



IDOT to rebuild Knoxville Avenue through the heart of Peoria

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PEORIA — Within four to six years, Illinois Route 40 — known as Knoxville Avenue as it goes through Peoria — could look vastly different.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is about 18 months into a preliminary study of the road from Pennsylvania Avenue near Interstate 74 to just north of the intersection with War Memorial Drive.

Chuck Grayeb represents the city's 2nd District, which is on one side of the road. The Third District is on the other.

"This is a wonderful chance to rebuild the infrastructure that is within the heart of the city," he said.

The councilman is also excited for the chance to remake the intersection which is one of the more dangerous in the city.

According to statistics provided by IDOT in 2019, it is the most crash-prone intersection in Peoria County by far. Some 29 crashes were recorded there between 2012-16, the period included in the IDOT study.

The next two highest intersections — Knoxville and Lake Avenue, and War Memorial and Glen Avenue — each recorded 18 accidents during the same time. Lake and Knoxville recently saw construction that included adding turn lanes with improved sight lines.

Karen Dvorsky, a program development engineer with IDOT, said the study has so far looked at safety concerns at the intersection with War Memorial. They've also looked at how passenger vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, truck drivers and buses use the intersection.

Next up are meetings with a citizens advisory group, as well as a group of technical advisers. After that, there will be public sessions where people can see some of the ideas for the intersection.

Then, it moves into phase two which can last two to four years. That's where the final plans will be developed and the state will attempt to buy the land needed.

Dvorsky said the study began a few years ago as the pavement on that stretch of road has reached the end of its lifespan. A resurfacing job a year or so ago bought some time, she said.

"The pavement is old enough that it is time to reconstruct the pavement, and because we are reconstructing the pavement, we got through the process to look at the other needs in the area," she said. "We will accommodate them as part of the project, which was driven by the pavement conditions."