

Pritzker Administration Announces Nearly \$40 Million In Rebuild Illinois Grants To Jumpstart Capital Projects Across The State

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CHICAGO— Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$39.5 million in new grants awarded for 27 capital development projects to support continued economic development across the state. The grants are being released through an allocation of \$24.8 million from the Fast-Track Public Infrastructure Capital program, and with a \$14.7 million allocation for projects located in Opportunity Zones.

Funding is supported by the Rebuild Illinois capital plan and will be used to accelerate shovel-ready public works projects as well as long-term infrastructure upgrades in underserved communities around the state.

"Investments aimed toward building modern infrastructure and fostering stronger and better-connected communities are at the center of our historic \$45 billion capital plan," said Governor Pritzker. "While COVID-19 continues to present extraordinary economic challenges – our planned infrastructure projects should not have to wait. From small communities downstate to those experiencing decades of underinvestment – these capital investments will provide an economic boost that will create jobs and spark additional community investment for years to come."

The projects funded by capital grants announced today run the gamut and include road and bridge repairs, capital upgrades for utilities and transportation centers, and neighborhood revitalization projects. Funding will support construction of vital projects spanning 24 distinct community areas while creating hundreds of jobs throughout the state.

"With the Governor's leadership on Rebuild Illinois, our state continues to advance critical infrastructure projects today that will bring growth and opportunity to Illinois communities for years to come," said Acting DCEO Director Michael Negron. "With nearly \$40 million in new capital investment, DCEO is committed to ensuring that shovel-ready projects are able to move forward on time, as well as continued support for long-term projects that will bring equitable opportunity and jobs for our communities."

Fast-Track Capital

As part of the Fast-Track Capital grant, DCEO awarded \$24.8 million in capital grants for 17 construction projects. The average grant award is \$1.5 million, and projects include utility work projects, street infrastructure, and large-scale playground modernization plans from the park districts for Chicago and Winfield. Projects funded by the initial allocation of the Fast-Track program reflect 9 economic development regions across the state, and include:

- City of Beardstown – sewer line replacement, \$1,002,000
- City of Calumet City – canoe launch and river walk, \$1,400,000
- City of Carbondale – Evergreen Park ADA enhancements, \$1,245,541
- Chicago Park District – various playground upgrade projects, \$1,775,000
- City of Danville –realignment of the Jackson and Voorhees Street intersections, \$1,252,279
- City of Dixon – street reconstruction, \$1,720,612
- City of Harvard – wastewater system improvements, \$2,000,000
- City of Kankakee – ADA sidewalk improvements, \$1,800,000
- City of Jacksonville – water main improvements, \$815,200
- City of Madison – maintenance building construction, \$635,050

- City of Marion – maintenance building repairs, \$2,000,000
- City of Pekin – street revitalization, \$2,000,000
- City of Polo – stormwater/sewer improvements, \$2,000,000
- City of Taylorville – roadwork and utilities repair, \$1,551,000
- Town of Normal – water main replacement, \$590,000
- Village of Beecher – water main improvements, \$966,719
- Winfield Park District– various playground upgrade projects, \$2,000,000

“The past few months have had devastating effects on communities that were already underserved. Through the FastTrack program, the state is not only bringing jobs to those communities, but we’re also prioritizing construction projects that are long overdue,” said State Senator Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill). “I commend Governor Pritzker for his continued commitment to ensuring the vitality of the downstate economy during this difficult time.”

The Fast-Track Public Infrastructure Grants program was launched earlier this year to accelerate work on planned public infrastructure projects, leveraging \$25 million of existing Rebuild Illinois funds for local infrastructure projects that are shovel ready. Fast-Track grants are dedicated toward local government infrastructure projects, in recognition that COVID-19 has caused a demonstrable impact to local governments and their ability to finance these projects.

“On behalf of Calumet City residents and the entire Southland Region that will enjoy “Blues Water Run Canoe and Kayak Launch” for generations to come, I applaud the efforts of Governor Pritzker and DCEO in providing a Fast Track grant,” said Calumet City Mayor Michelle Markiewicz Qualkinbush. “It is a sign of progress and greater things to come in the face of the challenges we’ve endured this past year. Calumet City stands with the State in its commitment to rebuild our economy by putting people to work and investing in infrastructure improvements.”

Fast Track was opened up to local governments, with funding made available only for use on construction and development of public assets and municipal works projects. To be eligible for Fast-Track, applicants were required to prove projects could meet shovel ready criteria, and that construction could commence within 90 days of receive state notice of award. All applications were reviewed on a competitive basis, and prioritized job creation, critical infrastructure needs, location in an underserved area and Business Enterprise Program (BEP) inclusion plans.

“We are thrilled to be included in the allocation of Rebuild Illinois funding,” said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. “Playgrounds are the centerpiece of neighborhood parks and treasured attractions for children and families. This grant will help renovate these spaces with a particular focus on

neighborhoods in need. The completion of these projects will invigorate our parks and make a lasting impact on the communities they serve.”

“On behalf of the City of Taylorville, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Governor Pritzker and DCEO for this Fast-Track grant,” said the Mayor of Taylorville, Bruce Barry. “These funds will be used to revitalize the East Main area of Taylorville, which was devastated by a tornado more than a year ago. The project will enhance the routes used to enter our downtown and will result in a domino effect of new community investment for years to come.”

