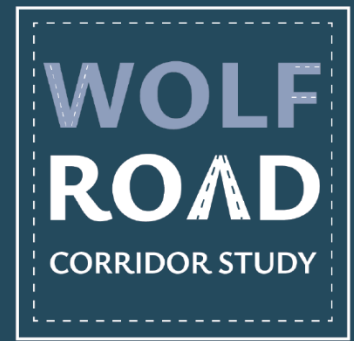


Village of Indian Head Park and Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways

Wolf Road Corridor Phase I Study



Corridor Advisory Committee #1 Meeting Summary

Attendees

Study Team

Amy Jo Wittenberg, Village President
Gavin Morgan, Village Administrator
Charlie Eck, Village Trustee
Katie Bell, Cook County DoTH
Jennifer Palma Skrebo, Cook County DoTH
Darcie Gabrisko, Strand Associates, Inc.
Matt Gazdziak, Strand Associates, Inc.
Tony Spinelli, Strand Associates, Inc.
Alexa Morris, Strand Associates, Inc.
Caitlin Bettisworth, R.M. Chin & Associates
Katrice Hodges Perkins, R.M. Chin & Associates

CAC Members

Matt Russian, Pleasant Dale Park District
John Munch, LaGrange Highlands School District 106
Mike Fricano, West Central Municipal Conference
Evan Walter, Village of Burr Ridge
David Preissig, Village of Burr Ridge
Robert Grela, Burr Ridge Resident
Philip Sirotzke, La Grange Highlands Sanitary District
Lyssa Colant, IHP Business Owner
Dayle Holmquist, IHP Resident
Amy Eckert, IHP Resident
Dave Palzet, Pleasantdale School District 107
Griffin Sonntag, Pleasantdale School District 107
Jill Ziegler, Illinois Tollway
Tim Donatucci, Pleasantview Fire Protection District
Tony Cavazos, Pleasant Dale Park District
Katie Hannigan, LaGrange Highlands School District 106
Kenneth Daemicke, IHP Resident

Non-Attendees

Chris Kokat, Flagg Creek Water Reclamation District
Karl Argast, Pleasantview Fire Protection District
Jim Liubicich, Flagg Creek Water Reclamation District
Elyse Hoffenberg, Township of Lyons
Guy Franzese, Village of Burr Ridge
Joe Schuessler, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Karyn Robles, Illinois Tollway

The following meeting summary is assumed correct unless written notice to the contrary is received within 5 days of the issue date.

Meeting Summary

The first Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting for the Wolf Road Corridor Study, from 79th Street to Plainfield Road, occurred on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 1:00 PM at the Indian Head Park Village Hall.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Study, establish the CAC, review existing conditions, share public survey results, discuss potential corridor alternative components, and receive feedback from CAC members. Twenty-eight (28) participants were in attendance, each of which was provided the meeting agenda, CAC description handout, member list, presentation, and corridor aerial exhibit.

The following is a general summary of the presentation and subsequent questions, comments, or discussion.

Meeting Goals:

Strand Associates, Inc. (Strand) welcomed attendees to the meeting, discussed housekeeping items, and outlined that the meeting goals were to 1) introduce the Study team; 2) establish the CAC roles and responsibilities; 3) provide an overview of the study background, goals, and timelines; 4) review and receive feedback on existing conditions; 5) review the public involvement strategy and public survey results; 6) discuss the potential corridor alternative components; and 7) identify next steps.

CAC Roles and Responsibilities:

The public involvement team, R.M. Chin and Associates (CHIN), outlined that the role of the CAC is to advise the Study team on project direction, provide the team guidance and support for issues within the CAC members' area of expertise, assist in the promotion of public information meetings, and serve as a link to update their organizations or communities on the overall project progress and schedule. CAC members introduced themselves and briefly described their connection to the Study. Three CAC meetings are anticipated for the Study.

Study Overview:

The portion of Wolf Road being evaluated as part of this Phase I Study is approximately 2.3 miles long, from 79th Street to Plainfield Road. The corridor is within or adjacent to the following communities: the Village of Indian Head Park, the Village of Burr Ridge, the City of Countryside, the Village of Willow Springs, and the Township of Lyons.

The Study looks to develop and assess corridor improvement alternatives to ultimately identify a preferred alternative to proceed to Phase II (design engineering) and Phase III (construction).

