



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY APPROVES RAILROAD AGREEMENTS FOR NEW I-490 TOLLWAY AND WESTERN ACCESS TO O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad providing property rights to accommodate roadway and interchange construction

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors today approved agreements with Soo Line Railroad Company d/b/a Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad representing the next major step forward for the I-490 Tollway Project.

“Improving and updating infrastructure across the state has been a top priority for my administration from the very beginning and this new agreement provides a clear path forward for a long-awaited project,” said **Governor JB Pritzker**. “After years of false starts and unfulfilled plans, the I-490 Tollway Project can now achieve its goals of improving access to O’Hare International Airport for businesses and communities and providing needed employment opportunities for workers.”

The forms of agreement will allow for the mutual exchange of property rights necessary for construction of the new I-490 Tollway extending south from the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) to the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) with interchanges creating new access into and around O’Hare International Airport and will enable improvements to rail operations in the Chicago Terminal area.

“Today we mark a significant breakthrough in the Illinois Tollway’s longstanding effort to deliver the Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project,” said **Tollway Board of Directors Chairman Will Evans**. “Thanks to the leadership of this administration, as well as the dogged persistence of our federal, state and local stakeholders, our collective goal of delivering western access to O’Hare is that much closer.”

“Negotiations for these long-sought agreements began in 2012, and their complexity reflects the importance of the area to the railroads, as well as our own efforts to complete the *Move Illinois* Capital Program,” said **Executive Director José Alvarez**. “Our cooperation represents a substantial step toward the modernization of Illinois’ road and railway infrastructure to invigorate the communities and businesses in the region.”

Construction of the new I-490 Tollway is planned to cross the Union Pacific Railroad at several locations, including where western access into and out of O’Hare International Airport is planned, as well as near the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) at the location of the future I-490/I-294 Interchange. The new I-490 Tollway is also planned to cross over the Canadian Pacific at several locations including where western access to the airport is planned and in the Canadian Pacific’s Bensenville Yard. The project will require relocating Canadian Pacific trackage south of the yard.

The agreements would also provide the Tollway with property rights that will advance adjacent projects supporting construction of Cook County’s planned improvements to Touhy Avenue, which include replacement of the at-grade crossing at the Union Pacific Railroad with a new bridge that will relieve congestion and improve access to the north side of O’Hare International Airport.

“The mutual benefits that will flow from these agreements are the result of cooperation and respect for one another’s needs,” said **Mark Redd, Canadian Pacific’s Executive Vice President of Operations**.

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“We are excited that the forms of agreement will help the Tollway meet the needs of the travelling public of Northeast Illinois, and enable improvements to the rail network which will contribute to Chicago’s economy and help position Canadian Pacific to meet future demand for freight rail service.”

Due to the overall magnitude and potential to dramatically improve mobility, freight connectivity and enhance the national and regional economies, the corridor was designated as a "Project of National and Regional Significance" by federal transportation legislation and the project has continued to advance with support from Illinois Congressional leaders.

“The Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project will bring significant economic benefits to the region by creating jobs, reducing congestion, increasing connectivity, and improving transportation infrastructure in Illinois. After years of working with the delegation and the Tollway to advance this project, I’m pleased we are one step closer to finally getting this project across the finish line,” said **U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)**.

“The Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project is vital to the future of northeastern Illinois’s transportation network, and today’s vote is a critical milestone toward construction of this project. I’m encouraged by the progress between the Illinois Tollway, Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad, and I will continue to help this important project move toward completion,” said **U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)**.

“Today’s announcement about the path forward for the Elgin O’Hare Project is, at long last, a significant win for our entire region. This agreement is the result of months, if not years, of hard work and good faith by all sides. The agreement will help ease travel around O’Hare, cut down on rail congestion that’s bad for the freight companies and my constituents, and make access to the airport easier and smoother for thousands of Chicagoland residents,” said **U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05)**.

“The Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project is among the most important economic and infrastructures projects in my district, and I’m very happy that the Illinois Tollway, Canadian Pacific, and Union Pacific Railroad are taking this crucial step forward. I am grateful to have helped facilitate the resolution of issues necessary to get to this point. Completing Western Access is a top priority for my constituents because of the thousands of jobs, increased tax revenue, and reduced traffic it will create for our region,” said **U.S. Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08)**.

“This action brings DuPage County one step closer to realizing the benefits of improved transit to and from O’Hare Airport. Additionally, the completion of the I-490 Tollway will create thousands of jobs and economic opportunity on the west side of the airport, further benefiting our region. We welcome the agreements and we will continue to advocate with all parties involved toward improved western access to O’Hare International Airport,” said **DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin**.

“I’d like to thank the Tollway Board and staff for their diligent work on this matter. These negotiations have spanned three administrations, and the Governor and his team deserve credit for getting this agreement over the finish line,” said **Franklin Park Mayor Barrett Pedersen**.

The new I-490 Tollway, scheduled to be complete by the end of 2025, coupled with the Illinois Route 390 Tollway which was completed in 2017, will connect businesses and communities with one of the nation’s busiest airports, transit facilities, major freight transportation hubs, distribution centers and multiple interstate highways including the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

Designed to accommodate access into the O’Hare International Airport, the two new all-electronic Tollways include 17 miles of new roads with 15 new or improved interchanges. The new I-490 Tollway

will be built to carry north-south traffic around the western border of O'Hare and provide access to the airport. The Illinois Route 390 Tollway, which currently carries east-west traffic between Lake Street (Illinois Route 20) and Illinois Route 83, will include an interchange connection to the new I-490 Tollway.

About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first eight years of *Move Illinois* are on schedule and within budget, delivering the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway and a rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) with its new SmartRoad corridor, as well as opening a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57. Progress continues on projects addressing the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system, delivering the new I-490 Tollway Project and reconstruction of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

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 294 miles of roadways 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), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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