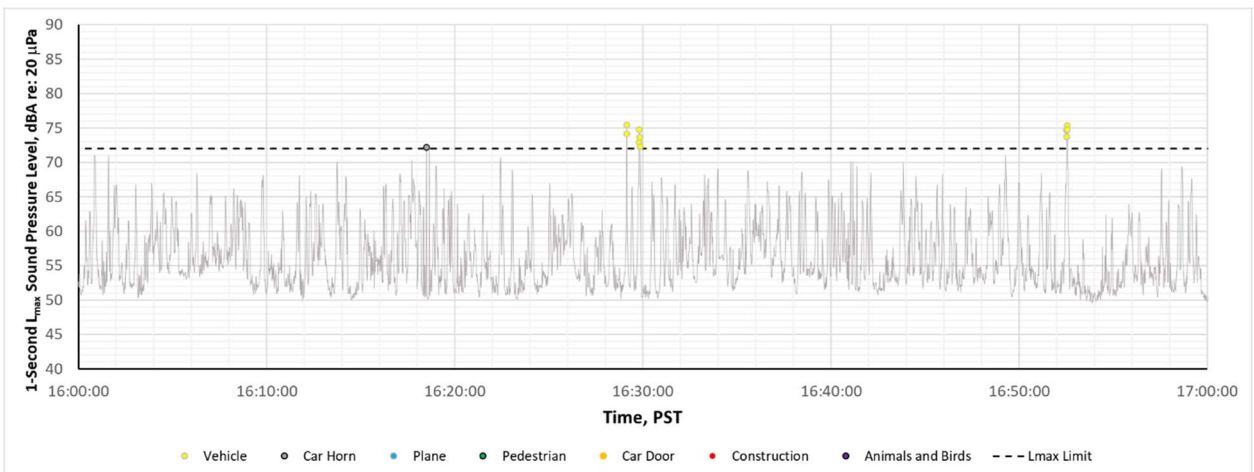
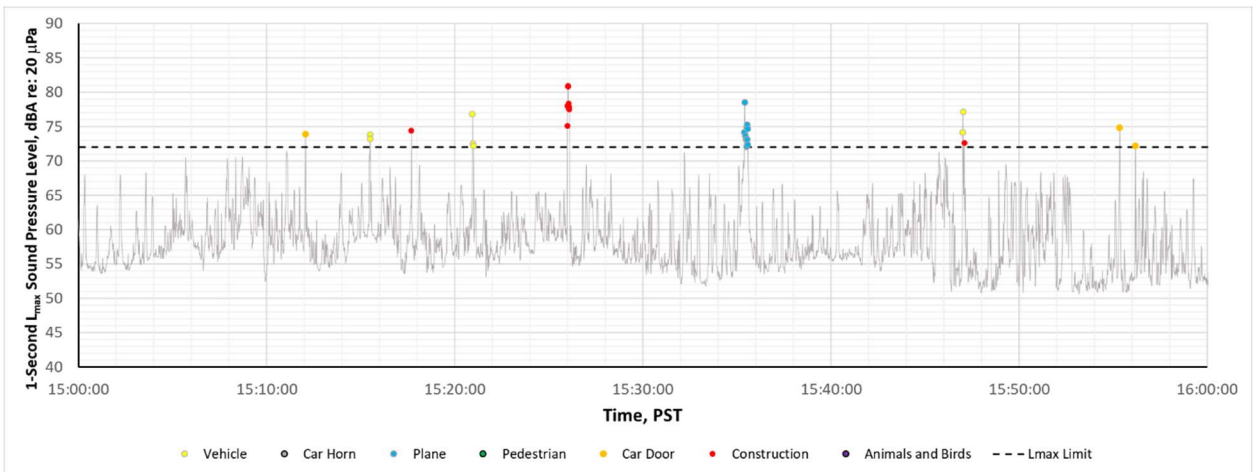
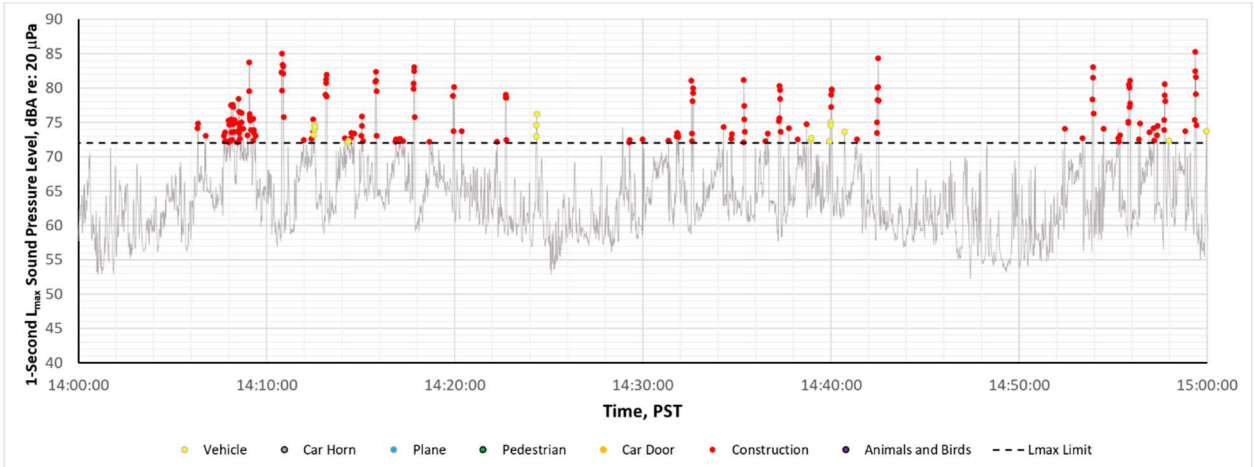
