



# ILLINOIS TOLLWAY UPDATE



## CREWS DEMOLISHING CLOSED NORTHBOUND MILE LONG BRIDGE TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW SPAN

It's not easy demolishing a 4,900-foot-long, four-lane, concrete-and-steel bridge that stands 40 feet high and is supported by 53 concrete piers.

But crews working through the winter using cranes and concrete saws already have removed about 35 percent of the northbound Mile Long Bridge on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), which closed last November when a new, adjacent bridge opened.

Weather permitting, they expect to finish demolishing the massive structure by October, although construction of a new southbound bridge on the same site will start even before the old bridge is completely gone.

*Continued on page 2*



## AS SEEN ON THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY – THORNTON QUARRIES

*A short, scenic drive through 450 million years of Illinois history*

One of the shortest segments of the Illinois Tollway traverses one of the biggest ravines in the ground in the Midwest.

A portion of the 5-mile segment of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294/I-80) between Hazel Crest to near the Indiana border runs across the Thornton Quarry. This 1.5-mile long, 450-foot-deep pit ranks as one of the largest commercial quarries in the world, according to the Thornton Historical Society.

Motorists on this stretch may see the quarry as one big canyon, but the Tollway was actually built on a dryland dike that splits the north quarry from the main pit area to the south.

One of the nation's oldest limestone mining operations, Thornton Quarry began mining operations in 1836 – a year before Chicago was incorporated as a city and the population of the fledgling city stood at around 4,200 people.

Owned and operated by Hanson Material Service Corp. since 1938, Thornton Quarry produces more than 7 million tons of rock products a year. Contractors use these products for asphalt and concrete pavement mixes, asphalt roof shingles, fertilizers and various building materials. Materials from this quarry have been used in asphalt and concrete mixes on many Tollway roadway and bridge projects, as well as on pavements throughout Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and beyond.

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The work is part of the Tollway's \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway Program, which is rebuilding and widening 22 miles of I-294 between Balmoral Avenue in Rosemont and 95th Street in Oak Lawn.

"This is a complex project so we're pleased this work is proceeding on schedule, despite the weather challenges we've faced at times this winter," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "Removing this portion of the Mile Long Bridge is critical because it allows us to proceed with the construction of the new southbound bridge needed to complete this project and provide a safer, state-of-the-art bridge for our customers."

Opened in 1958, the Mile Long Bridge is being replaced with two side-by-side, five-lane bridges that are projected to operate for up to 100 years.

The new northbound bridge opened last fall just east of the original northbound span, which was then closed to traffic.

That closed bridge now is being demolished to make room for the new southbound bridge.

Crews are using concrete saws to cut the parapet wall along the bridge and remove the bridge deck in slabs. The concrete sections are removed from the bridge and further processed for re-use by further breaking down the concrete and removing the steel rebar inside.

As part of the Tollway's commitment to sustainability, the concrete is being crushed and processed onsite. The material will be used in the project as base for roadway or ramp approaches to the new southbound bridge, or for access roads.

