

Citizens Against the Sprawlway **UPDATE**

August 2010

IDOT Cuts All Funding for Prairie Parkway

The Illinois Department of Transportation has cut all Prairie Parkway funding from its six-year Highway Improvement Program, essentially suspending the project. Previous six-year plans had included about \$200 million for the first 5-mile section from Illinois 71 to US 34.

But the project is far from dead. Dave Broviak, IDOT's Prairie Parkway engineer, said earlier this summer that the "consensus" at IDOT is still to build the road.

The earmarks in the 2005 transportation bill are still a sticking point – the Federal Highway Administration still insists that the money must be used for a new freeway project. With the money spent thus far on Prairie Parkway engineering and land and allocated to planned improvements to US 34, there is about \$140 million in federal dollars left. IDOT, the FHWA and Congressman Bill Foster need to work out a way to tap that money for improvements to existing roadways instead of squandering the funds on the Prairie Parkway.

But the Tollway Considers Taking on the Project

The Illinois Tollway is looking at the Prairie Parkway as a future tollway project, one of five under consideration. The tollway staff is currently gathering information on the project and met earlier this month with State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia and several groups opposing the Prairie Parkway, including Citizens Against the Sprawlway. The staff will likely present its findings to the tollway board later this fall. The other projects under consideration are (1) the Elgin O'Hare Expressway and western bypass to O'Hare; (2) extending Illinois 53 north into Lake and McHenry counties; (3) the proposed Illiana Expressway into Indiana through the southern suburbs; (4) and rebuilding Interstate 90 to Rockford.

Rocco Zuccherro, the tollway's deputy director for planning, pointed out that, of the five projects being considered, only the Prairie Parkway has substantial local opposition. Further, the other four projects have already been authorized by the legislature, should the tollway choose to undertake them.

Kane-Kendall Municipalities Narrowly Endorse Prairie Parkway

The Metrowest Council of Governments -- composed of the municipalities in Kane and Kendall counties -- voted 9-7 to support the Prairie Parkway at its July 22 meeting. Kendall County has been campaigning for months to get the Metrowest endorsement. While the vote favored the Prairie Parkway, the 7 municipalities voting against it showed there is hardly consensus support for the project. Further, there are 31 municipalities which are members of the Metrowest Council -- meaning only 30 percent of the member municipalities voted in support of the project.

Prairie Parkway given low priority in 30-year regional plan

The draft regional plan for land use and transportation excludes the Prairie Parkway from the top priority for funding. In the seven-county plan, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has focused on maintaining and improving the existing highway and transit network instead of taking on expensive new projects. CMAP plan approval is needed for state and federal funds to be used for major projects.

Just two new highway projects are labeled "top priority" in the draft Go To 2040 plan -- highway improvements associated with a western access to O'Hare Airport and an expressway extension for Illinois 53 north into Lake County. Dozens of other projects, including the Prairie Parkway, are lower in priority for funding.

The final plan is expected to be issued in October.

"Tipping Point" for Prairie Parkway – You can help

The momentum is clearly shifting on the Prairie Parkway:

- IDOT has dropped all funding for the project in its six-year spending plan.
- Congressman Bill Foster opposes the project and advocates shifting the federal funding to improving the existing highway infrastructure
- Local support has dwindled while State Sen. Chris Lauzen, State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, and others continue their strong opposition in Springfield.

Help end the Prairie Parkway – ask Gov. Pat Quinn and IDOT Secretary Gary Hannig to cancel the project. The state should request that the Federal Highway Administration withdraw its project approval, called the Record of Decision, and formally terminate of the Prairie Parkway corridor protection which restricts property owners along the 37-mile route in Kane, Kendall, and Grundy counties.

Governor Pat Quinn
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Tell the Illinois Tollway that the Prairie Parkway should not be part of any tollway expansion:

Kristi LaFleur
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For more information:

Citizens Against the Sprawlway

website: <http://www.sprawlway.org> -- e-mail: info@sprawlway.org

47+ Coalition website: <http://47plus.org>

IDOT's Prairie Parkway website: <http://www.prairie-parkway.com>