**APPENDIX**

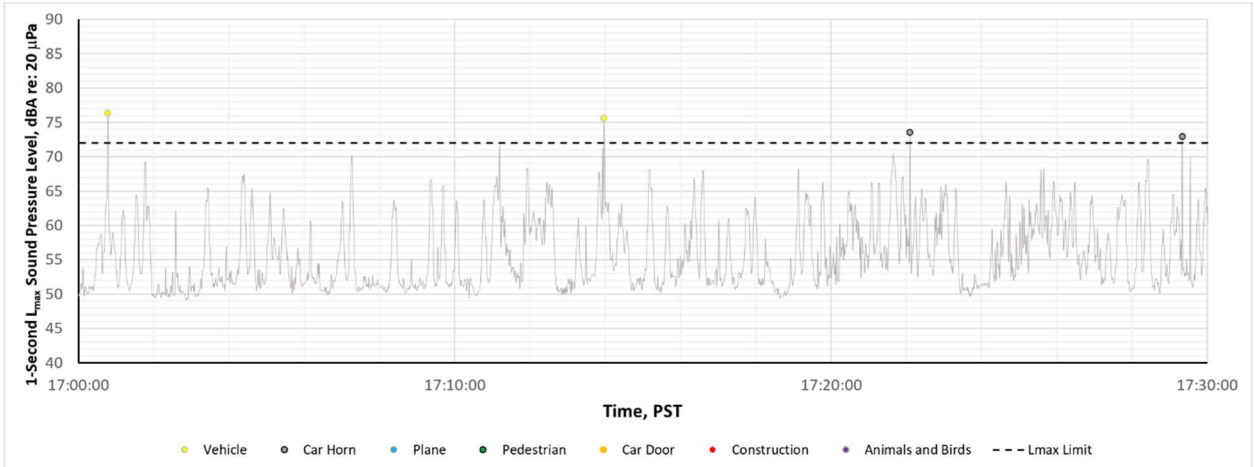
**Location 1 – March 10, 2021, L<sub>max</sub> Sound Levels**



