THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY'S MOVE ILLINOIS CAPITAL PROGRAM:

Economic Benefits, Infrastructure Improvements, and Lessons for Sustainable Transportation Investment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Tollway is an independent, user-funded transportation agency that operates and maintains five toll roads across 12 counties in northern Illinois.

- Unlike Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT, the Tollway is financed primarily through toll revenue rather than motor fuel taxes or general state revenues.
- As of 2025, the Illinois Tollway carries approximately 1.7 million vehicles per day, the highest traffic volume on the system since at least 2000.
- Commercial vehicles account for approximately 13% of vehicle miles traveled, highlighting the Tollway's critical role in regional freight movement.

Toll revenues support the operation, maintenance, and long-term investment needed to modernize the system.

- Toll rates vary by vehicle class, location, and payment method, with passenger vehicles using I-PASS paying approximately $0.07 per mile.
- A 2024 study found that the Illinois Tollway has relatively low toll rates compared with other major U.S. toll systems, ranking 8th lowest in average passenger tolls per mile.
- Passenger vehicle toll rates have remained unchanged since 2012, while commercial vehicle tolls are adjusted annually based on inflation.
- Since its creation in 1953, the Tollway has modified its toll rates only five times.

The Move Illinois capital program is a 15-year, $15.2 billion investment plan to modernize and preserve the Illinois Tollway system that will be completed by the end of 2027

- The program has delivered sustained investment of $1 billion annually on average in capital improvements, with $14.1 billion invested in Illinois Tollway infrastructure improvements from 2012 through the first quarter of 2026.
- Major investments include the Central Tri-State reconstruction (over $4 billion), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) modernization ($2.5 billion), the Elgin O'Hare Western Access / I-490 corridor ($3.4 billion), and the I-294/I-57 Interchange ($719 million).

The Move Illinois capital program has created jobs, expanded training, and boosted the economy.

- The program has generated an estimated $28.3 billion in economic output, averaging $2.0 billion annually – or roughly $2 in economic activity for every $1 invested.
- It has produced approximately $1.2 billion in state and local tax revenue over the life of the program, averaging $86 million annually.
- Move Illinois has supported nearly 150,000 jobs since 2012, or about 10,600 jobs annually – including 5,600 construction jobs per year.
- It is estimated that $148 million invested in registered apprenticeship programs in northern Illinois is attributable to Move Illinois.

The Move Illinois capital program demonstrates the long-term value of a dedicated, user-funded model for delivering large-scale transportation investment.

- Dedicated revenue enabled the delivery of complex, large-scale infrastructure projects that would have been difficult to finance through traditional funding sources.
- Policymakers should consider this model as new Tollway capital programs are advanced and as other major transportation investments are evaluated.
- Looking ahead, Illinois' growing transportation needs and long-term funding pressures underscore the role of the Tollway's user-supported model as a complementary funding mechanism that can help deliver major projects such as the I-290 Blue Line corridor and I-55 Managed Lanes, alongside traditional state and federal investment.

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INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Tollway is an independent state agency responsible for operating and maintaining nearly 300 centerline miles of toll highways serving northern Illinois. Created by the Illinois General Assembly in 1953 as the Illinois State Toll Highway Commission, the agency was established to finance and construct a modern highway system that bypassed the City of Chicago, complementing the radial routes of the Chicago expressway network.

The Illinois Tollway operates independently from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Governor. Unlike state highways, the Tollway is funded primarily through user fees collected from motorists rather than motor fuel taxes or general state revenues. This dedicated, self-sustaining funding model allows the agency to finance major capital improvements, maintain its infrastructure, and issue revenue bonds backed by future toll collections, enabling long-term investments in one of the nation's busiest transportation networks (Illinois Tollway, 2024).

For more than seven decades, this user-funded model has enabled the Illinois Tollway to play a distinct and complementary role within the state's broader transportation system. While IDOT is responsible for maintaining and improving more than 16,000 miles of state highways across Illinois, the Tollway is able to focus its resources on some of the state's busiest transportation corridors, delivering large-scale reconstruction, expansion, and modernization projects (IDOT, 2026). Through programs such as the 15-year, $15 billion Move Illinois capital program, the Tollway has demonstrated how a dedicated revenue source can provide the financial certainty needed to undertake transformative infrastructure investments while reducing reliance on traditional transportation funding sources.

