

IEPA Log No.: **C-0034-15**
CoE appl. #: **2014-00902**

Public Notice Beginning Date: **October 22, 2015**
Public Notice Ending Date: **November 23, 2015**

Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
Amendments of 1972

Section 401 Water Quality Certification to Discharge into Waters of the State

Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water
Division of Water Pollution Control
Permit Section
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Post Office Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
217/782-3362

Name and Address of Discharger: Will County Division of Transportation, 16841 W. Laraway Road,
Joliet, IL 60433

Discharge Location: Sections 31 and 32, T37N, R10E of the 3rd P.M. in Will County within Romeoville

Name of Receiving Water: Wetland along Lily Cache Slough.

Project Description: Weber Road improvements from Normantown Road to 135th Street/Romeo Road.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge into the waters of the state associated with a Section 404 permit application received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. The last day comments will be received will be on the Public Notice period ending date unless a commenter demonstrating the need for additional time requests an extension to this comment period and the request is granted by the IEPA. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters shall provide their names and addresses along with comments on the certification application. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. The certification and notice number(s) must appear on each comment page.

The attached Fact Sheet provides a description of the project and the antidegradation assessment.

The application, Public Notice/Fact Sheet, comments received, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the IEPA at the address shown above between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when scheduled by the interested person.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please call Thaddeus Faught at 217/782-3362.

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Fact Sheet for Antidegradation Assessment
Will County Division of Transportation – Wetland along Lily Cache Slough – Will County
COE# LRC-2014-00902
IEPA Log # C-0034-15
Contact: Diane K Shasteen (217) 558-2012
October 22, 2015

Will County Division of Transportation (WCDOT; “Applicant”) has applied for Section 401 water quality certification for impacts of approximately 1.59 acres of jurisdictional wetlands within the designated project area. The proposed project, located in Romeoville in Sections 31 and 32, Township 37 North, Range 10 East, includes widening and reconstructing Weber Road (CH 88) from south of 135th Street/Romeo Road to south of Normantown Road for a distance of 1.2 miles. The existing roadway consists of two lanes in each direction, northbound and southbound left turn lanes at both intersections, and a sidewalk along the east side of Weber Road from 135th Street/Romeo Road to Carillon Drive. The proposed highway will consist of three 12 foot lanes in each direction, separated by a raised median (varying in width from 6’ to 30’ wide and exclusive turn lanes at both intersections. Other improvements proposed include a 5’ sidewalk on the east side of Weber Road and a 8’ to 10’ wide multi-use path on the west side of Weber Road. The proposed project will be linked to a separate construction project of a diverging diamond interchange (DDI) at Interstate 55 and Weber Road. The purpose of this project is to provide an improved transportation facility in the Interstate 55 and Weber Road Interchange project area, expand the network of multi-use pathways to the surrounding communities, and address safety, operational, and capacity deficiencies of the roadway. The Illinois Department of Transportation is providing consultation design services to WCDOT; however, WCDOT will complete the construction of the project. The project will impact approximately 1.59 wetland acres in the Lily Cache Slough which will be mitigated with the purchase of 4.77 acres of wetland credit from Cedar Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank located in the Des Plaines Watershed.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) investigated 50 sites (Sites 1-50) for this project and the adjoining DDI project. One moderate floristic quality wetland, Lily Cache Slough (FQI 12.3), totaling 170.8 acres was located in the proposed project area. The proposed project will impact approximately 1.59 wetland acres permanently and 0.16 wetland acres temporarily. Impacts to these wetlands are unavoidable and will be mitigated at a ratio of 3.0:1. A total of 4.77 acres of wetland credit will be obtained from the Cedar Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank located in the Des Plaines Watershed.

Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses.

The pollutant load increases that would occur during this project include possible increases in suspended solids. The Applicant will follow IDOT’s Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction to guide erosion and sediment control efforts. An Independent SE/SC Inspector will be utilized to oversee the project. All disturbed areas will be seeded or sodded after construction activities in the area have concluded. No adverse effects are expected to the wetlands due to pollutant load increase.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in suspended solids will be local and temporary. Erosion control measures will be utilized to minimize any increase in these disturbances and prevent further impacts to the wetlands near the newly constructed roadway. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan along with a Best Management Practices Management and Monitoring Plan will be implemented to minimize disturbances within the project area.

