

Longmeadow Parkway

Responses to recent public comments



Project Description – Longmeadow Parkway centerline alignment and four lane design elements were approved in the 2001 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and 2002 Federal Record of Decision. The description remains unchanged and is in accordance with the 2002 approval.

Project Cost – Current estimate for construction and construction engineering for the corridor is \$115 Million (including a cost index). The current funding plan for the project includes transportation revenues from FHWA (\$12M), IDOT (\$40M), Kane County (\$23M), and bond revenue (\$40M) supported by user fees from a bridge toll. These existing fund sources are designated only for transportation purposes (MFT, STP, etc.) and are specifically allocated to Longmeadow Parkway in federal, state and county programs.

Status of Financial Plan – The federally required Financial Plan has been drafted and submitted to FHWA and IDOT for their review in accordance with federal procedures. The Financial Plan will be placed on KDOT's website upon approval. Typically projects of this scope are constructed in stages or incrementally. As such, the plan will be updated and resubmitted annually to address changes.

Toll Bridge – Longmeadow Parkway is not a high speed/capacity tollway facility. The proposed speed limit east of Randall will be similar to a local collector road and tolling applies only to the Fox River bridge portion of Longmeadow with the remainder of the corridor providing local access with no toll. A reevaluation of the FEIS was completed and approved in 2009 by IDOT and FHWA that demonstrated continued traffic benefits even with a reduction of traffic due to tolling.

Tolling Purpose – Tolling provides a mechanism for non-Kane County residents to help pay for the new Fox River bridge, supplements existing transportation revenues and will not result in new taxes. The financial feasibility study demonstrated a bonding capacity of up to \$70-75M, while the current financial plan proposes bonding \$40M. The study also showed a reverse correlation between toll rates and traffic volumes. With the recent FHWA and IDOT funds committed to the project, the County is now anticipating a reduced toll rate, which will increase the benefits of Longmeadow Parkway and better address area traffic congestion.

Up-to-date Planning – Projects of this scope often take 10-20 years to implement. As such, federal and State agencies require planning updates as appropriate to comply with applicable regulations. Examples of recent Longmeadow updates included wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and tree surveys. Longmeadow will be required to adhere to the rules in place for construction.

Environmentally Approved Alternative – Longmeadow was the only alternative found acceptable by the federal, state and local agencies to proceed to construction after 10 plus years of environmental studies and engineering that considered several alternative corridors and a no build scenario. The other alternatives were not found acceptable as the environmental and traffic impacts were significantly greater. Even two local bridge options were considered but showed significant negative impacts to the environment and to existing local streets and neighborhoods.

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Existing and Long-term Growth – Longmeadow addresses both the existing and projected population growth in the area. According to the U.S. Census, the population of Kane County has increased from about 208,000 people in 1960 to over 515,000 people in 2010. The population estimate for 2014 is 527,306. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) recently updated their 2040 Population Growth Projection in 2014 showing about 146,000 new people projected for Dundee, Rutland, Grafton & Algonquin Townships.

Economic Growth – Adding a river crossing within Dundee Township is projected to have a positive impact on economic growth. County and municipal studies show that businesses are anticipated to benefit due to better access to customers on both the east and west sides of the Fox River as the transportation network will be enhanced. Increased accessibility and mobility are key aspects to economic growth. Economic growth is beginning to move again in the Longmeadow Parkway area with Northern Kane County a leader in new housing starts currently in the Chicago region.

Congestion – The project will assist in improving mobility and alleviating traffic congestion by providing a new crossing of the Fox River. More direct routes reduce the number of miles traveled. While traffic was temporarily reduced during the downturn in the economy, traffic volumes were still over capacity for a 4-lane roadway (Level of Service D) and are increasing again on such roads as Randall Road, Huntley Road, IL 72, and IL 31. Traffic congestion impacts economic growth and existing communities by hampering accessibility and the desirability of existing and planned businesses. Decreasing congestion will also provide safety and environmental benefits.

Forest Preserve Cooperation – The acquisition of the right of way between the Fox River and IL 31 (Brunner Farm) by the County of Kane for Longmeadow Parkway was the culmination of almost 20 years of planning and coordination with the Forest Preserve District. The April 2007 referendum approved the borrowing of funds to expand forest preserve holdings throughout the County and was not specific to the Brunner Farm property. Prior to the Brunner acquisition, in 2008, the FPDKC and County worked together to set aside both the Forest Preserve open space and County right of way necessary to construct Longmeadow Parkway in accordance with adopted planning efforts. The joint cooperation helped make the Brunner Forest Preserve a reality.

Focus on Safety – Safety is an important element in the design process and the Longmeadow Parkway project follows federal, state, and county standards to create as safe a corridor as possible. The corridor will have a maximum speed limit of 45 mph east of Randall Road. This includes pedestrian accommodations at intersections and the inclusion of a separated shared-use path along the length of the corridor. Longmeadow will provide first responders with another direct route across the Fox River and an alternative to IL 62 and IL 72.

Community Support – For nearly two decades, the Longmeadow Parkway project has received the support of all communities within its corridor, along with neighboring communities, with support demonstrated through resolutions, adoption of municipal comprehensive plans, two referendums (Carpentersville's support for Longmeadow and their opposition to local bridge alternative in 2003), and election of public officials supporting Longmeadow. The Villages of Algonquin, Carpentersville and Barrington Hills worked together to foster a regional transportation consensus that became known as the Longmeadow Parkway Bridge Corridor.