

Noise Walls & I-35 Expansion

Will noise walls be constructed along the I-35 North expansion construction project?

The IA DOT will reduce where feasible and economically reasonable excessive noise from highway traffic and highway construction. Determining reasonableness and feasibility of noise abatement is done by professional judgment to weigh on a case-by-case basis overall benefits against overall adverse social, economic and environmental affects. Factors considered include: number of residences benefited, cost, opinions of affected residents, absolute noise level, change in noise level, timing of construction of the highway, differences between expected future traffic noise level and both existing and expected future no-build noise levels.

Three of these factors are described below and how they relate to the I-35 expansion project site. These factors are key and the basis for why the department does not believe noise mitigation in the form of noise walls is warranted with this project.

1. The date the homes impacted along the corridor were constructed. This section of I-35 existed prior to the development of the residential areas. The department's responsibility for noise mitigation is minimized for properties that knowingly build adjacent to the interstate ROW. For example, across the metro area, residential properties have been built adjacent to our interstate system and now have requested noise mitigation in the form of noise walls.
2. The increase in noise anticipated with our highway project. The expansion of I-35 will occur towards the center median, rather than expanding to the outside closer to the residential areas. This will allow most of the noise to remain confined within the existing road. Based on future traffic volumes (2030 traffic), the proposed six-lane project will have very little impact on increasing the noise levels when compared against the No-Build alternative in 2030.

Noise levels in the future are expected to increase with the additional development of residential and commercial properties and the associated increase in traffic volumes on I-35. The increasing noise levels are more the result of the increasing development in the area, and not the result of the proposed six-lane project.

3. The actual noise levels anticipated in the corridor. Many of the properties along I-35 are situated below the elevation of the roadway. This helps to keep down noise levels in the corridor.