

Western Springs gets \$468,000 grant for bike path

Jane Michaels | June 3, 2014

Western Springs has been awarded a \$468,000 grant to pave a pathway from Ogden Avenue and Wolf Road through Bemis Woods, connecting to the Salt Creek bike path.

Matt Supert, director of municipal services, said the village worked with the Illinois Department of Transportation several years ago to enhance an existing crossing at Woodland Avenue and the parking lot entrance to Bemis Woods South. A pedestrian activated signal with flashing yellow lights became operational in May 2012 with improved signage.

“The ideal solution is a full stoplight,” Supert said.

But the Woodland crossing is too close to Wolf Road to warrant a traffic signal, according to IDOT regulations, he said. Federal Highway Administration regulations don’t permit a pedestrian activated signal to stop traffic with a red light, other than a full traffic signal, he said.

The village also began talks with the Cook County Forest Preserve District and Highway Department, as well as IDOT to pursue improvements at Wolf Road.

In March, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program selected Western Springs’ path proposal as one of 71 projects slated to receive \$52.7 million. The grant will cover about 80 percent of the cost projected at \$550,000 to \$600,000, Supert said.

Details have yet to be finalized on where the path will run. It could go on the west side of Wolf and head north to connect to the Salt Creek bike path where it crosses Wolf. Or, the path could cut northwest through the woods and link with the bike path.

The entire intersection will be reconfigured at Wolf and Ogden with the pedestrian crossing likely on the west side, though it’s not yet determined, Supert said.

“As soon as there’s more than one county agency involved, it adds time,” he said. “I don’t know if we’ll get the construction going next year, but that’s our goal.”

Supert said the future use of the Woodland crossing also hasn’t been determined. It’s possible IDOT will require the signal’s removal, directing pedestrians to the Wolf Road crossing, he said.