"I take pride in seeing such a great investment in one of the 17th Senate District's gems, Calumet City," said State Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr. (D-Chicago). "The restoration of the city's riverwalk and canoe launch will not only improve residents' experience at the park, but the construction will also provide quality jobs at a time when many are struggling to make ends meet."

“Thank you Governor Pritzker for supporting me in releasing \$1.4 million dollars to Calumet City for our canoe launch and river walk project,” said State Representative Thaddeus Jones (D-Calumet City). “This eco-friendly project will allow residents to enjoy the river while also inviting a new economy for all Calumet City residents to enjoy.”

“This Fast Track grant is a welcome investment in Calumet City and will be of great benefit to the south suburban region,” said State Representative Nick Smith (D-Chicago). “We applaud the State of Illinois for investing and supporting ongoing development of this outdoor recreation center at a time when families really need it.”

“A Fast Track grant to update infrastructure in Kankakee’s business district will bring more customers at a time when it’s needed most,” said State Senator Patrick Joyce (D-Essex). “Through Governor Pritzker’s leadership, Illinois is making infrastructure and economic development a priority in every corner of our state.”

"We are thrilled Calumet City has been awarded a Fast Track grant," said Leslie Phemister, Transportation Planner for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association. "Calumet City has always been a destination in the South Suburbs and this state-of-the-art facility will give the South Suburbs more recreational opportunities to be together while apart. We are grateful to Gov. JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for providing the funding for a public infrastructure improvement project that will have years of impact on many Illinois families."

Fast Track is one of several new programs created by the state to provide emergency assistance for businesses and communities facing economic hardship as a result of the ongoing pandemic. To date, DCEO has launched more than \$300 million in emergency relief programs – with the majority of funding being made available directly to businesses. DCEO is also administering separate programs to administer federal aid to counties and municipalities incurring costs from the COVID-19 emergency response.

Opportunity Zones

A \$14.7 million investment in Opportunity Zones will fund 10 major infrastructure projects in underserved communities across the state. These 10 funded projects will pave the way for a total \$30.3 million investment, with private matching funds that will support costs of development associated with affordable housing, community development, and commercial real estate projects.

Recipients of the 2020 Opportunity Zone grants include:

- America’s Central Port, Roadwork - Granite City, \$636,755
- City of Centralia, Roadwork - \$455,000
- City of Dekalb, Neighborhood Revitalization - \$400,000
- City of Dixon, Roadwork and Enabling Infrastructure for Commercial Land Development - \$1,000,000
- City of Du Quoin, Industrial Park Electrical Extension - \$17,500
- City of Freeport, Streetscape Revitalization - \$1,980,401
- City of Rockford, Bridge Repairs - \$1,905,000
- New Pathways Investments Multi-Purpose Sports and Event Center - Centralia, \$7,500,000
- Saline Valley Conservation District, Slaker/Silo Upgrade - \$421,140
- Village of Maywood, Water Main Replacement - \$382,375

“We’re fortunate to receive funding from the Opportunity Zone grant program to improve our public infrastructure in a much-needed area of our community,” said Mayor Thomas P. McNamara, City of Rockford. “Grants like these allow us to stretch our infrastructure budget farther in this difficult economic time and complete projects that greatly impact our residents.”

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released earlier this year identified 10 projects spanning transportation infrastructure, a community recreation center, and various municipal works projects, all with an eye toward neighborhood revitalization.

Funded projects prioritize some of the most underserved communities across Illinois – with median income averaging \$42,000 for communities funded. It’s estimated that these projects will create 260 construction and 150 permanent jobs.

“America's Central Port is an amazing economic engine in Southwestern Illinois with many diverse businesses and hundreds of jobs,” said State Representative Monica Bristow (D-Alton). “We need to continue investing in ACP to create more jobs and opportunities for the people in our region.”

“As one of the largest freight hubs in the Midwest, America’s Central Port in Granite City advances economic development throughout the Southwest Illinois region,” said State Senator Rachelle Crowe (D-Glen Carbon). “By funding this Opportunity Zone Project, our state is investing in expansion opportunities while creating sustainable jobs for Metro East residents.”

The Opportunity Zone application review process was conducted on a competitive, merit basis, prioritizing projects with job creation, community support, project readiness, and alignment with priority investment areas outlined in the Governor’s 5-year economic plan.

"The City of Madison and America's Central Port are excited for the chance to partner with DCEO to attract Opportunity Zone investment to the community,” said Madison Mayor John Hamm III. “The project will help attract and expand businesses in the manufacturing sector, critical to economic growth in the Southwest Illinois region.”

Opportunity Zones are defined as distressed or economically underserved area census tracts. Certain types of investments made in Opportunity Zones that meet specific criteria stand to receive favorable capital gains tax benefits at both the federal and state levels. More on the Opportunity Zones can be found [HERE](#).

All newly funded projects are supported by Rebuild Illinois – Governor Pritzker’s historic \$45 billion capital program. Today’s announcement builds on a series of Rebuild Illinois capital projects announced by the administration in recent weeks. Recent projects over the past two weeks include major roadway repairs, bridges, investments in community colleges, and more.

DCEO has been charged with spearheading a number of Rebuild Illinois programs, including investments to expand broadband capacity, fund new public works projects, incentivize business development, and other initiatives designed to promote economic growth for all communities across the state. Check DCEO’s website and follow us on social media @IllinoisDCEO for updates on future Rebuild Illinois funding opportunities.

