

The background image shows a two-lane road with yellow double lines, receding into the distance. There are green fields on either side, some trees, and utility poles with power lines. A few cars are visible on the road. The logo 'GOUGAR' is in large white letters, with 'ROAD STUDY' in smaller white letters below it.

# GOUGAR

## ROAD STUDY

Public Information Meeting 2

October 4, 2022

## WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?

The Will County Division of Transportation (WCDOT) is undertaking roadway improvements along the Gougar Road corridor. Gougar Road (CH 52) is a county highway located in parts of Joliet, New Lenox, and Will County. The limits of the study are from the intersection of Laraway Road (CH 74) to Francis Road (CH 64), which is approximately 3.3 miles long. The intent of the project is to accommodate future traffic demands while ensuring a safe and efficient traffic flow.

## WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING?

This Public Information Meeting contains the following information. All the exhibits listed below are available on the project website at [www.GougarRoadStudy.com](http://www.GougarRoadStudy.com) and printed copies are available at the Will County Division of Transportation office.

- Location Map
  - See the Gougar Road Study limits and the boundaries of the City of Joliet and the Village of New Lenox
- Project Phasing Schedule
  - Learn about the 3 phases of a transportation project and the current status of the project
- Strip Map
  - See the proposed improvement from a bird's-eye point of view with the surrounding environmental resources.
- Existing and Proposed Cross Section
  - Compare the existing and proposed features of the roadway improvement
- Average Daily Traffic and Level of Service
  - Observe the current daily traffic and intersection delays. Then, see how the proposed improvements will mitigate these delays in the future.
- Gougar Road Crash History
  - Gain knowledge of the different types of crashes and where they have occurred along Gougar Road over the last 5 years
- Land Acquisition Process
  - Understand the process that will be followed to acquire land needed to complete the project as well as the different types of land acquisitions
- NEPA/Section 4(f) Information
  - Gain an understanding of the environmental considerations and the best management practices that are being considered
- Bike and Pedestrian Accommodations
  - Learn about the location of bicycle and pedestrians pathways and this project's compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.
- Noise Abatement
  - Learn about the location of proposed noise walls and the feasibility and reasonableness of noise abatement and how someone can benefit from noise abatement measures

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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

#### **What are the physical limits of this project?**

This study includes Gougar Road from Laraway Road to Francis Road. The section of Gougar Road from Francis Road to US 6 (Maple Road) is not included as part of this project and is not funded or included in the County's current fiscal year (FY) 2022–2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). However, this section of Gougar Road is identified for similar widening to four lanes in the County's 2040 Long Range Transportation Program.

#### **What other projects are ongoing along or adjacent to Gougar Road?**

##### Gougar Road (CH 52) over CNRR Grade Separation

This project is being performed by the Will County Division of Transportation (WCDOT) and is located on Gougar Road just south of Lincoln Way West High School. The Gougar Road grade separation project included a Phase I study performed by The Village of New Lenox. The scope of the project is to raise Gougar Road above the CNRR tracks. The project is currently in Phase II design and Phase III (construction) is anticipated to begin in 2024.

##### I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30

This project is being performed by IDOT. The I-80 project included a Phase I Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies project and Phase II design plans for near-term improvements. The scope of these near-term improvements was developed based on the project's bridge inspections and traffic and crash analyses. The near-term study focused on specific existing corridor conditions that needed correction, rehabilitation, or reconstruction before the long-term project can be funded for construction. Near-term conditions included operational and safety deficiencies, pavement deficiencies, and structure rehabilitation/reconstruction needs that are present due to effects of use, time, and weather. As part of the planned improvement is the replacement of the Gougar Road over I-80 bridge

#### **What does Gougar Road's classification mean?**

Gougar Road (CH52) is a County Highway owned and maintained by the Will County Division of Transportation. It is classified as a Minor Arterial. The Federal Highway Administration defines a Minor Arterial as a route that provides service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterparts, such as US 30, and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system. At the February 2020 County Board Meeting, Resolution 20–44 designated Gougar Road from Laraway Road north to US Route 30 as a Class II Truck Route. IDOT has updated their maps to include the Class II Truck Route changes made in this resolution.

#### **How is drainage being considered?**

There are two existing floodplains along the corridor, one associated with Sugar Run and the other with Hickory Creek. Other than these two locations, there have been no identified flooding concerns along Gougar Road that are occurring as a result of the roadway. As there will be significant widening associated with this roadway improvement a mix of stormwater best management practices will be employed. A number of stormwater detention facilities are proposed along the corridor in addition to floodplain compensation areas to manage discharge rates and improve water quality. A closed drainage system utilizing a new storm sewer network is also proposed to collect roadway stormwater runoff.



## How was traffic counted and predicted for 2050?

Major notable generators of both passenger car and truck traffic on Gougar Road include two high schools, Joliet Park District and Forest Preserve District of Will County facilities, religious institutions, residential, commercial, and industrial developments including the Cherry Hill Business Park.

Gougar Road currently sees average daily traffic volumes of approximately 6,500 to 12,100 vehicles per day with hourly volumes as high as 1,160 vehicles per hour. The capacity of a 2-lane facility is up to 1,250 vehicles per hour, if exceeded, a 4-lane should be considered. Recently, Will County designated Gougar Road as a Class 2 Truck route. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (otherwise known as CMAP) has projected that traffic along Gougar Road will double by the year 2050 ranging from 17,400 to 26,800 vehicles per day with hourly volumes ranging as high as 1,895 to 2,385 vehicles per hour. This meets the design guidelines for a two-way 4-lane facility (exceeds 1,250 vehicles per hour) according to state guidelines and criteria for design.

CMAP is the region's comprehensive planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. The agency has a variety of program activities that are distinct from and support the development and implementation of regional plans. These planning activities include Regional Economy, Livability Planning, Local Planning, Transportation Planning, and Transportation Programming.

## How is safety being considered in this project?

Based on analysis of the crash data obtained, countermeasures to be considered were recommended to reduce certain types of crashes. With high schools in the study proximity, driver experience and skill levels may be lower in this area. The most probable causes of crashes along the corridor include inappropriate speeds, slippery pavement, misjudged speed of on-coming traffic, restricted sight distance, large turning volumes, and poor visibility.

The varying speed limit of existing Gougar Road between Francis Road and Laraway Road will be evaluated for a constant posted speed limit of 45 mph which is consistent with the speed limits as proposed along other similar county highways in the area. A raised concrete median is proposed throughout the full length of the project per Will County standards. The proposed median will separate opposing traffic and mitigate potential head-on or opposing direction sideswipe crashes. The raised concrete median can also act as a refuge island for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Gougar Road.

New safety measures are also being implemented at the Old Plank Road Trail and Gougar Road crossing to make the crossing more visible including high visible crosswalk markings, additional signage, and pedestrian signals. At the two railroad crossings, benefits of added lanes at the crossing include the additional lane for vehicles to maneuver into when special vehicles are required to stop at the railroad crossing, per state law.

## What types of improvements will be included at the at-grade railroad crossings?

At the railroad at-grade crossings, the proposed improvements include recommended safety features as dictated by national railroad standards. These include escape areas, crossing gates, signalization, and flashing lights. Coordination is ongoing with railroad agencies including the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Metra Rail, Canadian National Railway (CN), and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to discuss standards and requirements for at-grade crossing improvements.

## QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND INFORMATION

Your comments are valuable to us. To submit a comment, fill out the comment form provided at this meeting, online at **GougarRoadStudy.com**, or pick up a printed copy from the Will County Department of Transportation office and send or email to:

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Visit the project website  
for more information:

**GougarRoadStudy.com**