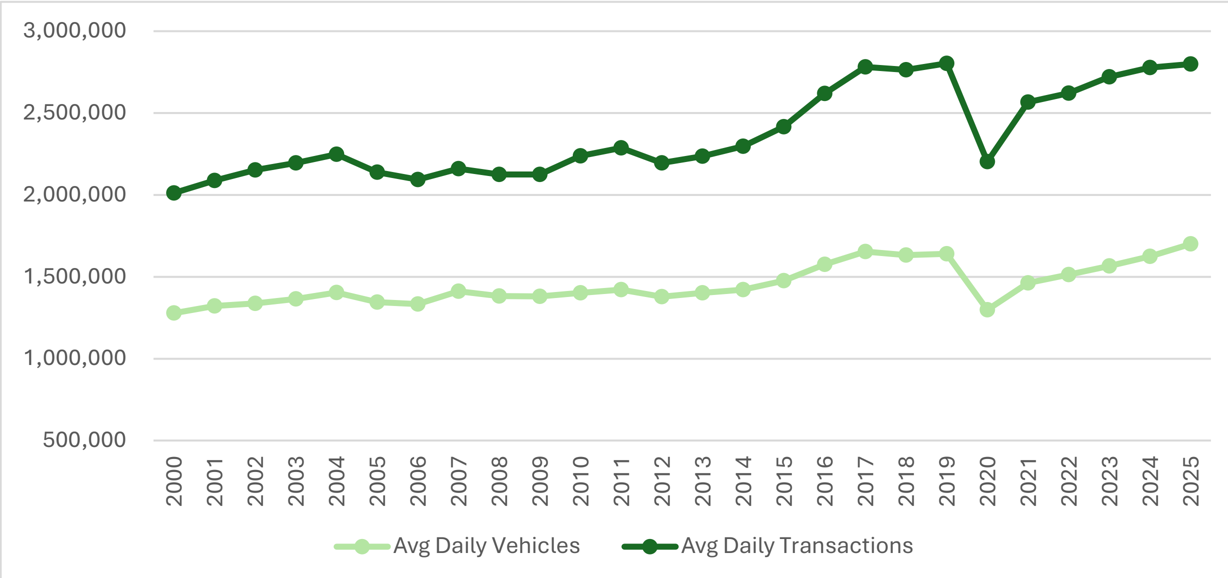
ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AT A GLANCE

The Illinois Tollway covers northern Illinois and includes 12 counties with a combined population of 8.8 million people, which accounts for 70% of the state's population. It currently operates five toll roads – Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), the Regan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway (IL 390) – and will soon open a sixth, the I-490 Tollway. The entire system includes 2,315 lane miles, 690 bridges and culverts, 1,048 structural walls, 919 overhead sign structures, 62 communication towers, 202 facilities, and 2,300 intelligent transportation devices (Illinois Tollway, 2025).

Traffic Counts

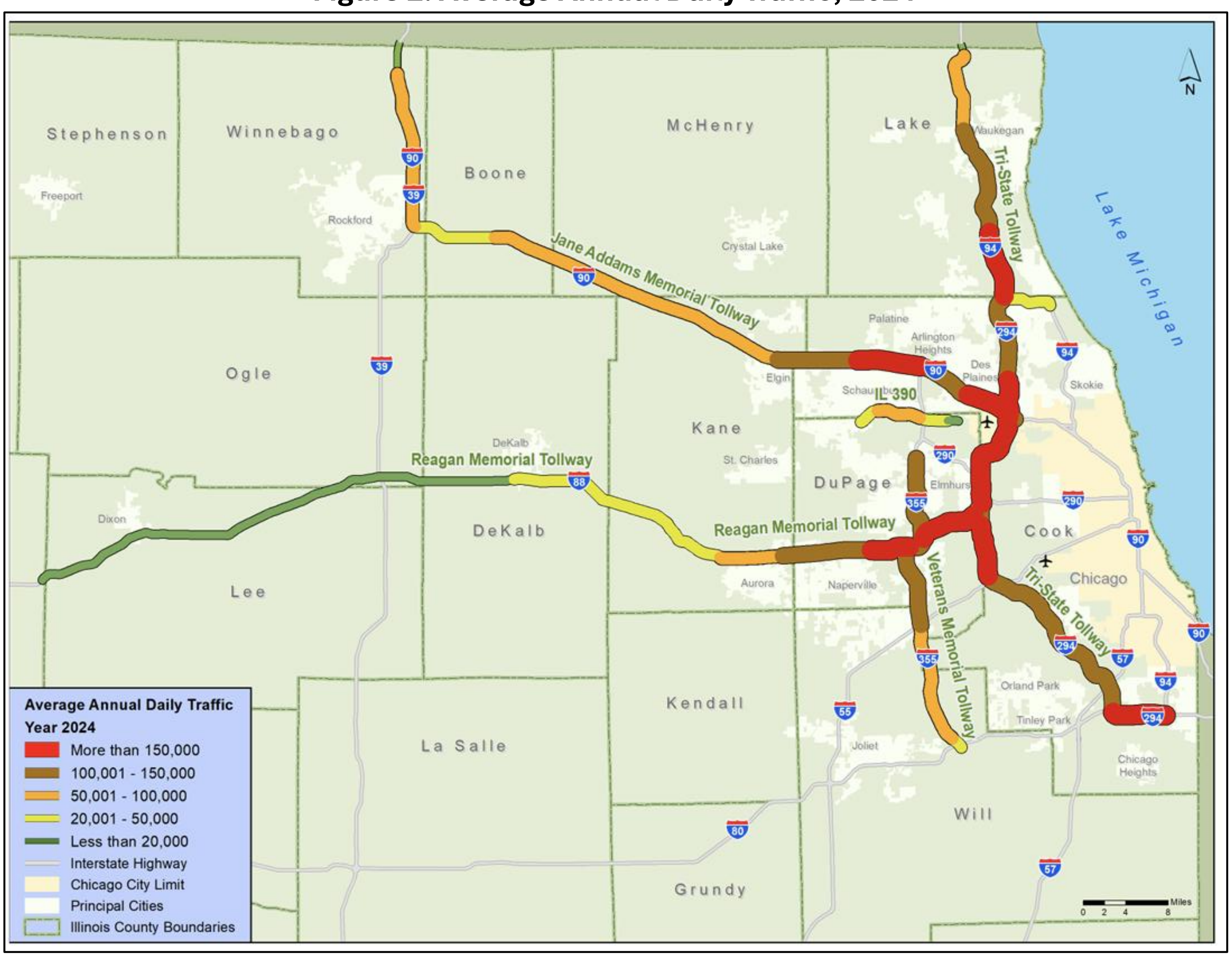
As of 2025, the Illinois Tollway carries an average of 1.7 million vehicles each day – the highest level of traffic on the system at any point since 2000. After a sharp decline in travel during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, traffic volumes have steadily rebounded in recent years. Toll transactions, which represent individual vehicle passages through tolling points, have followed a similar trend, reaching an average of 2.8 million transactions per day in 2025 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Average Daily Travel Statistics for the Illinois Tollway System, 2000-2025



