

Project Overview

The intersection of PR 206 and PR 213 (Garven Road) has had a history of severe collisions. Different short-term solutions have been implemented over the past couple of years including reducing the speed limits in the area and installing rumble strips to warn drivers of an upcoming stop sign.

With the desire to have a more permanent long-term solution that would lower the overall number of collisions and eliminate severe collisions, two options are being considered. The first option is to install traffic lights and auxiliary turning lanes; the second option is to install a roundabout.

An Open House was planned to solicit comments and opinions from the public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to present information to the public online through EngageMB. The online information presented the pros and cons of both options and asked the public to fill in a survey. The results from the survey presented will be used to evaluate the options and to determine the best option to implement at the intersection.

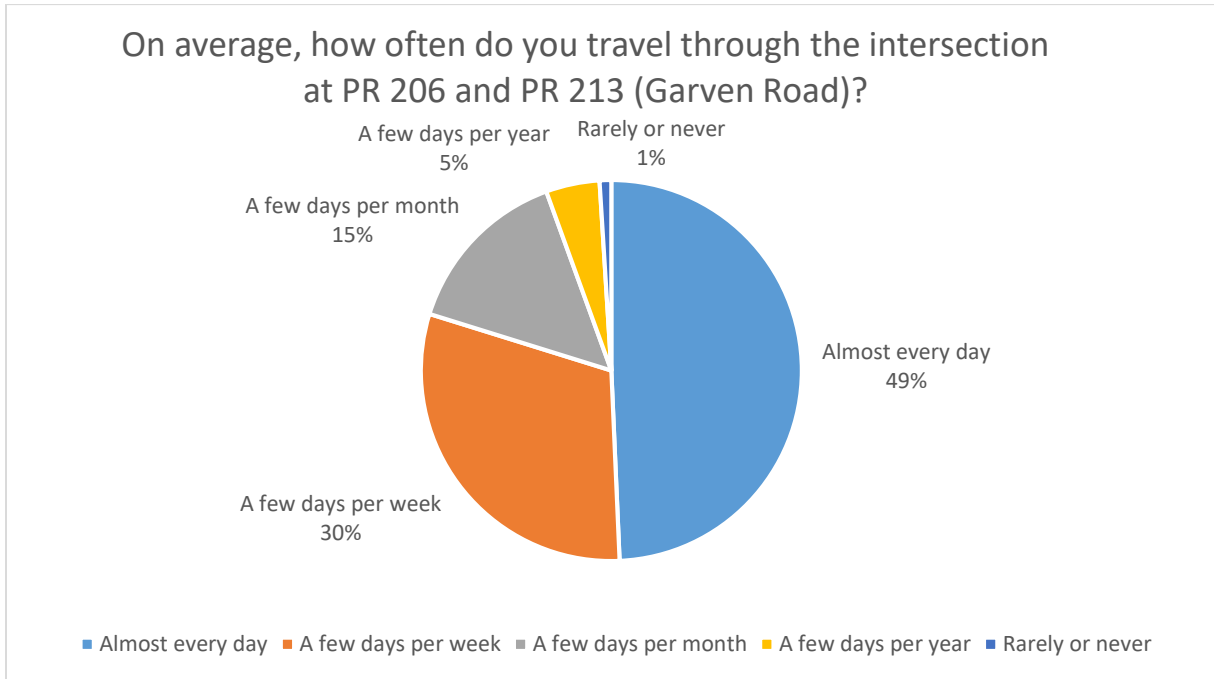
Engagement Overview

Public engagement consisted of an online presentation on EngageMB.ca. This was accompanied by an open online survey, which was run from May 25 to June 5, 2020. Invitations to participate were delivered to local residents. Public advertisements were issued in the Clipper Weekly, the Steinbach Carillon and through Steinbach.online.com. The RM of Springfield issued an email to its mailing list of residents and social media posts were shared by both the Manitoba government and the RM of Springfield encouraging followers to contribute to the engagement.

