

Tollway Board Takes Positive Step Toward O'Hare Western Access

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Following lengthy, and at times contentious, negotiations to acquire property for future western access to O'Hare International Airport, the Tollway Board today voted unanimously to enter into a formal *Letter of Intent* with Canadian Pacific Railway (CP). For over five years, IRTBA has supported the Tollway's efforts to acquire the CP rail property that would serve as the keystone for the Elgin-O'Hare Western Access project. The transportation design and construction industry has consistently and devotedly advocated for western access to O'Hare over the course of the last 33 years.

"IRTBA applauds this progress as the Illinois Tollway and Canadian Pacific Railway pass a significant milestone in their negotiations, which will address the gridlock around O'Hare. The Tollway's commitment to building I-490 and completing Illinois Route 390 will unlock future economic opportunities that will positively impact the entire region. The road building industry shares the Tollway's vision, and stands ready to design and build a key component to transform the western O'Hare area," said Mike Sturino, President and CEO of the Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association.

The Elgin-O'Hare Tollway extension would provide western access to O'Hare and continue west past O'Hare and curve to the south to meet the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), as well as run up the western border of O'Hare International Airport to join I-90 to the north. The newest extension running north and south will be called Illinois 490.

This project is expected to relieve congestion, create thousands of construction jobs, generate major economic development projects in the surrounding communities, and may possibly spark a long-discussed plan to add a Western terminal to O'Hare International Airport, though this is not part of the Chicago Department of Aviation's current terminal expansion budget.

The transportation design and construction industry is pleased that this agreement will allow construction of I-390 and I-490 projects to move forward. The agreement also comes on the heels of the Senate's confirmation to re-appoint **Bob Schillerstrom** as chairman of the Tollway for another four-year term. IRTBA looks forward to our continued partnership with the Tollway under his leadership, and will continue to advocate alongside our agency partners for projects of regional and national significance.

