



# WILLOW ROAD STUDY NEWSLETTER

**DATE:** Monday, May 16, 2011  
**TIME:** 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.  
**PLACE:** New Trier High School  
 Northfield Campus  
 Main Cafeteria, Bldg. C  
 7 Happ Road  
 Northfield, Illinois 60093

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
[www.willowroadfuture.org](http://www.willowroadfuture.org)  
 Phone: (847) 705-4106 (Marie Glynn)  
 TTY/TDD: (800) 526-0844 or 711  
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You are invited to attend an **Open House Public Meeting** held by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) concerning Willow Road from Illinois Route 43 (Waukegan Road) to Interstate 94 (Edens Expressway).

The purpose of the meeting is to seek input, and to provide an overview of the study progress to date, including a comprehensive review of transportation needs, as well as the initial evaluation of alternative solutions.

Exhibits will be on display and an audio-visual presentation will be shown approximately every 20 minutes beginning at 5:00 P.M., with the last showing at 7:40 P.M. IDOT representatives and project team members will be present to answer questions regarding the project.

Please attend at anytime between 5:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.

## What's *NEW* with *WILLOW* ?

IDOT has been working with stakeholders as part of a comprehensive study of Willow Road, from Illinois Route 43 (Waukegan Road) to I-94 (Edens Expressway), that began in the fall of 2009. The purpose of the study is to identify a long term solution that addresses the safety concerns, congestion, and the aging pavement and bridge along Willow Road. The planning process involves many steps, and includes a combination of technical analysis and stakeholder input. Those basic steps are shown in Figure 1. Defining transportation needs by collecting data are the first steps, followed by developing and evaluating a range of alternatives (solutions) and concluding with the identification of a preferred plan. We have completed the transportation needs step and we have just begun the alternatives development and evaluation step.

### How can I get involved in the Willow Road Study?

- Attend a CAG Meeting
- Attend a Public Meeting
- Submit a comment or question
- Contact the Project Team
- Visit the project website: [www.willowroadfuture.org](http://www.willowroadfuture.org)

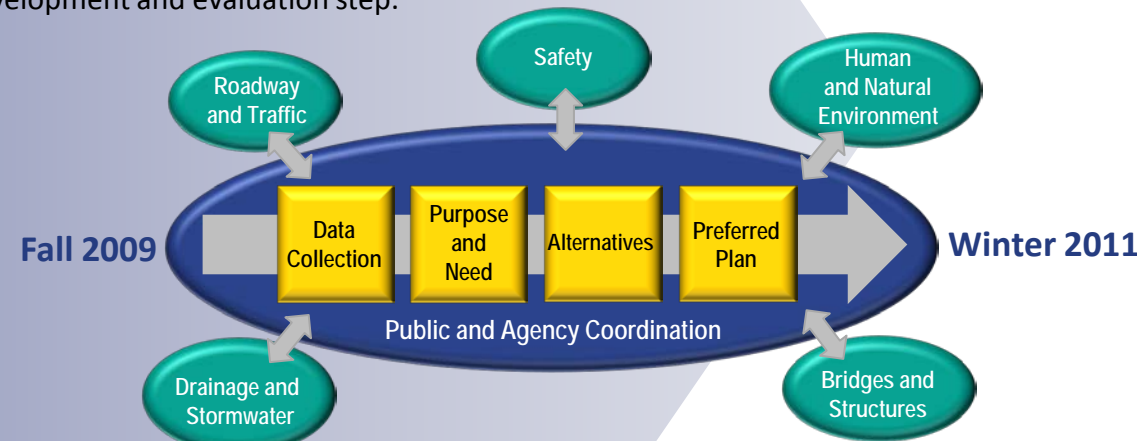
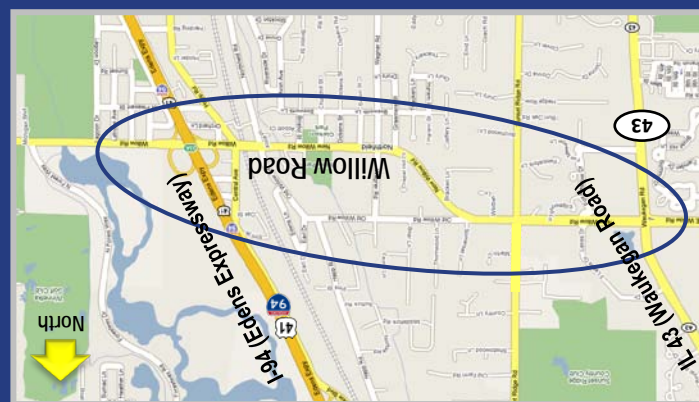


Figure 1: Project Planning Process

**Stakeholder involvement has been important** to the planning process, with a Community Advisory Group (CAG), a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a project website ([www.willowroadfuture.org](http://www.willowroadfuture.org)), Newsletters, and Public Meetings as the main elements of IDOT's outreach. The public outreach is following IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy, which involves meaningful and frequent engagement on every aspect of the Phase I study. Over the course of nine CAG meetings, the group has provided valued input, including a comprehensive review of existing conditions, transportation needs, and the range of alternatives that are being considered. This input has been complemented by extensive technical analyses, which are posted on the project website.

