



Citizens Against the
SPRAWLWAY
In Kendall and Kane Counties

3/23/2018

IDOT RESCINDS PRAIRIE PARKWAY CORRIDOR PROTECTION
REMOVING LAST VESTIGE OF CANCELLED EXPRESSWAY PROJECT

The Illinois Department of Transportation has cancelled the protected corridor for the Prairie Parkway, a proposed expressway to connect Interstate 80 to Interstate 88, according to Citizens Against the Sprawlway, the grassroots organization formed in 2001 to oppose the project.

IDOT informed the organization earlier this month that it had formally abolished the corridor protection with filings in Kendall, Kane, and Grundy counties on March 5. Property owners in the 500-foot wide corridor were previously restricted from making improvements to their property without state review and approval.

“This removes the last vestige of the ill-conceived billion dollar project,” said Jan Strasma, chairman of Citizens Against the Sprawlway. “Property owners in the corridor can now make improvements without state intervention.”

“This final step removes the possibility of an unneeded expressway that would destroy thousands of acres of farmland, threaten the Fox River and its tributaries, and forever change the area’s small community way of life,” he added.

The 37-mile long Prairie Parkway was proposed in 2001 and received a big boost in 2005 when then US House Speaker Dennis Hastert earmarked \$207 million in federal tax dollars for the project.

After the Federal Highway Administration approved the project in 2008, Citizens Against the Sprawlway and Friends of the Fox River filed suit, contending that the project review was inadequate. Chicago-based Environment Law and Policy Center represented the two groups. The lawsuit was settled in 2012 when the federal agency rescinded its approval, effectively cancelling the project.

Remaining federal money earmarked for it has been applied to improvements to Illinois 47 and US 34 in Kendall County. When the Prairie Parkway was cancelled, about \$70 million in state and federal funds had been spent on studies, engineering, and purchases of about 250 acres of along along the proposed route. No actual construction occurred.

IDOT has indicated that it will evaluate the land acquired for the project on a case-by-case base for possible sale. Any funds generated will go into the state’s general road fund, the agency said.

IDOT held a little publicized and sparsely attended public hearing November 2, 2017, in Yorkville for a required 10-year-review of the corridor projection. The agency said its action in rescinding the corridor was based on its evaluation of the corridor along with comments received from the public.

Note: IDOT’s letters on the corridor cancellation and background information are available online at: <http://www.galleonslap.net/sprawlway>

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Contact:
Jan Strasma
Cell/text: 630/863-6669
Email: rjan@mac.com