



# ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 1, 2021**

## **STEARNS SCHOOL ROAD BRIDGE WORK SCHEDULED TO BEGIN THIS WEEK AS ILLINOIS TOLLWAY REBUILDS BRIDGE OVER TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-94)**

*Full closure of bridge in Gurnee scheduled for nine months with posted detour*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway is scheduled to begin work this week to remove and rebuild the Stearns School Road Bridge carrying traffic over the Tri-State Tollway (I-94) in Gurnee. Reconstruction of the Stearns School Road Bridge is scheduled to be complete by the end of the year.

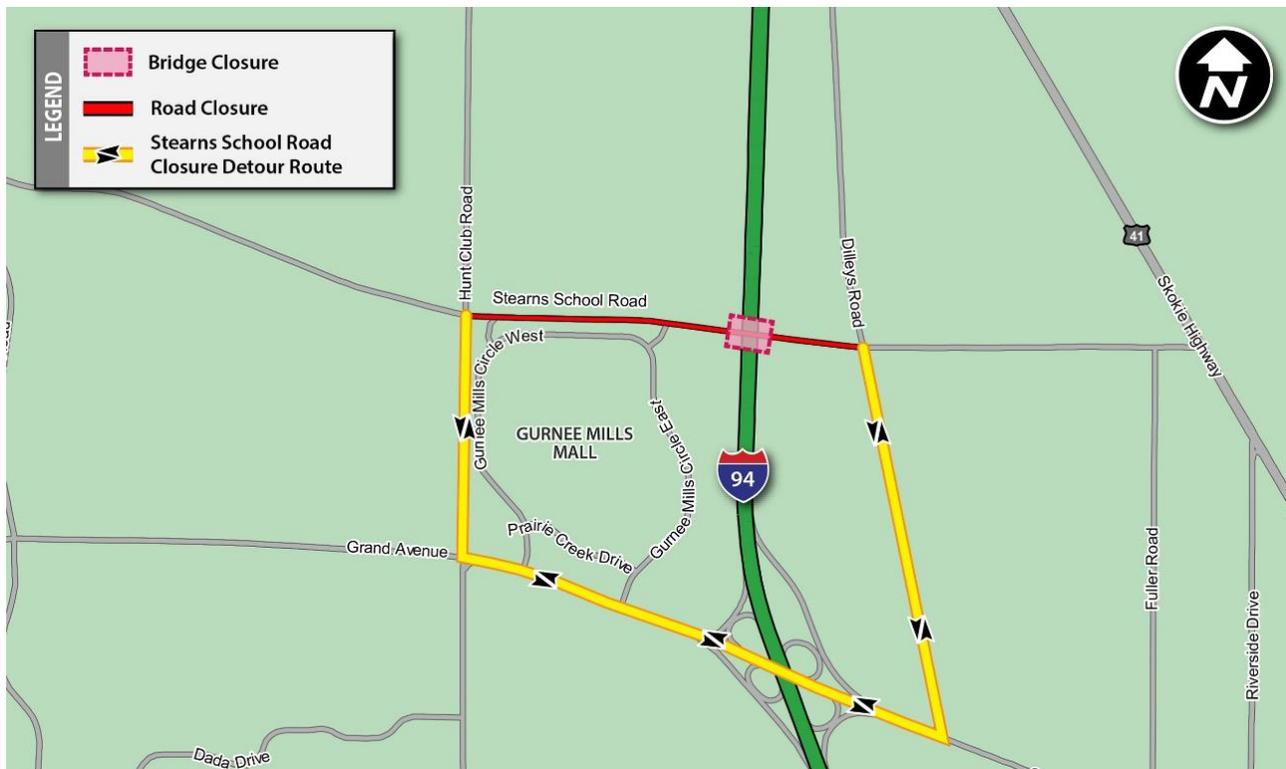
Beginning today, March 1, on I-94 daily lane closure in both directions will be scheduled between 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. with up to two lanes closed at a time for advance work to prepare for bridge removal and reconstruction. In addition, overnight lane closures will be also scheduled during the week with up to three lanes closed at a time and 15-minute full closures scheduled overnight Thursday, March 4 into Friday, March 5.

Electronic message signs and construction signage will be put in place to alert drivers in advance of construction. All work is weather dependent.

Once advance work is complete, a full closure of the Stearns School Road Bridge is scheduled to begin later in March. To safely accommodate construction and reduce the duration of work, the bridge is scheduled to be closed to traffic with a posted detour for nine months. Full closure and a traffic detour are necessary because the bridge is too narrow to accommodate traffic while safely providing a work zone to complete the removal and reconstruction of the bridge. Up to 15,900 vehicles travel on this section of Stearns School Road daily.

“The Illinois Tollway understands safety is just as important as access for drivers who use the Tollway to reach work and home, and we thank them for their patience,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. “Closing the bridge allows us to safely complete this work in less time and minimize the inconvenience to customers.”

Following closure of the bridge, a posted detour will be put in place directing Stearns School Road traffic to use Dilleys Road, Grand Avenue and Hunt Club Road to route around the bridge closure. Stearns School Road will be closed between Hunts Club Road and Dilleys Road, however access to Gurnee Mills Mall off Stearns School Road will remain open during construction.



In addition, on I-94, traffic shifts and overnight lane closures will continue to be scheduled in both directions as needed to accommodate work on the bridge.

Construction and detours are being coordinated with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Village of Gurnee, Warren Township and Lake County, as well as local fire and police departments.

The Illinois Tollway, Village of Gurnee and Lake County Division of Transportation are working in coordination to replace the 70-year-old Stearns School Road Bridge over the Tri-State Tollway (I-94). The new bridge structure will be designed to provide for three lanes of traffic, as well as additional bicycle and pedestrian access.

As part of the Stearns School Road Bridge Project, the existing two-lane bridge carrying traffic over the Tollway will be removed and replaced with a new, wider bridge structure. This Tollway-led project is planned to construct a new bridge that will carry three lanes of Stearns School Road over the North Tri-State Tollway (I-94) along with 4-foot-wide shoulders, replacement of the existing pedestrian path on the north side and the addition of a new sidewalk on the south side. In addition, since the Illinois Tollway typically constructs new bridges with a 75-year service life, the new bridge will be designed to accommodate future local roadway improvements

These repairs are necessary to extend the life of the local crossroad bridge and provide safe and convenient travel for Tollway customers. This work is part of the Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, and includes \$5.4 million in local cost participation for the improvements.

Maps and construction about the Stearns School Road Project are available in the 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.

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 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first nine 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 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.

