



PLAINFIELD ROAD Corridor Study



Summer 2021 Newsletter

ImprovePlainfieldRoad.org

Proposed Alternatives and Improvements Presented at the Virtual Public Information Meeting

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Virtual Public Information Meeting for the Plainfield Road Corridor Study on April 14, 2021! To ensure accessibility for those without internet access, hard copies of all meeting materials, along with pre-stamped comment cards, were provided at six public locations throughout the corridor. More than 60 community members attended the meeting and over 270 comments were received during the official comment period (April 7, 2021 through May 5, 2021). During the meeting, the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) reviewed existing conditions along the corridor and presented the developed alternatives for consideration. Following the presentation, the Project Team held a question-and-answer session. Read more about what we heard from the public on page 3.

Why is this project taking place?

Cook County DoTH initiated the Plainfield Road Corridor Study in 2020 to address known community concerns such as the existing roadway and drainage deficiencies, pedestrian/bicycle accommodations and other mobility and safety issues. All pavement sections have also reached the end of their useful service life and require improvement. Near County Line Road the concrete pavement is more than 40 years old and in other areas along the corridor the pavement is more than 60 years old. It is anticipated that the pavement will be reconstructed throughout the entire project area.

What are the proposed alternatives?

During the Virtual Public Information Meeting, the Project Team presented four (4) alternatives which were developed based on various data collection activities including existing conditions data analysis, multiple

Study Goals:



Safety improvements for all users



Enhance connectivity and accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians



Reconstruct and make updates to the roadway and drainage infrastructure



Accommodate the projected year 2050 travel demands and improve operational efficiency along the corridor

engineering and environmental studies, and preliminary feedback received from our Corridor Advisory Committee and Virtual Public Survey. Due to the projected needs and impacts to the community, only two alternatives are recommended to be further evaluated for selection of the preferred corridor alternative: Alternative 2 and Alternative 3(A and B). Please visit the project website to view all alternatives: improveplainfieldroad.org.

Continued page 2....

Inside this Issue

	Page
• Proposed Alternatives Presented at Virtual Public Information Meeting	1-2
• Public Survey Highlights	2
• Public Comment Themes	3-4
• Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	5
• Project Schedule	5
• Next Steps	5

Proposed Alternatives

...continued from page 1

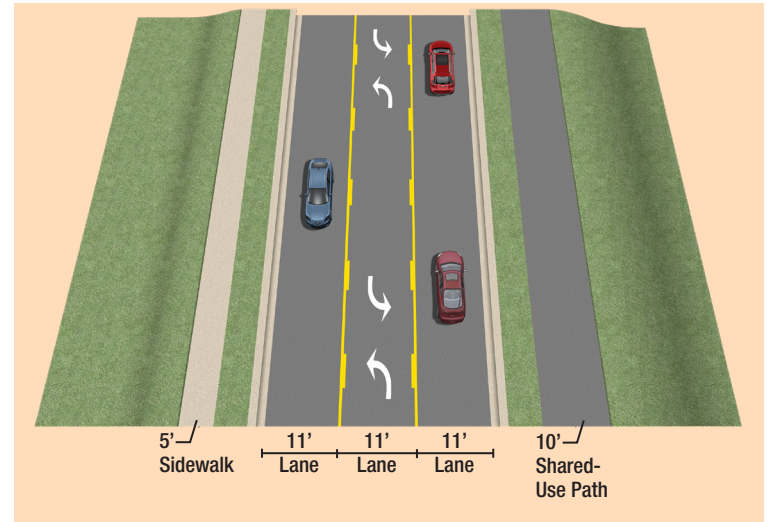
The following alternatives are being further evaluated:

- **Alternative 2** includes various intersection capacity improvements, a 3-lane roadway section with curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system in addition to continuous sidewalk and shared-use path throughout the corridor.
- **Alternative 3** includes all the Alternative 2 recommendations and introduces two sub-alternatives (Alternative 3A and Alternative 3B) that provide 5-lane segments of roadway along the Plainfield Road Corridor. The first segment (Alternative 3A) is between County Line Road and Wolf Road. The second segment (Alternative 3B) is between Brainard Avenue and 55th Street.

