



Central Tri-State Tollway Project

CONSTRUCTION OVERVIEW

The Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) is being reconstructed from Balmoral Avenue to 95th Street to provide congestion relief, reconstruct old infrastructure to meet current and future transportation demand, and address regional needs.

Work in 2026 includes:

- Ongoing roadway and bridge reconstruction, including between I-55 and I-88, to provide six lanes in each direction and between North Avenue and Roosevelt Road to provide six southbound lanes and five northbound lanes.
- Ongoing construction to reconfigure the I-290/I-88 Interchange at I-294 including construction of new lanes connecting I-294 to I-290 and I-88 and or the bridges over I-88 and I-294.

Work is scheduled to be complete in 2027.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project will rebuild and widen the roadway to increase capacity, reduce congestion and improve travel reliability.

The project includes reconfiguring the I-290/I-88 Interchange at I-294, rebuilding the Mile Long Bridge and the BNSF Railway Bridge, as well as integrating Flex Lanes and SmartRoad technology.

Northern Section: Balmoral Avenue to North Avenue

Work in the northern section began in June 2018 and is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2026. The Tollway has repaired pavement and rebuilt and widened roadway between Balmoral Avenue and North Avenue and reconstructed shoulders to accommodate Flex Lanes. The Tollway is also delivering new SmartRoad infrastructure as part of this project.

Bridges carrying I-294 over Irving Park Road, Lawrence Avenue and the Canadian National Railway in Schiller Park have been reconstructed, and improvements have been made to local crossroad bridges including Balmoral Avenue and Wolf Road.

As part of this work, the O'Hare Oasis over-the-road pavilion was removed in 2019 to accommodate roadway widening. The 7-Eleven fuel stations and parking lots remain and the Tollway will coordinate redevelopment with Schiller Park.

Improvements included reconstructing portions of the ramps connecting the O'Hare Oasis and Irving Park Road to I-294, as well as coordination of the North Avenue Interchange Project with Cook County.

Construction in this section includes roadway and ramp improvements coordinated with construction of the I-490/I-294 Interchange to support the new I-490 Tollway Project.

Work also includes noisewall, guardrail, drainage, lighting, signage and landscaping improvements.

Central Section: North Avenue to I-55

Work in the central section between North Avenue and I-55 began in 2021 and is scheduled to continue through 2027. The Tollway is rebuilding and widening the roadway, and will deliver new SmartRoad infrastructure, as well as reconstructed shoulders including adding Flex Lanes.

The Tollway is also reconfiguring and improving the I-290/I-88 Interchange at I-294, with construction scheduled through 2027.

At the Ogden Avenue Interchange, work is wrapping up on a project that included bridge improvements and reconfiguration of ramps on the east side of I-294.

Additional work in the section includes noisewall, guardrail, drainage, lighting, signage and landscaping improvements.

To accommodate roadway reconstruction and widening, the BNSF Railway Bridge was removed and a new bridge with additional track capacity was built. In addition, the Hinsdale Oasis over-the-road pavilion was removed in 2022 to accommodate roadway widening. The 7-Eleven fuel stations and parking lots remain and the Tollway will coordinate redevelopment with Hinsdale.

At the Ogden Avenue Interchange, completed work includes bridge improvements and reconfiguration of ramps on the east side of I-294.

Other completed work included: Improvements made to I-

294 local crossroad bridges at St. Charles Road, Electric Avenue, Butterfield Road, Roosevelt Road, Cermak Road, 31st Street, 47th Street, 55th Street and Plainfield Road. Improvements to I-290 local crossroad bridges are complete at St. Charles Road and Electric Avenue.

Southern Section: I-55 to 95th Street

Work in the southern section between I-55 and 95th Street began in 2019 and was completed at the end of 2024.

The Tollway rebuilt and widened the roadway to five lanes in both directions. New SmartRoad infrastructure and Flex Planes are planned.

The Tollway is continuing to work with the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, Illinois Department of Transportation and the Village of Justice to build a new interchange at 88th/Cork Avenue.

Work in the southern section included reconstruction of the twin structures that make up the Mile Long Bridge carrying traffic over two major railroads, three water resources and local roads, and over a major distribution center for UPS and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway.

New bridges over 87th Street and Roberts Road, reconstruction of ramps and bridges at the Archer Avenue Interchange and reconstruction of the ramp from I-55 to northbound I-294 were also completed, as well as improvements to local crossroad bridges made on Joliet Road, Wolf Road, Willow Springs Road, 5th Avenue, 75th Street, LaGrange Road.

Work also included noisewall, retaining wall, guardrail, drainage, lighting, signage and landscaping improvements.

Customer Impacts

Electronic message signs and construction signage will be put in place in advance to alert drivers to scheduled bridge closures, traffic patterns and work zone speed limits.

Shoulder closures and traffic shifts will be used to provide room for a work zone and safely accommodate traffic. Whenever possible, the Tollway uses traffic shifts and shoulders to keep as many lanes open during peak hours as were available before construction.

In addition, lane closures will be scheduled as needed on the Tollway and local roads to complete work and detours of ramps and local roads will be needed throughout 2026 for work along the corridor.

WORK ZONE SAFETY

The Illinois Tollway is committed to ensuring that the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and local roads remain safe for both drivers and workers during construction, which is part of the agency's overall commitment to roadway safety.

Work 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 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 include up to a \$10,000 fine, 2-year suspension of driving privileges and jail time, in extreme cases.

Visit the Tollway's Work Zone Safety page at illinoistollway.com.

PURPOSE

The Central Tri-State Tollway is being reconstructed to increase capacity, reduce congestion and improve travel reliability. This work is part of the Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*. More than 220,000 vehicles use this portion of the Tri-State Tollway daily.

Agency Coordination

The Central Tri-State Tollway crosses two counties and impacts more than 30 local communities and numerous agencies, including: the Illinois Department of Transportation, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Flagg Creek Water Reclamation District, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Chicago Department of Aviation, Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Federal Highway Administration, Cook County, DuPage County and more than 30 local communities, as well as local fire and police departments.

Outreach and coordination with all these entities is an important part of the work the Illinois Tollway has done and continues to do on the Central Tri-State Reconstruction Project.

The Illinois Tollway works closely with residents, communities, businesses and elected officials to plan for and implement improvements on I-294. The Tollway hosts public open house meetings and community outreach meetings to provide information and answers to residents and businesses.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Tollway is committed to building green and minimizing the environmental impact of construction by reducing, recycling and reusing materials. In addition to reducing the cost of this work, reuse of these materials reduces the need for virgin asphalt materials and reduces energy consumption, greenhouse gases and the volume of material that would otherwise be sent to

landfills.

GETTING TOLLWAY CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION

The Illinois Tollway has a variety of ways customers can get the latest travel information, including:

- Illinoistollway.com – Projects section, live roadway images and real-time roadway incident information.
- [Daily construction alerts](#) — Daily and long-term lane and shoulder closure schedules.
- [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) – Real-time roadway incident information at Tollway Trip 90, Tollway Trip 88, Tollway Trip 355, Tollway Trip 94/294 and Tollway Trip 390.