

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY

2026 PROPOSED TOLL RATE INCREASE



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMENT REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2026

SECTION 1:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 18, 2026, the Illinois Tollway Board of Directors was presented with the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan and associated rate adjustment, beginning a robust public engagement process designed to gather input from customers, communities, and stakeholders across the region.

While the Illinois Toll Highway Act requires public hearings in each of the 12 counties served by the Tollway, the agency expanded its outreach well beyond those requirements to ensure awareness and participation. Customers and stakeholders were encouraged to share feedback through public hearings as well as multiple written and online channels.

Outreach efforts included notifications to more than 4 million I-PASS email account holders, promotion through the Tollway's website and social media platforms, publication of an online hearing recording, newspaper notices, and coordination with community partners and stakeholder organizations to reach a wide range of audiences.

These efforts generated significant public engagement, resulting in more than 18,000 comments submitted throughout the process. Between July 13 and July 24, 2026, the Tollway also hosted 13 public hearings across the 12 counties it serves. More than 1,150 people attended the hearings, contributing 447 public comments.

Together, these varied viewpoints underscore the importance of offering multiple avenues for participation. By creating opportunities for engagement across different platforms and communities, the Tollway was able to capture a wide spectrum of public perspectives. This report summarizes key findings, identifies major themes raised through public comment, and highlights insights that will help inform the Tollway's future decisions and ongoing commitment to meaningful public engagement.

HOW WE SPREAD THE WORD



Stakeholders and Communities



Customer Email



Webpage



Online Public Hearing Recording



Social Media



Newspaper and Media

HOW WE COLLECTED COMMENTS



Online Public Comment Form



Public Hearings



Mail



Email



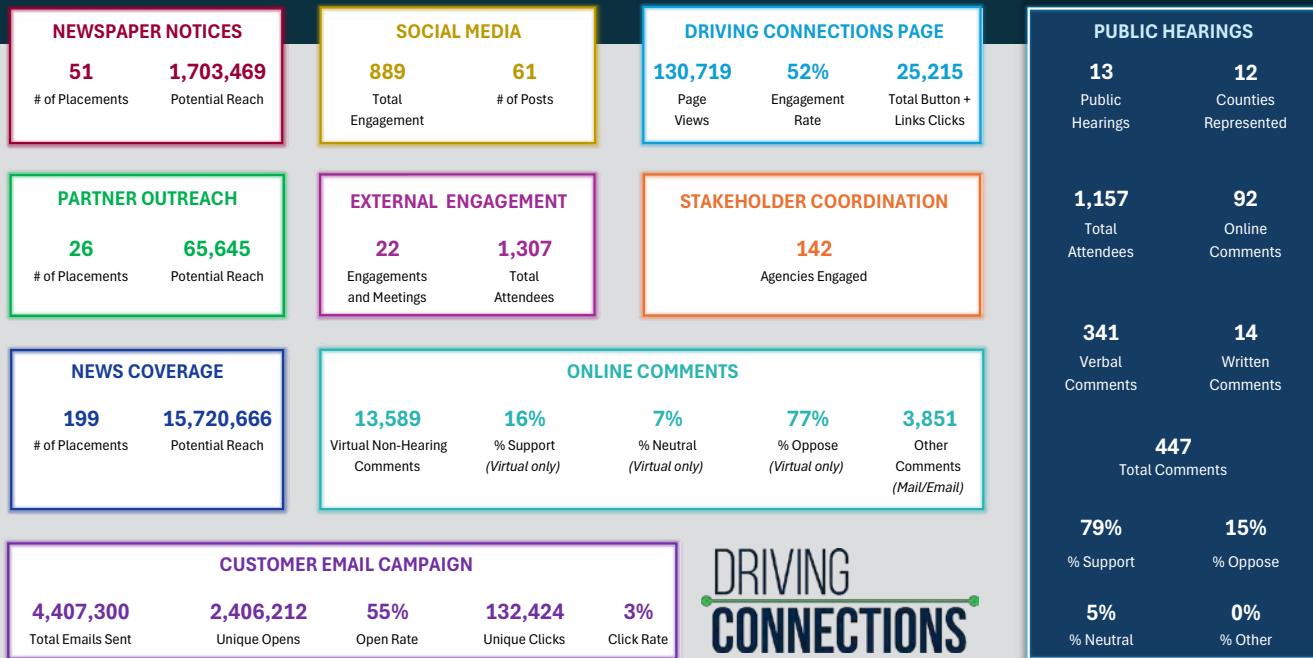
METRICS

18,000+
OVERALL COMMENTS
SUBMITTED



ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH DASHBOARD

6/18/2026 through 8/3/2026 (noon)



DRIVING
CONNECTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Public Hearings

- Completed 13 public hearings
- Across 12 counties
- Took place weeks of July 13 and July 20
- 447 comments collected at hearings
- 340 provided verbal testimony
- Other comments collected in writing or on Tollway-provided tablets

Online Comments

- Comment form was open from June 18 through August 3 at noon
- More than 13,000 responses were submitted
- Participation in Cook, DuPage, Will, McHenry, Kane and Lake were highest

Social Media

- 61 posts across platforms by Tollway and communities

Driving Connections Webpage

- More than 130,000 views
- Engagement rate of 52% including opens, links and other interactions

Partner Outreach

- 24 newsletter mentions from partner organizations
- Potential audience reach upwards of 64,000 stakeholders

Media Coverage

- 182 media placements across platforms
- Potential reach of more than 14 million

