

Comment: The new road will result in emissions and noise impacts due to higher traffic and truck volumes along this NAFTA route.

Response: A new freeway will address increasing traffic demand by providing a safer route for vehicles while minimizing adverse effects.

At the Public Hearing, several individuals commented that US 20 is a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Route. US Route 20 is on the National Highway System, but it has not been designated as a NAFTA Corridor. The Department requested a determination of this status from the FHWA. The FHWA has confirmed that US 20 is not a NAFTA route.

Nationally, interregional truck travel has risen dramatically as the trucking industry has accounted for an increasing share of shipping since the 1960's. Completion of major segments of the interstate highway system in the 1970's provided a large boost to the use of trucks to transport freight. Travel by commercial truck has continued to grow ever since. Nationwide arterial truck traffic has followed this trend upward, and U.S. Route 20 within the study limits is no exception. In the study area, truck traffic is primarily local in nature and will be focused along US Route 20 since it is the only major east-west highway in the area. Existing U.S. Route 20 was not designed to accommodate the larger trucks that are currently the norm for the trucking industry, and a new freeway would accommodate the projected traffic mix more effectively. With the new freeway, total US 20 traffic volumes are projected to increase only slightly more than they would if only existing US 20 remains in place.

Traffic generated noise levels associated with each alternative were studied at representative receptor locations and levels were compared to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and IDOT criteria levels for mitigation. For the vast majority of areas along each of the alternatives mitigation measures were not considered, since noise receptors identified as potentially impacted are scattered too far apart to make mitigation reasonable. The two residential subdivisions considered were along segments that are not part of the preferred alternative.

Along with the No-Action Alternative, the Freeway and Expressway Alternatives were analyzed for potential air quality impacts. The results of the air quality modeling for the Preferred Alternative show an insignificant change in air quality over the No-Action Alternative. Additionally, pollutant levels are still well below National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Since the air quality modeling indicates that there will be no significant air quality impacts, no mitigation measures are warranted to control vehicle emissions. This information is covered in the technical reports prepared for the project. These are available for review at the IDOT District 2 Office, in Dixon, Illinois.