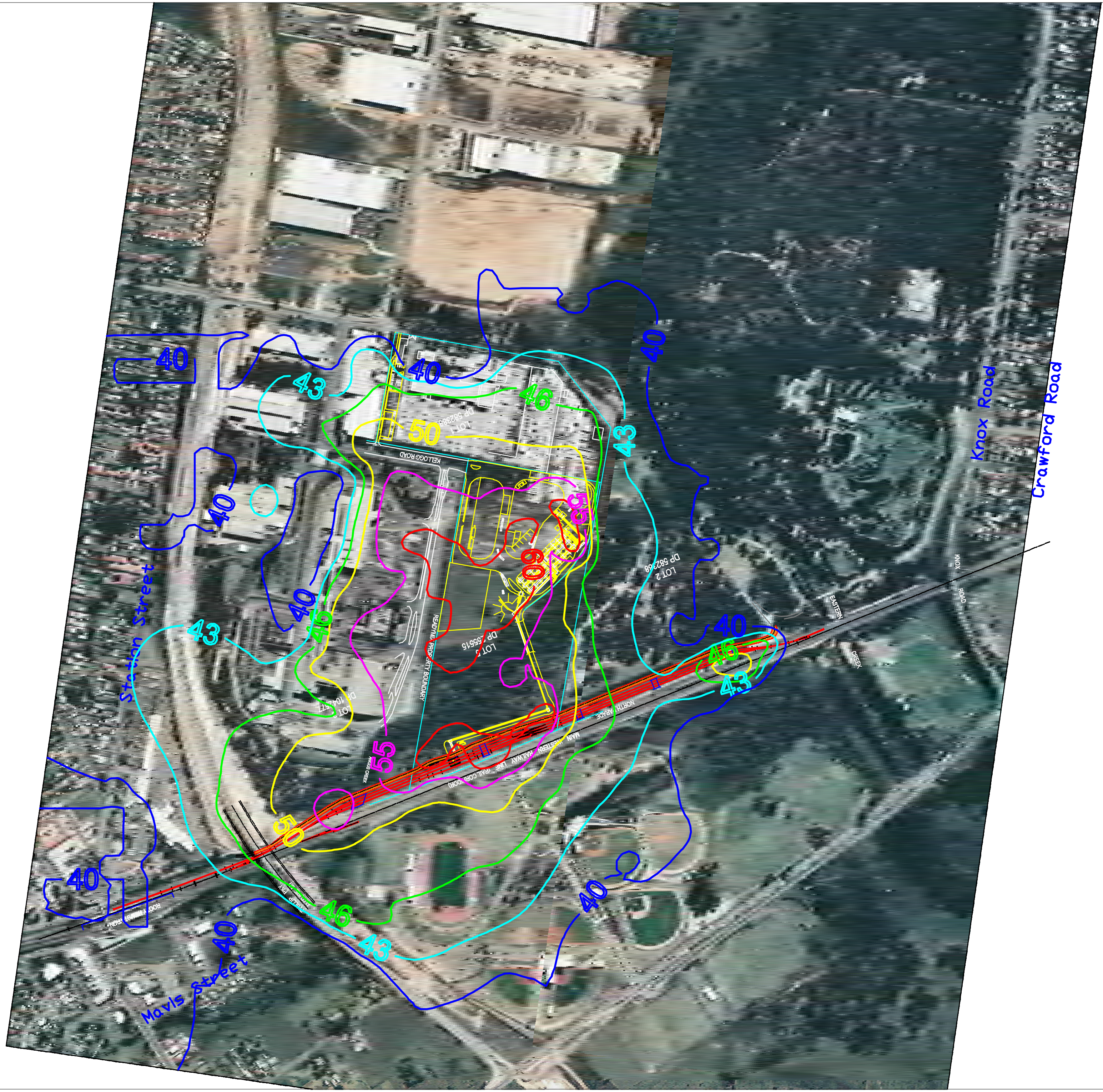