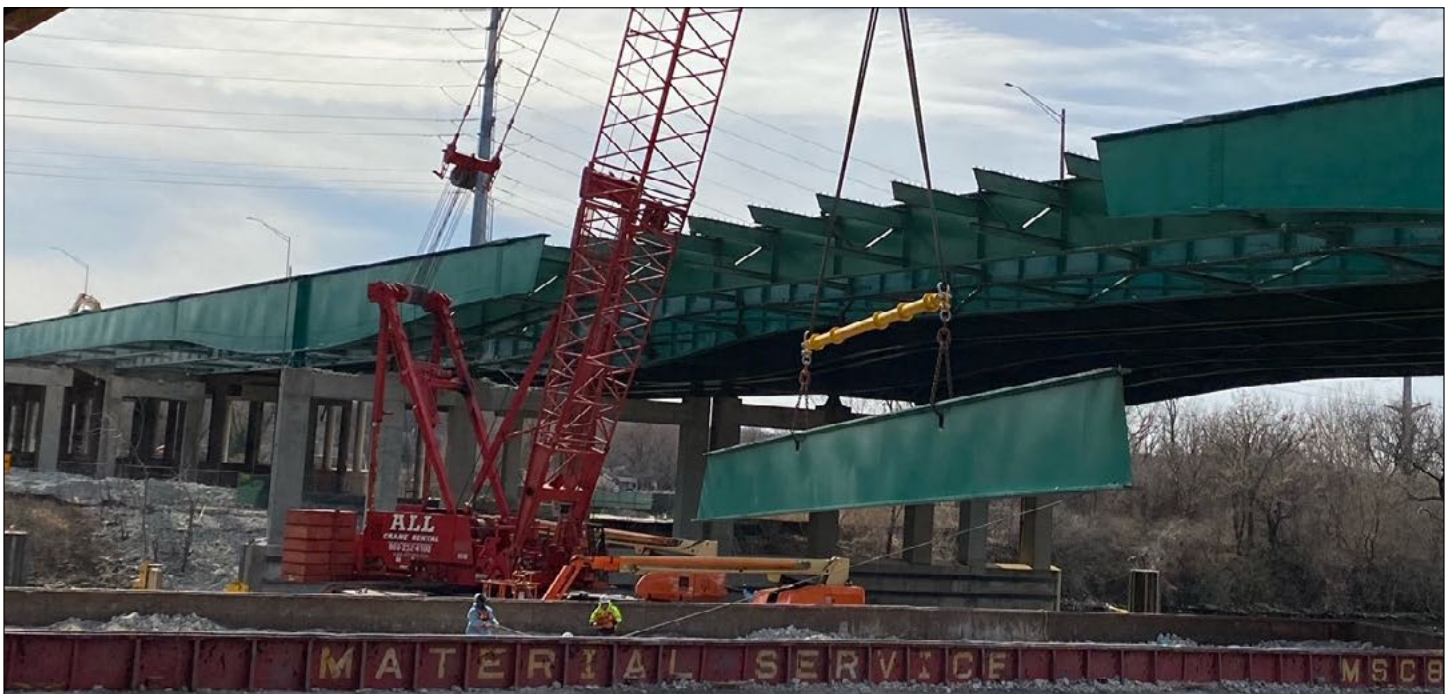
After each portion of the bridge deck is removed, the supporting concrete beams are also removed and later broken up onsite so the concrete can be reused in the bridge project.

When all the decking and beams have been removed, the 53 towering concrete piers that supported the bridge will be demolished and removed, although their underground foundations will be left in place.

So far, the walls and decking on nearly 20 of the 54 bridge spans have been removed, although work was stopped because of storms and cold weather for several weeks in late January and early February.

Later this year, even before the demolition work is completed, crews will begin drilling and sinking caissons for the piers needed to support the new southbound Mile Long Bridge. It will run adjacent to the new northbound bridge, roughly following the route of the demolished span.

The new southbound bridge is scheduled to open by the end of 2022, with the entire Mile Long Bridge project wrapping up in 2023.





The history of Thornton Quarry is much older. Fossilized remains of ancient sea creatures dating back more than 600 years have been discovered in the quarry. Ancient crabs, squids and coral once thrived when much of North America was underwater as part of a vast tropic reef.

During the Silurian Age, about 450 million years ago, the coral took in sea-water and processed out the lime, according to the Thornton Historical Society. Lime deposits from the coral hardened and produced limestone. When the coral died, it remained on top of the limestone and became part of the formation. Young coral then laid eggs on the limestone and started the process all over again. The result was coral and other dead sea creatures became encased in the layers of limestone.

Today, the north quarry serves as an emergency reservoir for the Chicago area to prevent floods during heavy rains.

Just below the toll road, a concrete dam separates the two sections of the quarry to prevent reservoir water from flooding into the main pit. The dam is 120 feet high and was built on rock 200 feet above the quarry floor. It is one of the biggest dams in Illinois, according to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

The north quarry is capable of draining nearly 8 billion gallons of excess water through a 109-mile network of connections to the Deep Tunnel system operated by the MWRD. Opened in 2015, the reservoir prevents stormwater and sewage from backing up into streets and flowing into area rivers and creeks. After a storm, water is pumped back through the tunnels to the MWRD's 130th Street treatment plant, where it is processed and returned to waterways flowing toward the Mississippi River.

