



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY JOINS HICKORY HILLS AND COOK COUNTY TO CELEBRATE IMPROVEMENTS AT 87TH/ROBERTS UNDER THE TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294)

New I-294 bridge results in redesigned, improved local travel through the intersection and new community recreational space

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway, Cook County and the City of Hickory Hills today celebrated local improvements to 87th Street and Roberts Road, including innovative creation of new community space, made possible by the reconstruction of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) bridge above the intersection as part of the Tollway’s *Move Illinois* capital program.

To accommodate the reconstruction and widening of the Tri-State Tollway, the project replaced two aging bridge structures on I-294 with new bridges that include improved roadway drainage and lighting, while also increasing traffic capacity and improving safety at the heavily traveled 87th Street/Roberts Road intersection underneath the bridges.

Redesigning the intersection created room under I-294 for a unique community space that includes outdoor fitness equipment, recreation space and seating while making it easier for pedestrians to reach the nearby Prairie Pond walking path.

“These improvements make traveling more efficient and safer not just for our customers, but for drivers in neighboring communities, and also assists Hickory Hills in upgrading property near our road,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse. “This project illustrates how we work closely with local partners like Hickory Hills and Cook County to improve transportation links and remain a good neighbor to the communities we serve.”

The Tollway invested about \$47 million to replace the northbound and southbound I-294 bridges over 87th Street and Roberts Road as part of its \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway Project, which is rebuilding, reconstructing and widening 22 miles of the roadway between Rosemont and Oak Lawn. This segment of the Central Tri-State Tollway traveling over the 87th Street/Roberts Road intersection carries about 220,000 vehicles daily.

As part of the overall project, Cook County provided \$5.7 million in local upgrades to improve traffic flows at the intersection of 87th Street and Roberts Road. That work included building a right-turn lane from 87th Street to Roberts Road, relocating traffic signals so they are more visible, installing new sidewalks and curb ramps and improving pedestrian lighting.

“These intersection improvements are part of our ongoing efforts to make roads across Cook County safer and more convenient for residents and travelers,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “We’re pleased to work closely with the Illinois Tollway and other transportation agencies on projects like this that improve local and regional transportation benefits.”

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As part of the project, Hickory Hills converted a vacant gravel lot next to the intersection and below I-294 into a specialized recreation space designed by the Tollway that provides an outdoor area for children and adults to exercise, walk or sit at permanent, fixed tables to play chess or checkers. It also provides a more user-friendly link to the nearby Prairie Pond walking path.

“We’re proud that we worked with the Tollway to find a way to turn this empty space under I-294 into a unique recreation area and public space for the community,” said Hickory Hills Mayor Michael Howley. “This is a clever, creative use of a parcel that otherwise would provide little benefit to our residents.”

In addition, to help reduce road noise from I-294, the Tollway installed innovative transparent acrylic noisewalls on the new bridges. The noisewalls also allow more light to reach street level in the area and provide better visual connectivity between the areas on each side of the bridges.

About *Move Illinois*

The Illinois Tollway’s 16-year, \$15 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 165,220 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first 13 years of *Move Illinois* are on schedule and within budget, delivering the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway and a rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) with its new SmartRoad corridor, as well as 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 new I-490 Tollway Project and reconstructing 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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