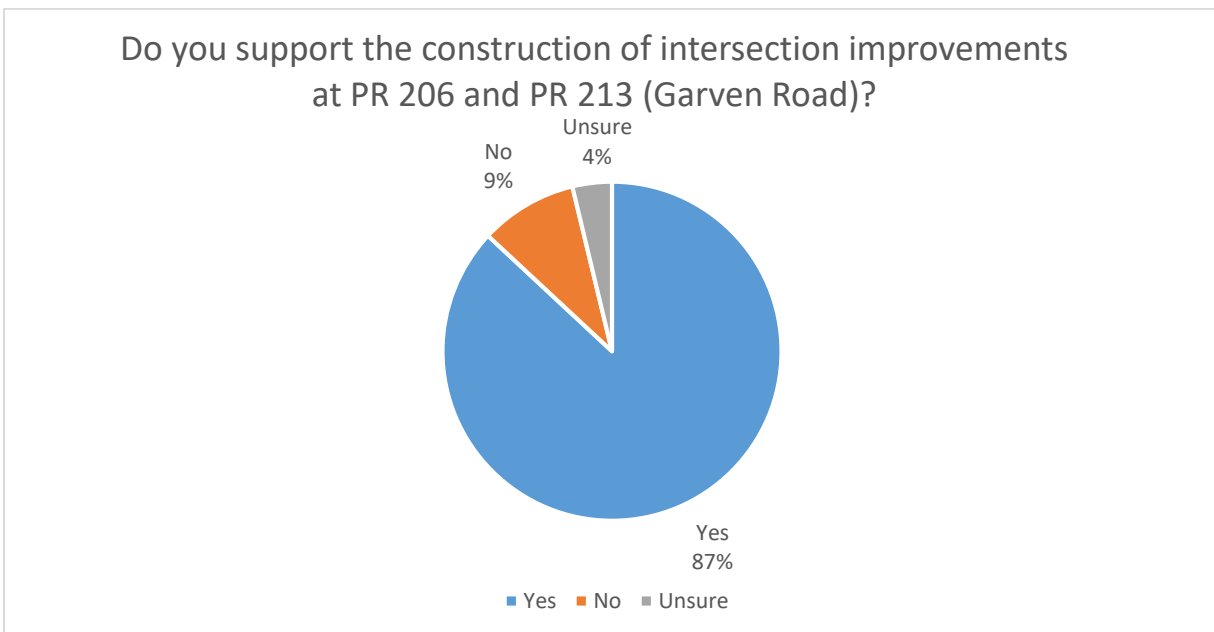
Demographics of Survey Responses

A total of 505 responses were received for the survey. New and generational property owners were represented in our survey sample, with those who have owned their properties for only one year as well as those who have owned for 65 years contributing.

The vast majority (80 per cent) of the survey respondents drove through the intersection almost every day or a few days per week.



Most people agreed that intersection improvements were necessary with 87 per cent agreeing with the question “Do you support the construction of intersection improvements at PR 206 and PR 213 (Garven Road)?”



What We Heard

Several key themes were identified when analyzing the feedback. Responses were categorized into themes in order to categorize the information into useable data. The themes identified are Roundabout Design Concerns, Driver Education Concerns and Traffic Law Enforcement Concerns. What we heard within these themes and how they will be addressed in the project going forward follow in the sections below.

Roundabout Design

One of the main concerns regarding the design of a roundabout was the necessity to accommodate semi-trailers and farm equipment. Participants were concerned that a roundabout in a rural area would not be able to accommodate the type of traffic that would be using it. There were also comments regarding hauling livestock through an intersection. The majority of the respondents concerned with live animal hauling preferred a roundabout as there was less chance of having to come to a full stop and thereby disturbing or injuring the animals.

A major point made by roundabout proponents was that roundabouts necessitate vehicles to slow down. Speed and impatience were identified by many as the leading causes of accidents though the intersection. The design of a roundabout would reduce a driver's ability to speed.

It was felt that traffic lights may be no better than stop signs for preventing collisions as drivers that don't stop for stop signs will not likely stop for red lights.

The existing rumble strips were a concern for many residents that live near the intersection. Many commented that the noise caused by the rumble strips was disturbing, especially at night.

Finally, a concern was expressed that during the winter a roundabout may become blocked with snow and thereby rendered impassable.