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

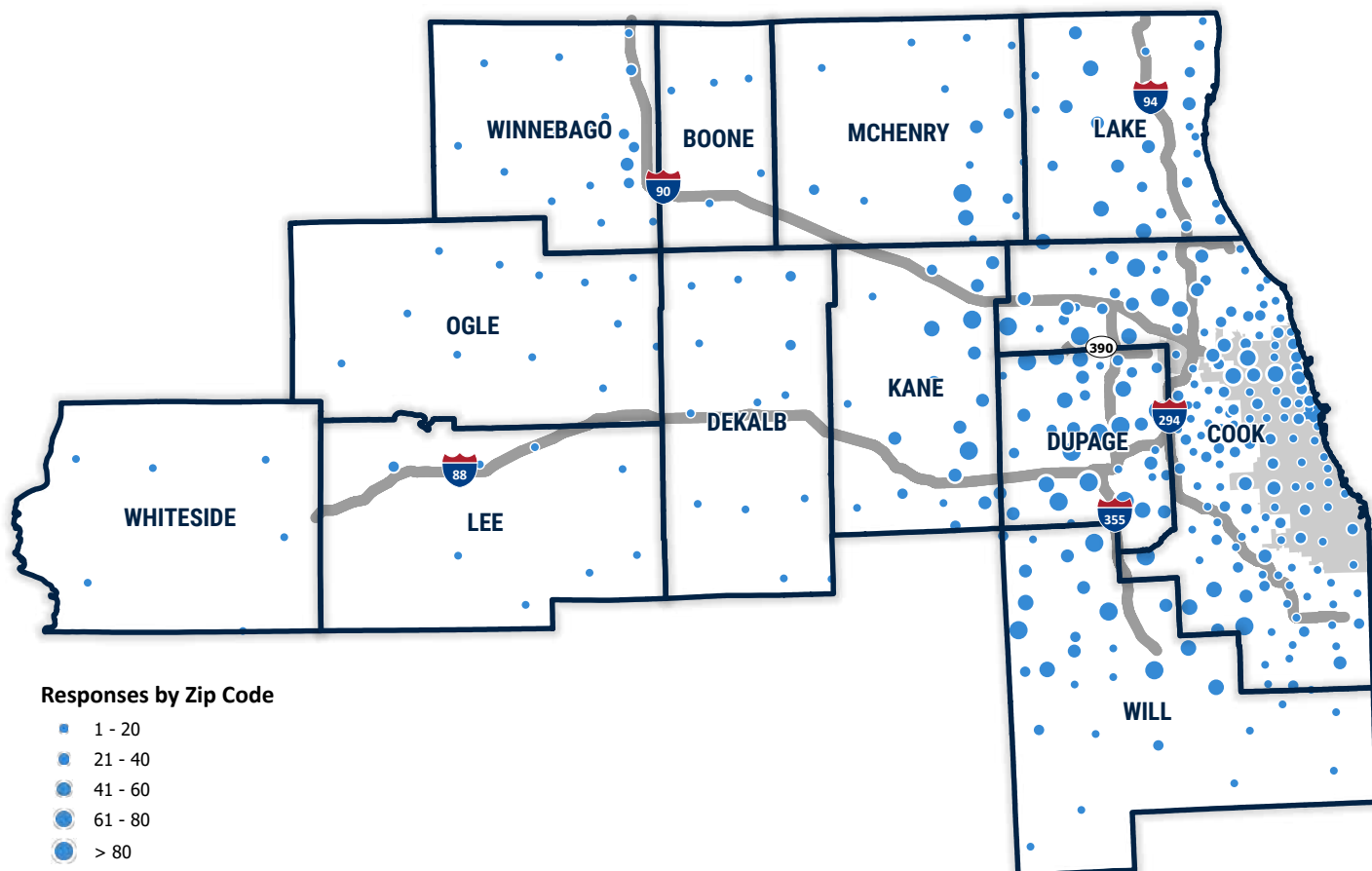
COMMENTS BY ZIP CODE

The distribution of comments closely mirrors the core Tollway service area. Comments from all sources were heavily concentrated in counties containing the largest share of Tollway users and infrastructure.

Of the valid zip codes provided, 10% were outside of the Tollway's 12-county service area.

COUNTY	PERCENT
Cook	34.8%
DuPage	16.6%
Will	12.3%
Kane	9.5%
Lake	7.6%
McHenry	4.2%

COUNTY	PERCENT
Winnebago	2.1%
DeKalb	1.2%
Boone	0.7%
Ogle	0.5%
Lee	0.3%
Whiteside	0.2%



KEY THEMES

Throughout the public comment period for the proposed rate increase, the Tollway received comments through various communications channels throughout the region. These comments were all analyzed and reviewed, and the following highlights several key themes heard throughout this process.

- Affordability
- Jobs and Skilled Trades
- "Toll Free by '73"
- Congestion Reduction and Time Savings
- Community Benefits and Economic Growth
- Transparency and Accountability
- Safety and Reliability
- Those Who Use the Tollway Pay For It
- Automatic Toll Increase
- Do Not Divert Toll Revenues to Transit
- Long-term Planning and Investment
- Project Management and Prioritization
- Commercial Truck Increases
- Toll Evasion Concerns
- Technology Investments

Affordability

The public described concerns around inflation, taxes, housing and fuel costs, senior affordability and the impact of rising household expenses.

Jobs and Skilled Trades

This theme centered on employment opportunities. Commenters frequently referenced family-supporting jobs, apprenticeship programs, construction careers, engineering opportunities, workforce development and economic opportunity.