## T.H.E. CONFERENCE GIVES TOLLWAY STAFF OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT INNOVATIONS KEEPING COMMUNICATION AND CONSTRUCTION MOVING FORWARD

Illinois Tollway staff joined an online audience of more than 1,000 transportation professionals and students for the Transportation and Highway Engineering (T.H.E.) Conference hosted in March by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to talk about innovations in improving project delivery.

Communication with customers, neighboring residents as well as community and stakeholder leaders is a key component to any Tollway project, and Lanyea Griffin, deputy chief of program implementation leading the \$4 billion Central Tri-State Project, shared how the Tollway is leveraging new technology to keep conversations going.

Amid a global pandemic that has curtailed large in-person group meetings, the Tollway is keeping its public outreach efforts on track through a Virtual Open House that allows visitors to walk through and view displays, videos and interactive maps for the I-294 Project from the safety and comfort of their own computer.

"It was important to keep all stakeholders apprised throughout design and construction, so the Tollway pivoted through world events and COVID and has offered a Virtual Open House and, as a result, accessibility increased," said Griffin. "We've seen a big benefit from using this platform and will continue to use it in the future."

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Through the Virtual Open House available here on the Tollway's website, the Tollway saw more than 8,000 visits to the virtual site between August and January as visitors stopped by to view videos, learn more about work and schedules. The interactive construction plan maps have become a way for the project team to walk the public through details that offer a view of their own property and adjacent construction improvements.

The Tollway and its contractors are also looking to innovative construction tools to improve project delivery.

Project Engineer Keith Keslinke shared how use of a self-propelled modular transporter (SPMT) vehicle helped save time and reduce disruptions during the reconstruction of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Bridge also part of the I-294 Project.

Rather than rely on a lengthy series of overnight lane closures to place new bridge beams and build the bridge in place, the Tollway allowed contractors to assemble girders adjacent to the mainline roadway and shut down traffic only to move the segments into place with pinpoint accuracy by the SPMT vehicle.

The use of the precise, computer-controlled operation significantly reduces the impact of bridge construction on traffic – in this case, performing work that would typically take two months of overnight and weekend lane closures to only two nights over a single weekend. The reduction of nightly lane closures improves safety for motorists and workers alike, according to Keslinke.

The I-294 Project is one of the major projects the Illinois Tollway will continue in 2021 as part of the \$14 billion *Move Illinois* Program.

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## ILLINOIS TOLLWAY LEADERSHIP PREPARES INDUSTRY FOR 2021 CONSTRUCTION SEASON

Kicking off the 2021 construction season, the Illinois Tollway reaffirmed the agency's commitment to keeping work moving forward during its virtual March *Move Illinois* Quarterly Meeting.

"Our ability to meet project milestones, maintain safe roadways and plan for the next successful construction season is a result of the constant collaboration between all of us," Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez told the online audience of more than 350 representatives from construction and professional engineering services firms.

With more than 53 percent the *Move Illinois* Program's work complete, retiring Chief Engineering Officer Paul Kovacs said 2021 will be one of the agency's biggest years ever, with work continuing on the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project, the I-490 Tollway and the I-294/I-57 Interchange.

In addition to contracts already approved for work in 2021, the Tollway will offer more than 70 new contract opportunities in all, advertising \$232 million for professional engineering services and \$518 million construction firms on major projects and systemwide projects.

Along with plans for more work, Tollway leaders continued to emphasize the agency's commitment to making diversity a top priority as these new contracts are advertised and awarded.

The Tollway is looking to award bid credits to protégé firms participating in the Partnering for Growth Program, streamline paperwork and implement new software to better track and monitor mentorship agreements.

