

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Why does the stormwater need to be collected? Wouldn't it be simpler to let it drain directly to the river?

Managing stormwater is required by Kane County to protect areas from flooding and to improve the water quality of our streams. Releasing stormwater directly into the river could have several serious effects. First, stormwater runs off of pavement much faster than it runs off of the land. Allowing the stormwater to run directly into the river would increase the rate at which the river level rises during flood events. Diverting the stormwater into a detention area helps to prevent flooding by slowing the release of that stormwater.

Second, stormwater runoff from roads and bridges carries with it sediment and pollutants that are washed off the pavement during rain and snow storms. Detention areas trap the sediment, slow down the release of the stormwater, and reduce the rate at which pollutants are discharged to the river.

How will sediment be prevented from entering the river and Norton Creek?

Stormwater from the new roadway and bridge will be collected and diverted to wet detention areas. This type of detention slows the release of stormwater into the waterway and traps suspended sediment before it enters the surface water systems. The outflow of the detention areas will be directed through vegetated swales which will trap additional sediment and provide for water quality improvements. Both of these controls reduce sediment to the Fox River. Norton Creek will not be affected by this project. During construction, erosion and sedimentation control measures will be implemented to minimize the short term impacts from construction related sedimentation.

How will the project impact the environment of the Fox River Bluff West Forest Preserve and Norton Creek Forest Preserve?

The environmental impact on the West Forest Preserve and on Norton Creek has not yet been determined. One of the main purposes of performing the study which is now underway (which is called an Environmental Assessment) is to identify potential environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures.

The project area will cross the Fox River Bluff West Forest Preserve. The project will not directly impact the Norton Creek Forest Preserve on the east side of the Fox River. The City is coordinating with the Forest Preserve District to minimize impacts to forest preserve property and to identify opportunities to improve recreational facilities and access to the forest preserves through this project. The Environmental Assessment will consider direct and indirect impacts to all forest preserve property and will include potential mitigation measures. See the response to other questions in this section for proposed measures that will mitigate impacts to the forest preserves.

Will there be an assessment of noise impacts to homes adjacent to the proposed project?

A Traffic Noise Assessment will be conducted using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model. The assessment will evaluate existing and future traffic noise levels at adjacent residences and other noise sensitive locations in the project area (the Red Gate Bridge link between IL 31 and IL 25). At locations where noise levels may exceed noise criteria as a result of the proposed improvements, an assessment of noise mitigation concepts will be made. The noise impact and mitigation assessment will be documented in the Environmental Assessment. The draft Environmental Assessment is anticipated to be available for public review and comment in summer 2006.

Environmental Studies (continued)**What kind of roadway lighting will be on the bridge?**

Streetlights can be disruptive to nearby residents and bridge lighting can confuse migratory birds that use the river as a flyway. No lighting is planned for the bridge and roadway except as a safety measure near the intersections with Routes 31 and 25.

How are endangered species concerns being addressed?

Information regarding endangered species is being gathered by the Illinois Natural History Survey and through coordination with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. An Environmental Survey Request Form (ESR) initiates the data gathering process. The ESR was submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation on May 10, 2005. The natural resource agencies will determine the presence or absence of State or Federally protected species potentially present in the project area. The Environmental Assessment for the project will assess potential impacts to any protected species and include mitigation and/or avoidance measures as appropriate. There will be additional coordination with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources or US Fish and Wildlife Service if threatened and endangered species are identified.