

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this project being done? Why can't Wolf Road be left how it is now?

The purpose of this project is to provide improved operational efficiency and safety along the Wolf Road corridor and enhance pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. The existing Wolf Road corridor does not meet the future needs of the surrounding communities. Within the corridor, existing pavement needs to be repaired, existing bridges need to be rehabilitated or replaced, and existing intersections need to be upgraded to handle future traffic volumes. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations are not provided for much of the corridor. The County's long-term plan has pedestrian/non-motorized pathways along all major corridors under its jurisdiction. This applies especially to the Villages of Western Springs, Countryside, Burr Ridge, and Willow Springs.

2. How were the project limits selected?

Wolf Road is under Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) jurisdiction. The northern project limit is at Plainfield Road, where Cook County DOTD is leading another project that the Wolf Road proposed improvements will match into. The next closest Cook County DOTD jurisdictional route south of Plainfield Road is at 79th Street, which was selected as the southern project terminus. In addition, traffic volumes are lower south of 79th Street than within the project limits, making that intersection a logical terminus.

3. When will this project be built and how long will it take?

The Preliminary Engineering and Environmental (Phase I) Study is anticipated to be completed in 2023. The timeline for future phases will be determined based on funding availability. Contract Plan Preparation and Land Acquisition (Phase II) is anticipated to be completed in approximately two years. Construction (Phase III) is anticipated to be completed in approximately two years. Phase II and Phase III are not yet funded.

4. How much will this project cost?

An Engineer's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost has not yet been prepared. It will be developed after the Preferred Alternative is selected and be available at the next Public Information Meeting.

5. Will this project impact my tree, fence, shed, etc.?

Impacts to existing trees, fences, and other roadside objects will be determined and mitigated after the Preferred Alternative is selected. Impacted trees will be replaced in accordance with IDOT's Design and Environment Policy Memo 18: Preservation and Replacement of Trees. The Village will share this information when the actual design is submitted and reviewed by the Village.

6. Where will trees be added? Will the project provide screening between Wolf Road and homes?

In general, new trees will be planted in the same area as those trees that are impacted. The specifics of the proposed landscaping plans will be further established and refined in Phase II. Cook County DOTD and the Village of Indian Head Park are committed to reducing the impacts of the proposed roadway improvements using landscaping. Cook County will be responsible for all landscaping improvements. Additionally, the Village has committed the use of Village funds to implement improvements over and above what the County will provide.

7. What is a TWLTL?

A Two-Way Left-Turn Lane (TWLTL) is a center lane that allows left turns from both directions. A TWLTL is proposed along Wolf Road due to the numerous commercial, residential, and side street entrances.

8. Will the speed limit along Wolf Road change?

The speed limit along Wolf Road from 79th Street to Joliet Road will be reduced from 40 mph to 35 mph. The speed limit along Wolf Road from Joliet Road to Plainfield Road will remain unchanged at 35 mph.

9. Why can't the speed limit along Wolf Road be reduced now?

The speed limit reduction along Wolf Road is proposed as part of the overall corridor improvements, including the change from open drainage ditches to a closed drainage system with curb and gutter. In general, corridors with curb and gutter are perceived to be more constrained and are associated with lower speeds. Therefore, it is most appropriate to reduce the speed limit when the other corridor changes are implemented.

10. Will there be bicycle or pedestrian accommodations along Wolf Road?

A shared-use path and sidewalk are proposed along the west and east sides of Wolf Road, respectively, from 79th Street to Plainfield Road. These will connect to other existing and planned future pedestrian accommodations within the project limits, as necessary. The Plainfield Road improvements are from the Tollway bridge to Wolf Road. Sidewalks on the north side of Plainfield, a pathway on the south side.

11. Why can't the existing sidewalk along Wolf Road remain in its current location?

The existing sidewalk along the corridor was constructed prior to the implementation of the current Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines, which provides design criteria for items such as sidewalk longitudinal slope, cross slope, and intersection treatments under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Therefore, much of the existing sidewalk does not meet these current standards. New sidewalk that meets current standards is included in the project's proposed improvements. After the selection of the Preferred Alternative, the specific locations of the sidewalk and shared-use path will be further refined to balance right-of-way needs, drainage needs, roadway geometrics, and proximity to existing buildings.

