



A NOISE ORDINANCE FOR ALL NEW ORLEANIANS

Introduction: The Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans (a community group composed of musicians, cultural workers and bearers, residents, and business owners) in coordination with Sweet Home New Orleans offer the following principals for a noise ordinance that works for all New Orleanians. This ordinance must be crafted in consultation with musicians, cultural workers, community groups, residents, business owners, and professional sound scientists. Such a policy must also receive ample public hearing.

Preamble: Music and performance are the backbone of our city and they drive our local economy. Live music draws millions of tourists to the city every year, attracts new residents and investments, and enhances real estate values in neighborhoods of cultural and musical vibrancy. A comprehensive noise ordinance that threatens the distinctiveness of New Orleans threatens our quality of life, the long-term economic growth of the city, and the everyday ability of thousands of our residents to earn an income. For New Orleanians, quality of life includes recognizing the interests of performers, residents (both owners and renters), businesses, and visitors in a manner that honors our culture bearers and the traditions—new and old—that comprise our city’s most important asset.

- **LOCALIZED DECISION MAKING:** While a citywide noise ordinance provides necessary coherence, blanket regulations are inappropriate and do not recognize the unique characteristics present in our neighborhoods. Regulations should be appropriate to the individual character and soundscapes of the city's diverse neighborhoods, communities, and traditions. Such policies must be created and enforced with the input of residents, neighborhood associations, businesses, performers and cultural workers.

- **MEDIATION, NOT CRIMINALIZATION:** Noise complaints should lead to a formalized mediation process rooted in the involvement of concerned residents, neighborhood and community groups, affected performers, cultural workers, and local businesses. Criminalizing live music is neither a good neighbor policy nor a good economic policy in a city that thrives on the availability, diversity, and innovation of performance.

- **PROFESSIONAL ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION:** New Orleans needs a dedicated office directed with handling noise complaints that is both accessible and accountable. It is integral that this office be tasked with providing outreach to residents, businesses, performers, cultural workers, and other members of the cultural community about rules and regulations. This office must also take the lead in starting and fostering any mediation necessary to bring all involved parties to a mutually satisfying resolution of issues.

- **CLARITY OF STREET PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS:** Hours of performance and sound levels for street musicians and other performers may require legal and enforceable regulation, but these regulations should not threaten New Orleans' reputation as a city that nurtures music, performance, and cultural innovation. Regulation on street performance must be crafted in consultation with performers themselves as well as residents and businesses. Once determined, hours and levels should be clearly posted on streets and online. Furthermore, all involved parties should have access to training and workshops regarding these regulations to ensure a common knowledge and understanding of the issues should the need for mediation arise.

- **HONORING TRADITION AND INNOVATION:** Traditional cultural practices including but not limited to Jazz Funerals, Second Lines, street performance, Mardi Gras Indian practices, parades, and gatherings should be explicitly encouraged and protected in the language of any final ordinance. These traditions lie at the core of our city’s culture and its economic growth, and the need to preserve and maintain the importance of these treasures must be considered at the heart of any mediation efforts.