The Tollway is beginning 2021 with three new mentoring agreements through the Partnering for Growth for Construction, with several more in development, said Chief of Diversity and Strategic Development Terry Miller.

The Tollway also is providing greater opportunities in 2021 for small businesses to participate in capital improvement projects available through the Small Business Initiative.

The Engineering Department is prioritizing contracts with project scopes in areas including demolition, electrical, vertical construction, grading and drainage and landscaping that are intended to result in interest and competition from the small business community.

This goes hand in hand with assistance from the Tollway's Technical Assistance Program's efforts to recruit and support new firms, Miller said, adding since last September, more than 105 small and diverse firms have registered as small businesses with the state.

Resources made available to participants at the *Move Illinois* quarterly meeting are available here on the Tollway's website.

## LONGEST-SERVING ENGINEERING CHIEF PAUL KOVACS RETIRES

After more than two decades of service to the Illinois Tollway, Chief Engineering Officer Paul Kovacs is retiring from the agency on April 1.

Kovacs is the longest-serving engineering chief in the Tollway's history. Since 2007, he has guided the agency's multi-billion capital programs, including delivering the 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* Program.

"Paul has been a tremendous asset to the Illinois Tollway, and his leadership will be missed," said Executive Director José Alvarez. "He's been instrumental in ensuring the Tollway's capital development efforts have stayed on track and has built a tremendous team of engineers to see that work through."

Kovacs joined the Tollway in 1999 as a senior project engineer managing various Tollway bridge, roadway and interchange projects. He was soon promoted to open road tolling program manager and deputy chief of project implementation to manage the systemwide conversion of 20 mainline toll plazas to open road tolling – making Illinois the first state to complete, in less than two years, a total mainline conversion from a traditional barrier system to an end-to-end open road tolling system.

In his role, he was also highly admired in the transportation industry for his collaborative approach to problem-solving, working hand-in-hand with other leaders from transportation and transit agencies, as well as industry partners and educational institutions. His emphasis on teamwork provides opportunities for the Tollway staff of more than 600 engineering, maintenance and traffic operations professionals to perform at their highest level, fostering innovation while serving the needs of Tollway customers.

"As a leader in the transportation space, he continues to advocate for innovation within the civil engineering profession," said American Society of Civil Engineers President Robin A. Kemper, P.E., in awarding Kovacs its 2019 Outstanding Projects and Leaders Award. The award honors civil engineers who have demonstrated leadership on public service construction projects or direct and oversee large government projects.



"His leadership, engineering acumen and dedication to the safety and service of the more than 1.6 million daily drivers on the Tollway system have been instrumental to the success of the Illinois Tollway and its reputation as a world-class government agency," said Clarita Lao, former deputy chief of program implementation.

Kovacs is also well-regarded for his advocacy of women in the transportation industry, both within the Tollway as well as throughout the region. As the winner of the WTS International Man of the Year Award, he was recognized for his support of women in the industry.

"Paul Kovacs, a longtime supporter of WTS, is a true advocate for seeking opportunities to advance the reputation and credibility of women throughout the Greater Chicago region," said WTS International Chair Maggie Walsh, who recognized Kovacs as the organization's 2015 Man of Year.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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## ILLINOIS TOLLWAY 2021 CONTRACTS SUPPORTING NEW AND GROWING CONSTRUCTION BUSINESSES

In 2021, the Tollway anticipates awarding more than 80 new contracts this year, with an emphasis placed offering Small Business Initiative and unbundled contracts.

And, during the first quarter of the year, the Tollway has already advertised two new unbundled contracts and 17 new contracts under the Small Business initiative.

"The Illinois Tollway has taken the challenge of increasing diversity to heart and has worked tirelessly at finding ways to lift small and diverse firms and give them an opportunity to compete with the ultimate goal of building capacity and opportunities for growth," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "So we have taken a comprehensive look at what remains in the *Move Illinois* program with a keen eye offering contracts for small businesses."

Unbundling contracts is increasing the opportunities for all-sized firms to participate on Tollway projects, but the smaller sized contracts are attractive to new and small firms looking to work as a prime contractor with the Tollway for the first time.

