

US 20 at Shales Parkway Phase I Engineering Study

NEWSLETTER #1

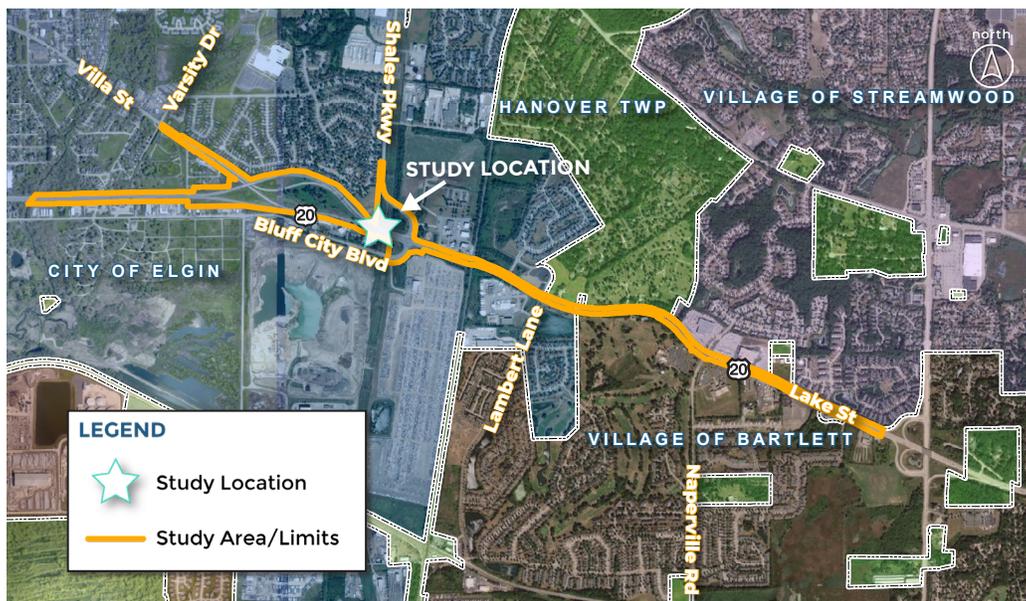
May 2022

VIRTUAL PUBLIC OUTREACH #1

Thank you to everyone who participated!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first Virtual Public Outreach Event for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (Department) preliminary engineering and environmental studies for the US 20 at Shales Parkway Phase I Study. The purpose of the first Virtual Public Outreach was to provide an overview of the study process and to obtain public input on transportation issues and needs within the study area. This newsletter is designed to share additional project information with the public and address comments received.

The study website received more than 2,200 views and 57 comments between September 10th to October 20th, 2021. The outreach efforts provided the study team with valuable insights to help move the project forward.



Study Area

The study area is located mainly in the City of Elgin. The study area focuses on potential improvements at the US 20 and Shales Parkway intersection and the existing interchange at Villa Street. In order to identify and capture potential impacts of alternatives, the study extends west along US 20 to Poplar Creek and east along US 20 to Illinois Route 59.

Within the study area, US 20 is identified as a Strategic Regional Arterial, which indicates it is intended to carry a larger volume of traffic at higher speeds as a complement to the region's expressway systems. US 20 has several different roadway and median sections as it transitions from a 55 miles per hour roadway with a concrete barrier separated median to a 45 miles per hour roadway with a striped median. Shales Parkway is a significant north-south roadway connecting to US 20 where US 20 transitions from a higher speed freeway/expressway to a 45 miles per hour arterial.

SAFETY TIERS

Critical

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Minimal

Safety

The 13 public comments related to safety pertained to driver safety, crashes, congestion, aggressive or reckless driving, lack of police enforcement, visibility, traffic signal delays, and back-ups.

The intersection of US 20 at Shales Parkway is identified as Safety Tier Critical by the Department. The Safety Tiers provide a rating to categorize roadway segments and intersections in Illinois based on their level of safety performance and opportunity for improvements relative to other locations.

Public input and engineering data related to crashes at the intersection will guide the development of improvements in this area.

This safety tier component, in addition to concerns related to the high crash rate and congestion, are driving factors for this study and will guide the development of the improvement alternatives.

Traffic

Public comments indicated concerns regarding increasing traffic at the intersection and at other intersections along the corridor.

As part of this study, traffic data has been collected and analyzed to understand existing travel patterns and operations of the US 20 and Shales Parkway intersection. The results will guide the development of alternatives for the existing US 20 at Shales Parkway intersection.

In accordance with methodology defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Department defines and measures traffic delays by a Level of Service or LOS rating using a scale from A to F, with free flow or no congestion rated as Level of Service A and heavy congestion rated as Level of Service F. Level of Service D is considered acceptable along state highways in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Traffic congestion is a common occurrence at the intersection of US 20 and Shales Parkway. If no roadway improvements are made, traffic volumes will continue to increase over the years and so too, will congestion. In the existing condition it was found that the intersection operates acceptably at LOS D; however excessive traffic backups, or queueing, occurs. By 2050, it was found that this intersection will operate over capacity, or Level of Service F, which is not acceptable.

