

Flossmoor study puts local road safety ideas up for consideration

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Following a two-year study, Flossmoor officials learned how it can make roads in the village safer.

The Local Road Safety Plan presented Monday, June 20, to the village board is the result of a grant awarded to Flossmoor by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Representatives from Jacobs Engineering presented the results of the work and discussed what comes next.

"We are so excited to be talking about the Local Road Safety Plan," Mayor Michelle Nelson said. "I feel like we've been waiting for this for a while, so it's really exciting to be seeing a first draft of it."

Tommy Myszka, of Jacobs Engineering, presented the plan, which he said is all about analyzing, identifying and prioritizing safety improvements. The plan does not represent any commitments to act on projects or represent policy, but it can help the village implement measures to reduce crashes that lead to fatalities or serious injuries. It uses crash data analysis, outreach activities and a steering committee to develop recommendations,

according to the presentation.

In Flossmoor, the road safety review included local, county and state routes within the village's boundaries. It found there were 1,333 crashes across 55 miles of public roadways and 299 intersections from 2015 to 2019. Roughly 370 of those involved "some type of injury," according to Myszka, while five fatalities were recorded over those five years.

"That's five people who didn't get to go home to their family that night," Myszka said. "The biggest goal of a local road safety plan is to bring those numbers down."

The study prioritized areas by crashes and the number of public comments, weighting severe and fatal crashes more heavily. It wound up with a focus on the Central Business District, including Park Drive from Argyle Avenue to Sterling Avenue (intersection improvements recommended), and Sterling Avenue from Flossmoor Road to Wallace Drive (bicycle lanes). The nine areas highlighted by the study also included 189th Street and Springfield Avenue (pedestrian crossing, stop or yield signs), and 189th Street at Hamlin Avenue (right-turn geometrics, pedestrian crossing).

Among the policy and behavioral recommendations Jacobs Engineering made to the board were complete streets, meaning that roads would include crosswalks, stops, bike lanes, dedicated turn lanes and other features, rather than just the standard lanes and median lines.

"It is moving away from that vehicle-centric system, where we'd like to emphasize the facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well, making it safe for them to use the system," Myszka said. "Then, there are a handful of other policies that ultimately result in infrastructure changes but are driven by the policy being enacted."

Trustee George Lofton said the report notes that three of the fatal crashes occurred where there was "questionable lighting." Myszka said they also received comments from residents about lack of lighting in the neighborhoods or lighting concerns elsewhere in the village.

"That could be another improvement that not only helps visibility spotting pedestrians or bicyclists but also animals or something at the road in the night," Myszka said.

Trustee Joni Bradley-Scott raised questions about how the village can

change people's behavior when the rules of the road are not being followed. Myszka talked about the possibility of establishing a police presence in certain areas so that daily users start to expect it. Then, they move to another area to create the same expectations there.

"Changing people's behavior is very difficult," Myszka said. "There are different types of outreach strategies."

He also suggested certain neighborhood roads could use speed humps as temporary traffic calming devices. Some trustees expressed concerns about those, but Myszka said there are ways to highlight the humps to make them an effective deterrent to high speeds.

"I can tell you: Once you drive over those speed humps and bottom out your car, guess what you do next time?" Trustee Gary Daggett added. "You slow down. They're very effective. Annoying, but effective."

Myszka said the next steps are to implement the measures and evaluate the results. Flossmoor Village Manager Bridget Wachtel noted staff will be reviewing the full plan over the next few weeks. She said the board could consider adopting the plan this month.

Vet group creates colorful way to raise funds, engage youth

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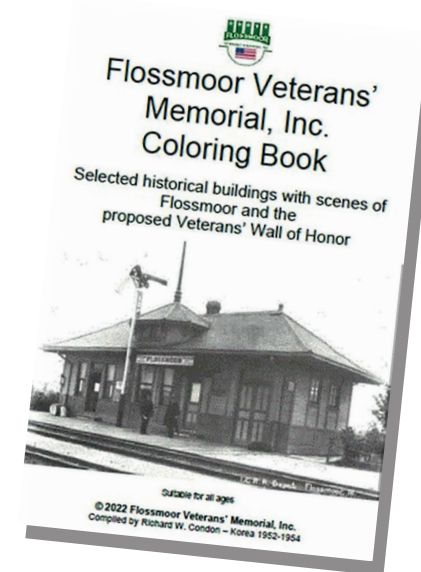
The effort to raise money for a Flossmoor veterans wall recently got a little more colorful.

As Flossmoor Veterans' Memorial Inc. continues its fundraising march toward the installation of a Wall of Honor in the village, the not-for-profit corporation announced a unique addition to the premiums being offered to donors. For \$12.50 a pop, supporters can get Historic Flossmoor Sites Coloring Books shipped to them.

Underwritten by Illinois Humanities and designed to be suitable for all ages, the book features 16 hand-drawn sketches of historic Flossmoor sites that trace all the way back to the early 1900s.

"The pictures in it are really cool," said Gina LoGalbo, Flossmoor's village clerk, who is also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran working with FVM. "There's several I've never seen before."

The images were all drawn by Richard Condon, vice president of FVM. Former Flossmoor Mayor Paul Braun, who serves as president of FVM, said



The cover of the FVM coloring book.

Condon — a former engineer — came up with the idea.

"He must have spent about 150 hours-plus putting that together," Braun said. "He did all of the drawings for the coloring book portion by hand."

In addition to raising funds, the coloring book helps get the project in front of the community, Braun said. It also creates an opening for children to get involved.

LoGalbo said she spent some time on Armed Forces Day at 2525 Flossmoor Road, the proposed 9,650-square-foot site where the wall is to be located, showing off the coloring books. She said Canadian National railway, which owns the property, recently told the village it can take down old telephone poles that are there. While the easement to allow for the wall is not yet done, LoGalbo said the village is not expecting that to be a problem.

"It's a great site," she said. "I think it will be very complementary to that area."

In mid-May, Braun did a Zoom presentation with the Flossmoor Public Library to help educate the community about the project. FVM also took part in Memorial Day programs in Homewood and Flossmoor and the 60422 event.

Braun said the group had raised roughly \$26,000 by late May and would start to campaign for major donors soon.

"It's all a question of fundraising at this point," Braun said. "Depending on how quick we can come up with another \$75,000, we're hoping sometime this fall we might be able to break ground."

LoGalbo said she is looking forward to more fundraising efforts. She took donations on her birthday via Facebook and raised \$730. She is hoping more local residents will consider collecting donations for Flossmoor Veterans' Memorial Inc. on their birthdays through the social media platform. It all adds up, LoGalbo said, and she is eager to get to the finish line.

"I'm very mission-focused," LoGalbo said. "Antsy to attack it because ... I want our group to meet the goal so we can get going with it."

LoGalbo added that being part of the process has allowed her to connect with more veterans in the community, including two on her street. She said she would love for Flossmoor veterans to reach out to flossmoorvets@gmail.com to put their names in the records for future events, recognition and more.

For more information about the project or to order a coloring book, visit flossmoorvets.square.site.