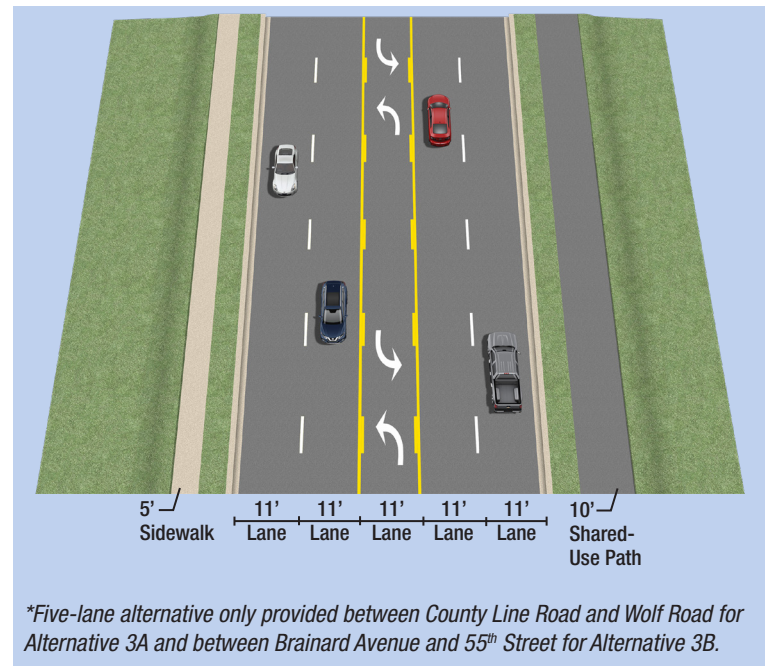
The projected 2050 traffic volumes within these segments warrant additional through lanes per the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) design criteria and have resulted in the investigation of the 5-lane segments along Plainfield Road. It is important to note that the evaluation of these alternatives will be based on various factors including public input, property, environmental and other impacts in addition to future traffic needs prior to determining a preferred alternative. If Alternative 3 is included in the final stages of the project, both segments could stand alone or be combined and result in an Alternative 3C. A continuous 5-lane roadway for the entire corridor is **not** recommended as it is **not** warranted through many segments of the corridor.

The proposed alternatives address existing roadway and drainage infrastructure deficiencies, enhance pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and improve safety and operational efficiency/mobility for all users along the Plainfield Road Corridor.

Alternative 2: Typical Section



Alternative 3A and 3B: Typical Section*



*Five-lane alternative only provided between County Line Road and Wolf Road for Alternative 3A and between Brainard Avenue and 55th Street for Alternative 3B.

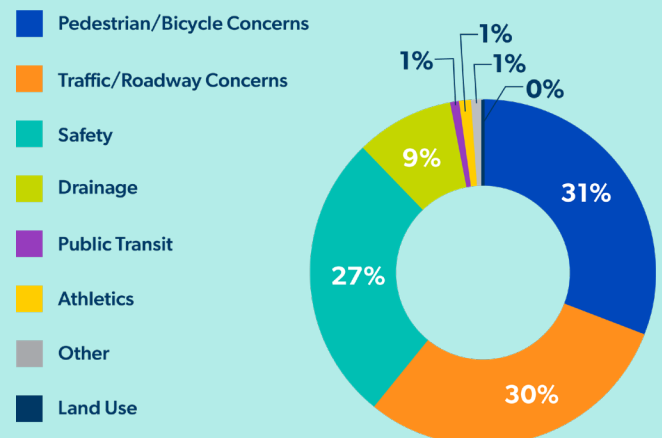
Public Survey Highlights

As part of the public outreach efforts for the study, the Project Team completed a Virtual Public Survey in fall 2020. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey! The survey included a welcome questionnaire and an interactive map which allowed for community input on issues they are seeing or experiencing within the corridor.

A total of 230 participants completed the survey and 162 comments were provided on the interactive map. Below are what participants thought should be the priority focus area in the corridor:

- Pedestrian/bicycle issues, access and accommodations
- Traffic/roadway improvements
- General safety
- Drainage concerns

Respondents' Priorities within the Corridor



These priority focus areas and location-specific comments have been incorporated into the alternative designs and will continue to be taken into consideration as the designs are refined. Read more about the public survey on the project website: improveplainfieldroad.org.

What We Heard from You!

The Project Team values your input and comments. Community involvement is crucial in determining the most appropriate improvements needed throughout the corridor. Following the community meeting, the Project Team received over 270 comments via voicemail, email and mailings. Additionally, we received a petition from over 400 community members.

Primary themes we heard based on comments received are outlined below and will be taken into consideration as the Project Team develops the preferred alternative.

Lane Configuration

A significant number of comments received, including the petition signed by community members, oppose the expansion of any segments of the Plainfield Road corridor to five (5) lanes. Comments in opposition of the 5-lane configurations conveyed that adding more lanes may increase traffic, result in higher speeds throughout the corridor, impact property value and trees/landscaping and cause safety issues – in particular, relating to access to local schools on the corridor. In addition, some comments expressed concerns about the effectiveness of County funds being used for this expansion.