12. Why is the shared-use path proposed on the west side of Wolf Road?

The shared-use path is proposed at a typical width of 10 feet, while the sidewalk is proposed at a typical width of 5 feet. The existing conditions on the west side of Wolf Road are generally more compatible with the wider footprint required for the shared-use path.

13. How were pedestrian crossing locations selected? How will the crossings be marked?

Marked pedestrian crossings are included at the three signalized intersections within the corridor: 79th Street, Joliet Road, and Plainfield Road. Additional crossings are proposed at several unsignalized locations along the corridor and were selected based on geometric compatibility and proximity to other crossings. The specifics of their advanced warning signage, pavement markings, and potential flashing warning beacons will be finalized later.

14. Will traffic be impacted during construction?

Traffic will be impacted during construction. A Transportation Management Plan and Suggested Maintenance of Traffic Plan will be developed at a later stage of the project to minimize traffic delays to the extent possible.

15. It is difficult to make turns in and out of my side street. Can a traffic signal be added?

During this project's analysis of current and future traffic capacity, new traffic signals were evaluated at several locations along the corridor. However, none of the evaluated locations warranted a new traffic signal. If a specific location is desired to be evaluated for a new traffic signal, the project team can review that request.

16. Will any environmental resources be impacted by this project?

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently identifying environmental resources along the corridor. Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, impacts to the environmental resources will be identified and shared at the next Public Information Meeting.

17. Will wetlands be impacted by this project?

It is anticipated that some wetlands will be impacted as a result of the proposed improvements. Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, impacts to wetlands will be identified and shared at the next Public Information Meeting. Impacted wetlands will be mitigated as part of the proposed improvements.

18. Will this project improve drainage along the corridor?

Drainage improvements, including switching from open drainage ditches to a closed drainage system with curb and gutter and storm sewers, are included in this project for the entire corridor. The closed drainage system will be designed to meet current standards. This project will not have a negative impact on those properties within or downstream of the project area with regards to drainage.

19. What improvements will be made to bridges or other structures along the corridor?

While many bridges and structures are present along the corridor due to the proximity of Flag Creek, I-55, and I-294, only two are included in the scope of the project. The Wolf Road bridge over Flag Creek (north of 72nd Street) and the Wolf Road box culvert over Abandoned Flag Creek (north of 70th Place) will be fully reconstructed and widened to meet the needs of the Wolf Road typical cross section.

20. Will parking be impacted by this project?

Due to the widened roadway footprint and shifted roadway alignment in portions of the corridor, existing parking may be impacted by this project. These impacts have been preliminarily identified and will be further refined after the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Parking impacts will be mitigated to the extent possible.

21. Will you need to acquire my property?

Potential land acquisition (easement or right-of-way) limits are shown in an approximate manner on the aerial project exhibits. Identification of the exact property to be acquired is an important part of the Phase I Study process. Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, specific property impacts will be better defined. Impacted property owners will be notified and invited to attend the second Public Information Meeting.

22. How will the land acquisition process work?

After specific property impacts are known, a team of land acquisition professionals will be engaged to determine the parcel boundaries, fair market value of the impacts, and method of compensation for the property owner. This team will involve professional land surveyors, appraisers, and negotiators. This process will follow the Illinois Department of Transportation's Land Acquisition Policies and Procedures Manual.

23. What are the next steps? Who will make the final decision in determining the Preferred Alternative?

After the first Public Information Meeting, public feedback received will be collected, evaluated in the context of the overall Phase I Study, and responded to, as necessary. Cook County, in conjunction with the Village of Indian Head Park, will make the final recommendation to IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration for the Preferred Alternative. Public feedback will be a consideration in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

24. Will there be another Public Information Meeting?

Another Public Information Meeting will be held after the Preferred Alternative refinement and impact identification are complete. The second Public Information Meeting will provide an update on the preliminary engineering, environmental resources review, and final impacts to the corridor.

25. How many communities are impacted by this?

The improvements will impact the City of Countryside and the Villages of Burr Ridge, Willow Springs and Indian Head Park.

26. Will there be a landscaping advisory committee?

This is an excellent question, yes there will be an advisory committee.

27. Will there be an increase in truck traffic?

There is no existing evidence that this project will increase traffic volume of any type beyond what is predicted now by regional planning agencies.

28. Will this affect property values?

There is absolutely no evidence that sidewalk projects of any nature decrease property values. Every planning organization, public works associations, and even the American Association of Retired Persons state that sidewalks add to the walkability and livability in communities and therefore make that community more desirable.