


Final open house planned for Fox River plan in McHenry, Lake counties

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August 27, 2018



Community members are being asked to weigh in on a draft plan for improving the Fox River corridor in parts of Lake and McHenry counties.

Inspired by a similar project completed for Algonquin and Carpentersville in late 2015, the Fox River Corridor Plan focuses on enhancing the waterway from the Fox Bluff Conservation Area upstream to Route 176 in Burtons Bridge. The goal is to provide a unified vision for the river and its potential environmental, recreational and economic opportunities, said Kate Evasic, project manager for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

"It's a way for us to bring many different recommendations across different plans into one plan that really focuses on the Fox River," she said. "It also is really looking at what resources are available so that communities or counties can go and pursue funding for some of these improvements."

The project has been ongoing since 2016, when the McHenry County planning and development staff members applied for the agency's local technical assistance program. The two groups have since partnered with Lake County, local municipalities and other organizations to develop the plan, Evasic said.

They also sought feedback from residents and community stakeholders through a survey and two previous public meetings. A third and final open house is scheduled for 4:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Fox River Grove village hall, 305 Illinois St.

The plan largely centers around suggestions in four topical areas: natural resources; recreation and open space; bicycle and pedestrian improvements; and economic development. It also touches on ways to address stormwater management and sediment control, Evasic said.

Recommendations include upgrading kayak and canoe launches, improving docks, enhancing riverfront parks, and increasing access to and along the river in areas already designated as public land, Evasic said. The plan also explores opportunities for generating more economic activity, especially in towns like Fox River Grove and Burton Bridge.

"We're looking at ways that ... they can use the river to their benefit so they can stimulate the local economy, attract local businesses and attract people to patronize those businesses," she said.

CMAP and McHenry County are accepting comments and feedback through Sept. 19 on the draft, which also is available on the CMAP website. The plan then will undergo final revisions before being presented to the McHenry County Board for approval late this year or in early 2019.

CMAP representatives also intend to provide assistance connecting government agencies with grant opportunities and implementing the plan once it's adopted.