Source: Illinois Tollway, 2024b

Figure 2: Average Annual Daily Traffic, 2024



Source: Map from 2024 Traffic Data Report (Illinois Tollway, 2024b)

The Illinois Tollway illustrates daily traffic volumes across the tollway system in its 2024 Traffic Data report, which is included in this report as Figure 2. As shown, the highest traffic volumes are concentrated in Cook County, with much of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) carrying more than 150,000 vehicles per day. Similarly high traffic volumes are observed on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) and the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as they approach the Tri-State. Overall, the majority of the Tollway system carries more than 100,000 vehicles per day, highlighting its role as one of the busiest transportation networks in the region (Illinois Tollway, 2024b).

Freight Traffic

While the Tollway serves millions of daily commuters and travelers, it also plays a critical role in the regional freight network. Commercial vehicles account for approximately 13% of all vehicle miles traveled on the system. Freight traffic is particularly concentrated along the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), where commercial vehicles account for nearly 16% of all toll transactions. By comparison, commercial vehicles represent approximately 10% of transactions on the Tollway's other major corridors. These figures highlight the Tri-State's role as a key freight corridor, connecting interstate highways, intermodal facilities, industrial centers, and distribution hubs throughout the Chicago region (Illinois Tollway, 2024b).

Tolls

The Illinois Tollway assesses tolls based on four vehicle classes: passenger vehicles, small trucks, medium trucks, and large trucks. Rates vary depending on the toll plaza, distance traveled, vehicle class, and whether a customer uses I-PASS (or E-ZPass) or pays by mail or online. Currently, a single passenger vehicle toll ranges from $0.20 to $3.80, while a single commercial vehicle toll ranges from $0.35 to $20.10 depending on method of payment, vehicle size, and time of day (Illinois Tollway, 2026f).

A 2023 study found that passenger vehicles pay approximately $0.07 per mile to travel on the Illinois Tollway system using an I-PASS (Figure 3). Small trucks pay an average of $0.16 per mile, medium trucks approximately $0.27 per mile, and large trucks $0.46 per mile. Despite serving one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, Illinois maintains comparatively low toll rates. A comparison of 24 major toll systems found that the Illinois Tollway ranks 17th in average passenger vehicle tolls per mile, with motorists paying an average of $0.20 per mile, well below systems such as Virginia ($3.27 per mile) and Pennsylvania ($1.73 per mile) (Davis, 2024).

Figure 3: Per Mile Toll Rates by Route and Vehicle Type, 2023

	Passenger Veh		Small Trucks		Medium Trucks		Large Trucks	
	Online Toll	I-PASS	Total Toll	Discount	Total Toll	Discount	Total Toll	Discount
Jane Addams Memorial	$0.10	$0.05	$0.19	$0.13	$0.28	$0.22	$0.50	$0.38
Tri-State	$0.13	$0.07	$0.24	$0.16	$0.36	$0.28	$0.65	$0.49
Reagan Memorial	$0.11	$0.05	$0.19	$0.13	$0.29	$0.23	$0.52	$0.39
Veterans Memorial	$0.26	$0.13	$0.37	$0.25	$0.56	$0.43	$0.99	$0.74
Illinois Route 390	$0.38	$0.19	$0.43	$0.29	$0.67	$0.51	$1.18	$0.87
Total	$0.14	$0.07	$0.23	$0.16	$0.35	$0.27	$0.62	$0.46

Source: Illinois Tollway, 2024

Another way to evaluate toll rates is by examining the average revenue per transaction. Because toll rates vary based on location, vehicle class, and payment method, the average revenue collected each time a vehicle passes through a tolling point provides a useful measure of what users typically pay. In 2024, the average toll paid per transaction was $0.78 for passenger vehicles and $5.49 for commercial vehicles (Illinois Tollway, 2024).

Passenger vehicle toll rates have remained unchanged since January 2012, when they were increased by 35 cents per transaction, while commercial vehicle tolls increased between 2015 and 2018 before transitioning to annual inflationary adjustments. Under the public transportation legislation passed in 2025 (SB 2111), passenger vehicle tolls are scheduled to increase by 45 cents per transaction beginning January 1, 2027, while commercial vehicle tolls will increase by 30%. Thereafter, toll rates would be adjusted every two years based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), subject to a maximum increase of 4% annually. Even with these proposed increases, Illinois is expected to remain among the more affordable major toll systems in the country.