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## TOLLWAY WORKER RESCUES FARMER, BATTLES GRASS FIRE ALONG I-88

While patrolling for stranded drivers, Illinois Tollway roadway maintenance worker Keith Stranberg instead saw someone else who needed help: A farmer whose tractor had gotten stuck and sparked a grass fire in a field next to the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88).

Even though the emergency wasn't on the Tollway, Stranberg pulled over, grabbed the fire extinguisher from his truck and ran to help.

"I was a little surprised but you see some weird things on the road," said Stranberg, 53, a Tollway equipment operator/laborer at the M-11 maintenance site in DeKalb for more than nine years. "It looked like he needed help so I went to see what I could do."

The farmer had been mowing grass when his tractor got stuck in a ditch just inside the fence separating his field from the Tollway right-of-way. The tractor's muffler apparently ignited the tall, dry grass, starting a fire around the stalled machine.

After struggling unsuccessfully to free the tractor, the farmer had managed to get off the machine but then collapsed nearby.

Stranberg jogged up a hill and climbed over the fence to move the dazed farmer farther away from the flames, then used his fire extinguisher to try to keep the flames from spreading.

"He was out of breath and looked like he was on the verge of passing out," Stranberg said of the elderly farmer. "He looked exhausted."

Several neighbors had pulled up in trucks and tractors by that time and Stranberg helped them hook a chain to the stalled tractor and drag it away from the fire.

"I saw the plastic gas tank starting to melt and I was afraid that if we didn't get it away from the fire the gas tank could explode and make things even worse," Stranberg said.

After moving the tractor, Stranberg turned his attention back to fighting the fire. Using a bucket from his truck and the shallow water in the roadside ditch, he wet down the grass near the fire to try to keep it from spreading.

He kept at the work until fire trucks rolled up a few minutes later and extinguished the flames.

His supervisor praised Stranberg as someone who is always willing to go "above and beyond" what's expected to assist drivers—or anyone else who needs help.

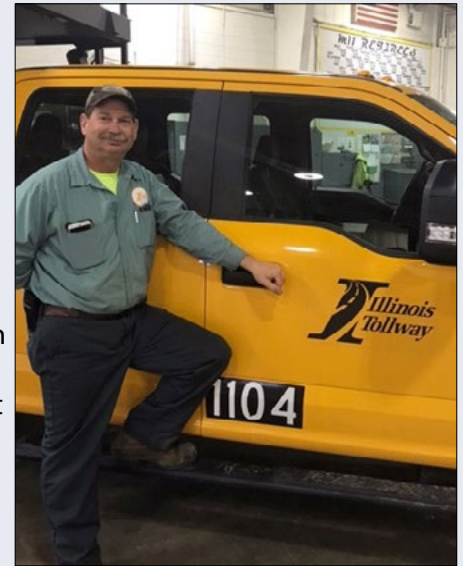
"This is the type of personality Keith has—he's always willing to jump in to help whoever needs it," said M-11 Supervisor Mike Velasco. "It didn't surprise me that he went above and beyond the call to handle this situation."

Stranberg said being able to assist people is what he loves about his Tollway job.

"I enjoy helping people when they get into trouble," he said. "We work hard here to provide great service to people."

While rescuing a farmer from a grass fire is a first for him in his career, he views it as just another part of his job.

"I was at the right place at the right time and just did I needed to do," Stranberg said. "It all ended well—that's what's important."



For example, in 2020 nearly 77 percent of construction contract advertisements were unbundled and they accounted for nearly nine percent of the total value of construction contract awards.

In addition, the Tollway has also updated its Small Business Initiative to provide new prime and subcontracting opportunities exclusively for small businesses.

Through the Initiative, the Tollway is identifying construction contracts that only registered small businesses can compete and perform on as primes or subs. In addition, unlike previously offered small business set-aside contracts, the new Small Business Initiative contracts also included have DBE goals and minimum self-performance goals, both to help give diverse contractors opportunities to gain experience while delivering Move Illinois Program contracts.