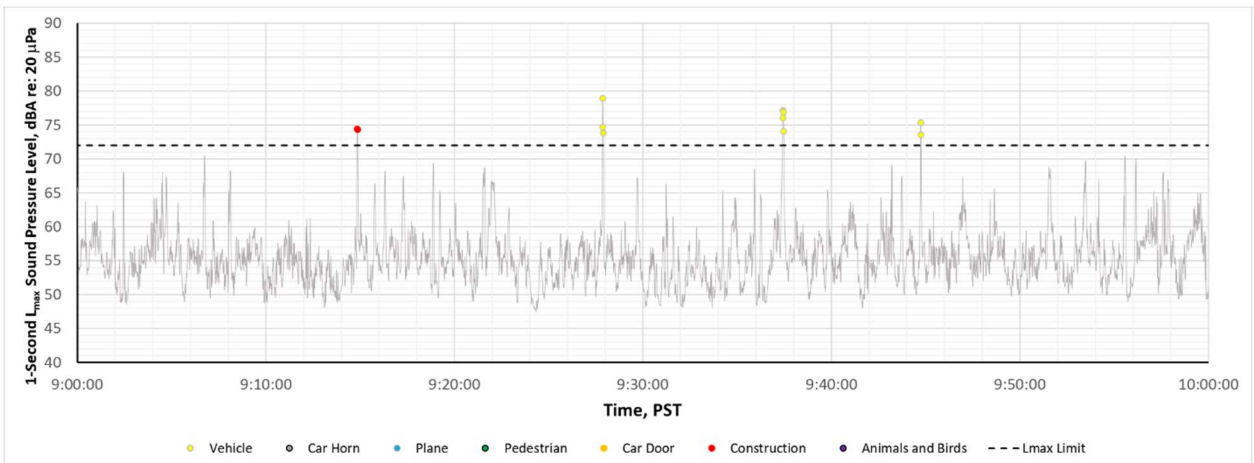
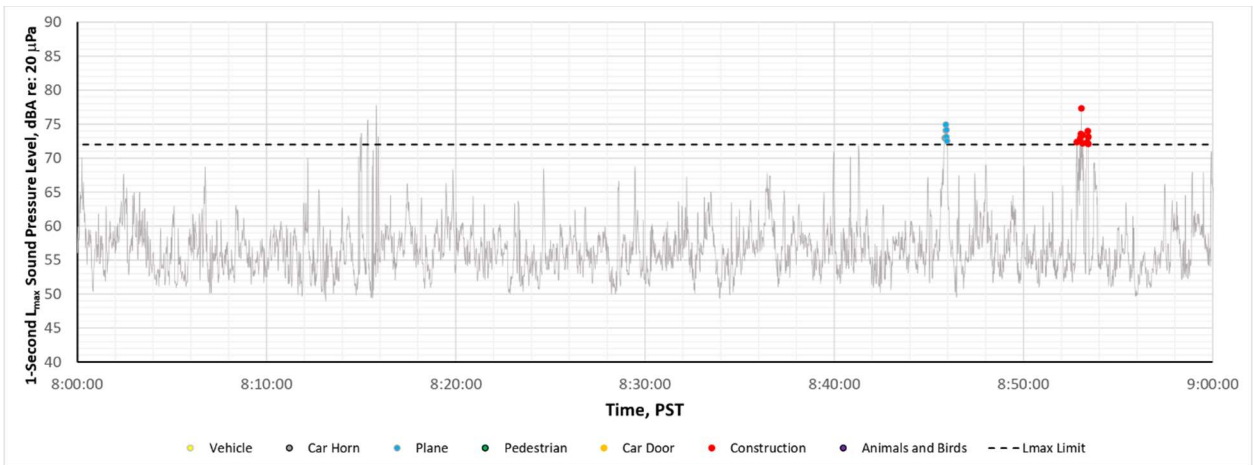


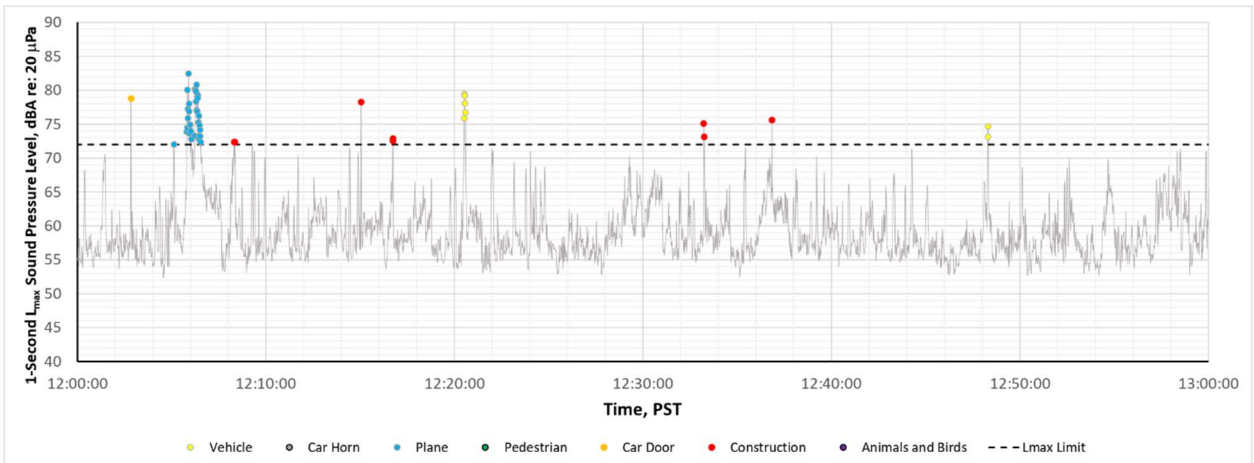
