



# ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 5, 2022**

## **NEW SOUTHBOUND MILE LONG BRIDGE SCHEDULED TO OPEN TO TRAFFIC NEXT WEEK ON THE TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294)**

*Illinois Tollway marking major milestone toward completion  
of new \$500 million double structure bridge*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway is preparing to open the new southbound Mile Long Bridge to traffic next week, completing the second phase of the \$500 million construction project to deliver the new twin-structure bridge as part of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project.

"The reopening of the Mile Long Bridge is a testament to the hard work of the people who made the timely completion of this project a reality," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Replacing outdated bridges throughout the state is a cornerstone of my administration's infrastructure revitalization goal and I could not be more proud to see this portion of the *Move Illinois* program come to fruition."

The Tollway will begin work to open the new bridge to southbound traffic with traffic impacts beginning as early as the evening of Tuesday, October 11, and anticipated four lanes of open on the new bridge before the evening commute on Wednesday, October 12, weather permitting.

"Opening the new southbound Mile Long Bridge structure to traffic is a significant milestone in our work to rebuild and widen the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) between 95<sup>th</sup> Street and Balmoral Avenue, and is due thanks to the hard work of our contractors, engineers and material providers," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse. "Replacing bridges, including the Mile Long Bridge structures, throughout the 22-mile corridor will allow us to deliver the new and improved roadway on schedule to our customers."

Overnight lane closures will be scheduled on southbound I-294 between I-55 and LaGrange Road with a single lane closure beginning at 7 p.m., followed by a second lane closure at 8 p.m. and a third lane closure at 10 p.m. In addition, traffic shifts will begin at 7 p.m. on the ramp connecting 75<sup>th</sup> Street to southbound I-294, with full stops scheduled between 12 a.m. to 4:30 a.m.

At 5 a.m., Wednesday, October 12, ramp traffic will be restored and the reopening of I-294 traffic lanes will begin and continue throughout the morning with all lanes open and southbound traffic traveling in four lanes on the new bridge by 1 p.m. on Wednesday, October 12.

The Mile Long Bridge Project includes replacement of two side-by-side structures – one to carry northbound traffic and the other to carry southbound traffic – to replace the original bridge built in 1958. Work to remove the old northbound structure and construct the new southbound Mile Long Bridge began in spring 2021. Construction of the new northbound bridge structure began in summer 2019 and was completed in fall 2020. The entire Mile Long Bridge Project, including the third phase - removal of the old southbound bridge structure, is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023.

The Mile Long Bridge carries traffic over two major railroads, the Des Plaines River, the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal and the Illinois & Michigan Canal and local roads, and over several major distribution centers. Currently, up to 150,000 vehicles travel across the Mile Long Bridge daily.

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The construction project includes building two, new side-by-side 4,800-foot-long bridge structures designed to last 100 years and increasing capacity to five lanes in each direction. The inside shoulders in both directions will be built to serve as Flex Lanes for transit, for emergency vehicles and as an alternate lane when warranted.

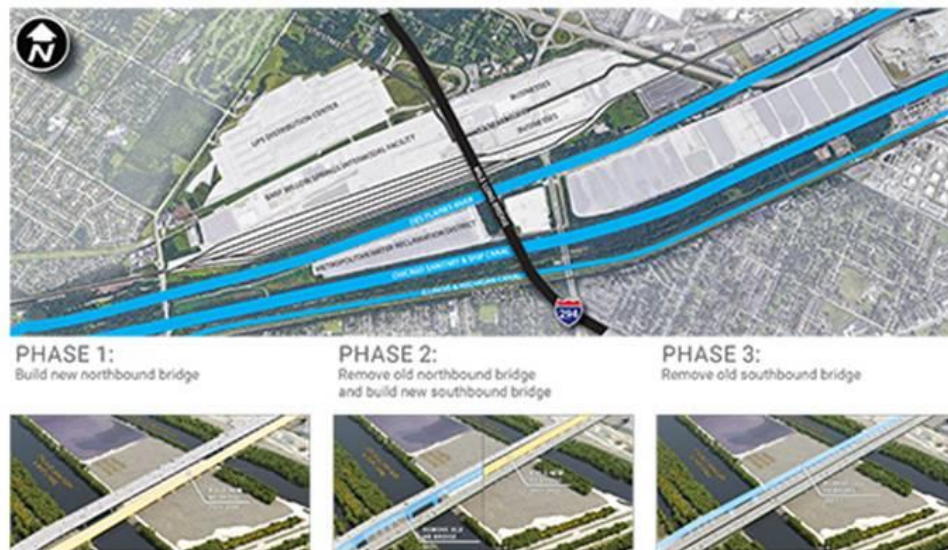
Facts about the new southbound Mile Long Bridge:

- The bridge features 27 spans supported by 26 piers, compared to the existing structure with 53 piers, reducing the impact on waterways, roadway and rail operations below.
- The bridge deck is supported by 250 precast concrete beams and 52 steel beams. Steel beams, measure up to 10 feet tall and range in length from 39 feet to 234 feet long were transported from Indiana and concrete beams measure up to 7.5 feet tall and are up to 187 feet long, were transported from Wisconsin.
- Nearly 34,000 cubic yards of concrete were used for the new bridge – an amount equal to more than 3,700 fully-loaded concrete-mixing trucks.
- The bridge deck includes nearly 7 million pounds of steel rebar.

Additional construction information about the Mile Long Bridge Project is available in the Projects section on the Tollway's website at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com).

The Illinois Tollway is coordinating work on the Mile Long Bridge Project with the Village of Hodgkins, Village of Countryside, Village of Willow Springs, Village of Justice, Cook County, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), IDNR Office of Water Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, as well as numerous businesses located near the Mile Long Bridge.

The project is part of the \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project, scheduled for 2018 through 2025, is rebuilding and improving the Tollway from Balmoral Avenue to 95th Street to provide congestion relief, improve mobility, reconstruct old infrastructure to meet current and future transportation demand and to address regional needs. This work is funded by the Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* capital program.



### **Work Zone Safety**

Construction zone speed limits are in effect in all construction zones 24/7 and drivers should continue to watch for changing traffic patterns and use caution, especially when workers are present. On I-294, a 45-mph work zone speed limit is in effect throughout the construction season.

The Illinois Tollway reminds motorists that the “Move Over Law” requires motorists to change lanes or to slow down and proceed with caution when passing any vehicle on the side of the road with hazard lights activated. If you see flashing lights ahead, please move over or slow down.

Illinois State Police have zero tolerance for drivers speeding in work zones or failure to comply with the Move Over Law. The minimum penalty for speeding in a work zone is \$250 and can include up to a \$25,000 fine and a 14-year jail sentence for hitting a roadway worker. Penalties for failure to slow down or move over for a vehicle on the shoulder with flashing lights includes up to a \$10,000 fine, 2-year suspension of driving privileges and jail time, in extreme cases.

### **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 152,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first eight years of *Move Illinois* is on schedule and within budget, delivering the rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor and 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 Elgin O’Hare Western Access 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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