"Toll Free by '73"

This theme centered on a 1950s campaign promise that toll roads were originally intended to become toll-free facilities after the original system was paid for.

Congestion Reduction and Time Savings

Many commenters emphasized roadway safety, reliable travel, roadway maintenance, H.E.L.P. trucks for roadside support, snow removal and congestion reduction.

Community Benefits and Economic Growth

Transportation investments were linked by comments to economic competitiveness, freight mobility, business attraction, community development and regional prosperity.

Transparency and Accountability

The need for consistent audits, financial reporting, expenditure explanations and greater accountability were requested.

KEY THEMES

Safety and Reliability	A frequent comment focused on shorter travel times, reduced congestion, improved reliability and safer road conditions.
Those Who Use the Tollway Pay For It	Commenters stated that those who use the system should be responsible for funding its maintenance and improvement rather than relying on broader tax revenues.
Automatic Toll Increases	Commenters expressed concern that future toll increases could occur without additional public review.
Do Not Divert Toll Revenues to Transit	Commenters expressed concern that Tollway revenues could potentially be used to support transit agencies rather than Tollway projects. Many requested assurance that Tollway users' payments remain dedicated to Tollway infrastructure investments.
Long-Term Planning and Investment	A proactive investment, sustainable financial planning and the importance of addressing needs before costs escalate further are accomplished by long-term planning and investment.
Project Management and Prioritization	Commenters questioned project sequencing, construction management practices, repeated reconstruction efforts and whether existing projects should be completed before new initiatives begin.
Commercial Truck Increases	Commercial-truck toll increases generated notable discussion. Some commenters argued that trucks should pay higher rates due to roadway wear, while others expressed concern that increased freight costs would eventually be passed on to consumers.
Toll-Evasion Concerns	Several commenters believed that collecting existing unpaid tolls should be prioritized before implementing additional rate increases. These comments focused on toll evasion, obscured license plates, unpaid tolls and fairness among users.
Technology Investments	Commenters highlighted the value of technology-focused investments, including fiber-optic infrastructure, modernization efforts, intelligent transportation systems and future-focused transportation technologies.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

Throughout the public comment process, several questions and concerns were raised regarding the agency, the proposed toll increase and the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan. To help provide additional context and clarity, the Illinois Tollway has developed responses to several of these frequently raised concerns, which are summarized below.

GAS TAX WAS ALREADY INCREASED

Tollway is not funded by the gas tax

The gas tax is already increased every year. Why do tolls need to be increased too?

The Tollway is a user-funded system and does not receive any state, federal or motor fuel tax revenues. An increase in tolls is necessary to support the maintenance and improvements proposed in the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan.

FREE IN '73

Decades of growth required investment

We were told the Tollway was going to be “Free in ‘73”.

There are no free roads. A decision was made by Illinois leaders in the 1950s that maintaining a dedicated funding source, paid only by users of the system, was a sustainable fiscal approach to ensure the Tollway was well maintained and could be used to better serve the region.

TOLLS SHOULDN'T BAIL OUT TRANSIT

Tollway revenues stay within the agency

How do we know that these funds will be used only for the Tollway and won't be used for things like transit?

The Tollway is funded only by toll revenues and the governing regulations for the agency prohibit funds from being used for non-Tollway purposes. The proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan only includes projects to improve the Illinois Tollway system and does not include the diversion of funding to any outside agencies.

NO OVERSIGHT ON TOLLWAY

Bi-partisan, senate-confirmed board oversees Tollway operations

What oversight exists to ensure the Tollway will deliver the improvements it is promising?

The Tollway is governed by an appointed Board of Directors who oversee the agency's operations. Additionally, the Tollway is audited on an annual basis by an appointed Certified Public Accounting firm and that report is available on the Tollway's website. Credit rating agencies including Fitch, S&P and Moody's also review and report on the Tollway's fiscal health.

TOLLWAY IS IN GOOD SHAPE ALREADY

Maintaining an asset is an ongoing process

The Tollway is in good shape. It seems like a lot of these improvements aren't needed or were just completed.

The Tollway uses a General Engineering Consultant who completes annual assessments of the Tollway's assets. That report is then used to determine what work is needed based on actual conditions, not just projections. Adjustments are regularly made to the program to defer projects that aren't yet needed or to expedite projects in areas of concern.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

WHY MORE COMMERCIAL INCREASES

Heavier vehicles cause more wear and tear

Commercial rates are already subjected to an annual CPI increase. Why is a 30% increase on top of those adjustments needed?

Commercial vehicle rates have been adjusted to keep up with inflation, however the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan recommends reducing the frequency of CPI adjustments to every other year to provide some relief to the commercial vehicles. Commercial vehicles also create more wear and tear on pavement and rates are structured to reflect those impacts. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, a typical 80,000 pound, 5-axle truck causes between 285 and 343 times more damage to pavement than a standard car.

AUTOMATIC RATE INCREASES ARE NOT NEEDED

Consistent investment provides greater predictability and reduces need for larger increases in the future

Why is the Tollway proposing automatic increases in toll rates?

The proposed automatic toll rate adjustments take place every two years and are tied to the Consumer Price Index to ensure revenues keep pace with inflation and rising construction and material costs. By implementing regular, capped adjustments of no more than 8% every two years, the Tollway can maintain its transportation system and deliver planned improvements while providing drivers with greater predictability and helping reduce the need for larger toll increases in the future.

