

WOLF ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PHASE I STUDY**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 has reached the end of its useful life and does not meet the future needs of the surrounding communities. Within the corridor, existing pavement needs to be repaired, existing bridges need to be 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. Cook County's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan has policy goals to prioritize transportation alternatives, including walking and biking, along their routes.

If nothing is done to the Wolf Road corridor, the pavement surface, structure conditions, safety, and traffic operations will continue to deteriorate over time. There will also continue to be a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to access local businesses, schools, parks, and other destinations along and adjacent to the corridor.

2. Which communities are impacted by this project?

The Wolf Road corridor is generally within the municipal limits of the Village of Indian Head Park and the Village of Burr Ridge. The City of Countryside and the Village of Willow Springs are adjacent to portions of the corridor.

3. Who has jurisdiction of Wolf Road?

Cook County has jurisdiction of Wolf Road, meaning that they have the responsibility and authority to maintain the roadway.

4. How were the project limits selected?

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

5. When will this project be built and how long will it take to complete?

The Preliminary Engineering and Environmental (Phase I) Study is anticipated to be completed in 2026. 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. The timing for Construction (Phase III) is dependent on how the construction is sequenced, but is anticipated to be at least two years. Phase II and Phase III are not yet funded.

6. How much will this project cost?

The proposed improvements are anticipated to cost at least \$27 million (2024 dollars). A more refined project cost estimate will be prepared after the Preferred Alternative is selected and available at Public Information Meeting #3.

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Impacts to existing fences, sheds, and other roadside objects will be determined and mitigated after the Preferred Alternative is selected.

8. My house is along Wolf Road. Can I add a new fence to my property?

The Village of Indian Head Park is exploring options to enhance safety and security on and near the roadway in conjunction with the Phase I Study. This may include allowing architectural fencing (at the property owner's expense) or other features. Allowing fencing on Wolf Road would require amending existing ordinances, which would involve a formal review and approval process by the Indian Head Park Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees.

9. How many trees will be impacted by this project?

As part of the Phase I Study's topographic survey, existing tree locations were collected. In addition, the Village of Indian Head Park collected the species, size, condition, and location of trees within the Village's municipal limits along Wolf Road.

Several factors will contribute to the total number of trees impacted along the corridor, including the roadway and sidewalk layout, underground utility construction, stormwater infrastructure, elevation and grading changes, and temporary elements needed to maintain traffic during construction. Some of these factors are not able to be determined as part of the Phase I Study, meaning that refined tree impacts cannot be determined until Phase II.

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

Cook County has a 1:1 tree replacement policy. Any tree that is greater than or equal to 6 inches in diameter that is removed by the project will be replaced within the corridor. 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 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 the restoration of landscaping, but the Village has committed the use of Village funds to provide landscaping improvements above and beyond what Cook County will provide within its municipal limits. The Study Team will discuss with the Village of Burr Ridge if they also desire additional landscaping improvements within their municipal limits.

11. What is a Two-Way Left-Turn Lane?

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

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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.

13. 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.

14. Have the Preliminary Alternatives changed since Public Information Meeting #1?

At Public Information Meeting #1, two Preliminary Alternatives were presented.

- Preliminary Alternative 1 consisted of a three-lane roadway layout (one northbound through lane, one two-way left turn lane, one southbound through lane) between 79th Street and I-294 and a five-lane typical section (two northbound through lanes, one two-way left turn lane, two southbound through lanes) between I-294 and Plainfield Road. All lanes were 11-feet wide.
- Preliminary Alternative 2 consisted of a three-lane roadway layout (one northbound through lane, one two-way left turn lane, one southbound through lane) between 79th Street and Plainfield Road. All lanes were 11-feet wide.
- For both alternatives, a 10-foot wide shared-use path was proposed on the west side of the road and a 5-foot wide sidewalk was proposed on the east side of the road.

At Public Information Meeting #2, three Preliminary Alternatives are presented.

