

DuPage River, Illinois
Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study

Frequently Asked Questions
March 2016

1. What kinds of alternatives will be evaluated during the study?

The study will evaluate a broad range of alternatives to address flooding in the watershed. This will include structural projects such as levees, floodwalls, storage reservoirs, channel improvements, diversions, and modifications to existing structures such as bridges and storage projects; non-structural projects such as buyouts, home elevations, and flood warning and preparedness plans.

2. When will the study be completed?

The study will be conducted in a staged process. The initial formulation and analysis is expected to be completed in January 2017. At that time, the tentatively selected plan will be provided for review to Federal, state, and local agencies; stakeholder organizations; and the public. Comments received during this review period will be addressed before the plan is finalized. The final steps in the study process includes refinement of the designs for the proposed plan and Washington level review of the Feasibility Report. These final steps are schedule to be completed in July 2018.

3. When will the plan recommended by the study be built?

The study authority does not allow us to move into the design or construction phase of the project. That would require additional Congressional action, which would need to provide authorization of the project and appropriation of funds for design and construction.

4. How will the public be kept informed while the Corps is working on the study?

Due to the high level of public interest in this study, we plan to provide periodic updates about the study to interested stakeholders through emails and updates to the project website: <http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorksProjects/DuPageRiver.aspx>.

Anyone who provided an email address at a public meeting or submitted a public comment via email or postal mail has been added to the list. If you are aware of others who may be interested, please encourage them to contact us at ChicagoDistrict.PAO@usace.army.mil.

5. *How are public outreach and community involvement achieved for feasibility studies?*

The Corps works to ensure openness and transparency in our study process. While there are no formal requirements for public coordination during the development of alternative plans for feasibility studies, we consider a variety of options for each study. As a minimum, we maintain up to date web pages for all projects. During the feasibility study we provide opportunities for comment from resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public. These opportunities typically occur at the start of the study, when information about affected resources in the study area is solicited during a 30-day public scoping period and again once a tentatively selected plan is identified and a draft report is released for public review and a 30-day comment period.

6. *Will there be opportunities for the public to review the proposed plan?*

Yes. Proposed study recommendations will be released for public review before they are finalized. The tentatively selected plan, analyses used to evaluate alternative plans, and an assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed plan will be documented in a Draft Feasibility Report. The draft report is expected to be released for review in January 2017. Comments on the draft report will be addressed prior to completion of the study in July 2018.

7. *How will the Corps engage local agencies and managers of large parcels in the study area to make them aware of the nature of problems and solutions, and seek their involvement?*

Agencies such as the Forest Preserves of DuPage and Will County, municipal leaders, and the Illinois Department of Transportation were notified of the Feasibility Study through the scoping letters sent on October 30, 2015. The Corps will further coordinate with those agencies where identified problems or solutions could affect lands or resources under their jurisdiction.

8. *Will plans that include levees and floodwalls consider impacts outside of the project area?*

Yes. Levees, floodwalls, and other projects such as channel improvements will be reviewed to determine whether they increase flood stages outside the project area and alternatives that avoid or mitigate any induced damage will be developed. Recommended plans will comply with Federal, state, and local floodplain management regulations.

9. *Will the study evaluate modifications to existing dams in the watershed such as Fawell Dam, Hammel Woods Dam, and the Channahon Dam?*

Yes. The study will consider modifications to existing projects such as Fawell, Hammel Woods, and Channahon Dams.

10. *Will the study consider modifications to previously constructed projects?*

Yes. The study will evaluate modifications to projects to improve flood risk management in the watershed. Alternatives considered by the study could include modification of existing control structures, storage sites, and other flood risk management projects.

11. *Will the study evaluate options to address groundwater flooding?*

The Corps has authority to study and construct projects to manage flood risk associated with overbank flooding. Groundwater flows associated with elevated river stages are within this authority. The Corps is aware that this type of flooding affects residents of the watershed, including the Valley View neighborhood. Our analysis will include an assessment of the impacts of elevated groundwater levels associated with elevated river stages and include alternatives that could address this problem.

Flooding associated with sewer backups or insufficient local drainage is not included in the Corps' flood risk management mission. The study will not evaluate options to address this type of flooding.

12. *Will Feasibility Report include new floodplain maps?*

The study will include updates to existing models to estimate flood stages and velocities throughout the watershed. However, floodplain maps are developed and approved through a separate process by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

If a project recommended by the study is eventually constructed, design activities would include modeling of any resulting changes to the floodplain and a Letter of Map Revision documenting these changes would be requested from FEMA.

State or County officials may request a revision to the floodplain maps based on the models developed for this study. If requested, FEMA would conduct a review of the models before revising the maps. This review would include a public review and comment period.

13. *Will the economic evaluation consider the impacts of flooding on the market value of my home?*

Corps policy requires that the economic evaluation use values of structures based on the depreciated replacement value for project justification. The depreciated replacement value is an estimate of the cost of replacing a structure in its current condition. The value of the property that the structure is located on is not included in the analysis. Factors such as market value are considered as social and economic factors in the environmental assessment of project impacts.

14. Will the study consider the impacts of existing projects in the watershed?

The feasibility study will review and consider the impacts of existing and planned projects on flood risks. Models used to evaluate flood impacts will include flows from wastewater treatment plants, previously channelized portions of the waterway, and existing fill in the floodplain. Alternatives considered by the study could include modification of existing control structures, storage sites, and other flood risk management projects.

15. Will the study address the impacts of development on flooding?

The Corps is not authorized to regulate or manage development and land use planning. However, alternative plans will take into consideration existing and projected flood risks in the watershed, and estimates of damages and risks will account for the impacts of development as much as possible.

In compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), the Corps works to: avoid development in the floodplain; reduce the hazard and risk associated with floods; minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health, and welfare; and restore and preserve natural and beneficial floodplain values. Our partners for project implementation are also required to comply with applicable Federal floodplain management and flood insurance programs.

16. How will the Corps decide which projects to recommend?

Several criteria will be used to evaluate projects including economic benefits and costs; impacts to environmental, social, and cultural resources; and managing risks to life-safety. The study will ultimately identify a “National Economic Development Plan.” This will be the plan that provides the most net benefits (benefits minus costs) and could include one or more separate projects.

Actions recommended for implementation by the Corps must meet legal and policy requirements including economic justification, implementability, and minimized or mitigated impacts to significant resources. Actions not recommended for implementation by the Corps may be implemented by other agencies.