UNPAID TOLLS SHOULD BE COLLECTED FIRST

Toll technology is in place to identify and recover unpaid tolls

How is the Tollway ensuring that unpaid tolls are being collected?

The Illinois Tollway uses a comprehensive toll collection process to identify and recover unpaid tolls. If tolls remain unpaid, the Tollway may issue violation notices and use other measures permitted under Illinois law. These efforts help ensure that all customers pay their fair share toward the operation, maintenance and improvement of the Tollway.

INCREASE WILL IMPACT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Programs are in place to help customers pay tolls equitably

This increase will impact seniors, frequent commuters and low-income drivers. What can the Tollway do to minimize those impacts so the Tollway remains a viable transportation option for those drivers?

The Tollway helps reduce the impact of toll costs by maintaining discounted rates for I-PASS users, which provides savings for frequent commuters, and by offering the I-PASS Assist program, which provides eligible low-income customers with reduced upfront costs and relief from certain fees.

ENSURING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

A robust capital program opens opportunity for all businesses to grow

What is the Tollway doing to ensure that small, diverse and minority owned businesses have opportunities to participate in this plan?

The proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan will continue the Tollway's commitment to creating opportunities for small, diverse, minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses through a variety of contracting, outreach and business development programs. These efforts include participation goals on eligible contracts, technical assistance and mentoring programs, and outreach activities designed to connect businesses with upcoming opportunities.

SPREADING THE WORD

The Tollway made a commitment to spread the word about its outreach efforts, ability to provide comment and opportunity to allow for various voices to be heard as a part of this process. The following highlights targeted areas used to engage the public and solicit feedback.



STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

22 MEETINGS

Through Tollway hosted events, virtual presentations and participation in stakeholder meetings, the agency provided opportunity for stakeholders to learn about planned investments and their regional impact. The Tollway provided stakeholders with an overview of the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan, opportunities for agency involvement and encouraged input about the proposed plan.



CUSTOMER EMAIL

4.4M EMAILS SENT

To communicate directly about the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan and proposed toll increase, the Illinois Tollway distributed regular email communications to its customer base. The email had a 55% open rate and included links to:

- Dedicated webpage for project backgrounds, goals and needs
- Online comment form for commenting and providing feedback
- Public hearings information, schedule and locations



The Illinois Tollway has proposed its next long-term capital program, *Driving Connections*, a 15-year, \$26.5 billion investment intended to improve traffic and enhance road conditions, providing Illinoisans with a resilient, modern system built to support a dynamic region for generations to come.

About the Proposal

Benefits for Communities

The *Driving Connections* will help alleviate traffic for Illinoisans – allowing people to spend more time with their families and less time on the road. The plan will also fuel economic development by creating thousands of engineering and construction jobs, support suppliers and small businesses while improving commerce and economic development.

SPREADING THE WORD



WEBPAGE

130K+ TOTAL VISITS

To enhance public access to information, the Illinois Tollway launched the *Driving Connections* webpage as a central platform for members of the public, industry partners and other stakeholders to learn more about the proposed capital plan.

DEDICATED WEBPAGE INCLUDED:

- ✓ Proposed plan overview
- ✓ Proposed goals
- ✓ Project types
- ✓ Corridor-specific project highlights
- ✓ Proposed toll rate adjustment
- ✓ Public hearing and comment information



HEARING RECORDING

509 TOTAL VIEWS



For those who were unable to attend a hearing, the Tollway recorded a virtual public hearing. This provided the public with an opportunity to hear the same message, the same presentation and receive the same information about the increase so they could then provide feedback.

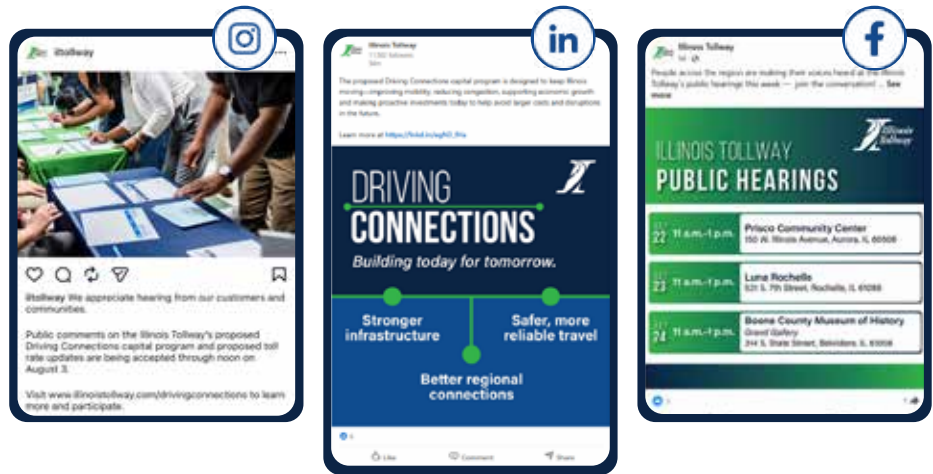
SPREADING THE WORD



SOCIAL MEDIA

61 POSTS

Leveraging its social media channels, the Illinois Tollway shared educational information and resources about the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan. Content was posted to Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, utilizing each platform's unique features to engage diverse audiences while encouraging participation in the capital planning process.