The study aims to accommodate the projected year 2050 travel demands, improve safety and mobility for all users, evaluate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and reconstruct aging infrastructure. The study is currently in Phase I, or the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study portion, of a typical roadway project timeline. During Phase I, the goal is to develop a preferred alternative and identify associated impacts. The Phase I follows an established engineering process with reviews and approvals by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). After Phase I, the project moves into Phase II, which includes contract plan preparation and possible land acquisition. Phase III is the actual construction of improvements. Phase II and Phase III are not currently funded. The Study must follow federal engineering processes and standards to be eligible for future funding opportunities.

- Attendees asked about when construction might occur. Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) noted that getting to construction takes time and there are dependences on other agencies for review, which can slow down the process. With that in mind, construction may begin in 2028; however, that will be impacted by delays in Phase I or Phase II.
- Attendees also asked about interim plans for the corridor between today and the anticipated 2028 construction, noting that there is needed maintenance. DoTH noted that they will review their internal maintenance schedule to identify if maintenance (e.g. patching or resurfacing) work could be performed as a short-term fix to keep the roadway in a state of good repair in advance of the full reconstruction project.

This Phase I Study began in 2020 and is anticipated to last until the end of 2024. Throughout the Study, the Study team will gather additional public feedback, review the components and trade-offs of various corridor elements for consideration, develop a public survey, conduct three Corridor Advisory Committee meetings, hold two Public Information Meetings, develop a range of alternatives for consideration, and develop a preferred alternative for the corridor.

Existing Conditions Review:

Strand presented an overview of the existing conditions including: roadway classifications and conditions, structure conditions, drainage conditions, traffic conditions, crass history, and multimodal facilities.

Roadway classifications and conditions: The Wolf Road corridor contains two functional classifications: minor arterial from the I-294 On Ramp to Plainfield Road and major collector from 79th Street to the I-294 On Ramp. These classifications are important as IDOT criteria identifies which types of vehicles the corridor must be designed for based on classification. This Study will not change the functional classifications of Wolf Road.

The Wolf Road pavement has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be reconstructed. Reconstruction is necessary due to a lack of significant past improvements. Resurfacing the roadway and maintaining the existing configuration

is no longer a viable alternative. Thus, this Study is not able to propose a 'no build' solution that maintains the roadway as is, because current roadway standards need to be met.

- The Study Team noted that other local corridors, including one in Willow Springs, may have been possible to resurface based on roadway conditions and maintenance history. However, that is not an option for Wolf Road.

Structure Conditions: The Flagg Creek Bridge, originally constructed in 1955, underwent its last rehabilitation in 1991 and recently required emergency repairs in 2023. It meets IDOT criteria for full replacement. Additionally, the Abandoned Flagg Creek Box Culvert, constructed in 1991, was observed to have creek erosion and a continually deteriorating condition. Full replacement was deemed to be the most cost-effective option for addressing the culvert's deteriorating condition. It is important to note that as this project looks to replace these structures, they need to be designed to be forward compatible with any future roadway and bicycle/pedestrian features (e.g. multimodal paths and sidewalks), as structures are typically reconstructed at a slower rate than roadways.

Drainage Conditions: Most of the corridor features open ditches for drainage, but the Joliet Road intersection contains an underground storm sewer system. The drainage from the entire corridor eventually leads to Flagg Creek. Other drainage studies conducted by different entities are either ongoing or have been completed in adjacent areas. Within the scope of the Wolf Road Corridor Study, those results and findings will be addressed to the extent possible.

- Attendees voiced frustrations regarding delayed responses from IDOT when residents sought answers on local drainage concerns, underscoring the need for more effective communication channels.
- Attendees also highlighted areas where the roadway is higher than the sidewalk, such as in front of the Pleasantdale Middle School. This leads to flooded sidewalks, creating safety concerns for children walking to and from school. Specifically, when it floods, students divert into Wolf Road to walk around puddles. In the winter, the puddles freeze and create unsafe conditions.
- Attendees also noted that flooded sidewalks seem to have created differential settlement between sidewalk panels, leading to safety concerns.
- The Pleasant Dale Park District noted a recent project to mitigate flooding on their property, which had positive results.
- Attendees also expressed concern on how climate change and worsening storms may impact the current drainage models. DoTH indicated that the Study uses IDOT approved data sources for rainfall data, which are periodically updated to reflect changing conditions.
- A discussion occurred on whether modeled drainage improvements factor into maintenance and actual conditions that may occur after construction is completed. DoTH noted that solutions that reduce long-term maintenance are desirable so that conditions such as sediment buildup do not occur. However, maintenance

agreements to continue upkeep may be necessary and will be further evaluated as the Study progresses.

- Amy Jo Wittenberg, Village President, recommended that individuals forward their specific drainage concerns to the Study team, as this data helps inform the analysis.