Furthermore, toll rates have remained relatively stable over the Tollway's history. Since the agency's creation in 1953, toll rates have been modified only five times, including a 17% increase in 1963, a 14% decrease in 1970, a 37% increase in 1983, the implementation of a new toll structure in 2005, and the toll adjustments associated with the Move Illinois capital program in 2012 (Illinois Tollway, 2024).

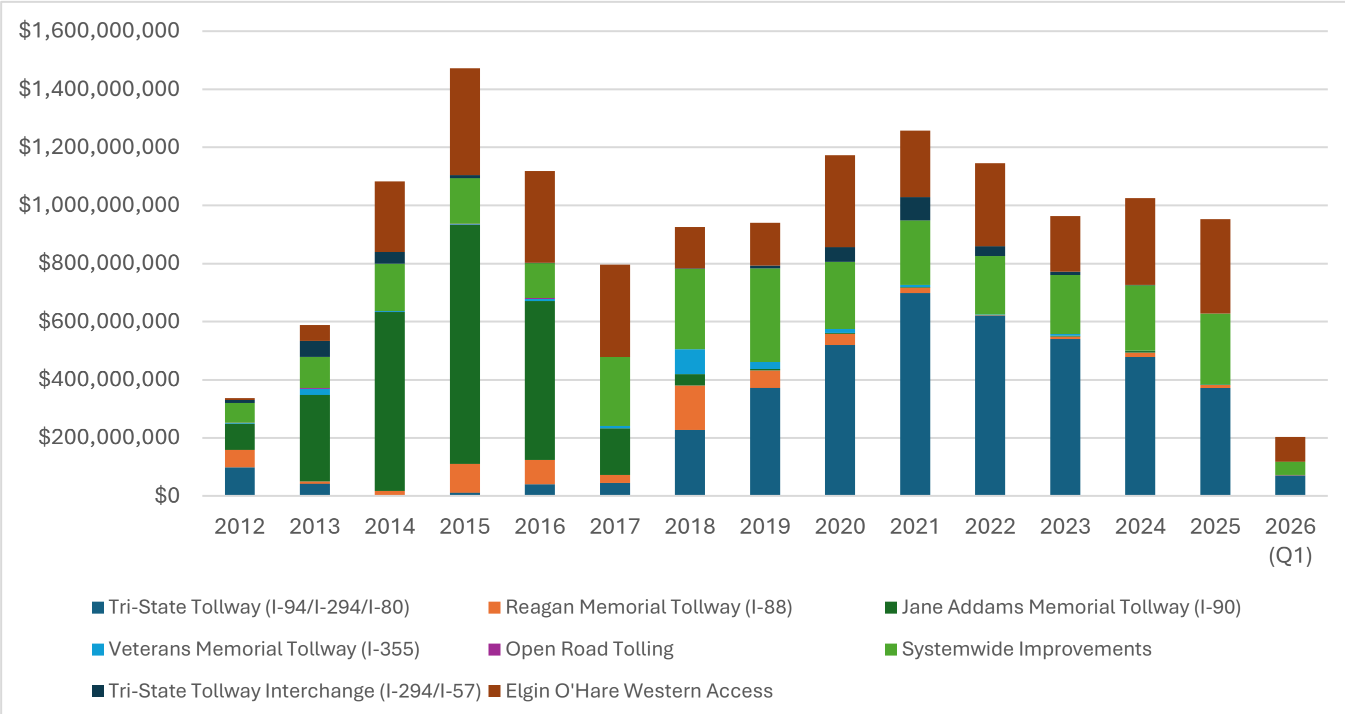
MOVE ILLINOIS CAPITAL PROGRAM

The Move Illinois capital program was approved in 2011 as a 15-year, $12 billion investment plan to modernize and preserve the Illinois Tollway system and support the region's long-term transportation needs. The program was designed to address aging infrastructure through the reconstruction, widening, and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and interchanges while advancing systemwide improvements in safety, technology, and toll collection, including the expansion of open-road tolling. Beyond preserving existing infrastructure, Move Illinois sought to reduce congestion, improve mobility, and strengthen connections between major freight corridors, employment centers, airports, and surrounding communities (COGFA, 2025). As the program progressed, the Tollway Board voted to expand its capital investments in 2017 and again in 2023, increasing the total program value to $15.2 billion.

To finance these investments, passenger vehicle tolls for I-PASS users increased from $0.40 to $0.75 per transaction, while cash tolls increased from $0.80 to $1.50 effective January 1, 2012. Commercial vehicle tolls remained unchanged initially but were increased in three phases between 2015 and 2017. Beginning in 2018, commercial vehicle tolls were indexed annually to inflation, with the methodology updated in 2022 to base adjustments on the annualized three-year change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The Move Illinois program has generated a sustained level of infrastructure investment over more than a decade. Between 2012 and 2025, the Tollway invested an average of approximately $1 billion annually in capital improvements (Illinois Tollway, 2026b). As of May 2026, 87% of the program had been completed (Illinois Tollway, 2026). As illustrated in Figure 4, annual capital expenditures peaked in 2015 at more than $1.4 billion, reflecting the height of construction activity under the program. The subsequent section further expands upon specific project achievements and infrastructure improvements.