**Social media metrics reflect content published by the Illinois Tollway and communities during the comment period.*



NEWSPAPER AND MEDIA

51 PLACEMENTS

Notices were published June 23 through July 9 with each notice appearing three consecutive times within each paper. In total, the public notices were published 51 times, helping inform stakeholders about the opportunity to participate in a public hearing. In addition to notices, there were 182 earned media placements throughout the campaign.

Newspaper Notice Publication Dates

COUNTY	NEWSPAPER	PUBLISH DATE 1	PUBLISH DATE 2	PUBLISH DATE 3
Boone	Belvidere Republican	June 25	July 2	July 9
Cook	Chicago Sun Times	June 23	June 24	June 25
Cook	Chicago Tribune	June 23	June 24	June 25
DeKalb	Daily Chronicle	June 23	June 24	June 25
DuPage	Daily Herald	June 23	June 24	June 25
Kane	Aurora Beacon	June 24	June 25	June 26
Lake	Daily Herald	June 23	June 24	June 25
Lee	The Telegraph	June 23	June 24	June 25
McHenry	Northwest Herald	June 23	June 24	June 25
Ogle	Rochelle News Leader	June 24	July 1	July 8
Whiteside	The Gazette	June 23	June 24	June 25
Will	Herald-News	June 23	June 24	June 25
Winnebago	Rockford Register Star	June 26	June 28	June 29

COLLECTING COMMENTS

The Tollway used a variety of methods to effectively collect the public's comments and solicit feedback to the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan and associated rate increase. The following outlines the various ways people were able to engage as a part of this public process.



ONLINE COMMENT FORM

13,589 COMMENTS

The Illinois Tollway accepted feedback through an online comment form as part of the public comment process. The form provided an opportunity to share perspectives on proposed investments, priorities and transportation needs. Of the responses received, 77% were not in favor of the proposed rate increase, while 23% did not express objections.



Submit a Public Comment

The Illinois Tollway is requesting public comments on its proposed toll rate increase to support and fund the upcoming *Driving Connections* capital program. All responses collected through this survey will be part of the official public record.

To learn more about the proposed rate increase, please visit IllinoisTollway.com/DrivingConnections

Thank you for taking the time to participate. **Comments must be submitted by noon on August 3, 2024.**

Name * Zip Code

* Which of these factors is most important to you when traveling on the Tollway? (choose 3)

☐ Well maintained roads ☐ Affordability

☐ More access points (entrance and exit ramps) ☐ Connections to buses, trains and airports

☐ Less traffic ☐ Driver services (roadside help, rest stops)

☐ Predictable drive times

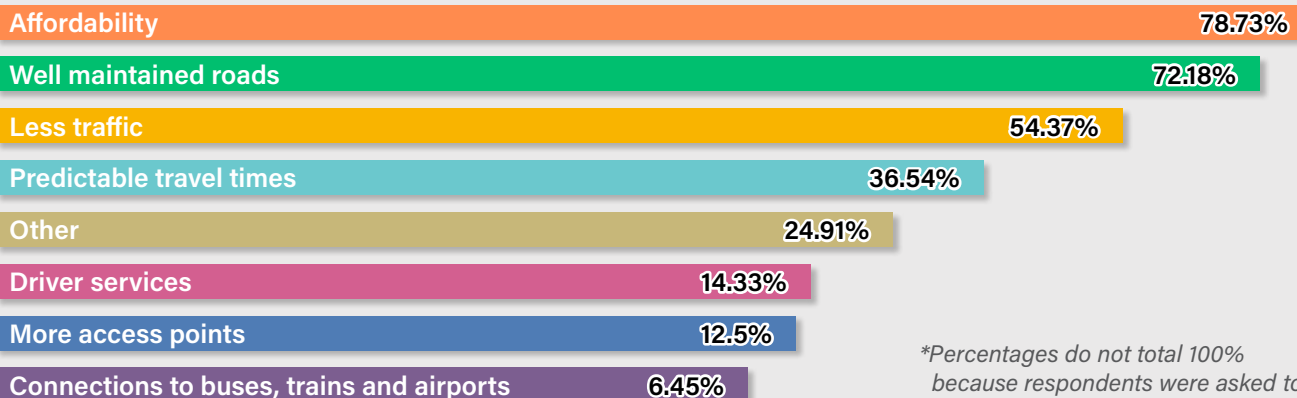
☐ Other (please specify)

* Which best summarizes your position on the proposed toll increase?

☐ Support ☐ Neutral ☐ Oppose

Comments

Which of these factors is most important to you when traveling on the Tollway? (choose 3)



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents were asked to select their top three options.

COLLECTING COMMENTS



MAIL AND EMAIL

3,851 COMMENTS

Nearly 4,000 emails and mailed letters were sent to the Tollway either in response to the emails that were sent to customers or from various organizations on their letterhead. These were included in overarching metrics and reflected the outreach efforts of the Tollway throughout the comment period.