Traffic Conditions: Traffic projections for the design year of 2050 were determined by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the approved and required authority on providing these traffic models. These models must be used in order to be eligible for federal funding.

- Attendees asked if there was any data or information on the historical accuracy of the data provided by CMAP. DoTH indicated that they were not aware of any such evaluations but would ask CMAP. It was also highlighted that these projections are the only approved traffic projections by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and a project would not be eligible for federal funding by using any other approach or model to estimate future traffic projections.

The Study Team collected real-time traffic counts at intersections along the corridor to determine baseline traffic levels. This baseline traffic data was provided to CMAP, who incorporated the baseline data into their region-wide models to project anticipated future 2050 traffic levels. The projected 2050 traffic volumes range from 6,800 to 14,300 vehicles per day.

- Attendees asked why the traffic volumes are expected to increase along a corridor that is already well established and built out. DoTH indicated that they will review the results with CMAP for further explanation; however, the Chicagoland region is anticipated have some overall growth over time. This may lead to an increase in traffic along the corridor even if the corridor itself is built out. An attendee also noted that the nearby UPS facility may also contribute as it will bring employees and trucks to the area.
- Attendees also discussed how these traffic projections impact the alternative components. Different design criteria are provided based on roadway classification and traffic volumes, so the projections do factor into how the alternatives will be developed. However, the alternatives will be developed based on many different factors, not just traffic volumes.
- Attendees asked if the traffic projections included information on increased truck volumes vs. car volumes. The traffic projections do not consider vehicle type, only total vehicle quantities. The Study team has the actual volumes of vehicles and the differentiation between trucks and cars from their real-time traffic counts; however, the projected 2050 data does not split those out.
- Attendees also questioned if more lanes equal more traffic. DoTH noted that yes, typically, this does happen; however, in the alternative components that will be presented later in the presentation, the Study team does not anticipate adding more thru travel lanes. Adding a center turn lane or expanding to a three-lane configuration still includes only one thru lane in each direction, which is what traffic models analyze.

Traffic operations are assessed using the Level of Service (LOS) metric, which assigns letter grades (A to F) to quantify the amount of delay experienced by roadway users. For future traffic conditions, Wolf Road is required to meet a minimum design criteria of LOS D, or else a design variance is required. Most of the segments on the corridor operate at an acceptable LOS in the future no-build condition, except for northbound Wolf Road between the I-294 Off-Ramp and Joliet Road. The traffic operations are designed for the peak hour of the day, which for this corridor is the PM rush hour.

- Attendees noted that it is difficult to leave the Indian Head Plaza and turn onto Wolf Road in the afternoon due to traffic that is congested near the Joliet Road intersection. It was also noted that northbound Wolf Road traffic backs up onto the I-294 Off-Ramp.
- Attendees questioned why the southbound section of Wolf Road between the I-294 Off-Ramp and 72nd Street is LOS D. The Study Team noted that they do not have the specific answer to that at this meeting, but will follow up. From an initial glance, it may be that the adjacent corridors create a backup on this section from people looking to turn left onto 72nd Street.
- Attendees proposed focusing improvements on areas with current traffic issues or anticipated increases rather than addressing segments already graded as acceptable.

When evaluating the intersections themselves, in a future no-build scenario, two intersections fail to meet the design criteria. At Joliet Road, the northbound through/right movement has a LOS F. At the 72nd Street, the eastbound left/through/right movement has a LOS F. In summary, traffic operations generally operate acceptably, but there are improvements that can be made.

Crash History: Crash reports from IDOT and local police departments covering the years 2016-2020 along the corridor were collected within a standard 5-year review window. A total of 183 crashes were identified, and their distribution by crash type was detailed. This included <1% Type K (Fatal Injury), 2% Type A (Suspected Serious Injury), 5% Type B (Suspected Minor Injury), 10% Type C (Possible Injury), and 83% PD (Property Damage Only).

26% of crashes occurred along segments between intersections, while 74% took place at intersections. The corridor was evaluated for this breakdown due to the high frequency of intersections along Wolf Road within the project limits, highlighting their integral role in this corridor.

- Attendees expressed a specific interest in obtaining a detailed breakdown of crash locations, specifically a differentiation between crashes involving pedestrians and vehicles and those involving vehicles and vehicles. The Study Team noted that their crash analysis did involve differentiating between crashes involving, pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
- Attendees also discussed the impacts of new businesses, including a potential Dunkin' Donuts, at the southwest corner of Wolf Road and Joliet Road. The Study Team indicated this property involves getting access permits from IDOT due to their jurisdiction of Joliet Road and DoTH due to

their jurisdiction of Wolf Road. Potential impacts at that corner due to the Wolf Road improvements would be coordinated with that property owner as part of access permit reviews.

