



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2017

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PROPOSES ALTERNATIVES TO EXPAND PLANS TO REBUILD THE CENTRAL TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294) AS PART OF *MOVE ILLINOIS*

No toll rate increase required for recommended alternative improvements to increase capacity, reduce congestion and improve travel reliability

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway Customer Service and Planning Committee today recommended that the full Board of Directors should consider a proposal to expand the agency’s current plans to rebuild the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) between Balmoral Avenue and 95th Street and increase funding for the *Move Illinois* capital program to accommodate enhancements to the project that will increase capacity, reduce congestion and improve travel reliability.

Currently, \$1.9 billion is provided to replace the Central Tri-State Tollway as part of *Move Illinois*. Expansion of the project would provide for construction of additional lanes and inclusion of transit and technology accommodations and would require a \$2.1 billion increase in funding for the Illinois Tollway’s \$12 billion *Move Illinois* Program. Should the Tollway Board expand the *Move Illinois* capital program and advance the recommended alternative, no toll increase would be required to fund the improvements.

“We already know that the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) will be rebuilt as part of the *Move Illinois* Program. The 22-mile-long stretch is a patchwork of pavement that includes original 60-year-old roadway and key infrastructure that is deteriorating, so we already have plans in place for work that is necessary to repair aging roadway,” said Board Chairman Bob Schillerstrom. “If the Tollway is going to make the best investment for our customers and the region, we need to expand these plans, build for the long-term and deliver innovative improvements that provide comprehensive solutions to regional transportation needs.”

Over the past year and a half, Tollway staff has met with communities, businesses and utilities one-on-one to understand their near-term and long-term plans related to the Central Tri-State Tollway, and the agency convened a Corridor Planning Council with local governments, civic organizations and freight industry leaders providing a wide range of perspectives.

The Tollway’s study to date identified the corridor’s top needs as congestion, access, flooding and freight, which were all taken into account and serve as the basis for the recommended alternative for the Central Tri-State Tollway Project.

The recommendation includes continue working collaboratively with individual communities, businesses and the public and beginning the necessary planning and design work for the recommended alternative, including:

- Building additional lanes, including integrating a Flex Lane through the full length of the corridor, which is a wide inside shoulder with access controlled through the use of SmartRoad technology.
- Delivering improvements at the two major system interchanges at I-290 and I-55.
- Providing for regional stormwater solutions in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and individual communities.

- Consider additional noisewalls, aesthetics and quality-of-life improvements such as local park enhancements, tree plantings and bike and pedestrian connections.
- Considering new truck parking opportunities to reduce freight congestion and access.

The Tollway's analysis estimates improvements delivered by the recommended alternative would reduce stop-and-go traffic and delays and result in significant reductions in peak travel times, including a 55 percent reduction in time it would take to drive the full length of the Tollway.

Reducing delays, eliminating stop-and-go congestion and providing new truck parking opportunities would increase safety and travel reliability. In addition, inclusion of Flex Lanes would provide greater flexibility for expansion of reliable suburban transit service and improve maintenance operations and incident response.

The proposal to increase funding for the *Move Illinois* capital program to accommodate enhancements to the Central Tri-State Project will be presented to the full board at the Board of Directors meeting scheduled for April 27.

The Illinois Tollway is hosting a series of open house meetings April 24-26 to share its research and proposed concept with the public and gather input from customers, residents, businesses and communities. Comments can also be shared with the Tollway online at illinoistollway.com/outreach or via email at 294tristate@getipass.com.

The Central Tri-State Tollway opened in 1958 as part of the original Tollway system is a critical piece of the region's transportation network and economy. Currently, more than 115,000 people work within a mile of the Central-Tri-State Tollway.

Forming the backbone of the region's system of interstates, the Tri-State Tollway connects four other interstates, I-80, I-55, I-290, I-88, and I-90, with the new I-490 Tollway being built as part of the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project set to become the sixth interstate connection. The corridor provides critical connections to both O'Hare International and Chicago Midway International Airports, and also plays an important role in Chicago's freight economy, which supports more than 176,000 jobs and generates \$12.3 billion in personal income.

About *Move Illinois*

The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$12 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 five 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 planning for emerging projects, including 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 292 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), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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