### Who's on the CAG?

The CAG plays a key role in the stakeholder involvement process, and is comprised of local government representatives, School District, Park District, community and business leaders appointed by the Villages of Glenview, Northbrook, Northfield, and Winnetka.



Willow Road Study  
 Illinois Department of Transportation  
 Division of Highways-District One  
 201 West Center Court  
 Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096

**You're Invited to a Public Meeting!**  
**Willow Road Study**  
**Public Meeting #2**  
**Monday, May 16, 2011**  
**5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.**



**What are the project needs?**

- SAFETY
- MOBILITY
- FACILITY CONDITION

**Guided by discussions** from CAG meetings and public input, and extensive technical analysis, the project team has identified three key project needs: Improving Safety for all users, Improving Mobility, and Improving Facility Condition and Design. This conclusion was supported by the completion of several key studies including a physical inventory of the current infrastructure, an in-depth crash analysis, and a traffic analysis. A summary of the needs are as follows:

**SAFETY.** There were a total of 533 crashes and 103 injuries along Willow Road over a 3-year period. That’s an average of 3 injury crashes per month; most involved rear-end crashes during congested conditions.

**MOBILITY.** Willow Road currently carries over 25,000 vehicles per day, and is highly congested with long lines of vehicles stacked at intersections. By the year 2040, for the “No Build” condition (roadway remains unchanged), the traffic is forecasted to rise to 30,000 vehicles per day.

**FACILITY CONDITION and DESIGN.** Willow Road was originally constructed as a concrete roadway in the mid-1940s with one lane in each direction; with periodic repairs to the roadway surface since that time, the roadway is long past its normal design life. The bridge over the North Branch of the Chicago River was also constructed in the 1940s and is similarly beyond its design life. The pedestrian facilities throughout the corridor need to be updated and improved.

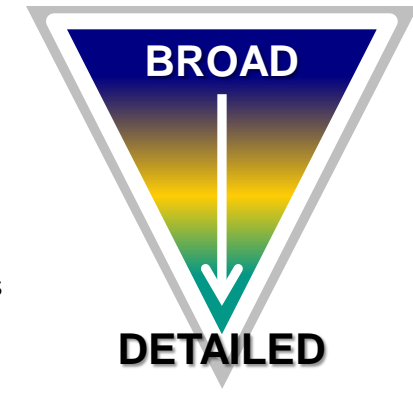
**Defining Project Needs**

*The Project Team considered...*

- Community Context Audit
- Problem Statement
- Traffic Analysis
- Crash Analysis
- Physical Inventory
- CAG Meetings
- Public Input

**An evaluation process** that adds detail as the number of alternatives are reduced was developed. The process began with an evaluation of how each proposed alternative addresses safety concerns, improves traffic flow and mobility along the road and at key intersections, and addresses both current and future infrastructure needs. The evaluation process also examines each alternative’s relative costs and impacts to determine any flaws that would eliminate them from further consideration. The performance of each alternative is measured by how it addresses the project’s needs and improves Willow Road over the No Build Alternative (which means not making any changes to Willow Road) and relative to the other alternatives.

The evaluation process is continuous, and in the next evaluation round, environmental and engineering detail will be added for those alternatives that are carried forward.



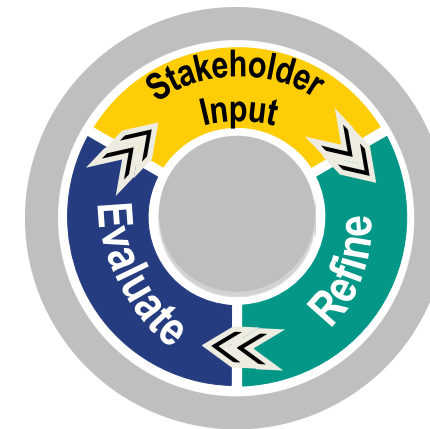
**How are the alternatives being evaluated?**

- Round #1 considers transportation needs
- Rounds #2 & #3 consider transportation needs, environmental impacts, community factors, and costs

**What alternatives are being considered?**

*All alternatives are stakeholder suggestions*

**One of the key CAG inputs** is that both local and regional alternatives be studied to see what impact they would have on the Willow Road project area. The focus is on determining what impact these improvements would have on Willow Road. As a result, 19 alternatives are being studied (16 Build Alternatives and 3 corridor specific options as shown in the graphic below) that include making specific changes to the area, improvements to the regional road network, and other improvements adjacent to the Willow Road project area.



