



NEWS

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PROPOSES NEW \$12 BILLION CAPITAL PLAN

*Plan will create more than 120,000 jobs and add \$21 billion to the economy;
Public hearings to be held in August*

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway today proposed a new, \$12 billion, 15-year capital plan designed to create jobs, stimulate the economy, provide better travel conditions and relieve congestion. The proposed capital plan, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, maps out the Illinois Tollway's infrastructure investments for 2012-2026, including funding to complete the rebuilding of the 52-year-old Tollway system.

The plan includes reconstructing the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a 21st century, state-of-the-art corridor linking Rockford to O'Hare Airport, a new interchange to connect I-294 to I-57 – one of only two places in the nation where interstates cross but do not connect – and a new all-electronic Elgin O'Hare West Bypass that can provide western access to one of the nation's busiest airports. Also included in the plan is funding for planning studies needed for the extension of Illinois Route 53 and the Illiana Expressway.

"Communities throughout the region are advocating for new transportation projects with increasing urgency," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "Illinois residents, business owners, planners, elected officials and others understand that new roads can improve quality of life by saving people time and money, creating jobs and stimulating local economies."

The proposed capital plan will create more than 120,000 permanent jobs and add \$21 billion to the economy. For every \$1 billion of annual construction, more than 13,000 shorter-term construction jobs will be created and sustained over the next decade.

"The Tollway's Board is committed to developing a plan that will ensure that the Chicago area remains competitive with other major cities in the U.S. and around the world," said Tollway Board Chair Paula Wolff. "Our transportation system is one of Illinois' greatest assets. Without a transportation system that is on the cutting-edge and capable of handling increased commercial and passenger travel, our regional economy will suffer."

The Illinois Tollway has completed nearly \$5 billion – nearly 85 percent – of the projects outlined in its current 2005-2016 Congestion-Relief Program on schedule and within budget and is required under the Toll Highway Act to put together its next capital program by the end of 2011.

Proposed Capital Plan

The proposed 15-year, \$12 billion capital plan includes \$8.32 billion to fund necessary improvements to the existing Tollway System. These needs are programmed to be performed at the right time to keep the existing 286 miles of roadways in a state of good repair. Projects include:

- Reconstructing and widening the 52-year-old Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) from the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to Rockford
- Reconstructing more than 20 miles of the central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and the Edens Spur (I-94)
- Preserving the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)
- Preserving the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355)
- Repairing roads, bridges and maintenance facilities
- Other capital projects, including local interchanges

In addition, the proposed capital plan commits an additional \$3.83 billion for new projects that focus on enhancing mobility, including:

- Constructing a new interchange at I-294/I-57, as well as the 147th Street ramps
- Constructing the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass, including completion of the Elgin O'Hare, construction of the West Bypass between I-90 and I-294 and rehabilitation and widening of the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway
- Planning for transit on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90)
- Planning studies for the Illinois Route 53 Corridor and the Illiana Expressway

"The Elgin O'Hare West Bypass is essential to our region's global competitiveness, will drive economic development and create thousands of jobs," said DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin, who serves as chairman of the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Financial Working Group. "I firmly believe that if this road is going to be built, that it will be built as a tollway which will ensure that the drivers who use the road, will pay for the road."

The plan focuses on achieving five goals:

1. Save Drivers Time and Money
Increased capacity and new access from projects in the Tollway's new capital plan will provide drivers with options and opportunities to save time and money over the next decade and beyond.
2. Drive the Economic Engine
The Tollway's capital plan provides an opportunity to help drive Illinois' economy and provide the infrastructure improvements necessary to continue to support the quick and efficient transport of goods, services and workers.
3. Build a 21st Century Transportation System
The Tollway's capital plan will provide for a system of roadways, innovative pricing systems and possibly incorporate mass transit that guarantees long-term competitiveness of the region and unlocks the economic potential of the Midwest for years to come.
4. Take Care of the Existing System
The plan commits funds to rebuild the remaining critical pieces of the Illinois Tollway system.
5. Be the "Cleanest and Greenest" Program In History
The Illinois Tollway's "Building Green" efforts will minimize the environmental impact of new roadway construction by reducing, recycling and reusing materials.

"If we expect companies to invest in our communities, we have to be ready to invest in ourselves," said Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey. "I look forward to participating in the hearings that will detail how the proposal would directly expand and improve service to create jobs and capacity for economic growth in the many communities connected by the system."

Capital Plan Time-Saving Benefits

Capital improvements on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass and I-294/57 Interchange will provide significant time and cost savings. With the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass, customers will save 13 minutes on a five-mile trip from I-290 to York Road. The new Elgin O'Hare West Bypass will accommodate three times as many vehicles per day as the local roads carry now. Additional capacity on I-90 will accommodate 30,000 more vehicles each day, saving drivers up to 25 minutes on the average trip from Elgin to the Kennedy Expressway.

