

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: October 14, 2025

To: Village President and Board of Trustees

From: Napoleon Haney, Village Manager

Topic: Options to Address Traffic Safety in 183rd Street Corridor

PURPOSE

At the August 12, 2025 Village Board meeting, staff was directed by the Village Board to review the 183rd Street Traffic Study which was previously completed in November 2021, to provide the Village Board with options to assist in determining how to address traffic concerns on 183rd Street.

BACKGROUND

In 1987, the Illinois Department of Transportation expanded 183rd Street from two to four lanes between Halsted Street and Kedzie Avenue to increase roadway capacity. That expansion established the four-lane layout that remains in place today. As part of this expansion, the Village accepted jurisdictional responsibility for the roadway.

Annual Average Daily Traffic Count

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation's most recent GIS data from 2024, the Annual Average Daily Traffic Count (AADTC) of the 183rd Street corridor, between Kedzie Avenue and Dixie Highway, is 21,900. The remaining leg of 183rd Street between Dixie Highway and Halsted Street has a lower AADTC of 15,100.

For comparison, Halsted Street's AADTC is 34,000 to 35,000. Homewood's 187th Street has an AADTC of 2,800 between Dixie Highway and Riegel Road. The AADTC increases to 3,950 between Riegel Road and Halsted Street.

COVID-19 Impacts on Driving Behavior

COVID-19 had a disruptive effect on the global community. There have been various studies that looked at the effects that the stringent lockdown measures enacted in March 2020 had on motorists' driving patterns. In particular, given the greater portability of remote working associated with the drastic decline in personal mobility, it is hypothesized that these may have served as accelerators for distracted and aggressive driving. The studies add to the growing literature investigating the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had, and in certain geographies still has, on traffic patterns. Overall, the results find agreement in the broader literature exploring the prevalence of vehicle collisions in 2020. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for example, found an increase in traffic fatalities from speeding during the pandemic in the United States. Likewise, a report from Transport Canada also highlights an increase in the rate of fatal collisions attributable to distraction or aggressive driving in the months following the issuance of stay-at-home orders. Consistent results are also found in the same geographies

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of the participants in this study, wherein aggressive driving increased by 52% in the second quarter of 2020 relative to the same period in 2019.

Homewood Not Immune to Bad Driving Behavior

In the immediate wake of a fatal crash that occurred in July 2020, Homewood officials took swift measures to improve safety at the intersection of Center Avenue and 183rd Street. Trees were removed to improve visibility, the traffic signal at Aberdeen Street was re-timed in an effort to act as a traffic calming measure, and flexible posts were installed to restrict dangerous turning movements at Center Avenue.

183rd Street Speeding/Accident Mitigation Options

Later in 2021, the Village issued a Request for Qualifications seeking an engineering consultant to study the entire 183rd Street corridor between Kedzie Avenue and Halsted Street. The intent was to comprehensively evaluate safety and traffic operations, considering a wide range of options to improve traffic safety such as lane reductions, traffic signals, roundabouts, turn lanes, bike lanes, and median improvements. In November 2021, the Village Board selected Burns & McDonnell of Chicago, IL to complete the study. The final report identified more than 47 potential mitigation strategies, each with associated cost estimates.

By March 2022, staff narrowed the list of strategies and recommended a phased approach to the Village Board. The key options included a pilot “road diet” between Riegel Road and Morgan Street, Phase I engineering for a new traffic signal at Center Street, conversion of Gottschalk Avenue into either a dead-end or a one-way street, and the installation of lane delineators at Park Avenue. The Board directed staff to refine these recommendations and identify costs as part of the upcoming capital plan.