Some comments voiced support of Alternative 2 which would allow Plainfield Road's existing 5-lane section near County Line Road to taper to a 3-lane section with continuous curb and gutter, sidewalk and a shared-use path to East Avenue.

The Project Team recognizes the concerns regarding a 5-lane configuration and has received opposition from the local municipalities to a 5-lane roadway. Both Alternative 3A and Alternative 3B provide the recommended capacity to accommodate the projected 2050 traffic volumes. The 5-lane section in Alternative 3A also provides a consistent typical section that continues through the intersection at County Line Road. The added lanes in Alternative 3B provide continuous right turn lanes to improve safety and reduce rear end crashes for vehicles using the commercial driveways present between Brainard Avenue and 55th Street.

While these benefits are recognized, the 5-lanes are anticipated to cause additional right-of-way (ROW) impacts without providing significant operational benefits. The increase in impervious area would cause larger storm-water impacts. Additionally, there may be larger impacts to the Arrowhead Memorial Park at the intersection of Wolf Road and Plainfield Road. Further coordination with IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is needed for Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 before a preferred alternative can be

selected. The impacts on the community are recognized and will be taken into consideration as alternatives are further evaluated.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Accommodations

Some comments were also received regarding pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations.

The majority of these comments requested additional sidewalks and/or bicycle accommodations along Plainfield Road for greater connectivity within their communities. Some of the feedback received expressed safety concerns regarding the addition of sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes due to traffic along Plainfield Road. A few comments emphasized the need to ensure that sidewalk and shared-use path plans align with the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, some comments received expressed preference for an on-road bicycle facility as opposed to an off-street shared-use path.



The Project Team will evaluate each existing sidewalk and crosswalk for safety throughout the corridor in the next stage of the study. This will result in a better understanding of the appropriate safety improvements that are needed and can be incorporated at existing crosswalk locations. All pedestrian accommodations will be ADA accessible, increasing accessibility and safety for all users.

One of the main goals of the study is to provide continuous connectivity for pedestrians and bicycles. A shared-use path is recommended on the south side of Plainfield Road and a sidewalk is recommended on the north side of Plainfield Road throughout the corridor. The Project Team found that a shared-use path would be more contextually appropriate along this corridor than on-street paths and more suitable for all users including young children.

Drainage

A few community members favored Alternative 2 when seeking options to address the drainage issues. This alternative would include a curb and gutter with a closed drainage system, along with a sidewalk and shared-use path. Others wanted to know whether the study would address the drainage conditions that exist throughout the corridor, particularly in the La Grange Highlands neighborhood and on the north side of Plainfield Road between Wolf Road and I-294.



Continued page 4....

What We Heard from You!

...continued from page 3

A Proposed Drainage Plan will be prepared after the preferred alternative is selected. The Proposed Drainage Plan generally focuses on the drainage infrastructure needs associated with roadway improvements along Plainfield Road. This would include improving ditches and storm sewers along the roadway corridor as well as providing better grading to make sure water makes its way into the ditches and storm sewers.

All the alternatives being considered include curb and gutter to provide an enclosed drainage system along Plainfield Road which collects stormwater runoff prior to leaving the roadway system. The Proposed Drainage Plan will be designed to comply with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's (MWRD) Watershed Management Ordinance requirements.

Property Impacts

Several comments were received concerning the possible removal of trees and shrubs along the corridor. These comments emphasized the importance of being part of a "Tree City" and maintaining the natural beauty of greenery and trees, including mature oak trees. The Project Team will make every attempt to mitigate impacts to adjacent properties and environmental resources and any trees that may be impacted will be replaced based on the County's requirement of a 1:1 ratio.



A few homeowners provided comments highlighting concerns regarding losing property. Also, the Project Team received comments regarding the potential of decreasing property values with the expansion of Plainfield Road. Additional right-of-way acquisition or construction easements are anticipated for the alternatives being considered to accommodate the roadway typical section, sidewalk, shared-use path, intersection improvements and grading and drainage improvements. This project improvement, along with pedestrian and drainage improvements, will provide a safer travel environment, improve accessibility and reinvest in the community to enhance land use and quality of life. The Project Team will develop a more detailed analysis of impacts in the next stage of the study.



If you were unable to attend the meeting or would like to review the meeting materials, please visit the project website, www.ImprovePlainfieldRoad.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of safety improvements will be provided at parks/schools for pedestrians crossing Plainfield Road?

Each existing crosswalk will be evaluated for safety throughout the corridor. Investigations provided in the next stage of the study will result in a better understanding of the possible safety improvements that are needed and can be incorporated at existing crosswalk locations.