PUBLIC HEARINGS

1,157 ATTENDEES

In compliance with the Toll Highway Act and to provide transparency to the public, the Tollway was required to hold a public hearing in each of the 12 counties within its jurisdiction to gather public feedback on the toll increase. The Tollway went beyond this requirement and held 13 public hearings – including two in Cook County.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM MORE THAN 18,000 COMMENTS

Across multiple platforms, the Tollway heard a variety of comments regarding the proposed toll rate increase. Highlights include:

- Using toll revenues to fund toll improvements
- Consistent investment in the transportation network
- Better roads for drivers including on-site assistance and roadside services
- Addressing potholes, cleaning debris and removing snow
- Providing access to communities for economic development
- Open up transportation options for businesses
- Create and sustain good paying jobs
- Continue to provide training and career opportunities for job growth
- Proactively addressing choke points and areas of congestion
- Consistently rising costs on all goods and services
- Cost of living concerns amid current environment
- Opposition to tolling
- A promise for a temporary toll system and a transition to a standard gas tax model
- Questioning the need to make these investments and increase tolls
- Toll increases in perpetuity without public oversight or a public process
- Opposition to commercial increase as costs have been rising in previous years
- Construction feels endless. More investment equals more construction and delays
- Lack of oversight on spending and priorities

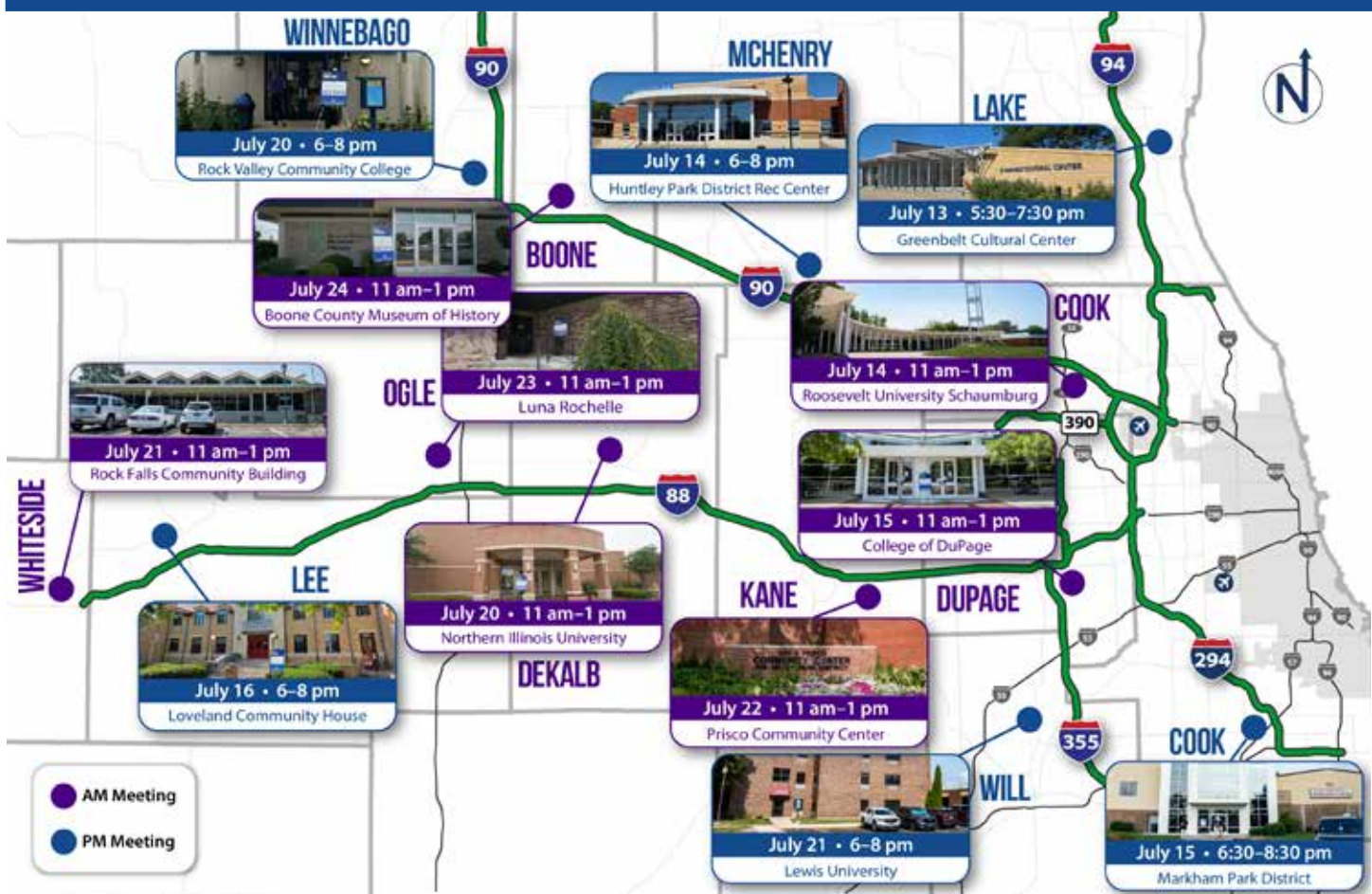
PUBLIC HEARINGS

The agency hosted 13 hearings across all 12 counties in the Tollway region to share information about the proposed toll increase and the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan, while providing opportunities for public comment on the proposed toll increase.

1,157
ATTENDEES



13 PUBLIC HEARINGS



PUBLIC HEARINGS



447 TOTAL COMMENTS



341
SPOKEN
COMMENTS

At each hearing, Tollway leadership provided a short presentation followed by spoken comments. Anyone wishing to speak submitted a blue card onsite to provide their remarks for three minutes.



92
ONLINE
COMMENTS

Tablets were set up at each hearing allowing attendees to submit comments online for inclusion in the public record. Technical, on-site support was provided for those who needed it.



14
WRITTEN
COMMENTS

To accommodate participants who preferred to submit written comments, comment cards could be filled out onsite to be included in the public record.

