



IL ROUTE 53/120

Blue Ribbon Advisory Council

FACT SHEET

Background

The Illinois Tollway has been asked to consider a northern extension of IL Route 53 through central Lake County since the early 1960s. The Tollway has created a Blue Ribbon Advisory Council to seek to develop a consensus as to whether the Tollway should build the road, and to guide the planning and potential building of an IL-53/120 North Extension.

As noted in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) comprehensive regional plan, GO TO 2040, an extension of Illinois Route 53 could ease congestion that has resulted from Lake County's rapid development in recent decades. The project could improve access and mobility in the county and the region as a whole. GO TO 2040 calls for a 21st Century urban highway – a “modern boulevard” with a smaller footprint to minimize potential negative impacts while protecting the natural environment and preserving the character of nearby communities.

Project Location

This roadway is intended to serve central Lake County extending north from the terminus of IL-53 and Lake Cook Road for 12.5 miles to just south of IL-120. The extension would continue to the east, where it would tie into the existing interchange at US-41. It would also continue to the west, terminating at U.S. 12. Approximately 70% of the needed right of way is currently owned by the State. However, the size, configuration and operation of the roadway have not been determined. Ultimately, the extension must coexist with dense existing residential development and projected commercial development, as well as wetlands, organic farms, and environmental resources throughout the corridor.

Purpose and Role of the Council

An extension of IL 53/120 provides an opportunity for the Tollway to explore options for an entirely new roadway concept. The Advisory Council will be responsible for developing regional consensus on whether the Tollway should move forward, the scope and configuration, the design and elements, and

how to finance the project. The Council will focus on corridor design, storm water management, integration of transit, use of congestion pricing to manage demand, visual and noise impacts and limited access for commercial vehicles. The group includes public officials as well as representatives from business, labor, planning and environmental groups, and will present its initial recommendations to the Tollway Board by spring 2012.

Project Cost

The Tollway has estimated the roadway cost for an extension of IL-53/120 at approximately \$2.2 billion in 2010 dollars. The previous estimate assumed a multi-lane (6-8) freeway-type facility, and did not include transit elements.

CMAP and the Illinois Tollway

CMAP will be closely involved with the Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council, serving as a partner with the Illinois Tollway. CMAP will provide traffic projections and oversight, land use and environmental data and resources, and staff will offer perspectives for the Council's consideration.

Past Efforts

A number of agencies have been involved in planning for improvements in the Central Lake County Corridor, with some planning efforts dating back to the 1970s. More recent studies have made specific recommendations regarding the size and basic design of the roadway. Those results will provide a foundation of information as the Council considers options for design, land use, funding and financing.