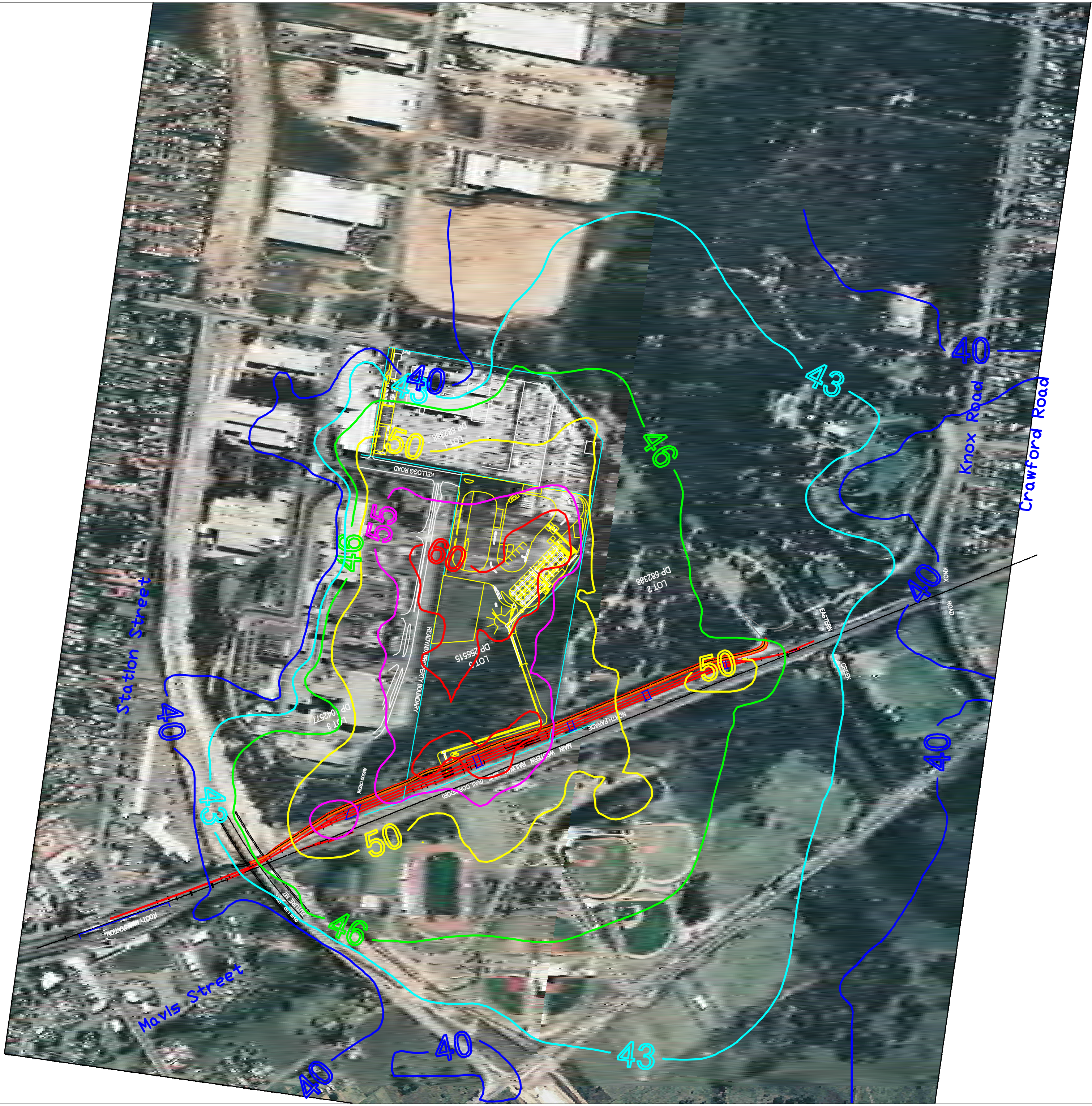