Driver Education

Many of the participants that preferred traffic lights reasoned that Manitobans would not know how to drive through a roundabout. Several of the roundabout proponents also felt this but suggested ways of educating the public. It was felt by many that proper signage before and through the roundabout would help. It was also felt that Manitoba Public Insurance could insert informational pamphlets into their driver's licence renewal packages and add information into the Manitoba Driver's Handbook.

A large number of participants have driven roundabouts in Europe and all of them were in favour of constructing a roundabout at this intersection. Many of these participants made the comment that, in general, drivers they had known who had initial concerns with roundabouts were always convinced roundabouts were a safer solution after driving them.

Traffic Law Enforcement

A high number of participants commented that dangerous drivers were the source of the accidents at this intersection. In this regard, it was felt that traffic lights would not solve the problem here since the drivers who drive dangerously through the area will most likely not drive any differently if traffic lights were installed. Most of these participants felt that the requirement to slow down for a roundabout was the only way to control these drivers.

There were also many participants who would like to see red light cameras installed at the intersection and many who would like a larger police presence to hand out tickets to offending drivers.

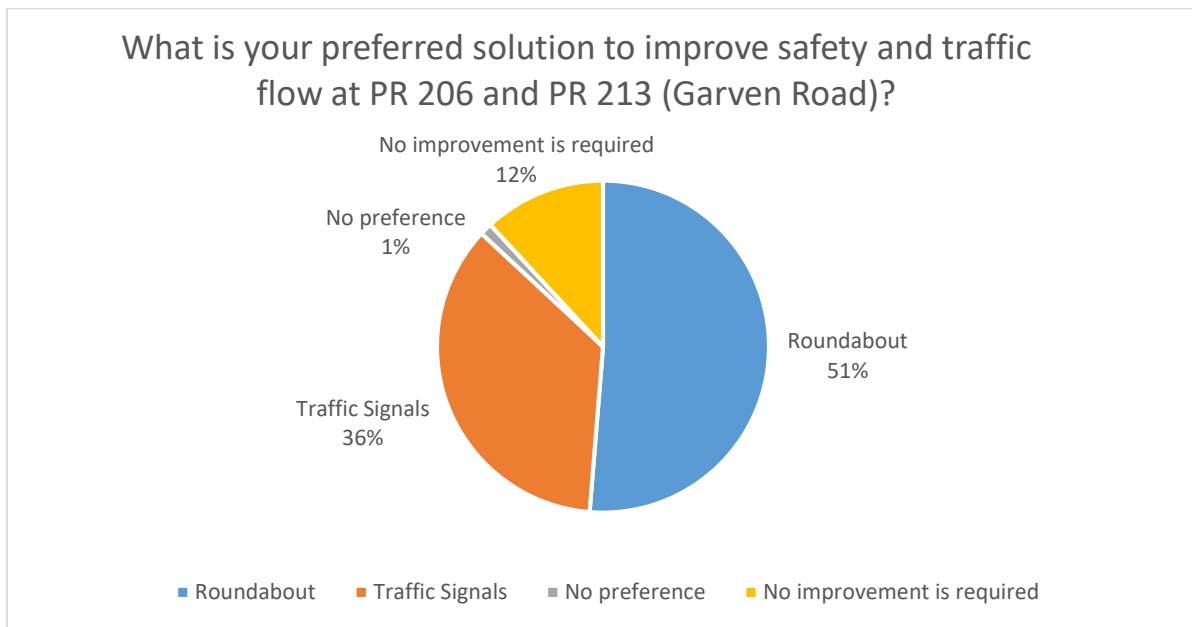
Finally, a number of participants commented on what they thought were too many changes in speed along both roadways. It was noted that PR 206 in particular has several short speed zones between Oakbank and Birds Hill Park.

Next Steps

The survey results showed that a roundabout is the preferred option with 51 per cent preferring a roundabout and 36 per cent preferring traffic lights.

With regard to the primary concerns expressed in findings:

- the department is able to continue providing the same level of service for snow removal for a roundabout or for traffic signals, and
- the department will consider how to provide information to the communities nearby on how to drive a roundabout



The next step in the project will be the tendering of the roundabout option. Tendering is expected to be complete by mid-July with construction starting shortly thereafter. The roundabout is expected to be open by fall of 2020.

Questions?

Please direct any questions or comments to Josh Plett at EORegion1@gov.mb.ca.