

I-355 South Extension

The Illinois Tollway has completed construction of the 12.5-mile, six-lane South Extension of the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355) from I-55 through Will County to I-80. This project is part of the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Program to reduce travel times.

Update – Latest Construction Info

Along the corridor, mainline concrete paving work was completed in October. Three lanes of pavement are now open in both directions between I-55 and I-80. 139th Street remains permanently closed between Cokes Road and Archer Avenue.

Minimizing Impact to Reduce Delays

There were minimal impacts to drivers during construction. The South Extension roadway is similar to the south end of the original section of I-355 between I-55 and Army Trail Road, where the road is depressed and runs underneath existing local roads. This aids in the reduction of roadway noise.

The South Extension runs under Cedar Rd.*, Route 6*, Bruce Road*, 167th St.*, Gougar Rd.*, 163rd St.*, 159th Street*, 127th St.*, 151st St., 143rd St.*, and 171st St./Archer Ave*, and also includes a 1.3 mile-long bridge over the Des Plaines River, and also runs over 135th St.*, I-55 and Internationale Pkwy.

Work Zone Safety

Remember to drive safely in work zones; see the Tollway's Work Zone Safety page at www.illinoistollway.com.

Schedule

The first contract on the project began in late 2004 clearing the lane for the new road. Major earthwork began in spring 2005 on the south end of the project. Additional work began in fall 2005, including embankment excavation and drainage work throughout the corridor. Bridge and interchange construction began throughout the corridor in 2006, including the 1.3-mile Des Plaines River Valley Bridge. Bridge and interchange construction was completed in 2007. Concrete paving work began in the spring and was completed in the fall.



Concrete paving operations near 127th Street.

Construction of Des Plaines River Valley Bridge

The project includes the construction of a 1.3-mile, six-lane bridge over the Des Plaines River Valley. The structure is a pre-cast, post-tensioned spliced bulb-tee concrete bridge that rises more than 100 feet above the ground at its highest point, with three lanes in each direction. The bridge runs from north of Bluff Road to south of New Avenue and spans the I & M Canal, the Sanitary & Ship Canal, several railroad lines, the Des Plaines River, and the Will County Forest Preserve. Work began in March 2006 to drill the caisson foundations for the new bridge piers. Substructure work was completed in spring 2007 and beam erection was completed by late summer 2007. The bridge features a total of 34 piers; five piers north of Bluff Road are 10-20 feet in height, and the 29 piers south of Bluff Road and through the Valley have an average height of 75 feet.

A low-level bridge was constructed over the Des Plaines River and was used to move equipment during construction of the Des Plaines River Valley Bridge, including work to raise the high-voltage Com Ed wires in the Valley by over 100 feet to accommodate the bridge. The low-level bridge will be turned over to the Will County Forest Preserve for use in connecting their trail systems. The Tollway will also utilize the low-level bridge in order to inspect and maintain the Des Plaines River Valley Bridge. There was minimal impact to drivers with construction of the Des Plaines River Valley Bridge, since it is not in close proximity to residential areas or businesses.



Rendering of Des Plaines River Valley Bridge

Construction of I-55 and I-80 Interchanges

The interchange at the terminus of I-355 and I-55 features eight ramp movements, including three flyover ramp bridges. All mainline lanes on I-355 and I-55 remained open during the day during construction but some overnight lane closures were required to build the new interchange. The interchange features one and a half miles of bridge deck varying in width from 34 feet to 120 feet. The flyover ramp movements take southbound I-55 traffic to northbound I-55, southbound I-55 traffic to southbound I-355, and northbound I-55 traffic to northbound I-355.

I-355 South Extension Interchange at I-55



Work began in spring 2006 at the site of the new I-80 interchange at Cedar Road, which features four ramp movements at the southern terminus of the roadway, including two flyover ramp bridges. The flyover ramp movements are for southbound I-355 traffic heading to I-80 eastbound and for eastbound I-80 traffic heading northbound on I-355.

Purpose – Pertinent Details on Why and How

The new extension serves Will County, one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois, and provides a regional connection that improves north-south mobility between Interstate 55 and Interstate 80. The extension reduces travel times by 20 percent and provides a more direct route between residences in Will County and areas where jobs are more plentiful, such as the O'Hare area, therefore benefiting the entire Chicagoland region.

The South Extension runs through 13 Municipalities/Townships in three counties including: Bolingbrook, Downers Grove Township, DuPage Township, Homer Glen, Homer Township, Lemont, Lemont Township, Lockport, Lockport Township, New Lenox, New Lenox Township, Romeoville and Woodridge.

The project includes noise abatement walls at 6 locations for developments that were platted before April 1999, when the road became public knowledge. See the Noise Abatement Fact Sheet for more information.

For further information, visit www.illinoistollway.com & view the Construction section.

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