In addition, the new interchange at I-294 and I-57 is expected to serve more than 76,000 vehicles per day. Tri-State Tollway commuters using I-80 to I-57 will save approximately 25 hours a year in travel time. Construction of the interchange will provide access to local communities and direct freight access to Chicago's south suburbs. The new interchange is expected to save drivers \$4 million annually in fuel consumption.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) projects that - collectively - these three major projects—all priorities of its Go To 2040 Plan--- will reduce vehicle miles traveled in congestion by 1 million miles daily, resulting in savings of more than \$775 million annually due to reduced congestion and delays.

“The Chicago area has the nation's worst roadway congestion,” said Mayor of Palos Hills and CMAP Board Chairman Gerald Bennett. “The Tollway's plan wisely invests in projects CMAP's GO TO 2040 Plan has identified as the best opportunities to maximize regional mobility and economic development – including construction of the I-294/I-57 Interchange.”

Proposed Funding Plan

The capital plan will be financed by bonds backed by a proposed toll rate increase for passenger vehicles effective January 1, 2012, and a previously approved commercial vehicle increase scheduled to begin in 2015. Funding for the proposed plan will also be generated through toll revenue from additional facilities, including the new Elgin O'Hare West Bypass.

The proposed plan includes a toll rate increase of 35 cents at a typical mainline toll plaza, with cash-paying passenger vehicles continuing to pay double the I-PASS rate. The proposal represents the first toll increase in 28 years for I-PASS users, who comprise 75 percent of the Illinois Tollway's 1.4 million daily users. The Illinois Tollway is a user-funded system that receives no state or federal tax dollars for maintenance and operations.

“A 21st century transportation system can't be paid for in 1983 dollars,” said Lafleur. “No one is going to step up – not Washington, D.C., nor anyone else - to help us pay for these infrastructure improvements that are needed to keep our competitive advantage.”

With the proposed toll rate increase—typically from 40 cents to 75 cents, the cost of a car trip on the Tollway system for an average I-PASS customer would be \$1.18 – up from today's average of 63 cents per trip and an increase of \$2.75 a week or \$11.00 a month. Even after the increase, the Illinois Tollway will rank 29 among all 41 toll road agencies in the U.S. in terms of price – still in the bottom third and an average of just 6 cents per mile.

The commercial vehicle increase previously approved by the Tollway Board in 2008 will remain in place. Commercial rates are scheduled to increase a total of 60 percent between 2015 and 2017 and are tied to the Consumer Price Index beginning in 2018.

Public Planning Process

To develop the proposed capital plan, the Tollway's leadership team worked to ensure that the voices of residents, business owners, community leaders, elected officials and environmental groups were brought to the table to join the discussion, along with transportation, planning and regional transit agencies.

Throughout 2010, the Tollway Board of Directors conducted a comprehensive, year-long public review of potential capital projects required to maintain the existing Tollway system in good repair through 2026, as well as new projects with regional impact that the Tollway could play a role in.

The review was followed by public discussion and input through a series of five public Capital Planning Forums held in July 2011, participation in the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Advisory Council and creation of the I-90 Corridor Planning Council and the Illinois Route 53 Corridor Blue Ribbon Advisory Council.

Public Hearings in August

Details of the capital plan and proposed toll rate increase will be presented at a series of public hearings in the 12 counties served by the Tollway to allow customers and others the opportunity to comment and provide feedback.

In addition, all of the public hearings will be Web cast live on the Tollway's Web site to provide access for those unable to attend the hearings in person. The Tollway is also soliciting comments on its Web site at www.illinoistollway.com.

Public hearings will be held:

August 18, 4-6 p.m.

Kane County - Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Avenue, Building A, Geneva

August 18, 7-9 p.m.

Cook County - Chicago Ridge City Hall, 10455 S. Ridgeland Avenue, Chicago Ridge
DuPage County - DuPage County Government Center, 421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton
Will County - Village of New Lenox, 1 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox

August 19, 7-9 p.m.

Boone County - Community Building, 111 W. 1st Street, Belvidere
DeKalb County - NIU-Convocation Center, 1525 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb
Lake County - Libertyville Civic Center, 135 W. Church Street, Libertyville
McHenry County - Village of Huntley, 10987 Main Street, Huntley

August 22, 7-9 p.m.

Lee County - Comfort Inn, 136 Plaza Drive, Dixon
Ogle County - Comfort Inn & Suites, 1122 N. Seventh Street, Rochelle
Whiteside County - Sterling Municipal Building, 212 3rd Avenue, Sterling

Winnebago County - Clock Tower Resort, 7801 E. State Street, Rockford

August 23, 4-6 p.m.

Cook County - Schaumburg Prairie Center for the Arts, 201 Schaumburg Court, Schaumburg

August 23, 7-9 p.m.

Lake County - Buffalo Grove Village Hall, 50 Raupp Boulevard, Buffalo Grove

The Tollway Board of Directors is scheduled to vote on the capital plan and proposed toll increase at its August 25 meeting at the Tollway's headquarters in Downers Grove. The Toll Highway Act requires the Board to complete its capital plan by the end of 2011.

For more information about the proposed capital plan and to submit a comment, please visit www.illinoistollway.com.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

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