



LIBERTYVILLE TOWNSHIP

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July 6, 2017

Dear Libertyville Township Resident:

The Libertyville Township Highway Department initiated a preliminary engineering study (Phase I Study) for the improvement of W. Rockland Road between the Des Plaines River Bridge and St. Mary's Road in January of 2016. At the same time, the Village of Libertyville also initiated a study of E. Rockland Road between IL Route 21 (Milwaukee Avenue) and the Des Plaines River Bridge. The primary purpose of the roadway project is to reconstruct the roadway pavement structure which is nearing the end of its useful design life.

A Phase I Engineering Study includes environmental and location-design studies needed to develop and refine geometric improvements, evaluate costs and impacts, and undertake coordination with jurisdictional agencies and the public. The primary objective of a Phase I Study is to develop a conceptual improvement plan which provides the desired level of traffic safety and operation, minimizes impacts to adjacent properties, and which fulfills all of the requirements for processing and funding of the project by the local agencies (Village of Libertyville and Libertyville Township Highway Department) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Phase I Studies are administered through the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT's) Bureau of Local Roads and Streets. Once a Phase I study is complete (signified by receiving *Design Approval* from IDOT and/or the FHWA), the project moves into the detailed design during which contract bid plans and specifications are prepared. Following is a timeline of the Phase I study:

- **January to November 2016:** Data collection, traffic and crash analyses, and initial geometric and environmental studies.
- **November 2016:** Neighborhood meeting for Township residents to *present and seek input on the range of alternatives for improving Rockland Road between the River and St. Mary's Road.*
 - Alternative 1 would reconstruct Rockland Road to provide a two-foot paved shoulder, which when combined with a two-foot gravel shoulder, would provide the minimum basic shoulder for a roadway of this nature to meet State and Federal standards.
 - Alternative 2 would reconstruct Rockland Road east of the River to provide a widened four-foot paved shoulder plus a two-foot gravel shoulder; the minimum standard width to accommodate bicycle travel. This would provide residents along E. Rockland Road better access to and from the Des Plaines River Trail.
 - Alternative 3 would replace the ditches and swales with concrete curb and gutter and underground storm sewers, and would provide a designated on-street bicycle lane in each direction.

Of the approximately 21 comments which included a preference for a particular alternative, approximately two-thirds included a preference for Alternative 2. Based on a consideration of all technical analyses, impacts, benefits, and public feedback, the Township Highway Commissioner selected Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative.





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- **March 2017:** The second public meeting was held for both Village and Township residents *to view and comment on the preferred alternative* stretching the entire length from IL Route 21 to St. Mary's Road. Approximately 47 comments were received from 36 individuals, as some submitted multiple comments. Of all commenters, approximately 5 to 10 could be classified as opposing the preferred improvement plan.
- **May 2017:** In response to requests from several residents within the Township jurisdiction regarding the proposed project, the Township Highway Department elected to hold one additional meeting *as a final opportunity for public comment on the preferred alternative* before completing the Phase I study. Of the 44 people who commented in writing or verbally, approximately 50% expressed support for the preferred alternative (with four-foot paved bike shoulders), and approximately 50% were opposed. Of those opposed, most preferred changing the preferred alternative to Alternative 1 (with two-foot paved shoulders), though some preferred the local agency-funded alternative (resurfacing or rehabilitating the roadway while maintaining the same widths as today). A petition opposing the roadway plan with the four-foot bicycle shoulders was submitted at the meeting. It was signed by 64 people, 21 of whom are included among the 44 who commented in writing or verbally at or after the meeting.

Materials from all three public meetings, including summaries and FAQ's, are available on the Township Highway Commissioner's website at <http://www.libertyvilletownship.us/highway-commissioner>.

After further consideration of all of the environmental, technical and cost analyses completed over the past 16 months, and with further consideration given to public input from all three public meetings, I have decided to revise the preferred alternative from Alternative 2 to Alternative 1.

I believe this choice strikes the best balance between safety and operational needs of the roadway and the social and environmental effects of the project. While Alternative 1 does not provide the minimum standard shoulder width for bicycle travel, it does provide a minor increase in width to result in the minimum basic roadway shoulder that is compliant with State and Federal highway standards. While there will still be impacts with Alternative 1, they will be minimized as compared to Alternative 2. Safety will still be improved with elements such as the improved mailbox turnouts and the upgrade in signage and striping at the trail crossing location. As the project moves into Phase II engineering, we will continue to refine the plan to further minimize any environmental impacts.

I realize that this will likely be welcome news to those who've opposed Alternative 2, and will be disappointing for those who supported the four-foot bicycle shoulders. I hope you'll recognize that I've done everything in my power to make this the most transparent study process possible. I value and respect the opinions of all of the residents of the Township Road District that I have been elected to serve. Please contact me with any additional questions or comments as the project moves into Phase II.

Sincerely,

Marty Neal
Highway Commissioner