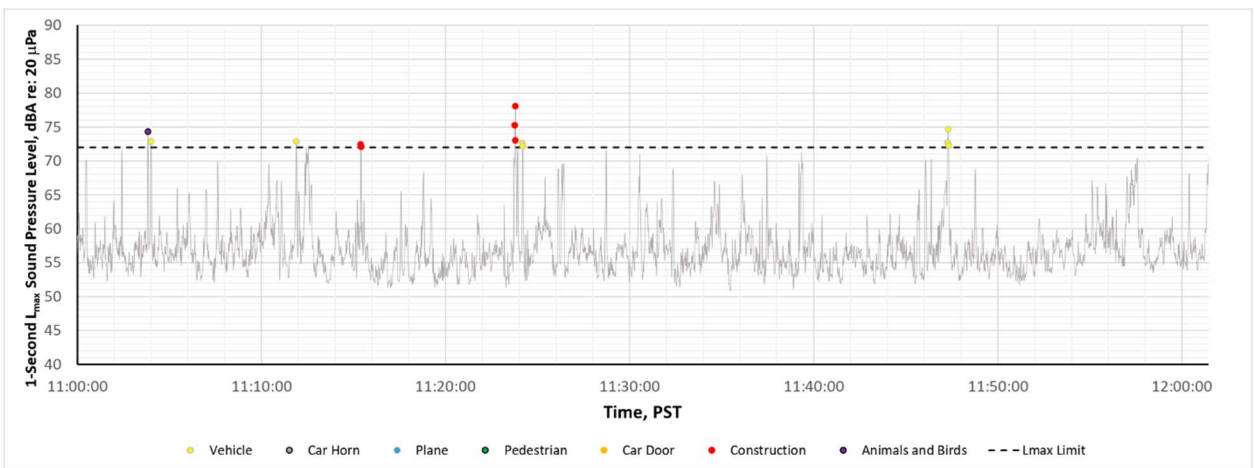
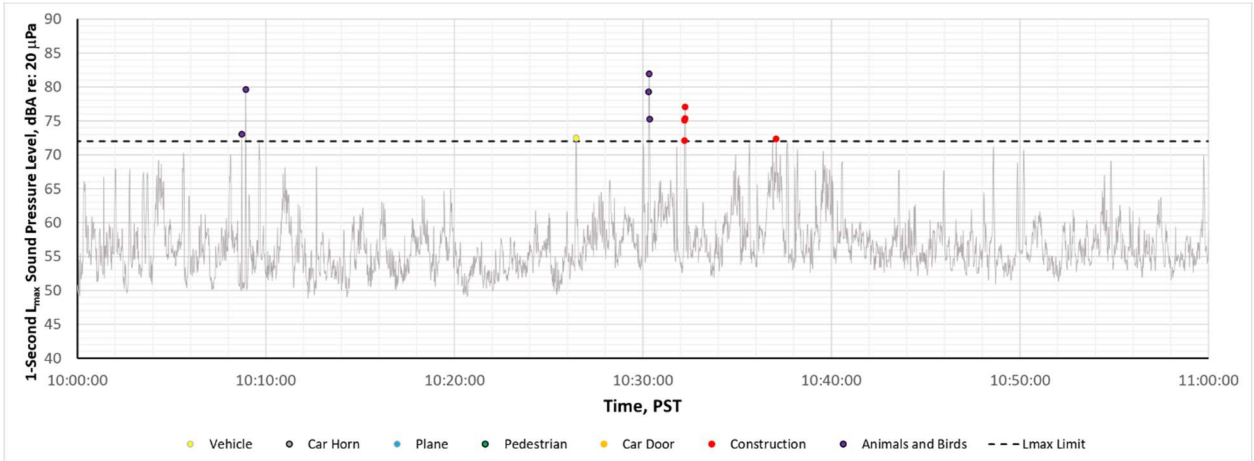


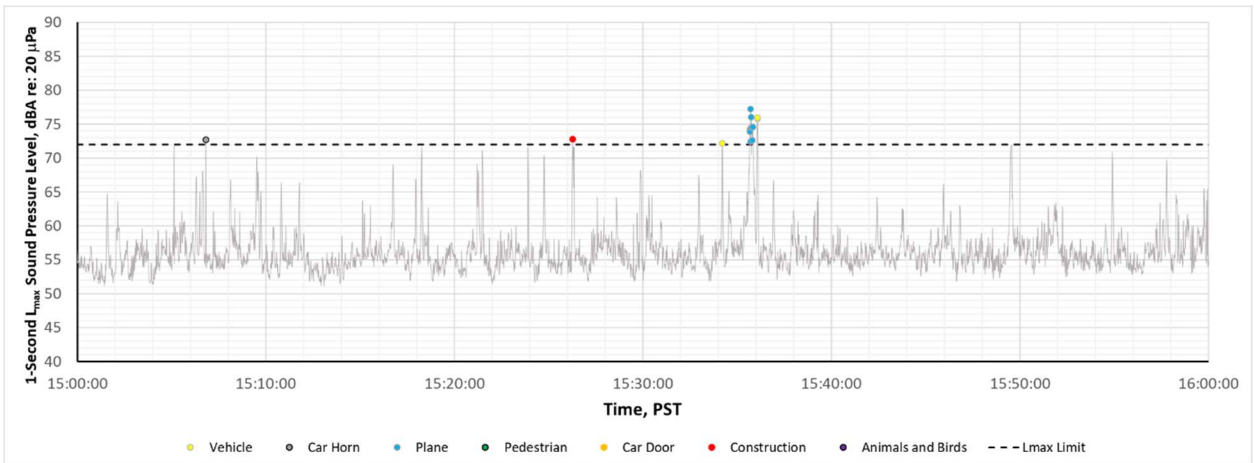