30-1202
Rooty Hill
Regional
Distribution
Centre

Noise Contours

East - Evening

Appendix D



30-1202
Rooty Hill
Regional
Distribution
Centre

Noise Contours

Inversion - Night

Appendix D

General Acoustic Concepts

This Appendix provides a brief overview of general acoustic concepts and properties of sound.

Sound Level (or Noise Level)

The terms “sound” and “noise” are almost interchangeable, except that in common usage “noise” is often used to refer to unwanted sound.

Sound (or noise) consists of minute fluctuations in atmospheric pressure capable of evoking the sense of hearing. The human ear responds to changes in sound pressure over a very wide range. The loudest sound pressure to which the human ear responds is ten million times greater than the softest. The decibel (abbreviated as dB) scale reduces this ratio to a more manageable size by the use of logarithms.

The symbols SPL, L or L_P are commonly used to represent Sound Pressure Level. The symbol L_A represents A-weighted Sound Pressure Level. The standard reference unit for Sound Pressure Levels expressed in decibels is 2E-5 Pa.

Sound Power Level

The Sound Power of a source is the rate at which it emits acoustic energy. As with Sound Pressure Levels, Sound Power Levels are expressed in decibel units (dB or dBA), but may be identified by the symbols SWL or L_W. The standard reference unit for sound power level is 1E-12 W.

The relationship between Sound Power and Sound Pressure may be likened to an electric radiator, which is characterised by a power rating, but has an effect on the surrounding environment that can be measured in terms of a different parameter, temperature.

A-weighted Sound Pressure Level

The overall level of a sound is usually expressed in terms of dBA, which is measured using a sound level meter with an “A-weighting” filter. This is an electronic filter having a frequency response corresponding approximately to that of human hearing.

People’s hearing is most sensitive to sounds at mid frequencies (500 Hz to 4000 Hz), and less sensitive at lower and higher frequencies. Thus, the level of a sound in dBA is a good measure of the loudness of that sound. Different sources having the same dBA level generally sound about equally loud.

Other weightings (eg B, C and D) are less commonly used than A-weighting. Sound Levels measured without any weighting are referred to as “linear”, and the units are expressed as dB(lin) or dB.

Change in Sound Pressure Levels

A change of 1 dBA or 2 dBA in the level of a sound is difficult for most people to detect, whilst a 3 dBA to 5 dBA change corresponds to a small but noticeable change in loudness. A 10 dBA change corresponds to an approximate doubling or halving in loudness.

Typical Noise Levels

Table 1 lists examples of typical noise levels.