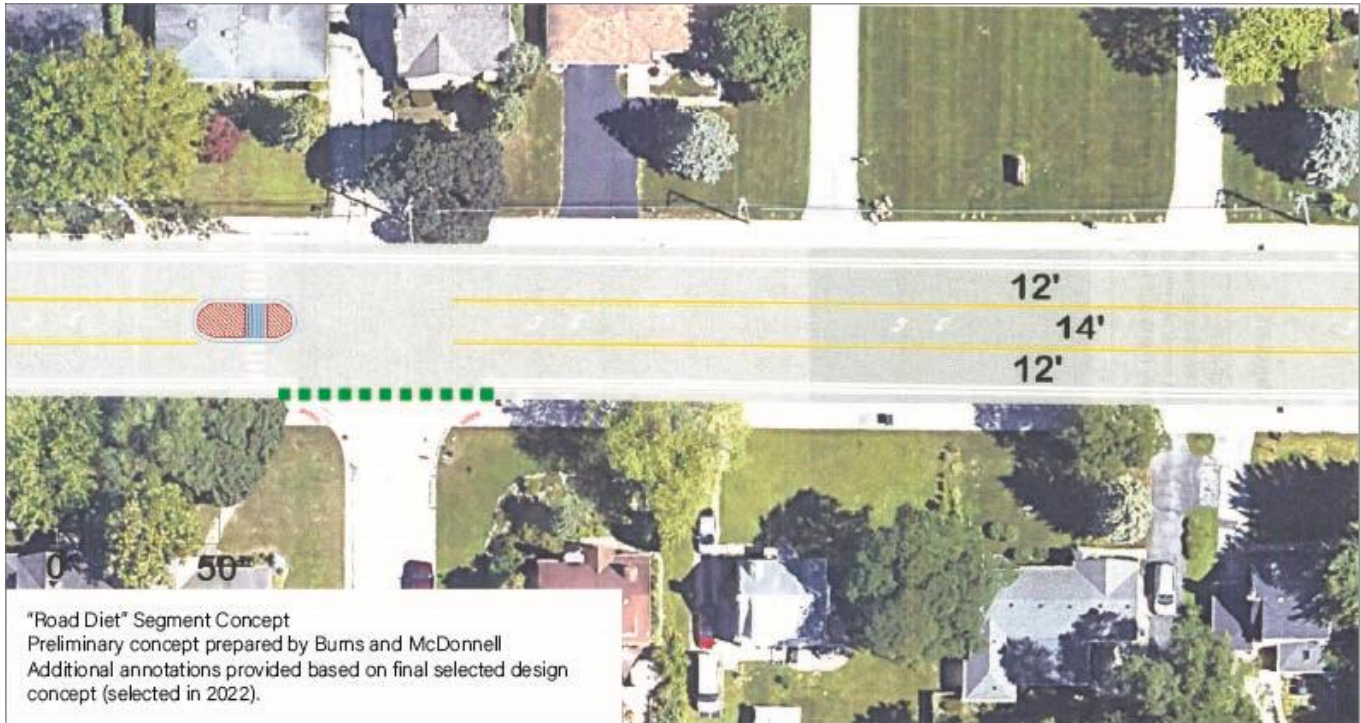
Public Engagement

Public engagement continued throughout spring 2022. Four (4) open houses were held in April and May to gather input from residents on 183rd Street, Gottschalk Avenue, and surrounding streets, and to explain the concept of the road diet. On May 16, 2022, the Village launched a two-week road diet pilot, using barrels to reduce 183rd Street from four (4) lanes to three (3) between Morgan Street and Riegel Road. Traffic and speed counts were collected, and feedback was gathered during multiple public workshops.

Grant Funding Solicited

In September 2022, the Village Board authorized a funding application to the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) for a permanent striping reconfiguration of 183rd Street with on-street bike lanes. The Board approved the concept design the following month, *subject to funding availability*. In April 2023, Homewood was awarded \$232,875 in ITEP funding for the project.

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Additional Costs

At a project kickoff meeting, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) informed Village staff that use of the ITEP grant required a Phase I engineering study (includes design work, additional traffic studies, American with Disability Act (ADA) review, and an environmental review). In summer of 2023, Homewood requested a *"categorical exclusion"* from the Phase I engineering requirements, noting that the project only involved restriping rather than reconstruction. IDOT denied the request, citing the need for a full Phase I study because the project would change traffic patterns.

Burns & McDonnell originally estimated the cost of Phase I engineering required for ITEP funding at \$142,000. The original project only included approximately \$50,000 for engineering costs. Any additional engineering costs that exceeded what was included in the original project budget would need to be funded by the Village.

Project Funding Included in Village's Five-Year Capital Plan

In response to IDOT's Phase I requirements and the additional costs, staff integrated the project into the Village's newly created five-year capital improvement plan (CIP), which also included the initial phase I design for the potential traffic signal at Center Avenue and 183rd Street. By January 2025, both projects were included in the capital plan. Unfortunately, the capital plan needed a funding source that had yet to be identified. Included in the CIP: \$400,000 in FY2027 for the reconfiguration of 183rd Street and \$132,000 in FY2028 for Phase I engineering for a traffic signal at 183rd Street and Center Avenue.