Figure 4: Move Illinois Capital Spending by Project, 2012-2026



Source: Author's analysis of Illinois Tollway's Quarterly Financial Reviews (Illinois Tollway, 2026b)

KEY PROJECTS

The Move Illinois capital program includes several large-scale, complex infrastructure projects that have modernized the Illinois Tollway system. The following section highlights these transformative investments and the regional benefits they are expected to deliver. In addition to these major corridor projects, the Tollway has also carried out ongoing maintenance and systemwide improvements to preserve infrastructure conditions and support reliable travel across the entire network.

Tri-State Tollway (I-294)

The Central Tri-State Tollway reconstruction is the largest project within the Move Illinois capital program, representing more than $4 billion in investments between 2018 and 2027. Stretching from Balmoral Avenue to 95th Street, the project is comprehensively rebuilding and modernizing one of the region's busiest passenger and freight corridors (Illinois Tollway, 2026c).

Improvements include reconstructing and widening roadway segments, replacing aging pavement and bridges, integrating Flex Lanes and SmartRoad technology, reconfiguring major interchanges, and enhancing stormwater management, noise mitigation, and freight mobility. Together, these improvements will bring the corridor into a state of good repair while improving safety, reducing congestion, and increasing travel reliability (CMAP, 2024).

One of the project's most significant components was the reconstruction of the Mile Long Bridge, which carries the Tri-State Tollway over two major railroads, three waterways, local roads, and adjacent freight facilities, including a major UPS distribution center and the BNSF Railway network. Replacing and modernizing the bridge improves the long-term reliability of one of the region's most critical passenger and freight corridors (Illinois Tollway, 2026c).

Beyond preserving critical infrastructure, the project is expected to deliver significant regional mobility benefits. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) identifies the Central Tri-State reconstruction as one of the region's most impactful transportation investments for improving freight movement and reducing truck congestion. The project is projected to reduce congested vehicle hours traveled by approximately 24,000 hours each day, shorten commute times, and improve access to employment opportunities throughout the metropolitan area (CMAP, 2024).

Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90)

One of the signature projects of the Move Illinois capital program, the $2.5 billion Jane Addams Memorial Tollway Project modernized 62 miles of I-90 between Rockford and O'Hare International Airport. The project rebuilt and widened the roadway, reconstructed more than 100 bridges, improved numerous interchanges, and incorporated new transportation technologies designed to improve safety and traffic operations. The project also marked the first time the Illinois Tollway integrated transit into one of its corridors by constructing Flex Lanes and Pace Park-n-Ride facilities to accommodate current and future bus service.

The improvements were designed to address growing travel demand while enhancing mobility for commuters, freight traffic, and transit users. By reconstructing and expanding the corridor, the project is expected to reduce congestion, improve travel times, increase roadway capacity, and support continued growth in freight movement across northern Illinois (Illinois Tollway, 2016; FHWA, 2017).

A recent economic impact analysis found that the I-90 Reconstruction and Widening Project has also spurred significant economic development along the corridor. Since construction began, the corridor has attracted 31 new industrial developments totaling 3.3 million square feet, more than 350,000 square feet of new office space, and 40 new retail developments. Overall, industrial occupancy has increased by 7.3 million square feet, retail occupancy has grown by 1.1 million square feet, and multifamily housing has expanded by approximately 2,400 occupied units. While office occupancy declined by 1.1 million square feet during the same period, the findings suggest the improved transportation network has enhanced the corridor's attractiveness for industrial, commercial, and residential investment (Illinois Tollway, 2024).

I-294/I-57 Interchange

Completed in 2022, the $719 million I-294/I-57 Interchange created the first full-access connection between two of the Chicago region's most important interstate corridors. By completing all interstate-to-interstate movements, the interchange eliminated the need for drivers and commercial vehicles to rely on indirect local routes or I-80 to travel between the two interstates. As a result, the project improves regional mobility, enhances freight movement, reduces congestion on surrounding roadways, and strengthens access to employment centers, industrial areas, and distribution centers throughout Chicago's south suburbs. The interchange is expected to serve more than 76,000 vehicles per day and save motorists an estimated $4 million annually in fuel costs, while supporting continued economic growth across the region (Illinois Tollway, 2022; Illinois Tollway, 2026d).

The I-294/I-57 Interchange has also generated impactful economic development throughout Chicago's Southland. Since 2020, the improved transportation connection has attracted 3.75 million square feet of industrial and 70,000 square feet of retail development. Additionally, assessed property values within the project area increased at an annual rate of 6.7%, which is 3.5% greater than Consumer Price Index inflation (Illinois Tollway, 2024)

Elgin O'Hare Western Access

The Elgin O'Hare Western Access (EOWA) project is a $3.4 billion corridor investment that widens Illinois Route 390 and extends it eastward to O'Hare, while also constructing a new north–south roadway along the western edge of the airport that links the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

The program includes approximately 17 miles of new tollway construction and 15 new or improved interchanges, creating a more direct and efficient transportation network serving one of the region's most important economic hubs. By improving access to the west side of O'Hare, the project reduces reliance on local arterials, helps relieve congestion on surrounding roadways, and improves overall travel reliability.

Once completed, the corridor is expected to enhance regional mobility, improve access to jobs and employment centers, and strengthen freight movement and connectivity across northern Illinois (Illinois Tollway, 2016b).