LAKE COUNTY

North Chicago, Greenbelt Cultural Center

JULY 13, 2026

5:30-7:30 P.M.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

Lake County participants expressed confidence in a long-term approach that prioritizes safety, mobility and economic opportunity across the Tollway system. Business leaders, engineers, skilled trades and everyday drivers described the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan as an investment in communities, workforce development and dependable transportation. Public comments also highlighted the need for transparency, financial stewardship and protecting user-funded revenues.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:		88			
Government officials:	3	General Public:	77	Media:	8

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	21	1	8	30
Neutral	2	0	0	2
Oppose	1	0	2	3
TOTAL	24	1	10	35

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Michael Shay,
Chief Information Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

88
ATTENDEES

24
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



COOK COUNTY (NORTH)

Schaumburg, Roosevelt University Schaumburg

JULY 14, 2026

11 A.M.-1 P.M.

PRESERVING A SYSTEM PEOPLE DEPEND ON

The hearing reflected recognition that the Illinois Tollway is a transportation system people rely on every day for safe, reliable travel and regional economic opportunity. Speakers emphasized the importance of preserving that quality through long-term investment, while continuing to ask questions about proposed rate increases and affordability. Public comments reinforced a shared expectation that future investments should continue delivering the level of performance drivers have come to expect.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 132				
Government officials:	2	General Public:	128	Media: 2

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	21	2	5	30
Neutral	3	1	2	6
Oppose	4	2	1	7
TOTAL	28	5	8	41

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Eric Wunderlich,
*Chief Strategy and
Implementation Officer*

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

132
ATTENDEES

28
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



MCHENRY COUNTY

Huntley, Huntley Park District Rec Center

JULY 14, 2026

6-8 P.M.

BALANCING LONG-TERM INVESTMENT WITH AFFORDABILITY

The McHenry County hearing reflected appreciation in that maintaining a safe, reliable transportation system requires continued investment, while also underscoring public scrutiny over the size of the proposed rate increase. Attendees highlighted the Tollway's role in expanding access to jobs, supporting local economic growth and improving mobility throughout the region. Many questions centered on affordability, accountability and ensuring users receive lasting value from future investments.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:		111		
Government officials:	0	General Public:	111	Media: 0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	16	3	3	22
Neutral	2	0	0	2
Oppose	11	1	2	14
TOTAL	29	4	5	38

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Eric Wunderlich,
*Chief Strategy and
Implementation Officer*

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

111
ATTENDEES

29
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



DUPAGE COUNTY

Glen Ellyn, College of DuPage

JULY 15, 2026

11 A.M.-1 P.M.

INVESTING IN EVERYDAY MOBILITY

The DuPage County hearing highlighted support for investments that improve everyday mobility across the region. Speakers described how the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan can reduce congestion, improve travel reliability, strengthen regional connectivity, and help families spend less time in traffic and more time at their destinations. Questions were raised about project priorities and the impact of higher tolls. Specific emphasis from the trucking community highlighted the strain on commercial drivers and ability to continue operations with higher costs. The discussion consistently emphasized maintaining a transportation system that supports future growth and quality of life.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 116			
Government officials:	0	General Public:	115
		Media:	1

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	31	1	21	53
Neutral	0	0	3	3
Oppose	4	0	0	4
TOTAL	34	1	24	59

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
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Cathy Williams,
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Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Eric Wunderlich,
*Chief Strategy and
Implementation Officer*

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

116
ATTENDEES

34
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



COOK COUNTY (SOUTH)

Markham, Markham Park District

JULY 15, 2026

6:30-8:30 P.M.

DRIVING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACROSS THE REGION

The Markham hearing reflected agreement in the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan as a long-term investment in jobs, regional mobility and community growth. Speakers described how past Tollway investments have strengthened local economies, reduced travel times, supported small businesses, and created career opportunities while positioning communities for future success. Public comments also acknowledged the importance of balancing these long-term positive impacts with affordability for drivers and commercial users.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 130			
Government officials:	4	General Public:	126
		Media:	0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	29	0	10	39
Neutral	1	0	0	1
Oppose	3	0	0	3
TOTAL	33	0	10	43

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

130
ATTENDEES

33
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



LEE COUNTY

Dixon, Loveland Community House and Museum

JULY 16, 2026

6-8 P.M.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS NORTHERN ILLINOIS

The Lee County hearing reflected support for the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan as an investment in regional connectivity that extends well beyond the Chicago metropolitan area. Speakers emphasized how the Tollway links western Illinois to jobs, markets, educational opportunities and family connections while supporting economic growth and reliable travel across multiple counties. The discussion also reinforced confidence in the Tollway's user-funded model and its long-standing commitment to maintaining safe, dependable infrastructure.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:		32
Government officials:	0	General Public: 31
		Media: 1

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	11	0	1	12
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Oppose	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	11	0	1	12

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Cassandra Rouse,
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Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

32
ATTENDEES

11
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION THROUGH LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

The DeKalb County hearing emphasized the importance of making long-term investments that strengthen both transportation infrastructure and the workforce that will build and maintain it. Speakers highlighted how the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan supports apprenticeships, career pathways, economic opportunities and safe, reliable travel while ensuring the Tollway system remains strong for future generations. Public comments also reflected the importance of maintaining affordability and transparency as these long-term investments move forward.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:	62		
Government officials:	3	General Public:	59
		Media:	0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	17	0	4	21
Neutral	3	0	1	4
Oppose	2	2	1	3
TOTAL	22	2	6	30

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Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Manar Nashif,
Chief Engineering Officer

MODERATOR

Michael Shay,
Chief Information Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

62
ATTENDEES

22
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Rockford, Rock Valley Community College

JULY 20, 2026

6-8 P.M.