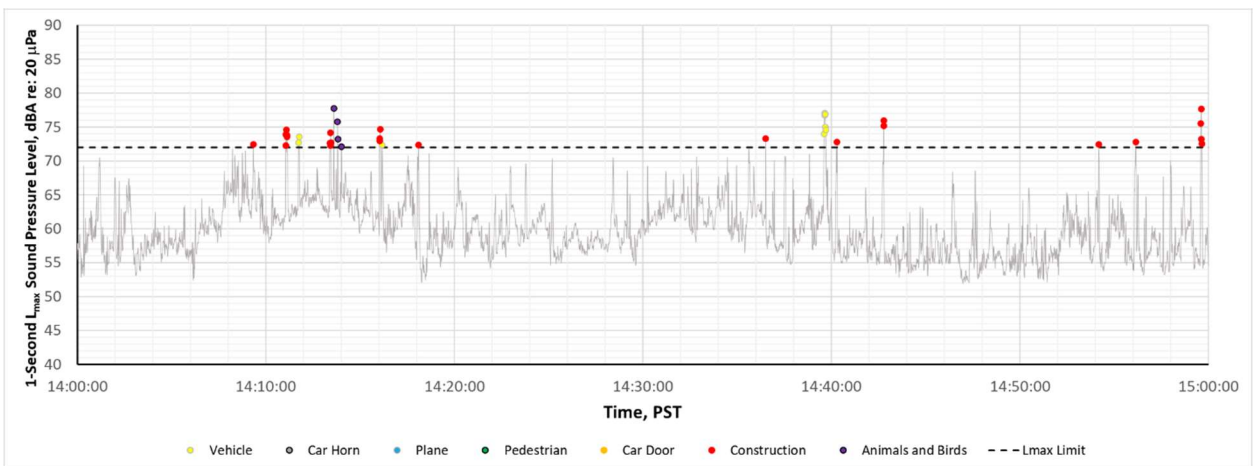
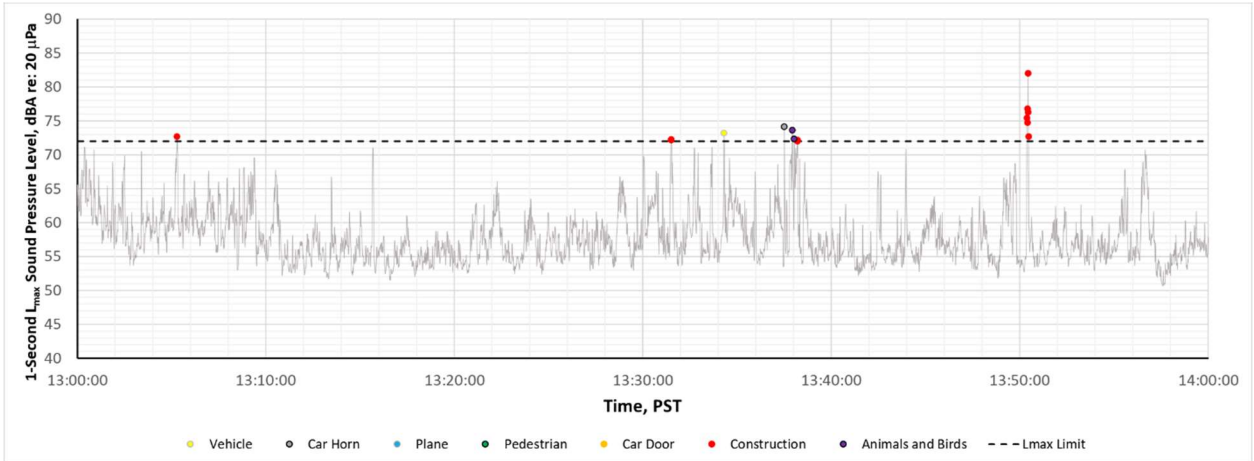




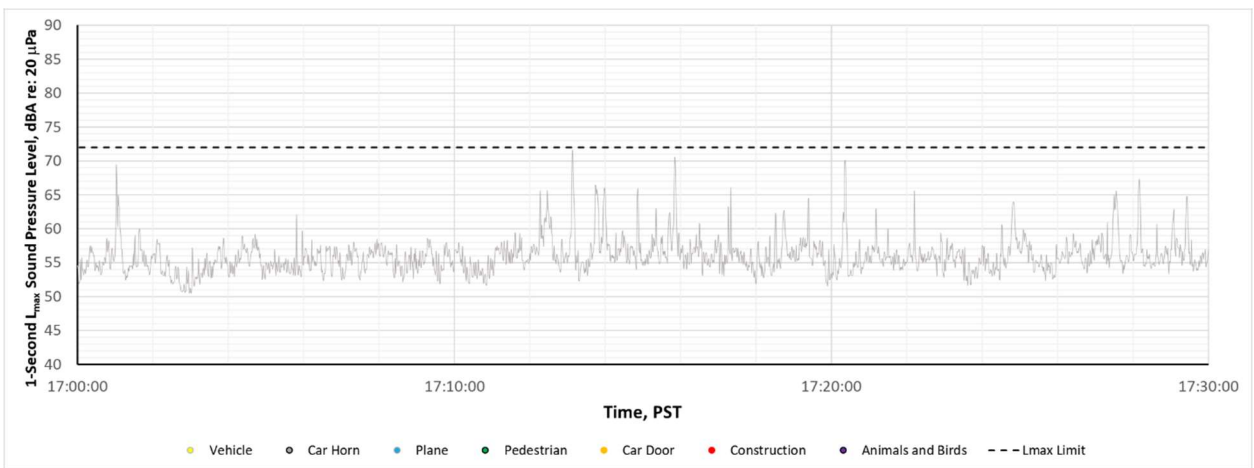
