



Four roundabouts in planning stages in McHenry County

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Roundabouts may be foreign to most drivers, but four are being planned in McHenry County.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has proposed two roundabouts in Coral Township: Route 20 and Harmony Road, and 3 miles north at Route 20 and Beck Road.

The McHenry County Division of Transportation plans roundabouts at Johnsburg and Chapel Hill roads in Johnsburg, and at River and Dowell roads east of Holiday Hills.

Assistant County Engineer Jeff Young said engineering has been completed for the Johnsburg roundabout, with construction to begin this year or next. Preliminary engineering is being done for the River and Dowell roads roundabout.

In Coral Township, Supervisor Roger Naylor said he will meet with IDOT on Thursday to set up a public hearing in June or July regarding both Route 20 roundabouts.

"We want to know how they will reduce accidents, their pluses and downsides," Naylor said. "A concern I've voiced is that we have not been in the loop at all."

Naylor said he was concerned about the Route 20-Beck Road intersection because of the convergence of roads there. South Union, Marengo, Beck and Route 20 form a triangle near Rowland Machinery and Wild West Town Restaurant and Bar.

"I've not seen any of the official documents," Naylor said. "There seems to be some confusion on the state side about what might be needed."

The Harmony Road project appears to be further along. IDOT engineer Guy Tridgell said design approval is expected this spring, and land acquisition should begin later this year.

"Construction will begin in the early part of the 2012-2017 Highway Improvement Program," Tridgell said.

"Roundabouts are a trendy thing in transportation right now," Tridgell said. "We want to experiment with them at a few locations where there is lighter traffic to see what kind of impact they do have."

Tridgell said that while a final determination has not been made about what land will be needed for the roundabouts, a former schoolhouse at the southwest corner of Route 20 and Harmony Road definitely will need to be removed.

Built 81 years ago, the schoolhouse has been home to Harmony Real Estate since 1975. Inside the front door on a wall is a bronze plaque that reads: "Harmony Grade School District 4, 1931. Frank Henning, President."



Traffic passes through the intersection of Harmony Road and Route 20 in Coral Township. A roundabout is planned for the intersection. (Jenny Kane – jkane@shawmedia.com)

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