PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING COMMENT RESPONSES

Charles Road at Queen Anne Road and Charles Road at IL 120/Greenwood Road

CHARLES ROAD
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Responses provided from April 8th, 2025 Public Information Meeting.

Traffic Operations and Design Concerns

COMMENT: Several attendees expressed concerns about traffic operations, including the lack of a dedicated eastbound turn lane from IL 120, potential traffic backups, adequacy of single-lane design for large trucks and farm equipment, and requests for traffic signals instead of roundabouts.

RESPONSE: The project and the proposed intersection improvements at Queen Anne Road and IL 120 are necessary to address safety concerns. The roundabout design has been carefully analyzed to accommodate the projected traffic volumes. Vehicles will reduce speed to approximately 15 mph when entering the roundabout. This speed reduction is intentional and significantly improves safety by reducing the severity of potential crashes. The single-lane roundabout design is appropriate for the anticipated traffic volumes and provides adequate capacity based on traffic analysis. In comparison, a traffic signal intersection provides reduced operations and does not provide the same safety benefits as a roundabout because signals do not reduce vehicle speeds through the intersection and do not eliminate dangerous turning and angle crashes that occur when drivers run red lights or misjudge gaps in oncoming traffic. The roundabout provides superior safety performance with only eight conflict points compared to 32 conflict points at a traditional signalized intersection.

The roundabout design accommodates large trucks and farm equipment using a mountable truck apron around the central island. This feature allows larger vehicles to track over the apron when making turns while maintaining appropriate geometry for passenger vehicles.

Lighting and Environmental Considerations

COMMENT: Residents requested eco-friendly lighting solutions such as motion-activated lights during overnight hours (midnight to 4 AM) and the use of native plants in the central landscaped areas that require minimal maintenance resources.

RESPONSE: For the Charles Road/IL 120 intersection, the intersection lighting will be designed according to current IDOT and AASHTO standards due to the presence of the state route, while incorporating energy-efficient LED technology and design measures to minimize light pollution.

For the Charles Road/Queen Anne Road intersection, the County is exploring alternative solutions to lighting the intersection that would reduce lighting impacts and/or the number of lights at the intersection while maintaining safe navigation for all users.

Landscaping design can prioritize native and drought-tolerant plant species that require minimal irrigation and maintenance. The central island landscaping will be designed to provide visual guidance for drivers while minimizing long-term maintenance costs and environmental impact. Plant selection will consider seasonal visibility requirements and compatibility with winter maintenance operations. The landscaping and other design features will be finalized in the next phase of the project when contract plans and specifications will be prepared for construction.

DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

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Safety and Speed Management

COMMENT: Residents acknowledged the need for safety improvements due to increasing traffic volumes and frequent accidents, with several expressing support for the roundabout as a safety enhancement. Concerns were raised about speed limits and the need for additional speed reduction measures.

RESPONSE: The purpose of this project is to address documented safety concerns at these intersections. Crash data analysis shows a pattern of severe crashes, particularly around the intersections and along the curve west of Queen Anne Road. The roundabout design reduces vehicle speeds and aims to eliminate the most dangerous crash types, including high-speed crashes.

The County has completed a comprehensive speed study along Charles Road. Speed management strategies, including the roundabout design, are being implemented based on engineering analysis rather than solely relying on posted speed limit reductions, which often have limited effectiveness in changing driver behavior. The roundabout intersection will force speed reduction through geometric design, providing speed management that is more effective than enforcement alone.

Additionally, the posted speed along Charles Road has been reduced to 50 MPH from IL 47 to IL 120.

Pedestrian Infrastructure and Additional Improvements

COMMENT: Attendees made suggestions for pedestrian crosswalks, additional turn lanes for neighborhood access, architectural enhancements to make the roundabouts more aesthetically pleasing, and requests to study other intersections along the Charles Road corridor.

RESPONSE: Pedestrian accommodation will be designed according to current ADA standards and IDOT guidelines to be compliant with anticipated federal funding. Pedestrian crosswalks will be strategically located to provide safe crossing opportunities while maintaining efficient traffic flow. The design will consider existing and planned pedestrian infrastructure in the area.

The project scope focuses specifically on the two identified high-crash intersections along with the curve west of Queen Anne Road. Additional improvements such as turn lanes at neighborhood entrances and aesthetic enhancements are not a part of this project. Improvements such as neighborhood turn lanes may be a part of a future county safety initiative. The County will incorporate appropriate aesthetic elements within project budget constraints.

The County monitors crash data and traffic patterns throughout the road network including the Charles Road corridor. Future safety studies and improvements are prioritized based on crash frequency, severity, and available funding. Residents are encouraged to report specific safety concerns to the County for evaluation.

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