ECONOMIC, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND FISCAL IMPACTS

From 2012 through the first quarter of 2026, the Move Illinois capital program invested a total of $14.1 billion in Illinois Tollway infrastructure improvements (Figure 5). Annual capital expenditures averaged $989 million, ranging from $336 million in the program's first year to a peak of $1.5 billion in 2015. Over the program's first 14 years, annual investments exceeded $1 billion in eight separate years.

These investments have generated significant economic benefits for northern Illinois. Since 2012, Move Illinois has increased regional economic output by an estimated $28.3 billion, averaging $2.0 billion in additional economic activity each year – or approximately $2 in economic output for every $1 invested (Figure 5). For the past 12 years, the program has boosted the regional economy by at least $1.6 billion annually.

Move Illinois has also strengthened state and local government finances (Figure 5). The direct purchases, associated supply-chain and manufacturing activity, and consumer spending spurred by tollway improvements have produced an average of $86 million in combined tax revenues for the State of Illinois and local governments each year. Estimated state and local tax revenues have amounted to $1.2 billion over the life of the capital program.

Figure 5: Annual Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Move Illinois, 2012-2026

Year	Tollway Investments	Economic Output (Sales)	State and Local Tax Revenue	Multiplier Effect
2012	$335,659,000	$685,257,633	$30,336,307	$2.04
2013	$588,687,000	$1,221,347,719	$53,442,162	$2.07
2014	$1,083,559,000	$2,204,696,972	$96,756,574	$2.03
2015	$1,473,375,000	$3,021,982,818	$130,825,710	$2.05
2016	$1,119,200,000	$2,275,911,517	$99,887,165	$2.03
2017	$799,159,000	$1,646,455,572	$72,797,775	$2.06
2018	$934,148,000	$1,859,840,060	$84,427,285	$1.99
2019	$944,823,000	$1,931,085,685	$84,678,963	$2.04
2020	$1,173,556,000	$2,335,092,755	$103,397,357	$1.99
2021	$1,257,167,000	$2,522,813,392	$105,842,834	$2.01
2022	$1,145,400,000	$2,242,126,023	$93,226,989	$1.96
2023	$963,800,000	$1,913,795,873	$79,500,185	$1.99
2024	$1,025,600,000	$1,992,490,529	$83,261,597	$1.94
2025	$1,004,500,000	$1,986,895,940	$81,599,969	$1.98
2026Q1	$215,900,000	$424,853,681	$17,276,105	$1.97
Totals	**$14,064,533,000**	**$28,264,646,168**	**$1,217,256,976**	**$2.01**
Annual Average (2012-2025)	*$989,188,071*	*$1,988,556,606*	*$85,712,919*	*$2.01*

Source: Authors' analysis of Illinois State Toll Highway Authority infrastructure spending under the Move Illinois Capital Program from Quarterly Financial Reviews, 2012-2026 (Illinois Tollway, 2026b) and economic impact analysis using industry-standard IMPLAN software (IMPLAN, 2026).

Figure 6: Direct, Indirect and Induced, and Total Employment Impacts of Move Illinois, 2012-2026

Year	Tollway Investments	Construction Jobs (Direct)	Supply-Chain and Consumer Demand Jobs	Total Jobs
2012	$335,659,000	2,255	2,001	4,257
2013	$588,687,000	3,832	3,466	7,298
2014	$1,083,559,000	7,031	6,178	13,209
2015	$1,473,375,000	9,586	8,304	17,889
2016	$1,119,200,000	7,245	6,282	13,527
2017	$799,159,000	4,971	4,454	9,425
2018	$934,148,000	5,500	5,069	10,569
2019	$944,823,000	5,469	4,975	10,444
2020	$1,173,556,000	6,805	6,002	12,807
2021	$1,257,167,000	6,673	5,872	12,545
2022	$1,145,400,000	5,535	4,839	10,374
2023	$963,800,000	4,533	3,978	8,511
2024	$1,025,600,000	4,641	4,069	8,710
2025	$1,004,500,000	4,141	4,148	8,289
2026Q1	$215,900,000	851	863	1,714
Totals	**$14,064,533,000**	**79,068**	**70,499**	**149,567**
Annual Average (2012-2025)	*$989,188,071*	*5,587*	*4,974*	*10,561*

Source: Authors' analysis of Illinois State Toll Highway Authority infrastructure spending under the Move Illinois Capital Program from Quarterly Financial Reviews, 2012-2026 (Illinois Tollway, 2026b) and economic impact analysis using industry-standard IMPLAN software (IMPLAN, 2026).

Move Illinois investments have also supported significant employment growth across Illinois (Figure 6). The program initially created approximately 2,300 construction industry jobs in 2012, increasing to as many as 9,600 positions in 2015, including skilled trades workers as well as white-collar professionals employed in the industry, such as engineers and office personnel. Over the past decade, annual construction employment supported by the program has ranged from 4,100 to 6,800 jobs.

In addition to direct construction employment, the program has supported an estimated 2,000 to 8,300 additional jobs annually through supply-chain activity and increased consumer spending by workers directly and indirectly affected by the investments. Collectively, Move Illinois has generated more than 79,000 job-years in the construction industry and approximately 150,000 job-years across all sectors since 2012. This equates to an average of roughly 10,600 jobs supported annually, including about 5,600 construction jobs per year (Figure 6).

