



# ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 20, 2020**

## **NEW NORTHBOUND MILE LONG BRIDGE SCHEDULED TO OPEN TO TRAFFIC NEXT WEEK ON THE TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294)**

*Illinois Tollway marking major milestone to keep  
Central Tri-State Tollway Project on track for customers*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway is preparing to open the new northbound Mile Long Bridge to traffic next week, marking the halfway point in the \$500 million construction project to deliver the new bridge and a major milestone for the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project.

"The Mile Long Bridge is an extraordinary project, and completion of the new northbound structure stands out due to the hard work and perseverance of the many engineering and construction firms continuing to move forward during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "The northbound bridge contract is the largest in the Illinois Tollway's history, and we are pleased to deliver this first piece to our customers within budget and on schedule."

Construction of the northbound structure started in summer of 2019, and the Tollway will open the new bridge to northbound traffic ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday, with work that impacts traffic beginning as early as the evening of Monday, November 23, weather permitting.

The Mile Long Bridge Project includes replacement of two side-by-side structures – one to carry northbound traffic and the other to carry southbound traffic – to replace the original bridge built in 1958.

The \$184.6 million contract to build the new northbound bridge structure began in summer 2019. Work will continue over the winter under a second \$182.6 million contract to remove the old northbound structure and construct the new southbound Mile Long Bridge beginning in spring 2021. The entire Mile Long Bridge Project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023.

The Mile Long Bridge carries traffic over two major railroads, the Des Plaines River, the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal and the Illinois & Michigan Canal and local roads, and over several major distribute on centers. Currently, up to 150,000 vehicles travel across the Mile Long Bridge daily.

The construction project includes building two, new side-by-side 4,800-foot-long bridge structures designed to last 100 years and increasing capacity to five lanes in each direction. The inside shoulders in both directions will be built to serve as Flex Lanes for transit, for emergency vehicles and as an alternate lane when warranted.

Facts about the new northbound Mile Long Bridge:

- The bridge features 27 spans supported by 26 piers, compared to the existing structure with 53 piers, reducing the impact on waterways, roadway and rail operations below.
- The bridge deck is supported by 273 precast concrete beams and 52 steel beams. Steel beams, measure up to 10 feet tall and range in length from 57 feet to 134 feet long were transported from Indiana and concrete beams measure nearly 8 feet tall and are up to 187 feet long, were transported from Wisconsin.

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- Nearly 16,000 cubic yards of concrete were used for the new bridge – an amount equal to about 1,760 fully-loaded concrete-mixing trucks.
- The bridge deck includes 5.2 million pounds of stainless-steel rebar, which is being used on the project because it resists corrosion and helps extend the life of the bridge.

Additional construction information about the Mile Long Bridge Project is available in the Projects section on the Tollway's website at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com).

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, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, 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 project is part of the \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project, scheduled for 2018 through 2025, is rebuilding and improving the Tollway from Balmoral Avenue to 95th Street to provide congestion relief, improve mobility, reconstruct old infrastructure to meet current and future transportation demand and to address regional needs. This work is funded by the Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion Move Illinois capital program.



**PHASE 1:**  
Build new northbound bridge

**PHASE 2:**  
Remove old northbound bridge  
and build new southbound bridge

**PHASE 3:**  
Remove old southbound bridge



### **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 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 eight 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 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.

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