

## COMMERCIAL PARKING

Multiple commercial properties along 55th Street have asphalt paving within state right of way that is used for parking or provides access to parking without a permit, which is considered an encroachment. These paved encroachment areas will be replaced with a grassed parkway, as they conflict with the Department's roadway and pedestrian improvements. After the completion of the project, Countryside and any property owners who are interested in using these areas can apply to lease the property from the state through a lease agreement by submitting a formal request with an exhibit of the area to the Department's Bureau of Land Acquisition. Strip mall properties must submit a joint application to provide a consistent treatment along 55th Street and LaGrange Road. Any properties with legal parking spaces affected by the improvement will be compensated through the Department's Land Acquisition process. The city and businesses are encouraged to work together to find a solution that is beneficial to all stakeholders involved.

## STREETSCAPE



To improve the appeal and aesthetics of the corridor, Countryside was awarded an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant for streetscape improvements, which the Department has agreed to include as part of this project. Improvements include ornamental lighting along LaGrange Road south of 55th Street as well as decorative stamped concrete, streetscape furniture and landscaping that matches previous upgrades done along the corridor.



## NEXT STEPS

The Department is finalizing the Phase I Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study as we address comments from the public hearing. We will then proceed with contract plan preparation and land acquisition in preparation for construction. The improvement is currently included in the Department's FY 2018-2023 Proposed Highway Improvement Program, as we're committed to funding highway improvements to address the Joliet Road closure in the study area. Our current engineering efforts are targeted to enable a contract letting in the middle years of our current program contingent upon plan readiness, land acquisition and funding availability through our future annual legislative appropriations. For additional information, please feel free to contact us:

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 [www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/55thStWidening](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/55thStWidening)

## 55th Street US 12/20/45 (LaGrange Road) to East Avenue

2018 Newsletter



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE

Thank you for your attendance at the public hearing held on Thursday, Oct. 26, 2017, for the Illinois Department of Transportation's proposed improvement of 55th Street from LaGrange Road to East Avenue in Countryside. Your comments have become part of the official public hearing record. A total of eleven comments were received during the three-week comment period that lasted through Nov 24, 2017. As many comments concerned similar issues, this newsletter has been prepared to address your concerns as well as provide you with an overview of topics. The materials presented at the public hearing are available on the project website at [www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/55THSTWIDENING](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/55THSTWIDENING).



# 55th Street US 12/20/45 (LaGrange Road) to East Avenue



## SPEED LIMITS & CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC

Speed limits on Illinois state roadways are established by the Illinois Vehicle Code and Department policy. A speed study was conducted on 55th Street that resulted in the speed limit from County Line Road to East Avenue being lowered to 35 mph. A speed study was conducted on LaGrange Road from 47th Street to Joliet Road that recommended no change to the existing 35 mph speed limit. Speed enforcement and cut-through traffic is the responsibility of local law enforcement, and the Department encourages Countryside to continue monitoring and enforcing the safe and proper use of the roadways.



## STORMWATER AND DRAINAGE FACILITIES

As part of the planning and coordination process, measures were studied to address stormwater runoff. The proposed drainage system will incorporate in-line stormwater detention along with minor improvements to the local drainage systems. IDOT is not a flood control agency; therefore, the proposed drainage scope is limited to the roadway improvement. However, the Department coordinated with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District on their study of the nearby watershed to identify flood relief strategies. Although the drainage systems in the project area are diverse and complex, this coordination will result in a roadway drainage system design compatible with future improvements proposed as part of a regional plan developed by the MWRD with input and assistance from local communities. A large storm sewer is needed to provide water management to the communities in this area. To minimize disruption to residents, businesses and the traveling public along 55th Street, the Department is coordinating and evaluating the inclusion of MWRD's storm sewer as part of the 55th Street improvement.



## LAGRANGE ROAD ON-STREET PARKING

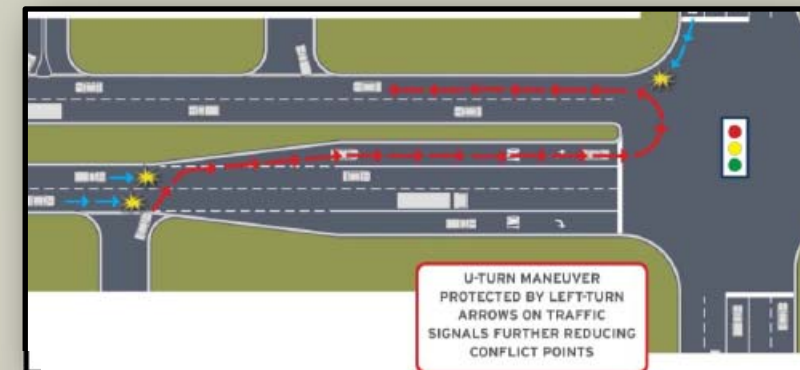
During the public hearing comment period, Countryside asked the Department to allow on-street parking along LaGrange Road. In accordance with the Department's design manuals and policies, the addition of on-street parking on state highways is strongly discouraged as it reduces the roadway's capacity, impedes traffic flow, and may produce undesirable traffic operations or an increase in crashes. The Department intends to improve operations and safety along this corridor and allowing on-street parking would not meet the purpose and need of this improvement; therefore, the Department does not approve on-street parking along LaGrange Road.

## RAISED MEDIANS

Comments received during the public hearing requested reconsideration of the raised medians to maintain current access to businesses. The Department re-evaluated the median treatments using available crash data. Left turning vehicles must stop in the through lane waiting for a gap in traffic, which impedes traffic flow. Crash data results



show rear-end, angle and turning crashes are predominant within the project limits (84 percent). Additionally, these stopped vehicles block the proper flow of traffic creating operational and safety issues. As such, a raised median continues to be the appropriate countermeasure proposed at the intersection of LaGrange Road and 55th Street to improve safety by prohibiting left-turning vehicles from blocking through lanes and making unsafe maneuvers. Statistical crash studies in the Highway Safety Manual have shown installation of raised medians can decrease crashes by up to 22 percent. The Federal Highway Administration notes that raised medians reduce crashes by over 40 percent in urban areas and could increase roadway capacity by as much as 36 percent. Furthermore, business surveys conducted in various states show the vast majority of business owners noted no decline in business sales after installation of raised medians. The Department will accommodate for U-turns at the intersection and install a two-way left turn lane along 55th Street to allow easy access to businesses along the corridor.



[https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access\\_mgmt/docs/benefits\\_am\\_trifold.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access_mgmt/docs/benefits_am_trifold.htm)

## PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

- Improve operations and safety by widening 55th Street to provide continuous five-lane cross section
- Extend left turn lanes and add raised medians at the intersection of 55th Street and LaGrange Road
- Add right turn lanes on both legs of 55th Street and the south leg of LaGrange Road
- Improve drainage by providing continuous curb and gutter sections and improved storm sewers
- Modernize traffic signals and add pedestrian push buttons and countdowns
- Provide continuous bicyclist and pedestrian accommodations throughout the corridors including an 8-foot wide shared-use path and 5-foot wide sidewalks to eliminate gaps in pedestrian accessibility throughout the project limits
- Improve aesthetics of the commercial corridor through streetscape improvements by the City of Countryside

