

Frequently Asked Questions

How will potential increases in traffic noise be addressed?

IDOT has completed a Highway Traffic Noise Study as part of the ongoing IL 60/83 study which has found noise walls to be warranted at various locations in the project study limits. To access exhibits depicting the potential noise wall locations please [click here](#).

When is a noise analysis required?

When evaluating traffic noise, traffic noise impacts and traffic noise abatement, the process IDOT follows conforms to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations, policies and procedures. Noise walls or sound barriers to abate identified traffic noise impacts are considered in the environmental analysis throughout the development of a highway project. Projects that are eligible for traffic noise abatement consideration are identified as Type I and Type II projects. A Type I Project or New Highway Project is a proposed project for the construction of a State highway on new alignment (a highway where one did not exist before), or the physical alteration of an existing State highway that significantly changes either the horizontal or the vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes.

The Noise Policy does identify Federal or Federal-aid highway projects for noise abatement on an existing highway, which is known as a Type II or retrofit project. However, IDOT does not maintain a Type II program. With the current economic and financial situation and constraints, the Department does not have a plan, program or funding available for implementing Type II retrofits noise abatement projects. If at some future date Illinois initiates and develops a Type II program, and if funding becomes available, the consideration of cost sharing between municipalities or local government sponsors would also likely be incorporated as a major element into the program.

Who pays for the noise walls to be constructed?

If the benefitted receptors* vote in favor of a noise wall, the standard construction cost will be borne by IDOT as part of the overall IL 60/83 project. Non-standard features, or enhanced aesthetics, will be subject to municipal cost participation. Individual property owners would not be asked to pay for a noise wall.

*Benefitted receptors are residents and property owners who benefit from a noise wall.

What happens if a noise abatement measure is determined to be necessary?

As established by Federal Highway Administration regulations, property owners are able to vote for or against noise walls in their area. In order for a person to be eligible to vote, the noise wall must decrease the noise level at the property by at least 5 decibels, which is a readily perceptible change in noise (typically homes within 300 feet of a noise wall). Anything less than 5 decibels is barely detectable by the human ear, therefore a noise wall would not provide any perceptible benefit.

If more than 50% of the votes received are in favor of a wall, a wall will likely be included in the project. A response rate of at least 33% of eligible voters is desired. If the response rate from the initial ballot mailing is less than 33%, a second ballot will be mailed for residents in those areas only to the residents and property owners who did not vote in the first round.

Voters who are in the “first row” of receptors (who share a property line with the highway) will be counted and weighed as two votes. All others will be single votes. For rental properties, each occupant will count as one vote and the owner counts as one vote per unit. A final decision on the installation of abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project’s final design and the public involvement process.

What will the noise walls look like?

The barriers are typically constructed of precast concrete panels of varying heights depending on the location.

Will planting vegetation help reduce noise levels?

Not typically. Landscaping typically needs to be up to 200 feet wide, 16-18 feet in height, and with dense undergrowth in order to be effective in reducing noise. Such a treatment would not be prudent in the IL 60/83 corridor.

Who can I contact about this study?

You can direct questions and comments to us [via this website](#) or send written correspondence directly to:

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