

# LONGMEADOW PARKWAY – TEN MYTHS VS. FACTS

<http://www.co.kane.il.us/dot/foxBridges/longmeadowPkwy.aspx>

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**Myth:** “\$3 round-trip tolls”

**Fact:** All of the 5.6-mile corridor will be free to the public, with the exception of only the Fox River Bridge. The best estimate of the cost of the toll at the bridge currently is \$0.75 (75 cents) for passenger vehicles with truck tolls being higher. It could be less than that, depending on the final local, state or federal funding provided to the project. The toll will end when the bridge debt is paid off.

**Myth:** “Drivers won’t use it”

**Fact:** Based upon a projected \$0.75 (75 cent) bridge toll for passenger vehicles, it is estimated that approximately 14,000 to 16,000 vehicles per day will utilize Longmeadow Parkway to cross over the Fox River. The free public access areas of Longmeadow would be slightly higher traffic volumes due to some local traffic not using the toll bridge to cross the river. The projected vehicles will nearly all be passenger vehicles as trucks will mostly continue to use the IL 62 bridge which has no truck toll, while the Longmeadow Parkway truck toll rates will be upwards of 6 times the toll rate of a passenger vehicle. Additionally, the two southerly bridges, Main Street and IL 72, have very low existing heavy truck volumes ranging from 0.3% to 0.6%.

**Myth:** “Don’t need it - no growth in this area”

**Fact:** In 2014, the [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning \(CMAP\)](#) updated 2040 population growth projections that show an additional 146,000 people in Dundee, Rutland, Grafton and Algonquin townships by the year 2040. While development has slowed, northern Kane County continues to be a leader in new home starts and population growth. The roadway also addresses existing and projected traffic impacts to the IL 62, IL 72 and the Huntley Road/Main Street bridge corridors.

**Myth:** “Forever damages Brunner Forest Preserve”

**Fact:** The Brunner Family Forest Preserve would not exist today if not for the planning process and project funding for the Longmeadow Parkway. The property was planned for development, but Kane County Division of Transportation (KDOT) and the Kane County Forest Preserve District worked together to set aside both the Forest Preserve open space and county right of way for Longmeadow Parkway. The joint cooperation and funding helped make the Brunner Forest Preserve a reality. As most of Brunner Forest Preserve is currently farm field, Longmeadow Parkway is also assisting the Forest Preserve with environmental enhancements by planting thousands of new native trees.

**Myth:** “Won’t help traffic congestion anywhere”

**Fact:** Longmeadow Parkway is needed to reduce traffic congestion now and in the future. A more direct route across the river reduces the number of miles traveled, while decreased congestion also provides safety and environmental benefits. Alternative corridors and the “No Build” scenario had more environmental impacts and required traffic to use existing streets through residential neighborhoods.

**Myth:** “Drops nearby home values up to 20 percent”

**Fact:** Longmeadow Parkway impacts the fewest homes when considering all other construction alternatives, including the “no build” option, as existing and projected traffic growth and congestion are already impacting existing residential neighborhoods and are anticipated to worsen. There will be positive benefits for most residents, because Longmeadow Parkway will increase access and reduce existing and projected congestion impacts in many residential areas. Algonquin used extra-wide rights of way and when that property was developed into subdivisions, each home buyer adjacent to Longmeadow Parkway signed a document that informed them about the future Longmeadow Parkway roadway widening improvement prior to the purchase of his or her home. Each subsequent home buyer was to be informed about the future Longmeadow Parkway roadway widening improvement too.

**Myth:** “Over 5,000 mature trees to be cut down”

**Fact:** It is true that 5,000 trees will be removed, but about half of those trees are in poor health and/or have poor structure or are dead. For every tree removed, two high-quality native trees will be planted, resulting in more than 11,500 new trees to be planted along the corridor and in open space areas, including the Brunner Family Forest Preserve which is currently mostly farm fields.

**Myth:** “Will raise your taxes”

**Fact:** Longmeadow Parkway will not raise your taxes. The project will be funded with existing transportation tax revenues with funding commitments so far including \$14.5 million in federal transportation funds, \$39.4 million in state transportation funds, and \$61.1 million in local transportation funds. The local funds are currently comprised of \$3.5 million from KDOT’s development road [impact fees](#) and \$27.6 million from KDOT’s programmed fund sources, with the remaining \$30 million from KDOT’s existing fund sources and/or from the future bond revenue to be repaid with tolls. The initial financial plan was approved by the FHWA in September 2015 and will be updated annually.

**Myth:** “Wastes more than \$100,000,000 - your taxes”

**Fact:** Longmeadow Parkway is the most cost effective use of our transportation funds as environmental studies, engineering, and land acquisition are nearly complete with significant public investment. Local, state and federal environmental protection and regulatory agencies have determined the Longmeadow Parkway alternative to have the least impact when considering homes, air, noise, water, wetlands and wildlife and is the only acceptable bridge crossing in the approved Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for northern Kane County. The other alternatives will also require significantly more local investment with the loss of the federal and state funds specifically programmed for Longmeadow Parkway.

**Myth:** KDOT should “Fix existing roads”

**Fact:** KDOT has one of the most successful and progressive [road and bridge maintenance programs](#) in Illinois. Part of KDOT’s responsibility is to ensure a quality transportation system for today and for future generations. Longmeadow Parkway is a key part of that future; a rare chance to provide an additional river crossing and much-needed infrastructure to the northern part of Kane County. Funding from the state and federal government earmarked for the LMP project cannot simply be transferred to other county road projects.