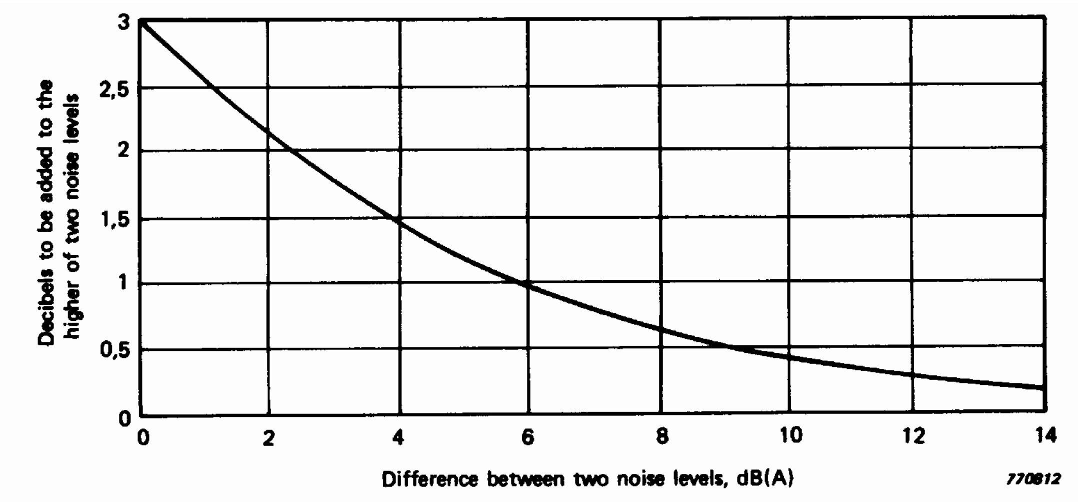
Table 1 Typical Noise Levels

Sound Pressure Level (dBA)	Typical Source	Subjective Evaluation
130	Threshold of pain	Intolerable
120	Heavy rock concert	Extremely noisy
110	Grinding on steel	
100	Loud car horn at 3m	Very noisy
90	Construction site with pneumatic hammering	
80	Kerbside of busy street	Loud
70	Loud radio or television	
60	Department store	Moderate to quiet
50	General office	
40	Inside private office	Quiet to very quiet
30	Inside bedroom	
20	Unoccupied recording studio	Almost silent

Adding Sound Pressure Levels

When adding the contribution from two (or more) sound sources the total sound pressure level is not the numerical sum of the individual dBA values. The graph in **Figure 1** provides a simple method for the addition of sound pressure levels. To use this graph, calculate the difference between the noise levels that are to be added together and read this number from the horizontal axis. The corresponding number on the vertical axis is then added to the highest sound pressure level under consideration to get the total sound pressure level.

Figure 1 Addition of Sound Pressure Levels



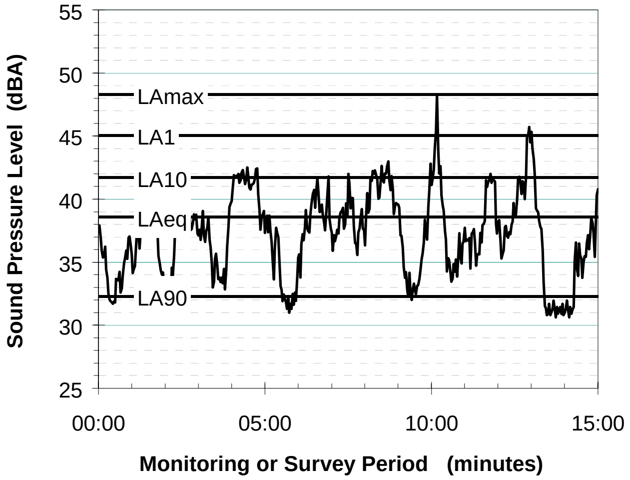
As can be seen from the graph, if the difference between the two sound pressure levels under consideration is greater than 10 dBA then the lower noise level does not increase the total noise level.

Statistical Noise Levels

Sounds that vary in level over time, such as road traffic noise and most community noise, are commonly described in terms of the statistical exceedance levels L_{AN}, where L_{AN} is the A-weighted sound pressure level exceeded for N% of a given measurement period. For example, the L_{A1} is the noise level exceeded for 1% of the time, L_{A10} the noise exceeded for 10% of the time, and so on.

Figure 2 presents a hypothetical 15 minute noise survey, illustrating various common statistical indices of interest.

Figure 2 Hypothetical Noise Survey



Of particular relevance, are:

L_{A1} The noise level exceeded for 1% of the 15 minute interval.

L_{A10} The noise level exceed for 10% of the 15 minute interval. This is commonly referred to as the average maximum noise level.

L_{A90} The noise level exceeded for 90% of the sample period. This noise level is described as the average minimum background sound level (in the absence of the source under consideration), or simply the background level.

L_{Aeq} The A-weighted equivalent noise level (basically the average noise level). It is defined as the steady sound level that contains the same amount of acoustical energy as the corresponding time-varying sound.