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CONSTRUCTION SET TO BEGIN ON LONG-AWAITED JUSTICE INTERCHANGE AT 88TH/CORK AVENUE ON THE TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294)

*New access poised to fuel economic development and congestion relief
in Justice and neighboring communities*

JUSTICE, IL – State and local leaders met today to highlight the long-awaited start of construction on the 88th Cork Avenue Interchange on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), one of the top projects in the state’s Competitive Freight Program aimed at improving the movement of freight and delivering congestion relief and economic benefits across the state.

“Connecting communities and providing improved access to our region’s transportation network is a top priority of the Illinois Department of Transportation under Gov. JB Pritzker,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We are proud of the partnership that has made this project possible, but even more excited for the enhanced safety and mobility it will bring to an important part of the state.”

The project is a culmination of years of planning between the Illinois Tollway, the Village of Justice, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) and the Southwest Conference of Mayors.

The \$39 million infrastructure investment includes construction of new ramps connecting 88th/Cork Avenue to the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) along with other local roadway improvements to both accommodate for the larger Central Tri-State construction project as well as to improve local traffic circulation and provide congestion relief.

Reconstruction of the 88th/Cork Avenue Bridge over I-294 and construction on the new ramps, which is being led by the Tollway, is set to start in June, while construction on the mainline Central Tri-State Tollway surrounding the area is in full swing. The interchange project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2024.

“This new interchange is going to be more than access improvements – it’s going to be a game changer for the Chicago Southland in terms of providing congestion relief and economic opportunities,” said Illinois Tollway interim Executive Director Lanyea Griffin who kicked off the event. “Our agency’s innovative Interchange and Roadway Cost Sharing Policy is providing communities like Justice new opportunities and is opening doors for economic success, and as you will hear those doors are wide open.”

As part of the project, the Tollway will construct a new ramp connecting northbound I-294 to 88th/Cork Avenue and a new ramp connecting 88th/Cork Avenue to southbound I-294. In addition, the Tollway will widen the 88th/Cork Avenue Bridge over I-294 to provide a southbound left turn lane, as well as additional pedestrian and bicycle access, noisewalls and drainage and lighting improvements.

The new interchange is designed to be compatible with a new ramp connecting southbound Archer Avenue to northbound I-294, which is being constructed by the Illinois Tollway as part of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project.

The 88th/Cork Avenue Interchange Project is in alignment with Cook County's long-range transportation plan, Connecting Cook County, to encourage business development and growth by improving freight and traffic connections across the county.

"This project aligns with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle's goal that all communities throughout the County are ensured equitable access to safe, modern and efficient roadways," said DoTH Superintendent Jennifer "Sis" Killen. "Transportation investment is the backbone to supporting economic potential in our region. We are proud to partner with the Tollway and the Village of Justice on this critical freight project to provide improved mobility and reduced congestion for those traveling within the Village and surrounding Southland communities."

The new interchange is located within an enterprise zone created by the Village of Justice and will encourage new construction and support job creation in the village, as well as opening up an entryway to Justice and other surrounding communities to relieve traffic congestion and provide easier access to destinations including freight related businesses and SeatGeek Stadium.

In addition, the continued efficient movement of goods and services is central to what makes Illinois the transportation hub of North America.

"The project will facilitate investment in and redevelopment of the Village of Justice and several surrounding communities while improving efficiencies for freight related companies for more cost-effective shipping and logistics and will create employment opportunities and mobility for the region," said Justice Mayor Krzysztof Wasowicz.

According to the Village, benefits include creating much improved truck access to a CSX Railroad intermodal yard in Bedford Park, reducing out of direction travel and impact on adjacent communities, reducing congestion, and fostering economic development and job creation in the southwest region.

Currently, the area has approximately 85 freight related firms which employ 22,000 workers. The new access will create even more jobs, while increasing accessibility and mobility for the 21 surrounding communities.

In addition, the impacts of the anticipated interchange are already driving economic development. Current new area developments include

- A newly completed 10,000-square-foot shopping center
- An under construction 2,700-square-foot commercial retail building
- Four new residential four-unit townhomes currently under construction
- A new five-acre development that will include a name brand hotel and two additional commercial buildings, an anticipated \$20 million investment currently in the permitting phase

Information on the 88th/Cork Avenue Interchange Project, including comprehensive information and map overviews can be found [here](#) in the Projects section on the Tollway's website.

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