The Applicant will purchase 4.77 acres of wetland credit from the Cedar Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank in Will County, the result of a 3.0:1 mitigation ratio applied to 1.59 acres of permanent impacts to the Lily Cache Slough.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The proposed roadway project will provide an improved transportation facility in the Interstate 55 and Weber Road Interchange project area by expanding the 4 lane highway to 6 lanes. This expansion will address safety, operational, and capacity deficiencies of the existing roadway. The proposed project will also expand the network of multi-use pathways to the surrounding communities providing safe and convenient walking and biking paths for residents to local businesses along the roadway.

Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation.

IDOT assessed different alternatives to the project during Phase 1. These alternatives focused on socioeconomic impacts including business relocation and parking area impacts. Following input from the COE, IDOT also assessed alternatives in regards to reducing the acreage of wetland impacts of the project. Design modifications adopted to minimize impacts to Lily Cache Slough include reducing the median width from 30' to 6' through the slough, narrowing the multi-use path from 10' to 8', and increasing the slide slopes to a ratio of 1:3. There would be no increase in pollution loading if a no-build alternative was chosen; however, this option is not appropriate due to the forecasted traffic growth and the potential for roadway accidents in the area. The construction alternatives assessed by IDOT included the following:

No Build

- Consist of repair and maintenance into design year of 2040
- Would not address the issues of operations, capacity, and safety
- Forecasted traffic growth is expected to increase intersection delays, increase queuing at intersections, and potentially increase rear end crashes along Weber Road
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety would continue to suffer without the proposed sidewalk and multi-use path
- No impacts to Lily Cache Slough

Widening Existing Roadway

- Alleviate some of the traffic congestion
- Would not allow for additional turn lanes at the intersection needed to improve the level of service for all movements

- Would restrict operational improvements to side roads
- Would prevent changes to the existing roadway profile needed in order to meet the freeboard requirements based on guidelines in the IDOT Drainage Manual
- Existing profile has risk of water overtopping the roadway during the design year storm event
- Would result in approximately 1.22 acres of permanent wetland impacts

Construction on Alternate Location

- Veterans Parkway located 1.5 miles northeast of Weber Road was evaluated as an alternative location
- Roadway does not meet the urban criteria minimum of 1 mile separation between interchange locations
- Does not provide optimal solution for the traffic and operations problems in the area
- Full access interchange at this location would increase weaving conflict points, potentially leading to increased crash rates
- Significant costs associated with increasing the capacity and building an interchange
- Does not affect Lily Cache Slough; however, not known if other wetlands would exist within the project footprint

Proposed Build Option

- Widen Weber Road from south of 135th Street/Romeo Road to south of Normantown Road from two lanes in each direction to three lanes in each direction
- Raised median that varies from 6' in Lily Cache Slough to 30' landscaped median between the intersections
- Channelized turn lanes at both intersections, traffic signal modernization and lighting improvements
- Drainage improvements including a detention basin at the southeast corner of Weber Road and 135th Street/Romeo Road and a compensatory storage site at the south limits of Lily Cache Slough
- Raised profile to accommodate the 3' freeboard between the design 50-yr headwater elevation and the low edge of pavement elevation through the floodplain
- Increased pedestrian and bicycle safety with the addition of the multi-use path on west side of Weber Road and the sidewalk on east side of Weber Road
- Option will result in decreased congestion and improvements in capacity, traffic safety, and mobility

Conclusion:

The construction of the proposed project will follow conditions set forth by the Agency and USACE. The completion of the roadway widening and reconstructing of Weber Road (CH 88) from south of 135th Street/Romeo Road to south of Normantown Road is the most cost effective, viable means for decreasing congestion and improving roadway capacity, traffic safety, and mobility. Erosion and sediment control plans will be implemented prior to and through construction activities to reduce the pollution load. A detention basin and compensatory storage site will provide additional stormwater runoff storage. Wetland mitigation of 4.77 acres of wetland credit will be purchased from the Cedar Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank in Will County, the result of a 3.0:1 mitigation ratio applied to 1.59 acres of impacts to Lily Cache Slough.

Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities

The Biological Resource Review Memorandum (dated July 16, 2014) indicated that no record of State-listed threatened or endangered species or natural areas exist in the vicinity of the project location and consultation was immediately terminated.

Agency Conclusion.

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (antidegradation standard) and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity will result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this activity will benefit the community at large by improving the transportation facility in the Interstate 55 and Weber Road Interchange project area, expanding the network of multi-use pathways to the surrounding communities, and addressing safety, operational, and capacity deficiencies of the roadway. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.