Figure 7: Annual Construction Industry and Training Investment Impacts of Move Illinois, 2012-2026

Year	Tollway Investments	Construction Income*	Construction Wage Per Hour*	Apprenticeship Contributions
2012	$335,659,000	$140,011,379	$29.85	$3,330,678
2013	$588,687,000	$243,935,550	$30.61	$5,897,826
2014	$1,083,559,000	$453,536,326	$31.01	$11,261,442
2015	$1,473,375,000	$619,466,113	$31.07	$15,950,639
2016	$1,119,200,000	$470,390,583	$31.21	$12,508,323
2017	$799,159,000	$332,496,192	$32.16	$8,891,555
2018	$934,148,000	$384,765,943	$33.63	$10,296,099
2019	$944,823,000	$391,155,362	$34.38	$10,693,304
2020	$1,173,556,000	$490,965,484	$34.69	$13,587,953
2021	$1,257,167,000	$526,363,289	$37.92	$13,601,884
2022	$1,145,400,000	$480,552,250	$41.74	$11,512,918
2023	$963,800,000	$403,893,656	$42.83	$9,618,048
2024	$1,025,600,000	$429,898,415	$44.54	$10,038,829
2025	$1,004,500,000	$398,785,740	$46.30	$9,129,500
2026Q1	$215,900,000	$85,249,263	$48.15	$1,912,243
Totals	**$14,064,533,000**	**$5,851,465,546**	**$35.58**	**$148,231,241**
Annual Average (2012-2025)	*$989,188,071*	*$411,872,592*	*$35.44*	*$10,451,357*

Source: Authors' analysis of Illinois State Toll Highway Authority infrastructure spending under the Move Illinois Capital Program from Quarterly Financial Reviews, 2012-2026 (Illinois Tollway, 2026b) and economic impact analysis using industry-standard IMPLAN software (IMPLAN, 2026). Apprenticeship contributions are based on training contributions per hour from May prevailing wage determinations in each year for applicable trades in highway (HWY) or highway and building (ALL) classifications, except for 2016 through 2019 when the closest month to May was chosen. A simple average per hour from these trades is multiplied by the number of construction jobs and 2,080 annual hours to arrive at the estimate on registered apprenticeship contributions (IDOL, 2026). *Note: Construction income and construction wage per hour include both blue-collar construction workers and white-collar workers employed in the construction industry, such as architects, engineers, project managers, office workers, and installation and repair workers.

Figure 7 presents additional impacts of the Move Illinois capital program on Illinois' construction industry. Overall, the program has generated approximately $5.9 billion in income for skilled trades workers, white-collar professionals, and industry executives involved in project delivery. Hourly wages in the sector have increased from roughly $30 per hour a decade and a half ago to over $48 per hour today, representing a 61% increase in earnings, which has outpaced inflation growth of approximately 46% since 2012 (BLS, 2026).[1]

Additionally, prevailing wage determinations issued by the Illinois Department of Labor reveal that trades engaged in highway work, including those with determinations for both highway and building projects, contributed an average of 71 cents per hour towards registered apprenticeship programs in 2012 and $1.08 per hour by 2026 – representing approximately 2% and 3% of base skilled trades wages (IDOL, 2012; IDOL, 2026a; IDOL, 2026b). Applying prevailing wage rates for each year in between, it is estimated that $148 million invested at registered apprenticeship programs in northern Illinois has been attributable to Move Illinois. Workforce training contributions surpassed $10 million annually in nine of the first 14 years of the capital program. Collectively, these data suggest that Tollway investments have not only supported strong middle-class career pathways in construction, but have also contributed meaningfully to the development of the region's skilled trades workforce and the long-term pipeline of apprenticeship training (Figure 7).

Figure 8 dives deeper and shows economic impacts of the six largest Tollway projects since 2012. The Central Tri-State reconstruction and widening project is a $4.1 billion initiative with the majority of construction spending occurring from 2019 through 2025. Its cumulative economic boost has amounted to $8.2 billion and 40,000 total jobs, including 21,700 construction jobs and $44 million invested in registered apprenticeships, with another $334 million generated in state and local tax revenues. A related interchange at I-294 and I-57 has created an additional 1,700 construction jobs and 1,700 jobs connected to the supply chain and net consumer spending. The Elgin O'Hare Western Access and Jane Addams Memorial Tollway projects have each been multibillion-dollar undertakings that have created 31,300 to 34,600 total jobs, including 17,000 to 18,800 in construction, and boosted the economy by between $5 and $7 billion in total.

Figure 8: Total Economic, Job, Training, and Fiscal Impacts of Major Move Illinois Projects, 2012-2026

Major Projects*	Tollway Investments	Construction Jobs**	Total Jobs	Apprenticeship Contributions	Economic Output	State and Local Taxes
Tri-State (I-94/I-294/I-80)	$4,137,815,000	21,683	39,998	$43,901,361	$8,216,878,200	$334,266,649
Elgin O'Hare Western Access	$3,325,374,000	18,760	34,606	$35,621,100	$6,663,244,483	$275,243,784
Jane Addams Memorial (I-90)	$2,597,147,000	16,990	31,341	$28,097,247	$5,307,639,508	$225,111,304
Reagan Memorial (I-88)	$598,248,000	3,693	6,813	$6,605,561	$1,212,060,986	$50,896,927
Tri-State Interchange (I-294/I-57)	$306,298,000	1,716	3,420	$3,140,549	$619,381,417	$30,038,417
Veterans Memorial (I-355)	$179,344,000	1,035	2,065	$1,908,028	$358,858,715	$17,832,634
All Other Spending	$2,920,307,000	15,192	31,325	$28,957,395	$5,886,582,859	$283,867,261