When will Plainfield Road be under construction?

The Project Team expects Phase I to be completed by the end of 2022 with Phase II following. Timing of construction will be dependent on plan readiness, land acquisition status and funding availability. The earliest we anticipate construction to begin is 2026.

I am opposed to a 5-lane section. Why is the County considering this?

A 5-lane section has been considered as a potential alternative based on project traffic volumes, but is not warranted throughout all segments of the corridor. There are two segments along Plainfield Road in which the projected 2050 traffic volumes are high enough to justify a 5-lane section according to IDOT design criteria:

- County Line Road to Wolf Road
- Brainard Avenue to 55th Street

Further investigation and coordination with IDOT and the FHWA is required to determine if safety and operational benefits provided justify a 5-lane section with additional impacts anticipated.

Is the project going to remove trees and shrubs?

The Project Team is making every attempt to mitigate impacts to adjacent properties and environmental resources, however, it is anticipated that some tree and bush removal will be required to accommodate the proposed improvements. All trees that are removed will be replaced at a 1 to 1 ratio. The Project Team will develop a more detailed analysis of these impacts in the next stage of this study.

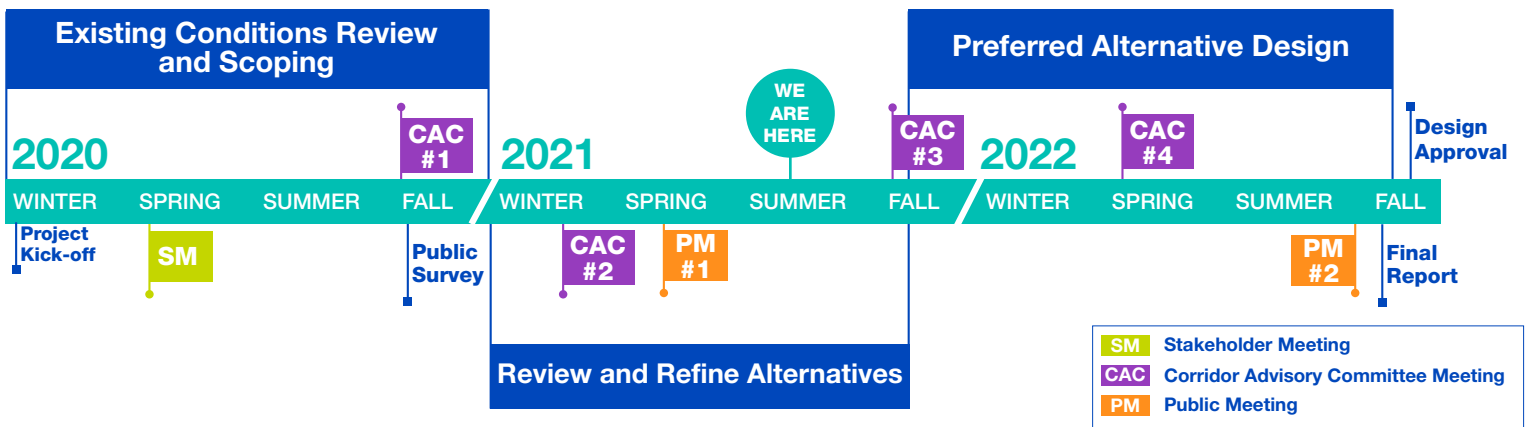
How will the study address drainage issues in the region?

The project's ability to address flooding and provide relief beyond the roadway corridor is limited. As such, the proposed drainage plan will generally focus on the drainage infrastructure needs associated with roadway improvements along Plainfield Road. The proposed drainage system will be designed to comply with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's (MWRD) Watershed Management Ordinance requirements.

Why is the County proposing two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) throughout the corridor limits?

A review of the crash data has shown that 54% of reported crashes were rear end crashes. The addition of a center two-way left turn lane reduces the potential for rear end crashes by providing a refuge area for left turning vehicles and allows through traffic to continue uninterrupted. Given the high number of rear end crashes reported along the corridor, a center two-way left turn lane is recommended to improve safety and mobility for users.

Project Schedule



Next Steps

Cook County will continue to review and refine the alternatives, meet with local stakeholders and the Corridor Advisory Committee and we anticipate presenting a preferred alternative to the public for comment during the second public information meeting in 2022. Phase I is expected to be completed in late 2022, which consists of the development of the preferred alternative, final reports and design approval of the preferred alternative.

Please send comments or questions about to the study to:

Sanjay Joshi, P.E.

Project Manager

Info@ ImprovePlainfieldRoad.org

