



# ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 30, 2019**

## **NEW TRAFFIC PATTERN SCHEDULED THIS WEEK ON TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294) MILE LONG BRIDGE**

*Additional traffic shifts planned on to prepare for bridge reconstruction work*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – Work to shift northbound traffic on the Central Tollway (I-294) between Archer Avenue (Illinois Route 171) and the Mile Long Bridge is scheduled to begin this week as part of bridge reconstruction work. Traffic will remain in this configuration through fall.

“The Illinois Tollway is committed to ensuring the roadway remains safe for both drivers and workers during construction, which is part of our overall commitment to roadway safety,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. “We ask drivers to be attentive in work zones by watching for changing traffic patterns and using caution, especially when workers are present.”

Weather permitting, overnight Wednesday, October 2, lane closures will be scheduled on northbound I-294 between Archer Avenue (Illinois Route 171) and the Mile Long Bridge to prepare for a long-term traffic shift. The first lane is scheduled to close at 7 p.m. with a second lane closing at 8 p.m. and a third at 1 a.m. All lanes are scheduled to reopen by 5 a.m. on Thursday, October 3 in advance on the morning rush hour. Similar closures also are scheduled overnight Thursday, with all lanes scheduled to reopen by 5 a.m. on Friday, October 4. When work to shift traffic is complete, all traffic will be shifted to the right.

Currently, traffic in both directions is shifted between 75<sup>th</sup> St and I-55. Additional closures will be scheduled later in the month in both directions to extend the traffic shifts across the length of the Mile Long Bridge.

The Mile Long Bridge is one of the first major construction segments for the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project with an estimated to cost of between \$550 million and \$650 million. Currently, up to 150,000 vehicles travel across the Mile Long Bridge daily. Construction is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023.

The Mile Long Bridge Project includes building two, new side-by-side bridge structures near Countryside, Hodgkins, Willow Springs and Justice to carry I-294 northbound and southbound traffic over three water resources and local roads, a major distribution center for UPS, a segment of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and the Canadian National Railroad.

The new 4,800-foot-long bridge structures will increase capacity from four lanes to five lanes in each direction to accommodate reconstruction and widening of the Tri-State Tollway between Balmoral Avenue and 95<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, the inside shoulders on the bridge will be built to serve as Flex Lanes to provide for transit, assist emergency vehicles and serve as an alternate lane to reduce traffic congestion when warranted.

The design of the new bridge structures took into consideration the sensitive aquatic ecosystem, navigable waterways and existing railroad and roadway operations underneath the structure. Each of the new structures will have fewer piers to reduce the environmental impact on the waterways and

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industrial areas below. Each bridge will have 27 spans supported by 26 piers, compared to the existing structures each with 53 piers. The spans will be made up of a total of nearly 600 steel or concrete beams of various lengths.

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, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, 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 work is part of the Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*.

Construction information about the Mile Long Bridge Project is available in the "Projects by Roadway" section in the Explore Projects section on the Tollway's website at [illinoistollway.com](http://illinoistollway.com).

### **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. Posted signs advise drivers of a \$10,000 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 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first seven 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 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.