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BURNS & MCDONNELL 183RD STREET TRAFFIC STUDY AND ANALYSIS

The corridor on 183rd Street was expanded in 1987 by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) from two lanes to four lanes with no center divider. The board minutes from 1985, 1986 and 1987 captures *public comments* from residents citing their opposition to expanding the roadway to four lanes.

A number of high-profile incidents and ongoing traffic safety concerns resulted in the Village commissioning Burns & McDonnell to complete a traffic study in early 2021 to review and address safety concerns along the 183rd Street corridor. The Burns and McDonnell study was commissioned to recommend ways to further refine the current design of 183rd Street to resolve long-standing safety concerns.

What did this study measure?

The 2021 traffic study was commissioned to measure traffic data (current and future vehicle counts, traffic behavior) and collision data (location, type, and causes of collisions, etc.). The study included the area of 183rd Street between Park Avenue and Halsted Street (1.83 miles).

Traffic volumes were collected on April 13, 2021 and were paired with 30-year traffic projections prepared by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The study also created a list of potential street design changes and hazard mitigation strategies, which could improve safety appropriate for traffic levels at specific locations.

What did the study tell us about traffic?

- **No “rush hour”:** The 183rd Street corridor is different from most major suburban streets, with no true “rush hour peaks” with traffic gradually increasing throughout the day between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- **Traffic volume decreases east of Dixie Highway:** Total daily traffic counts drop by 50% between Harwood Avenue and Halsted Street. While nearly 25,000 vehicles per day were counted near the Metra tracks, only 12,600 vehicles per day were counted immediately west of Halsted Street.
- **Traffic volume changes unlikely:** The study used regional models projecting a 20% increase in traffic by 2050. However, Burns and McDonnell cautioned that this full increase is unlikely to occur because (a) traffic did not change between 2019 and 2021, and (b) no major changes in land use or population are expected along 183rd Street. It is worth noting that traffic levels since the study was conducted may have changed (between 2021 and today).
- **Traffic volume:** Burns and McDonnell engineers noted that a four-lane road may not be justified between Riegel Road and Halsted Street due to low traffic volumes. This idea will require additional study to confirm due to the study being completed four years ago.

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What did the study tell us about traffic safety?

- **Rear-end accidents are most common:** Rear-end accidents were by far the most common type of crash, making up almost 50% of all crashes. Rear-end accidents were found to be caused by turns into/out of driveways, left turn lane queues not protected from rear traffic (no dedicated lane or lane is too short), or “lane weaving” paired with speeding.
- **Angle crashes have the highest risks of injuries and fatalities** Angle crashes caused over half of the 101 injuries (99) or fatalities (2) along 183rd Street recorded from 2016-2020. Dangerous angle crashes were especially common at Center Avenue/183rd Street and Riegel Road/183rd Street. About 18% of crashes resulted in injuries. About 55% of injuries reported were Type A (hospital required) or Type B (evident injuries requiring treatment on scene), while 45% were Type C (self-reported or no evident injury). Engineers recommended prioritizing the reduction of angle crashes.
- **Many accidents were not at intersections:** Many of the rear-end crashes were due to driveway turns and poor visibility when changing between lanes. These crashes had unusually high injury risk. Many of these accidents happened with “normal” pavement conditions (not icy, wet, etc.).
- **Accident risk is high on 183rd Street:** According to accident analysis in this study, 183rd Street has a rate of roughly 6.5 fatal/injurious crashes per mile annually.

What recommendations did the study provide?

The study provided a table of “potential mitigation strategies,” tailored to each intersection or segment of 183rd Street based on the traffic counts and accident risks found there. These strategies were paired with estimated cost and crash modification factors (a measure of how effective a treatment will be at reducing crashes). This table of options is provided in **Exhibit A**.

STAFF OPTIONS

Based on the 2021-2022 Burns & McDonnell study and in light of updated traffic information and input from various Village departments, staff is providing a comprehensive set of options that the Village Board may want to consider in their discussions and evaluation of 183rd Street. The Board may wish to direct staff to further pursue one or more of these options. Each option is provided in detail below.

