

The Virginia Department of Transportation's *Highway Traffic Noise Impact Analysis Guidance Manual* provides the procedures for the acoustical design of noise barriers. Part of this procedure is reviewing public input on proposed barriers. The following provides a brief summary of the process by which VDOT collects a vote of benefited receptors from potential noise barriers. It is important to note that the voting procedure is done on a noise barrier by noise barrier basis. For further reference on the voting procedures, please visit the following website and review **Section 12.4** of the Guidance Manual: http://www.virginiadot.org/VDOT/Projects/asset_upload_file561_52826.pdf

1. The method by which VDOT collects these votes is determined by the Central Office Noise Abatement staff on a project by project basis. The two most common ways to collect votes from benefited citizens is through certified mail and public meetings. The preferred method is certified mail; other methods will only be used when extenuating circumstances dictate so.
2. Only benefited receptors will receive a voting survey. A description of what qualifies as "benefited" is provided below. It is also of note that a receptor may be synonymous with a residence. If this is the case, the residence will receive one vote even if a family or multiple people reside in the same location.
 - a. Benefited receptors are those receptors shown in the noise study with a predicted noise reduction of 5 dB(A) or more as a result of the proposed noise barriers.
3. Benefited voters have three options after receiving their voting surveys. Obviously, you may vote either yes or no, but simply not voting is also an option. Non-responses or non-votes are handled, essentially, as an abstention and will not be considered as a respondent. If you have no personal preference towards whether or not the noise mitigation is built, this may be an option for you. Please note that fifty percent (50%) or more of the respondents are required to favor the noise abatement measure in determining desirability.
4. After filling out your voting survey, send it back in the return envelope that you should receive along with the survey. The envelope will have pre-paid postage so mailing it back will be quick and easy. The voting period only lasts for a period of one month and any surveys received after this time frame are not considered. Citizens should make sure that they fill out and send back their surveys in a timely manner.
5. After the time frame to receive feedback has passed, the votes will be tallied. VDOT will review the results and come to a decision on whether or not to construct the noise barrier. This information will then be shared with the public. It is important to note that VDOT will make the final decision determining whether or not the noise barrier will be constructed. VDOT will base their decision upon the collected data from the voting process.