- For all three alternatives, a three-lane roadway layout (one northbound through lane, one two-way left turn lane, one southbound through lane) is proposed. The through lanes are 11-feet wide and the two-way left turn lane is 10-feet wide. The following pedestrian and/or bicycle accommodations are proposed to accompany the roadway layout.
- Preliminary Alternative 1 (Baseline Sidewalk) consists of a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the west side of the road from 79th Street to Plainfield Road and on the east side of the road from 79th Street to 72nd Street and Acacia Drive (North) to Plainfield Road.
- Preliminary Alternative 2 (Full Sidewalk) consists of a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the west side of the road from 79th Street to Plainfield Road and on the east side of the road from 79th Street to 72nd Street and Joliet Road to Plainfield Road.
- Preliminary Alternative 3 (Shared-Use Path) consists of an 8-foot wide shared-use path on the west side of the road from 79th Street to Joliet Road and on the east side of the street from Joliet Road to Plainfield Road. A 5-foot wide sidewalk is proposed on the east side of the road from 79th Street to 72nd Street and on the west side of the road from Joliet Road to Plainfield Road.

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The Preliminary Alternatives presented at Public Information Meeting #2 propose a sidewalk (intended for pedestrian use) and/or a shared-use path (intended for pedestrian and bicycle use) in various locations along the corridor. Please refer to the Preliminary Alternative exhibits to view these locations.

If included in the Preferred Alternative, the sidewalk and/or shared-use path will connect to other existing and planned future sidewalks and/or shared-use paths within the project limits, as necessary. These elements already exist or are planned along Joliet Road, Acacia Drive, and Plainfield Road.

16. 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 as part of Phase II.

17. How many households along Wolf Road send children to the Highlands Elementary / Middle Schools?

The following student information was provided by LaGrange Highlands School District 106:

- South of Plainfield Road and west of Wolf Road, there are 37 households with at least one elementary student and 40 households with at least one middle school student, for a minimum student count of 77.
- South of Plainfield Road and east of Wolf Road, there are 58 households with at least one elementary student and 37 households with at least one middle school student that would use Wolf Road to get to school, for a minimum student county of 95.

18. 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.

19. Will there be an increase in truck traffic due to the improvements? Can truck traffic be restricted along Wolf Road?

Wolf Road does not currently have truck traffic restrictions. Since Wolf Road is an arterial route between I-294 and Plainfield Road and a collector route south of I-294, it serves as a route to deliver goods and provide connectivity to state routes. Arterial and collector routes are typically designed to accommodate passenger vehicles, buses, and trucks. As part of these improvements, Cook County cannot implement any truck traffic restrictions on roadways under their jurisdiction.

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Converting an existing two-lane road to a three-lane road with a center two-way left turn lane is not anticipated to cause any appreciable differences in traffic volumes (including truck traffic) beyond what is already projected for the 2050 design year by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Chicagoland region's planning organization. Similar projections are anticipated even in a "no-build" scenario.

Illinois state law requires that reasonable access be provided for trucks to travel off the National Highway Freight Network (which includes I-294 and I-55) for the purposes of food, fuel, repair, rest, and to points of loading and unloading. This further prohibits the ability to restrict truck traffic along Wolf Road.

20. 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 Study Team can review that request.

21. 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 Public Information Meeting #3.

22. 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 Public Information Meeting #3. Impacted wetlands will be mitigated as part of the proposed improvements.

23. 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 proposed drainage system will be designed in accordance with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Bureau of Local Roads and Streets Manual, the IDOT Drainage Manual, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) standards. The proposed drainage system will be reviewed by Cook County, IDOT, and MWRD as applicable.

Curb and gutter is proposed to collect roadway runoff and direct it to underground storm sewer pipes that would discharge the water at the existing outlet locations. Additional flow, due to added impervious pavement, would be detained in the pipes and released at the same rate as existing conditions. The inclusion of curb and gutter and storm sewer reduces potential land acquisition needs over open ditches, which would have to be expanded from their current sizes to handle increased capacity.

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WOLF ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PHASE I STUDY**Frequently Asked Questions****24. 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.

25. Will parking be impacted by this project?

Permanent parking impacts are not anticipated from the proposed improvements. Temporary parking impacts may be necessary to accommodate construction of the roadway, underground storm sewer, or other project elements. These impacts will be further identified, refined, and mitigated after the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

26. Will this project negatively affect property values?

Proximity to a roadway or other transportation infrastructure is one of several factors, including zoning, land-use planning, desirability, and economic conditions which may impact property values. Given that these factors influence property values, it is difficult to ascertain the impact that a specific factor may have on the value of an individual property. This project will provide a safer travel environment, improve accessibility, and enhance the quality of life within the community by providing better mobility for residents and commuters within the Study area.