Option 1: Perform Additional Studies and/or Analyses

The Village Board could direct staff to undertake an updated corridor study for 183rd Street. The last study was commissioned in 2021, and conditions have changed since the study was performed. The analysis relied on a **one-day** traffic count (April 13, 2021) supplemented by past traffic data and CMAP 30-year future projections, which aligns with standard practices. However, an expanded counting window may have yielded alternative results and a more clearly reliable characterization of “normal” traffic patterns along 183rd Street. A new study could be tailored to address additional concerns — public safety vehicle stops, fire and ambulatory impact, Amazon-type delivery service impacts, speeding hot spots, school and bus operations, intersection safety, truck traffic, cut-through traffic, and winter performance — so that the study provides a new set of precise and actionable recommendations.

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Decisions Creating Surrounding Impact

Because of the weightiness of 183rd Street being a major east/west corridor, an impact analysis study could be performed that evaluates side street and other corridor impact if 183rd Street were to be adjusted. This study would include traffic impact modeling. A common critique of the traffic study is that it was conducted during COVID, when traffic patterns were unusually disrupted by public health restrictions. A new study would not invalidate the prior work; rather, it would build on the previous study by adding new data and incorporating staff recommendations and insights from the past four years.

Unsanctioned Road Diet Pilot Program

A comprehensive study, if selected, is unlikely to include a pilot program for a “road diet,” as this presents significant challenges and may not be practical. Coordination with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) would be a significant barrier to running another pilot, as the previous pilot performed was not recognized by IDOT. IDOT would more than likely decline a new pilot to avoid traffic disruption and/or potential liability, especially a program lasting long enough to assess side effects. The original program lasted two weeks using construction barrels, which are a crude tool that did not accurately reflect real-world, normal driving operations.

Option 2: Fund the 183rd Street Bike Lane Reconfiguration Project with Sub-Options

During the Regular Board meeting of October 25, 2022, the previously situated Board of Trustees voted to “approve the 183rd Street bike lane reconfiguration concept subject to available funding.” This reconfiguration was selected to address key concerns along 183rd Street, and would reconfigure 183rd Street to include two through lanes, a center shared turn lane, and potential bicycle lanes or a multi-use shared path. This reconfiguration is commonly referred to as a “road diet.” The intent of a “road diet” is designed to improve safety for all road users, calm traffic, and enhance the quality of life along a corridor. The first step in completing this “road diet” would be Phase I engineering, which is a full traffic study of the corridor with environmental and safety reviews. Phase II and Phase III engineering would also be required to create the final plans for the reconfiguration and construct the new lanes.

The Village completed a two-week pilot program of the “road diet” in 2022. The Village’s pilot program for the “road diet” showed results in reducing speeding and illegal traffic motions without adding traffic congestion. The program did not fully measure accident risk or potential traffic spillover to side streets. The program also only lasted for a limited time and did not fully simulate real traffic conditions (i.e. used construction barrels vs. striping).

The Village budgeted \$400,000 for this project in FY2027 in the five-year capital plan. This budgeted amount does not have an exact funding source identified.

Sub-Option 1: Proceed with “road diet” with ITEP funding

The Village may use the awarded \$232,875 from the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) to assist with engineering and construction costs for the permanent reconfiguration of 183rd Street. To use the ITEP funds, IDOT requires full Phase I engineering.

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ITEP will reimburse up to 80 percent of eligible costs, and the Village would be responsible for a \$46,575 local match. The Village also received state assistance to reimburse 50% of this local match. Proceeding with the project under this model allows the Village to leverage state and federal dollars while advancing a corridor redesign that reflects both the recommendations of the original traffic study and community input. The funding from the ITEP grant expires in April 2027. The Village must use all project funds by this time.

Revised numbers from Burns & McDonnell estimate the required updated Phase I engineering at a cost of \$288,100, creating a funding gap of \$101,800. This amount would need to be paid by the Village. ***The ITEP program has additional requirements for Phase II and Phase III engineering. These engineering costs are not included in this amount and would be calculated based on updated data and final design selections. The Board would provide final approval of any design recommendations from Phase I.***

Cost Description	Amount
ITEP Funding (80% of \$232,875)	\$186,300
State Assistance for ITEP Local Match (50% of 20% required match)	\$23,287
ITEP Required Local Match	\$23,287
Phase I Engineering Cost (Traffic Study and Preliminary Design)	\$288,100
Phase II Engineering Cost (Final Design)	TBD
Phase III (Construction)	TBD
Total (to be covered by Village)	\$101,800 + TBD

Sub-Option 2: Proceed with “road diet” without ITEP funding

If the Village wishes to pursue the project faster and with greater flexibility, the Village can pursue this project without ITEP grant assistance. Phase I engineering is still required, but there are potential long-term savings because the project does not need to go through additional IDOT requirements for grant-funded projects and there is more flexibility in completing design and construction work. Based on current capital planning, this work would be completed in FY2027-2028.

