

ROADSIDE DESIGN TO REDUCE TRAFFIC NOISE

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This is a supplemental report on abatement of highway noise with special reference to roadside design. It is a record of information as of 1958, to supplement information already published in HRB Bulletin 110 (publication 363, 1955), and in the Report of the Committee on Roadside Development (pp. 41-44, publication 419, 1956). This committee is interested in factors that make for safe and pleasant driving as well as pleasant residential living along highways because highway landscape development is concerned with the complete development of the highway right-of-way and its environment. One of these factors is traffic noise emanating from the highway to the surrounding area and to dwellers on abutting property.

A primary responsibility of highway engineers is that of providing transportation service to highway users. This responsibility has now broadened to include the effect of traffic noise on the motorist and on roadside dwellers. It is important that highway planners, locaters, and designers analyze the economic effect of traffic noise upon abutting property uses and values, and then do everything possible in the early planning and design stages of their work to suppress noise which emanates from the highway.

In 1955, HRB Bulletin 110 outlined (a) what may be done by the highway engineer to make traffic noise less objectionable to people living along the highway, and (b) what further research is needed for evaluating highway noise abatement methods. Roadside tests are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of barriers such as walls, embankments, and buffer-planting to abate noise. Reports on comparative field tests would assist the highway engineer in abating traffic noise that is objectionable to roadside dwellers on major highways.

This resume of published information (1956-1958) on the problem of community noise should be helpful to those interested in the abatement of highway noise. A supplemental list of references is included so that the reader may have an opportunity to explore for himself the latest published information.

The period 1956-1958 evidenced an increasing interest in transportation noise and an increasing interest on the part of a noise-conscious public trying to do something about the control of noise—a big problem in cities and in most communities. The highway engineer desiring to keep informed on trends in the field of outdoor noise will no doubt find helpful this resume on articles published since a similar progress record was reported on pp. 41-44 of the HRB-1956 Annual Report of the Committee on Roadside Development.

Supplemental References 1956-1958

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