Planning organizations, public works associations, and the American Association of Retired Persons have found that communities with pedestrian accommodations add to the walkability and livability of those communities, making them more desirable than communities without those accommodations. According to the National Association of Home Builders, trails and paths for walking and biking consistently remain one of the most sought-after community amenities by prospective homeowners. Also, an improved pedestrian and bicycle network in and around Indian Head Park, Burr Ridge, Countryside, and Willow Springs will allow more people to visit local businesses, schools, parks, and other destinations along and adjacent to the corridor.

27. Who is responsible for utility relocations?

As part of the Phase I Study, the Study Team contacted utility owners to make them aware of the project and to collect their utility atlases. Potential conflicts between existing utilities and the Preferred Alternative will be identified as part of the Phase I Study. During Phase II, these potential conflicts will be further refined in coordination with each utility owner. Facilities that are determined to be in conflict with the Wolf Road improvements will be relocated by each utility owner.

28. Will street lighting improvements be included as part of the project?

The existing Wolf Road corridor generally contains street lighting only at intersections. The replacement of intersection lighting and potential for additional lighting will be evaluated at the Study progresses.

WOLF ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PHASE I STUDY**Frequently Asked Questions****29. How much property does Cook County own along Wolf Road? Will private property need to be acquired as part of this project?**

Cook County owns the land surrounding Wolf Road. This property is called right-of-way and is used for roadway, drainage, safety, and maintenance purposes. The existing Wolf Road is generally centered within the Cook County right-of-way. The existing Cook County right-of-way varies from 33 feet to 50 feet on each side of the center of the road, for a total width of 66 feet to 100 feet wide.

The proposed improvements are not able to be fully constructed within the existing right-of-way. Potential land acquisition limits are shown in an approximate manner on the Preliminary Alternatives 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 Public Information Meeting #3.

In certain locations along the corridor, private property ownership extends to the center of Wolf Road. As part of this project, Cook County will acquire the portion of private property that would otherwise be considered right-of-way.

30. What are the different types of land acquisition?

There are three types of land acquisition. Property owners are financially compensated for all types of land acquisition.

- Fee Simple (Right-of-Way)
 - Acquisition of all rights and interests by Cook County.
- Permanent Easement
 - Area to cover construction and/or installation of ancillary roadway facilities that are considered permanent. Ownership is retained by the property owner, but the land is used by Cook County for construction and maintenance.
- Temporary Easement
 - Area essential to the completion of a project, but future entry is not needed. Ownership is retained by the property owner, but the land is used by Cook County for construction.

31. 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.

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After Public Information Meeting #2, 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 recommendation for the Preferred Alternative. Public feedback will be a consideration in the recommendation of the Preferred Alternative. This Preferred Alternative recommendation will be presented to the Illinois Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration for their final approval.

Community consensus on a single Preferred Alternative may not be possible.

33. Will there be another Public Information Meeting?

Public Information Meeting #3 will be held after the Preferred Alternative refinement and impact identification are complete. This Public Information Meeting will provide an update on the preliminary engineering, environmental resources review, and final impacts to the corridor. It is anticipated that this meeting will be held in 2026.

34. What is the future vision of the Wolf Road corridor?

This project is a once-in-a-generation investment in the Wolf Road corridor and will enhance and upgrade infrastructure for long-term benefit. This project will leave a lasting impact by:

- Enhancing corridor aesthetics using durable, low-maintenance hardscaping and landscaping consistent with the natural and wooded landscape of the community. Resident input will be actively sought to maintain the character of the community.
- Evaluating safety and security upgrades using architectural fencing, lighting, or other elements in conjunction with potential ordinance changes.
- Proactively planning infrastructure improvements for watermain and other utilities along Wolf Road as part of the roadway improvements using available funding opportunities.

This project has a significant scope and needs to be thoughtfully planned. Community and stakeholder feedback will be solicited throughout the project to maintain open communication and dialogue.