The project costs with this option are detailed below:

Cost Description	Amount
Phase I Engineering (Traffic Study and Preliminary Design)	\$288,100
Design and Construction	TBD
Total (to be covered by Village)	\$288,100 + TBD

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Option 3: Pursue Alternative Corridor Safety Improvements

Instead of reconfiguring 183rd Street from four lanes to three, the Village Board may consider other targeted safety improvements that combine engineering, enforcement, and education. This approach could include review of other recommended safety improvements (i.e., traffic signal at 183rd Street and Center Avenue) provided by Burns & McDonnell in 2021, or pursuing additional measures, which do not require road reconfiguration but would provide targeted improvements to safety. Together, these approaches could address specific areas affected by speeding, turning conflicts, and high crash frequency while maintaining the current four-lane layout.

With this option, the Board could direct staff to pursue one or more of the following:

- **Assess other potential mitigation strategies:** Burns & McDonnell developed a list of 47 mitigation measures with the original traffic study in 2021. These strategies were tailored to address safety concerns in specific locations. The list includes strategies such as signal adjustments, intersection reconfigurations, or other traffic calming measures. Staff will assess these options and return to the Board with information on other mitigation strategies. *See Exhibit A.*
- **Increase police enforcement:** Police could perform targeted police enforcement during the times and locations with the highest crash risk or speeding concerns. This would provide a visible deterrent and reinforce safe driving behavior. The Board should weigh potential costs, including increased costs from additional staffing and equipment and the potential for reduced service levels elsewhere. Staff believes that enforcement is critical, but this would be a temporary solution, not long term.
- **Additional signage:** Staff will assess locations for enhanced signage and driver awareness tools, such as digital speed feedback signs, flashing beacons, or carefully designed turn restrictions, to reinforce compliance and improve safety without major roadway changes. This option can address traffic safety concerns without road reconfiguration. This option has additional costs and requires enforcement to reach full effectiveness. Additional study would be required to incorporate some signs, such as signs restricting specific turn motions (i.e. no left turns at an intersection).

By selecting one or more of these options, the Village can pursue measurable safety improvements while minimizing potential risks or long-term challenges which could come with a full reconfiguration of 183rd Street.

Option 4: Consider Village-Wide Input and Feedback via Non-Binding Referendum

It is clear that any significant lane-limiting and striping change to 183rd Street will impact Village residents and commuters at large, not just those living along the corridor. It may be in the Village's best interest to solicit a wider sample of input and feedback before moving forward. An option to consider could be to add a non-binding referendum question on an upcoming voting ballot.

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A non-binding referendum is a public vote used to measure community opinion and/or support or non-support on an issue or item, but it does not carry the force of law and does not require implementation. Municipalities often use referenda to gauge voter sentiment before making significant policy decisions. While the results are advisory and not legally binding, they provide valuable insight into collective and collaborative community priorities.

If the Village Board decides to move forward with placing the 183rd Street lane reconfiguration question on the ballot as a non-binding referendum, below is the schedule the Village must adhere to meet the ballot requirements:

REFERENDUM SUBMISSION SCHEDULE	
DATE	ACTION
December 15, 2025	Petition must be filed by Village with the Cook County Electoral Board
December 29, 2025	Village would need to adopt a resolution to place the question on the ballot
January 8, 2026	Final certification by Cook County required
March 17, 2026	Primary election with referendum question

Possible Referendum Questions

- Should the Village of Homewood reconfigure 183rd Street between Dixie Highway and Morgan Street within the Village limits to three lanes, one lane in each direction with a continuous center left-turn lane, to address safety and traffic operations?
- Should the Village of Homewood reduce 183rd Street between Dixie Highway and Morgan Street from four travel lanes to three (one in each direction with a center left-turn lane) to address safety and traffic operations?
- Should the Village of Homewood implement a three-lane cross-section between Dixie Highway and Morgan Street on 183rd Street within the Village limits, replacing the current four-lane layout, to address safety and traffic operations?

LEGAL REVIEW

Not required

FINANCE REVIEW

Not required

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RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION

Review options presented by staff and authorize staff to proceed with additional follow up, research, selected option(s), or any implementation as directed.

ATTACHMENT

Exhibit A – Potential Mitigation Strategies Table (prepared by Burns & McDonnell, November 9, 2021).