Multimodal Conditions: Wolf Road serves as a multimodal corridor catering to various users, including passenger vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and freight. Sidewalks along Wolf Road are provided intermittently, as depicted in an accompanying graphic. However, bicyclists are required to share the travel lanes and narrow shoulders with other vehicles, as there are no separate or marked accommodations for them.

Illinois state law mandates reasonable access for trucks to travel off the National Highway Freight Network, encompassing I-294 and I-55. This access is crucial for purposes such as food, fuel, repair, rest, and loading/unloading points. Consequently, this legal requirement prohibits the restriction of truck traffic along Wolf Road.

- Attendees asked if there are ways to design the roadway to counteract large truck traffic. The Study Team indicated that they must follow roadway design criteria set by DoTH, IDOT, and FHWA. If these criteria are not followed, thorough documentation and justification must be provided through design variances to be presented to IDOT and FHWA for approval. Designing something explicitly to not allow trucks would likely not be granted a design variance.
- Attendees emphasized the necessity for enhanced bike accommodations, although there was no consensus regarding on vs. off-street bike facilities. There are different types of bicyclists that use the corridor. Large bike clubs riding 3-5 riders wide typically ride on the street today and take up an entire travel lane; these groups may not use off-street bike facilities. However, young riders, families, or individual riders may not feel comfortable using on-street bike facilities.

Purpose and Need: Through evaluating the corridor's existing conditions, the Study's Purpose and Need was developed, presented to, and approved by IDOT and FHWA. The purpose of the proposed improvements is to provide improved operational efficiency and safety and enhance pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and safety. Improvements are needed to address intersection capacity and crashes and provide sidewalk connectivity and bicycle accommodations along the corridor.

- There were no objections to or suggested modifications to the Purpose and Need from attendees.

Public Involvement

CHIN presented the Public Involvement Strategy and high-level survey results. Extensive public feedback was gathered in April and May 2022 following Public Information Meeting #1, revealing diverse opinions along the corridor. In response, the Study Team increased outreach efforts by establishing a Corridor Advisory

Committee, a public survey, a project website, and a variety of outreach mechanisms.

The Study Team implemented two surveys: a questionnaire and an interactive mapping survey. The questionnaire had 320 responses, with 93% of respondents using Wolf Road daily, and 61% representing new participants, indicating increased community engagement. The interactive mapping survey allowed respondents to pinpoint locations and express concerns, resulting in 81 total participants, 62 pins, and 447 comments related to bike facilities, drainage, trees, safety, pedestrians, and property impact. Key concerns included traffic and roadway conditions, biking and pedestrian accommodations, and safety measures. Participants emphasized the urgent need for enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to ensure safe mobility, as well as the need to preserve trees.

In addition to the insights gathered from the surveys, the Study Team collected feedback from residents through letters (2), social media, email (83), and voicemail (18). The two letters received were from homeowners associations throughout the corridor representing over 200 residents. In these letters, the Ashbrook Associations and Indian Head Park Associations noted support for maintaining the existing sidewalk on the east side of Wolf Road from the Acacia neighborhood to Plainfield Road, with preferences for specific terminus paving and safe crossing locations.

There was also support for sidewalks on both sides of Wolf Road between 79th Street and 72nd Street, and on the west side only from 72nd Street to Joliet Road. There was opposition to a sidewalk on the east side of Wolf Road between 72nd Street and Joliet Road.

Potential Alternative Components

Strand discussed potential corridor alternative components and collected additional suggestions. Attendees were provided aerial map handouts to draw and comment on their preferences in different segments of the corridor. It was noted that each of the resulting options was a potential component of the corridor design alternative that meets current design standards and the project's purpose and need. It was noted that there will be trade-offs and impacts of the various components that will need to be further evaluated and discussed with the CAC.

Roadway and Drainage Options:

The existing corridor typically contains 12-foot-wide lanes and 3-foot-wide shoulders, although conditions vary along the corridor. Additionally, open ditches collect and drain stormwater. This means there is approximately 30-feet of roadway surface width along the corridor.

One potential option is to keep the look and feel of the corridor the same as existing with one lane in each direction and open ditch drainage. Using current design criteria, 11-foot-wide lanes and 10-foot-wide shoulders would be required. This gives a roadway surface width of 42 feet. The slope and width of the ditches would also be increased to meet current design criteria.