Small Business Initiative contracts fall into three tiers with contracts valued at \$1 million or less, \$1-3 million and \$3-5 million, and include project scopes in areas intended to increase interest and competition from the small business community, including vertical construction, demolition, electrical, structural, grading and drainage work, as well as general roadway work.

## SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE CONTRACT TIERS



# MOVE ILLINOIS CAPITAL PROGRAM UPDATE

The Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, Move Illinois, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The program is scheduled from 2012-2026.

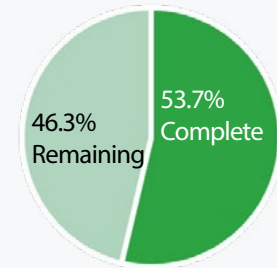
## MOVE ILLINOIS PROGRAM STATUS - DATA THROUGH FEBRUARY 2021

### MOVE ILLINOIS PROGRAM BUDGET OVERVIEW (2012-2021)

**\$9.9 billion** or 69.8% of the program budget committed

- **\$5.6 billion**, or approximately 39.5%, in construction work
- **\$2.6 billion**, or approximately 18.1%, in consultant services
- **\$1.7 billion**, or approximately 11.9%, in other costs (utilities, ROW, misc.)
- **\$190.2 million** in reimbursement agreements has been approved; reducing overall program costs by 1.3%

**53.7%** of the Move Illinois Program is complete (work in place)



### PROGRAM EXPENDITURES (2012-2021)



### PROGRAM BUDGET BY CORRIDOR (2012-2021)

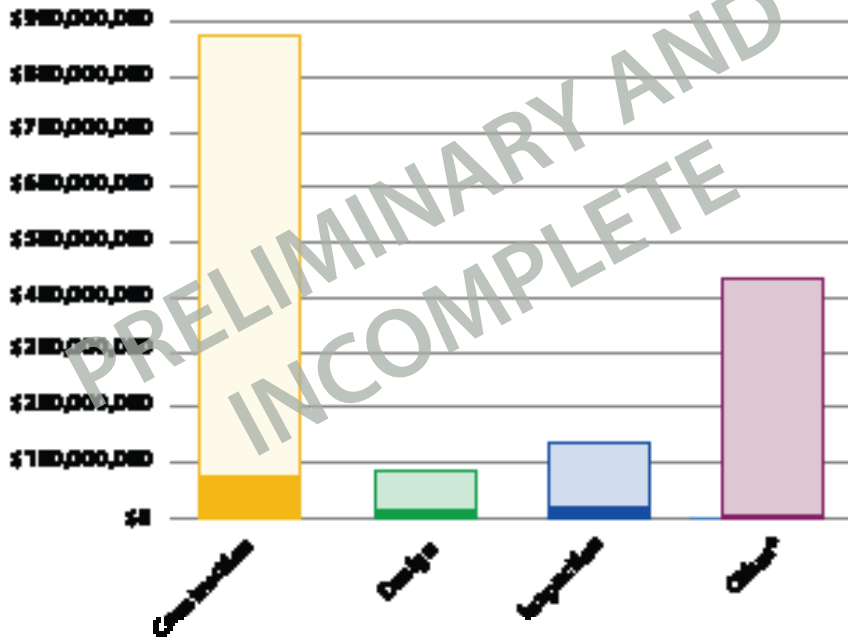
Program Element	Current Budget (millions)	Original Awards to Date (millions)	Contract Changes (CO/EWO/Supp.) (millions)	Total Obligations* (millions)	Budget Remaining (millions)
I-94/I-294/I-80	\$4,380.2	\$2,645.2	\$115.5	\$2,760.7	\$1,619.5
I-88	\$360.3	\$299.3	\$3.4	\$302.7	\$57.6
I-90	\$2,359.4	\$2,236.5	\$81.7	\$2,318.2	\$41.2
I-355	\$265.7	\$147.4	\$14.8	\$162.2	\$103.5
SW	\$3,188.3	\$1,262.8	\$209.0	\$1,471.7	\$1,716.6
I-294/I-57	\$331.7	\$274.8	\$7.2	\$282.0	\$49.7
EOWA	\$3,266.4	\$2,416.1	\$144.8	\$2,560.8	\$705.5
Other emerging projects	\$121.1	\$40.2	(\$13.5)	\$26.7	\$94.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$14,273.0</b>	<b>\$9,322.2</b>	<b>\$562.9</b>	<b>\$9,885.1</b>	<b>\$4,387.9</b>

