NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2012

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ISSUE RECORD OF DECISION FOR ELGIN O'HARE WESTERN ACCESS PROJECT

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation today announced that the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Aviation Administration have issued a Record of Decision (ROD) approving the plan for the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project. This approval completes the last step in the federal review of the project's environmental impact, allowing the Tollway to move toward implementation.

Release of this document marks the end of more than five years of planning studies by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The $3.4 billion project is part of the Illinois Tollway's 15-year, $12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future.*

"This critical step towards construction of the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project is a testament to the strong regional and bipartisan consensus we built for this project," Governor Pat Quinn said. "This historic project will put thousands of Illinois men and women to work improving our infrastructure while driving economic growth across the region."

"With this major milestone, Illinois is finally positioned to implement this long-planned project, setting the stage for economic growth for decades to come," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "Today's signing is a significant step toward better transportation options for residents and businesses in the communities surrounding O'Hare Airport."

The Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project will include construction of a new, all-electronic toll road around the western border of O'Hare International Airport linking the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), the extension of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway east along Thorndale Avenue to O'Hare and the rehabilitation and widening of the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway. The project is also expected to create as many as 65,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2040 when combined with completion of the western terminal at O'Hare Airport.

"The Elgin O'Hare Western Access will make travel safer and more efficient to and from one of the nation's busiest airports and will help the suburbs west of O'Hare by moving people and goods safely and efficiently throughout the region," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider.

The Tollway is tentatively planning to spend $95.6 million in 2013 for work on the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project. Potential 2013 construction includes noisewalls along the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway, Rohlwing Road (Illinois Route 53) grade separation and the southbound Elmhurst Road over I-90 bridge. The actual location and schedule of construction will be dependent on land acquisition, permits, agreements and utility relocations.

The 2013-2025 implementation plan is broadly supported by local governments and represents a fiscally responsible approach to address the area's diverse travel needs - improving travel efficiency, providing western access to O'Hare, enhancing multi-modal connections and reducing congestion.

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The Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project has been in the works for decades and is considered a “Project of National and Regional Significance” by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

About *Move Illinois*

The Illinois Tollway’s $12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future,* will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create as many as 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. *Move Illinois* will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O’Hare Western Access and fund planning studies for the Illinois Route 53/120 Extension and the Illiana Expressway.

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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Tier Two
Record of Decision

Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass Cook and DuPage Counties, Illinois

December 2012

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
Federal Aviation Administration

The goals of the mitigation site will be established, monitored, and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the USACE, IEPA, and IDNR. The performance standards applied to the long-term success of wetlands and waters restoration will follow those described in the Chicago District Permittee Responsible Mitigation Requirements (revised October 2009). These goals and performance standards (e.g., how success will be measured) for the mitigation area and associated buffers are detailed within this document which can be found on the USACE Chicago District website at http://155.79.114.199/co-r/mitgr.htm.

As mentioned above, it is expected that the Illinois Tollway will maintain and monitor the mitigation areas for five years or until sign-off/approval by the USACE and IDNR. Once sign-off is obtained, responsibility for the long-term/perpetual maintenance and monitoring of the site will be the responsibility of the Lake County Forest Preserves.

If additional or alternative wetland/waters mitigation sites are determined to be necessary through the permitting process, it is anticipated that a similar review/approval process would occur, and an IGA would be arranged with an appropriate land steward regarding establishment, maintenance, and monitoring (both short and long-term) of the mitigation site(s).

9. Approval

Based on the analysis and evaluation contained in the Tier Two Final EIS, after careful consideration of all the identified social, economic, and environmental factors and input received from other agencies, organizations, and the public; and the factors and mitigation measures outlined in this document, it is the decision of FHWA and FAA to approve the Preferred Alternative as the Selected Alternative.

12/12/2012
Date

Norman R. Stoner, P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

12/11/12
Date

Barry Cooper
Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration