

Highway 169 Redefine Environmental Review

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE

AND NOISE BARRIERS



When does MnDOT conduct noise studies?

Two programs activate a noise analysis:

The first is for a major reconstruction project in which the road would be expanded with additional lanes for more than a mile or would significantly change the alignment of the road. This type of project usually requires an in-depth environmental review process in which many issues are looked at, one of which is noise and noise barriers.

The other program is commonly referred to as a retro-fit project. It is for stand-alone noise walls where major reconstruction is not planned in the near future. As part of this program, areas are ranked by existing noise levels, length of barrier, and number of homes.

How does MnDOT determine whether a noise barrier can be constructed?

A noise barrier must be both feasible and reasonable if it is to be constructed with a highway project. The reasonability of a noisewall is determined by factors such as cost, amount of reduction in noise, safety, and site features. Decisions on noise mitigation locations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

How do noise barriers work?

Noise barriers block the direct path of sound waves from the highway to homes and businesses along the highway. They do not eliminate noise, they only reduce the noise. To be considered effective, a noise barrier must reduce noise impact to receptors by at least 5 decibels.

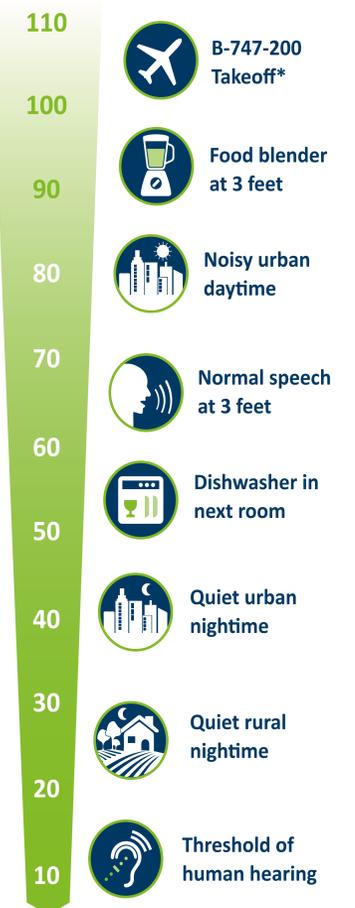
Do noise barriers affect property values?

There haven't been any studies that link property values to noise barriers. Future buyers may either appreciate the noise reduction the barrier provides, or they may have aesthetic concerns about its presence.

Comparison of Noise Levels

Increase or decrease in noise level:

- <3 dBA- not perceptible
- 3 dBA- barely perceptible
- 5 dBA- easily perceptible
- 10 dBA- perceived as twice as loud



* As measured along the takeoff path
2 miles from the overflight end of the runway