Another potential option is to maintain one lane in each direction and introduce a closed drainage system. This would require the lane widths to be increased to 13 feet with a 2 foot gutter on each side to meet the 30-foot minimum roadway surface width required by IDOT design criteria. The 30-foot minimum roadway surface width is required to accommodate the potential for stalled vehicles, emergency vehicles, and detoured traffic. However, wider lanes can be perceived by drivers as allowing for increased speeds and can be more attractive to larger vehicles.

Another component could be to introduce a Two Way Left Turn Lane (TWLTL). This is not an additional travel lane, but a continuous center turn lane that can be used in areas with a high number of left turns. This lane allows left-turning vehicles to move outside of the travel lane while waiting to make a turn, which can improve traffic operations and increase safety. IDOT provides guidance on which conditions can benefit from the addition of a TWLTL, and the Wolf Road corridor meets several of the elements. With the inclusion of a TWLTL, 11-foot-wide lanes would be able to be used with 2-foot gutters, for a total roadway surface width of 37 feet.

- Attendees inquired about the availability of safety data for the TWLTL and any information on enforcement, as other local TWLTLs seem to be used as through lanes. DoTH and Strand noted that this may be an enforcement issue and something to consider when looking at the options; however, a TWLTL is typically incorporated into a project as a safety measure to decrease crashes.

Pedestrian Accommodations:

IDOT and DoTH's criteria recommend a 3- to 5-foot-wide buffer between the curb and the sidewalk, a 5-foot-wide sidewalk, and a 2-foot-wide buffer behind the sidewalk. Sidewalks are designed solely for pedestrians, and the criteria may vary to accommodate specific site conditions.

- Attendees asked about the potential of adding sidewalk near the Lyonsville Cemetery. The Study Team noted that due to the age of the cemetery, and based on conversations directly with the Cemetery, there are not reliable records for locations of underground grave plots and caskets. Any proposed work that impacts the land behind the existing retaining wall along Wolf Road would require archaeological research and notification to relatives of the deceased. To avoid these efforts, the Study Team would place any potential sidewalk in front of the retaining wall.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations:

IDOT and DoTH's criteria recommend a 5-foot-wide buffer between the curb and the shared-use path, an 8- to 10-foot-wide shared-use path, and a 2-foot-wide buffer behind the path. The shared-use path is designed to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists, and the criteria may be adjusted to suit specific site conditions.

- Attendees asked about the differences between recommended buffer sizes between sidewalks and shared-use paths. DoTH indicated that they would look into it; however, it is likely due to bicyclists traveling at higher speeds than pedestrians. A

larger offset from the roadway reduces the potential that a user will accidentally enter the roadway.

- Attendees asked about the ability to be flexible and vary a shared-use path width throughout the corridor, noting that a similar path along nearby Brainard Avenue is only 8 feet wide. The Study Team confirmed that due to the surroundings and preferences of the community, the shared-use path does not need to be a continuous width as long as it is the minimum width recommended by IDOT and DoTH.
- Attendees also asked about potential overlapping shared-use paths and sidewalks, debating the ability and usefulness of having sidewalks throughout and introducing shared-use paths where they may be used more, such as near schools. The Study Team confirmed this option could be evaluated.

Bicycle Accommodations:

Another potential bicycle accommodation would be to have on-street painted bike lanes. IDOT and DoTH's criteria recommend a 6-foot-wide on-street bicycle lane with a 2-foot-wide buffer. Additionally, the criteria require separate northbound and southbound on-street bicycle lanes, emphasizing that these lanes are exclusively for bicyclists.

- Attendees voiced apprehensions regarding the potential impact on adjacent land and parking lots by implementing both on-street bike accommodations and off-street pedestrian accommodations.

Open Discussion:

Attendees asked about the impacts on vegetation along the corridor. DoTH noted that as the alternatives are better defined, impacts to vegetation and trees will be able to be better understood. The Study Team understands that reducing impacts to vegetation is a priority of the community.

Attendees also sought insights into the cost difference between a closed drainage system and open ditches, in addition to a general project cost estimate for construction. Strand noted that cost estimates have not been prepared yet and will come later in the Study, as the alternatives are better defined and impacts are better understood.

Strand concluded the meeting at 3:15 PM, noting that meeting materials would be posted on the Study website. The Study Team thanked the CAC members who were able to join the meeting. CAC feedback will be incorporated into the development of improvement alternatives to be shared at the next CAC meeting. The next CAC meeting will also serve to preview the second Public Information Meeting, to be held in Mid-2024.