EXISTING & FUTURE TRAFFIC (vehicles/day)

	2021	2050
US 20	42,000	56,000
Shales Parkway	19,100	24,200
Bluff City Blvd.	8,200	9,400
Villa Street	5,750	8,100



Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

Three public comments suggested bicycle and pedestrian considerations within the study area, such as the creation of new protected and separated lanes for active transportation, as well as additional lighting and signals.

During the study's alternative development process, the study team will evaluate improvements that consider all modes of transportation, including safe and accessible routes for bicycles and pedestrians. The Department coordinates with municipal and regional agencies on bicycle improvement plans to ensure study alternatives accommodate any future planned bicycle or pedestrian improvements.

Truck Traffic

The six public comments related to truck traffic concerns pertained to increased congestion, delays, noise, pollution, weight limit enforcement, aggressive driving, and residential impacts.

In the study area, US 20 and IL 59 are state maintained Class II truck routes. The increase in truck traffic is a study area concern, especially throughout residential neighborhoods. Comments received from the first virtual public outreach mirror the analysis that shows there are major truck movements occurring through this intersection. The study will consider existing truck traffic as alternatives are developed.

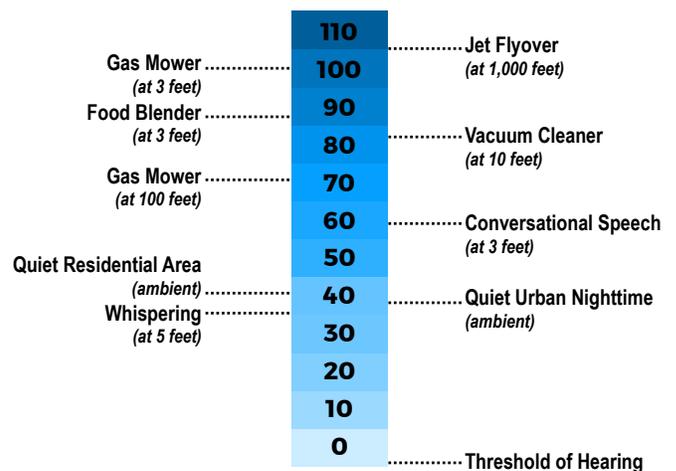
Noise

Public comments inquired about proposed noise walls at the interchange. The existing noise is disruptive to the residents.

The noise levels experienced by study area homeowners was a concern expressed during the CAG and public outreach event. When evaluating traffic noise, noise impacts, and noise abatement, the Department follows the FHWA regulations, policies, and procedures. Noise walls or sound barriers identified to abate traffic noise impacts are considered during the environmental studies process that will be conducted as part of this study's Phase I process.

The Department recently completed the US 20, Randall Road to Shales Parkway study in Elgin that proposed sound barriers north and south of the US 20 and Shales Parkway intersection.

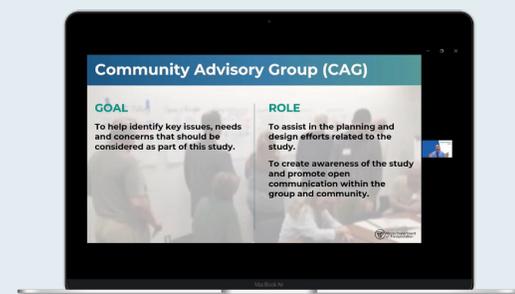
Common Sound Levels (Decibels)



Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #1

The study's first CAG meeting was held virtually on Thursday, December 9th, 2021 from 9:30AM-11:30AM. A total of 14 attendees participated in the first CAG meeting: seven residents and seven representatives from local organizations. The following local agencies were represented: the City of Elgin, Elgin Fire Department, Elgin Police Department, and Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways.

CAG members reiterated concerns that were identified during the first public outreach including truck traffic, pedestrian/bicycle access, and safety concerns. Two other major concerns expressed were study impacts to surrounding areas and the safety issues caused due to the existing conditions and operations within the study area. These identified concerns, in addition to those gathered from the first public outreach will be considered and become part of the overall problem statement that will be developed and presented at the second CAG meeting, tentatively scheduled for Summer 2022.





Next Steps

The study team is in the process of analyzing the public comments received to date, as well as evaluating the area's existing conditions and deficiencies to help with the development of the study's Problem and Purpose and Need Statements.

What is a Problem Statement?

A Problem statement identifies transportation problems within a study area that can realistically be addressed through infrastructure improvement options and available funding. The information obtained through public and stakeholder involvement processes help identify clear transportation problem(s) to be solved by a study. Once a problem statement is prepared, it contributes to the development of a Purpose and Need statement.

What is a Purpose and Need Statement?

A Purpose and Need statement details the exact reasons why a study is necessary as well as the issues that the project will address.

Stay Involved

Questions and comments can be submitted to the study team via the following methods:



Email us at info@US20atShalesStudy.org



Sign up for updates or send comments via the study website at www.US20atShalesStudy.org



Mail a letter to: Illinois Department of Transportation
Bureau of Programming, Attn: Lori Brown
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096

For more information about the study or to join our mailing list visit, www.US20atShalesStudy.org.