MAINTAINING PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

The Winnebago County hearing reflected support for continued investment in the Tollway while emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability and responsible stewardship. Speakers highlighted the value of maintaining safe, reliable infrastructure, supporting economic opportunity and reinvesting toll revenues into the system, while others raised questions about future toll increases, financial oversight and opportunities for continued public input. Together, the comments underscored that long-term investment is strengthened when paired with public confidence and responsible decision-making.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:	70		
Government officials:	0	General public:	69
		Media:	1

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	13	0	1	14
Neutral	1	0	0	1
Oppose	8	0	1	9
TOTAL	22	0	2	24

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Manar Nashif,
Chief Engineering Officer

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

70
ATTENDEES

22
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



WHITESIDE COUNTY

Rock Falls, Rock Falls Community Building

JULY 21, 2026

11 A.M.-1 P.M.

CREATING TIME AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES

The Whiteside County hearing focused on the everyday value the Tollway provides to families, workers and communities across northern Illinois. Speakers described how the proposed *Driving Connections* capital plan would support reliable travel, strengthens access to jobs and family, and create long-term opportunities through continued investment in infrastructure and workforce development. Comments also reflected confidence that proactive planning and responsible stewardship will help preserve these outcomes for future generations.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 43			
Government officials:	0	General Public:	41
		Media:	2

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	12	0	1	13
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Oppose	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	13	0	1	14

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

John Donato,
Chief of Staff

Sam Samra,
Deputy Chief Finance

Lauren Platt,
Sr. Manager of Strategic Planning

MODERATOR

Eric Wunderlich,
Chief Strategy and Implementation Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Zuzana Stepanek,
Supervising Attorney

43
ATTENDEES

13
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



WILL COUNTY

Romeoville, Lewis University St. Charles Borromeo North Campus

JULY 21, 2026

6 P.M.-8 P.M.

SUSTAINING A USER-FUNDED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Will County hearing centered on the long-term sustainability of the Tollway's user-funded model and the investments it supports. Speakers emphasized that toll revenues are reinvested into maintaining and improving the system, creating economic opportunities and ensuring those who use the Tollway pay for its operation and future growth. Public questions reflected concerns about affordability, future toll adjustments and financial accountability, reinforcing the importance of transparent stewardship as the system continues to evolve.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 143			
Government officials:	1	General Public:	142
		Media:	0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	35	0	5	40
Neutral	0	1	1	2
Oppose	10	0	0	10
TOTAL	45	1	6	52

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

Cassandra Rouse,
Executive Director

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Manar Nashif,
Chief Engineering Officer

MODERATOR

Michael Shay,
Chief Information Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

143
ATTENDEES

45
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



KANE COUNTY

Aurora, Prisco Community Center

JULY 22, 2026

11 A.M-1 P.M.

SUPPORTING A GROWING REGION

The Kane County hearing focused on the role the Tollway plays in supporting one of Illinois' fastest-growing regions through long-term transportation investment. Speakers emphasized that continued improvements to key corridors will strengthen regional mobility, reduce congestion, support economic growth and provide reliable connections for residents, businesses and freight as demand continues to increase. Public comments also reflected the importance of balancing these long-term investments with affordability, accountability and confidence that toll revenues are managed responsibly.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 119			
Government officials:	4	General Public:	112
		Media:	3

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	26	0	14	40
Neutral	3	0	0	3
Oppose	8	0	1	9
TOTAL	37	0	15	52

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

John Donato,
Chief of Staff

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Manar Nashif,
Chief Engineering Officer

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Zuzana Stepanek,
Supervising Attorney

119
ATTENDEES

37
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



INVESTING IN A CROSSROADS THAT CONNECTS NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Ogle County's hearing reflected two very different perspectives. Attendees emphasized the value of maintaining a safe, reliable transportation system that connects communities, supports local businesses and creates jobs. While other attendees focused on affordability, and questioned the need for additional revenue. The discussion underscored how the Tollway's role extends into communities that depend on regional connectivity and long-term infrastructure investment.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 49				
Government officials:	1	General Public:	48	Media: 0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	18	0	0	18
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Oppose	4	0	0	4
TOTAL	22	0	0	22

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

John Donato,
Chief of Staff

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

49
ATTENDEES

22
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



KEEPING NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMPETITIVE THROUGH CONNECTIVITY

Comments in Boone County emphasized the Tollway's role as a driver of economic competitiveness, particularly for manufacturing, freight movement, and regional employers. Speakers repeatedly connected reliable infrastructure with business investment, job creation, and efficient access to markets, noting that companies locate and expand because of dependable transportation connections rather than local road networks alone. While some participants raised concerns about the impact of higher commercial toll rates, the discussion centered on maintaining a user-funded system that supports long-term economic growth, regional mobility, and continued investment in Northern Illinois.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL:	66		
Government officials:	0	General Public:	66
		Media:	0

PUBLIC COMMENT TOTALS

POSITION	SPOKEN	WRITTEN	ONLINE	TOTAL
Support	18	0	4	22
Neutral	1	0	0	1
Oppose	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	21	0	4	25

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PRESENTERS

John Donato,
Chief of Staff

Cathy Williams,
Chief Financial Officer

Karyn Robles,
Chief of Planning

MODERATOR

Thaddeus Wilkins,
Chief Operating Officer

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Kathleen Pasulka-Brown,
General Counsel

66
ATTENDEES

21
SPOKEN
COMMENTS



