

3.14 Permits and Certifications

What permits or certifications are necessary for approval of an alternative?

The following is a summarization of the permits and certifications applicable to the US 51 project. Regulatory permits would be required for the implementation of an alternative.

Permits for the proposed project could include at least the following:

- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) from the USACE - an Individual Permit would be required for jurisdictional wetland and Waters of the United States impacts.
- Section 401 of the CWA Water Quality Certification (WQC) from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the IEPA – required for stormwater discharges from the construction site.
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) – Office of Water Resources (OWR) permits for impacts to regulatory floodways and stream crossings - required for work within regulatory floodways and for the crossing of streams with more than 640 acres of drainage area for urban areas.



View of Existing US 51

Sensitive viewers include residents near an existing or proposed US 51 alignment, park or natural area users, and those living near unique views. Sensitive viewers were determined near the alternatives through field review and public comments.

As the project is state sponsored, the project must comply with the Interagency Wetland Policy Act of 1989 (IWPA). Under the IWPA, all impacts to wetlands regardless of size must be mitigated within the affected drainage basin or within one mile of the proposed project limits.

3.15 Visual Resources

Building US 51 in a new location will change existing views, as will widening US 51 to a four-lane road. Potential impacts to views are identified through the visual impact assessment process. The different types of viewers in the study area and how their views would change are determined. Sensitive viewers are identified.

What types of views are in the study area now?

The study area has two types of views: rural landscapes and communities.

Rural landscapes include:

- Agricultural Plains: Cropland with interspersed grazing land and pastureland.
- Forested
- Rural Fringe Mixed Development: Different types of developed land in rural areas on the fringe of communities.
- Vandalia Geologic Area: A hilly area north of Vandalia in the Kaskaskia River area.



Agricultural Plains

The majority of the US 51 build alternatives are within agricultural plains. The remainder of the alternatives falls within communities. The visual analysis grouped communities into four areas: Centralia-Sandoval, Vernon-Patoka, Vandalia, and Ramsey.

The existing US 51 alignment is a two-lane paved rural highway, designed and constructed in the mid-20th century. As is typical with highways designed during the mid-20th century, some of the highway's curves and hills are tighter or steeper than what would typically be designed today. US 51 was originally routed through the cities in the study area, and those cities have since developed around the road.



Forested

This section will analyze both the view *from* the proposed US 51 as well as the view *of* the roadway improvement.

How will views from US 51 change?

Visual impacts are subjective and determined by the preferences of viewers.

First, the existing two-lane highway would now be a four-lane highway (in most areas), and travelers will see more pavement and roadway than they do currently. The exception is the Ramsey Creek Option A, where the alignment will be comprised of a pair of one-way, two-lane roadways; in some areas, only two lanes of roadway will be visible by users due to the surrounding forested area. The alternatives include interchanges as US 51 approaches and routes around cities. V Alt 4 in Vandalia will combine with a portion of I-70; V Alt 4 drivers will see a typical interstate with no at-grade intersections or driveways. V Alt 4 will also see more traffic than other portions of US 51.



Rural Fringe Mixed Development

Second, all of the alternatives would realign US 51 around cities, creating new views of agricultural land and community edges from US 51. The changed views *from* US 51 include:



Vandalia Geologic Area

- Views will change from developed communities to farmland for CS Alt 1, CS Alt 2, the portion of the US 51 Build Alternative routed west of Vernon, V Alt 1, R Alt 1, and R Alt 2.
- Views will change from developed communities to fringe and rural development and farmland for V Alt 2 and V Alt 3.



View from Vandalia Geologic Area residential property. Approximate location of V Alt 3 in red (not to scale). V Alt 2 would not be visible in this view.

Views from US 51 will remain similar for the majority of the US 51 Build Alternative (where the roadway stays in the same locations as it is now) and for Ramsey Creek Options A and B.

Third, a change in elevation with the proposed US 51 alignment will result in changed views from US 51 for the following alignment:

- V Alt 2 – V Alt 2 will be aligned along the base of the Vandalia Geologic Area. V Alt 2 will be approximately 50 feet higher in elevation than the Kaskaskia River valley to the east, which will allow for new views of the river valley from V Alt 2.

How will views of US 51 change?

As previously stated, visual impacts are subjective and determined by the preferences of viewers. Most viewers of US 51 are those living within view of the roadway.

Those living adjacent to the proposed alternatives would have views of a four-lane US 51 where a road did not previously exist or, in the case of the US 51 Build Alternative, where a two-lane highway previously existed. The majority of sensitive viewers who will have changed views of US 51 live on community edges, including:



Typical existing view for a rural resident in a bypass area, prior to construction of proposed US 51.

- *US 51 Build Alternative* - Residents living on the west edge of Vernon will have new views of the four-lane roadway instead of agricultural fields.
- *US 51 Build Alternative* – South of Vandalia near County Road 1400 N, recreational users of the Kaskaskia River will have views of the proposed US 51 crossing the river.
- *V Alt 2, V Alt 3* - Residents in the rural residential neighborhoods north of Vandalia (near Thrill Hill Road, Zent Drive, and IL 185) will have the four-lane roadway incorporated into the existing residential and agricultural areas. Some of the residents in the Vandalia Geologic Area have views of the Kaskaskia River valley. V Alt 3 will likely be seen within that view; V Alt 2 will be aligned along the side of the hill and

will be less visible, depending on each home's view from the top of the hill.

- *R Alt 1, R Alt 2* - Some residents on the east edge of Ramsey will have new views of the roadway instead of agricultural fields and trees.

In addition to these groups, residents in rural areas within sight of the proposed bypass alternatives will have changed views because a road will be introduced where one did not previously exist.

Are there any major visual impacts from any of the alternatives?

Several alternatives had greater visual impacts than others. Visual impacts typically are not used to identify a preferred alternative; however, visual impacts are summarized below so that measures to minimize them may be investigated if any of these alternatives are included in the Preferred Alternative.

- CS Alt 2 has moderate impacts to agricultural lands, communities in the Centralia area, and forested streams (CS Alt 1 has less visual impacts).
- V Alt 2 and V Alt 3 have major visual impacts to the Vandalia Geologic Area (V Alt 1 and V Alt 4 have less visual impacts).
- R Alt 1 has minor impacts to agricultural lands, moderate impacts to fringe development, and the Ramsey community, and R Alt 2 has moderate impacts to agricultural lands and fringe development (while the alternatives have different impacts, one is not necessarily a greater impact).

How will US 51 look during construction?

Road construction will have temporary visual effects. Large construction equipment, construction materials, and piles of earth or other materials may be present at and adjacent to the new roadway during construction. There may be areas used temporarily for construction staging, but these will be restored to their original condition when construction is complete.