**Alternative Evaluation Process**

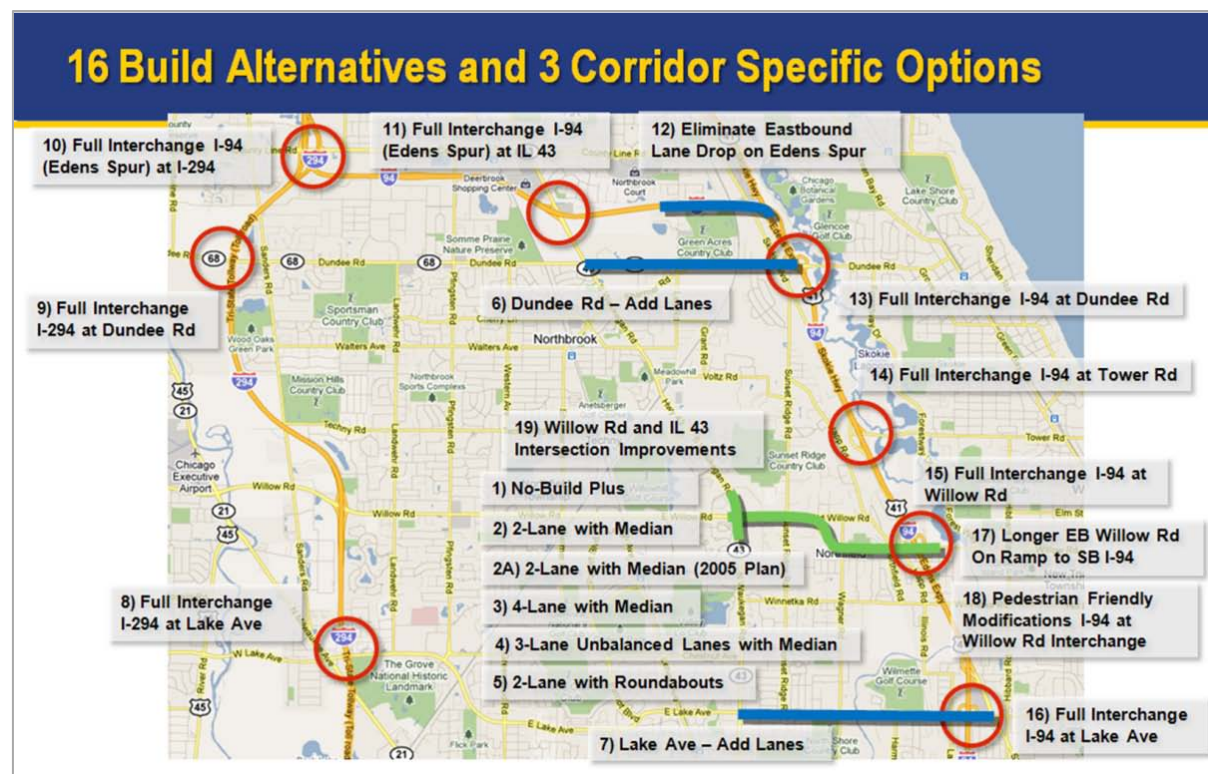
*Stakeholder input, alternative refinement, and continued evaluation are the key steps in each round of the alternative evaluation process*

**What are the results of the initial round of evaluations and how do they affect Willow Road?**

*Local Alternatives are better performing*

**What’s considered as part of CSS?**

- Engineering Factors
- Environmental Factors
- Community Factors
- Stakeholder Input



**The first evaluation round** included an initial screening to determine how each alternative met the Willow Road Purpose and Need, and completed an initial flaw and impact analysis. Relative comparisons of the alternatives to each other were made and discussed with the CAG to obtain stakeholder input. The following is the project team’s initial appraisal of the build alternatives:

**Purpose and Need Screening:** The sixteen build alternatives were screened against the three project needs of safety, mobility, and facility condition. The Regional Alternatives (improvements to other parallel routes and interchanges) did not address the Willow Road project needs. Comparatively, the Local (Willow Road) Alternatives were better able to address the project needs.

**Flaw Analysis / Impacts:** The flaw analysis considered the potential displacements, property acquisitions, floodplain and floodway impacts, and the concept level construction cost. The Regional Alternatives had the highest impacts and costs by a wide margin. The Local Alternatives involved comparatively fewer impacts and lower overall construction costs.

**We’re excited to continue our work** in the next round to create the best possible future for Willow Road. In the months ahead, we will review input and considerations from our second public meeting and work to narrow the selection of alternatives. The team will focus on detailed aspects of each remaining alternative by incorporating pedestrian safety measures, specific roadway designs, and performing in-depth budget considerations. Further input from future CAG meetings and technical analyses of preliminary studies will help to guide the evaluation of the best possible alternatives, and lead to the presentation of a recommended alternative in a Preferred Plan for Willow Road.

**What’s next?**

- Public input
- Complete initial evaluation round
- Add details to remaining alternatives