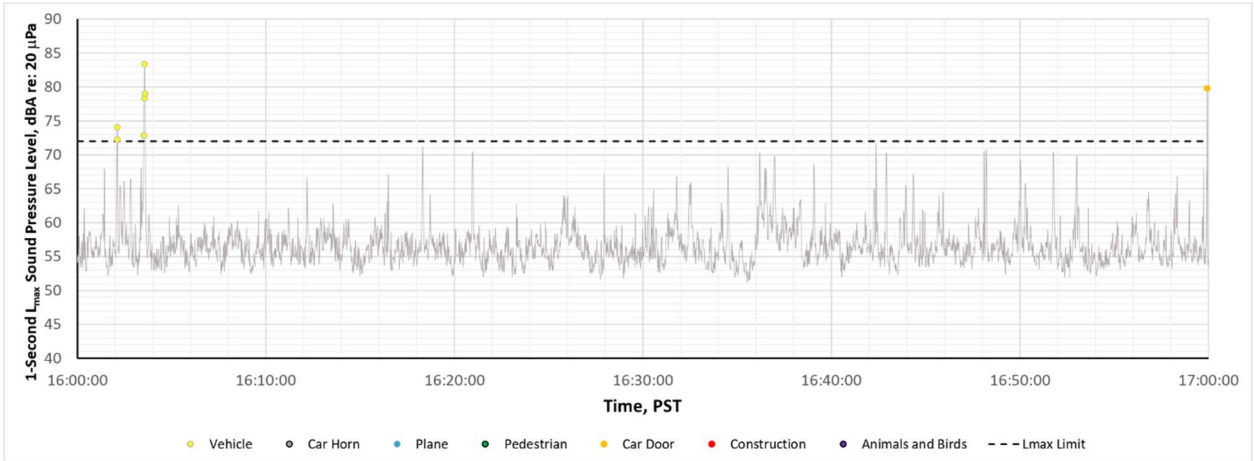
**Location 2 – March 10, 2021,  $L_{max}$  Sound Levels**



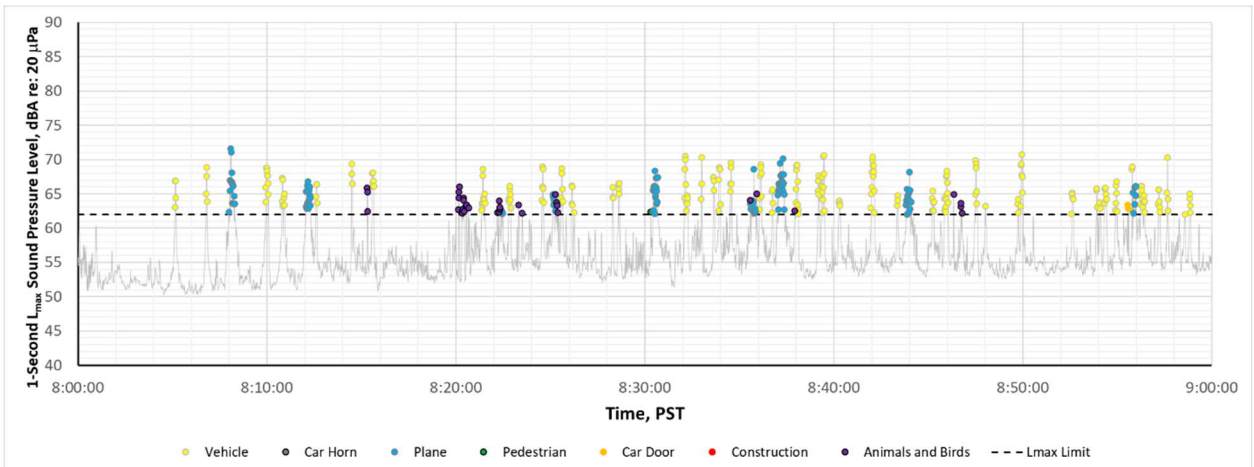








**Location 1 – March 20, 2021, L<sub>max</sub> Sound Levels**





### Location 2 – March 20, 2021, $L_{max}$ Sound Levels

