Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are we doing this project?

The Washington Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project is designed to improve safety, accessibility, and overall roadway function. It addresses long-standing community concerns about speeding and safety at intersections. The project also focuses on multi-modal accessibility, meaning it aims to make travel easier and safer for people whether they are walking, biking, driving, using public transit, or mobility devices like wheelchairs.

A Village-wide traffic study revealed that the 85th percentile speed along the corridor was 15 mph above the posted speed limit, indicating that the road's current condition encourages faster driving than intended. The project aims to:

- Reduce speeding and improve traffic controls
- Enhance safety for all users
- Improve multimodal accessibility
- Balance parking needs with safety enhancements

Who is working on this project?

The project is being led by the Village of River Forest in partnership with Primera Engineers, an engineering design and consulting firm. Key members of the project team include Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works & Engineering at the Village and Chad Dillavou, Project Manager and Lead Traffic Engineer at Primera.

What do the proposed improvements for this project include?

The proposed improvements focus on safety, accessibility, and corridor consistency. They include:

- Traffic calming measures such as bump-outs, raised intersections, and enhanced crosswalks
- Upgraded traffic controls, signage, and pavement marking
- Dedicated bike lanes and improved pedestrian infrastructure
- Streetscape modernization to improve visibility and traffic flow
- ADA-compliant design features
- Strategic parking adjustments to balance resident needs with safety goals

These elements are designed to create a safer, more inclusive, and community-friendly boulevard.

What is traffic calming?

Traffic calming means making streets safer and more comfortable for everyone, including residents, pedestrians and cyclists. It uses simple changes like speed bumps, curb extensions, and raised crosswalks to slow down cars and reduce speeding. These changes help prevent crashes, make it easier to cross the street, and create a more pleasant neighborhood for all.

Are there plans to add stop signs as part of the project?

Currently, the project does not include plans to add stop signs. Decisions about stop sign placement follow federal guidelines, which require certain conditions to be met. If a stop sign is installed where those conditions are not met, it can lead to drivers ignoring it and may increase safety risks. To help improve intersection safety, the project may include several traffic calming features designed to slow down traffic and make it easier for drivers to see pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles.

What is the projected timeline for the project and when will it be completed?

Phase I Preliminary Engineering – Started August 2025

A Phase I Study consists of a Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study which provides the support for the determination of a preferred option. During this phase, proposed geometry, environmental concerns, and proposed right-of-way are identified and public hearings are held to solicit feedback regarding the project.

Phase II Detailed Engineering – Start approximately July 2026

Phase II is the Design phase which refines the design and develops Plans, Specifications and Estimates for construction.

Phase III Construction – Start approximately May 2027

Phase III refers to the construction phase of a project, which is the final stage where the actual building and implementation of the planned improvements take place.

What happens during Phase I?

Phase I focuses on engineering analysis, public involvement, and preliminary design. Activities include:

- Reviewing traffic and safety data
- Developing design alternatives
- Engaging stakeholders through public meetings and other communication means

The goal of Phase I is to ensure that the proposed improvements reflect community priorities and meet safety and accessibility standards.

What happens after Phase I?

After Phase I is finalized and approved, the project will move into Phase II, which involves:

- Finalizing design plans
- Securing permits and approvals
- Coordinating with utilities and agencies
- Preparing bid documents for general construction contractors

Phase III will be the construction phase, where the improvements are built.

How much will the project cost?

The concept project estimate was $1,790,000 for Phase I and II engineering, construction, and construction engineering. This figure will be refined as the project advances and more details become available.

How will the project be paid for?

The Village applied for Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant funding in September 2024 but was unsuccessful in obtaining this grant. The Next ITEP funding application cycle is in August 2026 which the Village will submit for Washington Boulevard. In March of 2025, Village staff submitted a grant application to Cook County's Invest in Cook grant program for potential funds for the completion of Phase I for the Washington Corridor Improvement. The Village was notified of the award on July 25, 2025. The County shall reimburse the Village up to $62,786 for Phase I engineering costs. Additional funding sources will be assessed and pursued during the Phase I process.

How do I get involved?

There are several ways for all stakeholders, including residents, to get involved. These include:

- Attend community meetings
- Submit comment cards at meetings. These include questions about concerns, preferences, and suggestions on the project.
- Email the project team: Residents can send questions or feedback to **washingtoncorridorproject@primeraeng.com**.
- Review materials online: Project boards, maps, and FAQs are available on the Village website.

The project team is committed to incorporating community feedback throughout the process.