Source: Authors' analysis of Illinois State Toll Highway Authority infrastructure spending under the Move Illinois Capital Program from Quarterly Financial Reviews, 2012-2026 (Illinois Tollway, 2026b) and economic impact analysis using industry-standard IMPLAN software (IMPLAN, 2026). Apprenticeship contributions are based on training contributions per hour from May prevailing wage determinations in each year for applicable trades in highway (HWY) or highway and building (ALL) classifications, except for 2016 through 2019 when the closest month to May was chosen (IDOL, 2026). *Note: Expenditures peaked in 2015 for the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway and Veterans Memorial Tollway, 2018 for the Elgin O'Hare Western Access and Reagan Memorial Tollway, and 2021 for the Tri-State Tollway and Tri-State Tollway Interchange. **Note: Construction jobs include both blue-collar construction workers and white-collar workers employed in the industry.

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[1] The $48.15 average wage in 2026 is 61.3% higher than the $29.85 value in 2012, while Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 45.8% between May 2012 and May 2026 (BLS, 2026).

INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS

In addition to the many economic and job benefits, the Move Illinois program has also helped preserve the long-term condition of some of Chicago's most travelled interstates. Maintaining infrastructure in a state of good repair reduces lifecycle costs, improves travel reliability, enhances safety, and minimizes the need for costly emergency repairs. As a result of sustained investment, the Illinois Tollway continues to outperform statewide averages for roadway conditions.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) reports that 100% of Illinois Tollway lane miles are in acceptable condition, exceeding the statewide average for all roadway systems (76%) by 24 percentage points (IDOT, 2025). In addition, approximately 47% of tollway lane miles are classified as being in excellent condition, compared with about 35% of roadway miles statewide (Figure 9). These findings demonstrate that consistent, dedicated investment has enabled the Illinois Tollway to maintain a higher-performing transportation network while reducing the backlog of aging infrastructure that many roadway systems continue to face.

Figure 9: Road Condition Performance by System, IDOT Condition Rating Survey, Fiscal Year 2025

Route Type	Total Miles	Miles in a State of Acceptable Condition (SOAC)	SOAC Share	Miles in Excellent Condition	Excellent Share
Tollway	**292.50**	**292.50**	**100.0%**	**138.26**	**47.3%**
State Highway (NHS)	1,892.97	1,684.72	89.0%	1,007.03	53.2%
Non-Interstate State Roads (NHS)	5,066.14	4,113.62	81.2%	1,864.33	36.8%
Local Roads (NHS)	488.76	427.79	87.5%	152.91	31.3%
Marked Non-NHS Roads	6,580.14	4,566.81	69.4%	2,030.53	30.9%
Unmarked Non-NHS Roads	2,326.30	1,529.98	65.8%	664.22	28.6%
Statewide Total	**16,646.81**	**12,615.42**	**75.8%**	**5,857.28**	**35.2%**

Source: Authors' analysis of publicly available data in the Illinois Department of Transportation's *FY2025 Condition Rating Survey: Summary Report* (Table 3-8) released in December 2025 (IDOT, 2025).

LOOKING AHEAD

The Move Illinois capital program demonstrates the long-term value of sustained infrastructure investment backed by a dedicated revenue source. Over the past 15 years, the program has modernized the Illinois Tollway system while delivering measurable benefits for Illinois residents, businesses, and visiting motorists. Supported through user fees, Move Illinois invested more than $15 billion in transportation infrastructure, generating an estimated $28 billion in economic activity, supporting 150,000 jobs, and contributing approximately $150 million to registered apprenticeship and workforce training programs. Beyond these economic impacts, the program improved roadway conditions, enhanced freight mobility, reduced congestion, and strengthened reliability throughout northern Illinois.

In June 2026, the Illinois Tollway announced Driving Connections, a proposed 15-year, $26.5 billion capital program that would continue this investment strategy through 2042. The program includes major infrastructure projects such as a reconstruction of the I-88/I-355 interchange, a full interchange at I-294 and Irving Park Road, modernization of the I-294/I-80 corridor with advanced traffic management technology, early design work for the I-294/I-90 interchange, and numerous systemwide improvements designed to renew aging infrastructure, reduce congestion, and improve safety and mobility throughout the Tollway system (Illinois Tollway, 2026).

For decades, the Illinois Tollway has played a distinct and complementary role within Illinois' broader transportation network. While the Illinois Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining more than 16,000 miles of state highways, the Tollway's user-funded model allows it to concentrate resources on some of the state's busiest passenger and freight corridors. This dedicated funding structure has provided the financial certainty needed to undertake large-scale reconstruction and modernization projects that would be difficult to deliver through traditional transportation funding alone.

Looking ahead, Illinois faces a growing list of major transportation needs. At the same time, transportation agencies continue to face long-term funding pressures as traditional revenue sources become less sustainable. As policymakers consider how to finance the next generation of transformative infrastructure projects – including initiatives such as the reconstruction of the I-290 Blue Line corridor and the proposed I-55 Managed Lanes project – the Illinois Tollway offers an example of how a dedicated, user-supported funding model can support delivering large-scale transportation investments.

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