\*Total Obligations = Original Awards to Date + Contract Changes (CO/EWO/Supplements)

NOTE: \$572.2 million of additional Right of Way and Utility Authorizations reclassified from Contract Changes to Original Awards to Date



## 2021 PROGRAM PROGRESS (THROUGH FEBRUARY 2021)



2021 YTD	2021 Estimated Expenditures	Progress Through February 2021 **	Percent Complete
Construction	\$875,274,678	\$73,479,137	8%
Design	\$86,967,410	\$12,210,440	14%
Inspection	\$138,102,465	\$16,770,483	12%
Other*	\$433,731,030	\$1,338,519	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,534,075,583</b>	<b>\$103,798,580</b>	<b>7%</b>

\*Other includes non-roadway, right-of-way, utilities and third-party payments.

\*\*Financial data presented is preliminary, unaudited and subject to change.

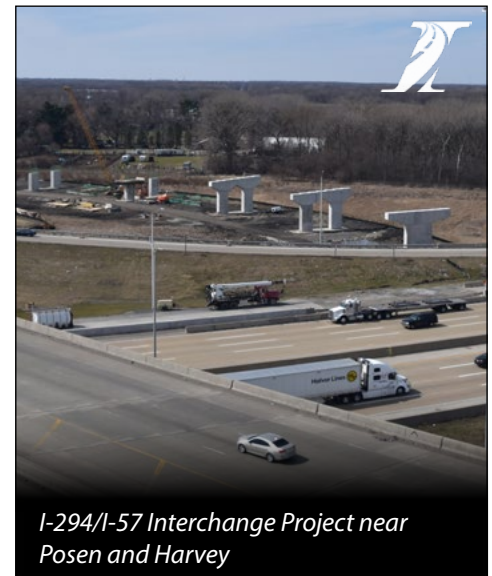
Preliminary financials are provided, as end-of-year data will be confirmed with the closing of the general ledger.

## 2021 PROGRAM METRICS (THROUGH FEBRUARY 2021)

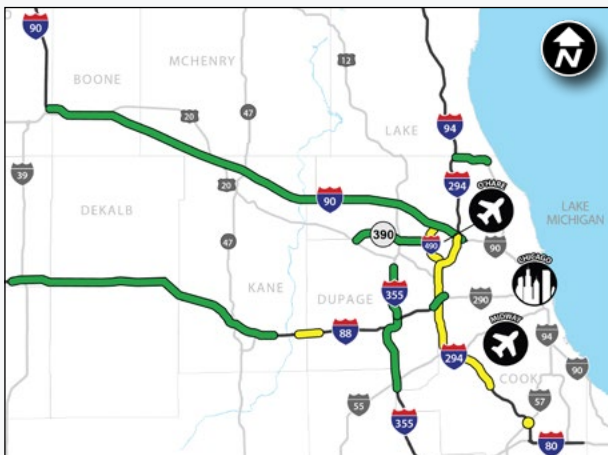
Awarded **4** construction and professional services contracts

Awarded **4** construction contracts less than \$10 million

Closed out **18** construction and professional services contracts



## MOVE ILLINOIS PROGRAM PROGRESS MAP



### COMPLETED

- Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) Rebuilding and Widening
- Illinois Route 390 Tollway Construction
- Existing System Needs – Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), Edens Spur Tollway (I-94)
- Tri-State Tollway (I-294)/I-57 Interchange – Phase 1

### CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

- I-490 Tollway Construction
- Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Reconstruction
- Tri-State Tollway (I-294)/I-57 Interchange – Phase 2
- Existing System Needs – Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)