



IDOT In 2021 Rebuilding Illinois Continues With Completed Projects, Launch Of New Major Projects And Initiatives

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SPRINGFIELD— The Illinois Department of Transportation, under the leadership of Gov. JB Pritzker and Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman, continued to make

transformational investments in infrastructure, people, and communities through the Rebuild Illinois capital program, with major projects delivered or coming to life across the state in 2021.

“This past year was perhaps the most eventful in the history of IDOT,” Osman said. “Because of Rebuild Illinois, we made history in 2021 with generational improvements to highways, bridges, rail, transit, waterways, airports as well as bike and pedestrian infrastructure. We head into 2022 prepared to build an even safer, more equitable transportation system for all of Illinois.”

Through Governor Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, IDOT was able to manage approximately \$2.4 billion in improvements to 1,314 miles of highway and 142 bridges, as well as 194 safety improvements, in the 2021 fiscal year – the second full year of the historic, bipartisan capital program.

During the year, Gov. Pritzker and IDOT broke ground on the Interstate 57/74 interchange reconstruction in Champaign-Urbana, the latest stretch of Interstate 57 to be widened in southern Illinois and the overhaul of Interstate 80 in Will County – as well as hundreds of other improvements both small and large. The year also brought new investments that promise to strengthen multimodal connections in a state that serves as the transportation hub of North America.

Passed in 2019, the Governor’s historic and bipartisan Rebuild Illinois is investing a total \$33.2 billion into the state’s aging transportation system, creating jobs and promoting economic growth. Rebuild Illinois is not only the largest capital program in state history and the first in nearly a decade, but also the first one that touches all modes of Illinois transportation: roads and bridges, transit, waterways, freight and passenger rail, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Additionally, with the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passing last month, Illinois is estimated to receive about \$17.8 billion over the next five years, ensuring the sustained investment in a safe, equitable, resilient, multimodal transportation system for many years to come.

Highway and bridges

The new \$1.2 billion Interstate 74 Mississippi River bridge in the Quad Cities opened to traffic Dec. 3 following four years of construction and a ribbon-cutting led by the governor. A joint project with Iowa, the bridge is one of the biggest projects in state history.

Construction wrapped up on expanding I-80 to six lanes between Interstate 355 and U.S. 30 in Joliet and New Lenox. The work was tied to the reconstruction of the U.S. 30

interchange and a prelude to six-year plan to rebuild 16 miles of I-80 – a \$1.2 billion project that is currently in progress.

In Champaign-Urbana, construction began on rebuilding the I-57/74 interchange. The \$216.8 million project replaces the more than 50-year-old original interchange and will provide safer and more efficient movement of freight and people.

Work advanced on replacing the eastbound McClugage Bridge that carries U.S. 150 in Peoria. One of six bridges spanning the Illinois River in the Peoria area, the \$167 million project ended the year about 40% complete. The new structure will improve capacity, increase safety, reduce travel times and provide multimodal access with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Chicago's Jane Byrne Interchange project entered its final phase with reconstruction of the Interstate 90/94 mainline. Work will add lanes, reconstruct several exit ramps and build a new collector-distributor ramp on the east side of the expressway for the array of downtown exits before the project substantially wraps up in late 2022.

In far Southern Illinois, work will be underway in January on a \$67.6 million expansion of nine miles of I-57 north of Illinois 149 to south of Illinois 154. The project continues the ongoing effort to expand I-57 from four to six lanes in West Frankfort.

The State of Rail

Lincoln Service, Carl Sandburg/Illinois Zephyr, and Illini/Saluki state-supported Amtrak trains resumed full service in July after being limited due to COVID-19. In November, communities along the Illinois Zephyr celebrated the 50th anniversary of the service connecting Chicago and Quincy.

Ground was broken on a new federal and state effort with several railroads to reconfigure an outdated network of tracks and signals while replacing the 97-year-old Lenox Tower in the Metro East. The project, expected to conclude in 2022, is modernizing rail operations, safety and mobility.

In December, a new schedule was implemented for Lincoln Service trains to reflect higher 90 mph speeds as a result of improvements made along the Chicago-St. Louis corridor. Work continues toward the ultimate goal of increasing speeds to 110 mph by 2023. Testing of the new Siemens Venture passenger rail cars occurred, with the cars expected to go into service in early 2022 in Illinois and other Midwest states.

Multimodalism at work

In December, Gov. Pritzker and the department awarded \$94 million through Rebuild Illinois to improve public airports throughout the state. Additionally, the funding

unlocked \$11.5 million in local contributions for a total investment of \$105 million, representing the largest statewide capital investment for airports in state history.

Downstate transit providers were asked to submit project ideas as part of the second round of the Rebuild Illinois Transit Capital Grant Program, which is set to distribute almost \$110 million next year for projects outside the Chicago area. Rebuild Illinois identifies a total of \$4.5 billion – \$3 billion in bonding and \$1.5 billion in new pay-as-you-go funding – to invest in transit throughout the state.

Proposals from public port operators also were sought to distribute almost \$110 million in funding via Rebuild Illinois to modernize and revitalize the state's marine transportation system. The winning submissions are anticipated to be announced in early 2022. The start of the Port Facilities Capital Investment Grant Program coincided with the release of IDOT's new Illinois Marine Transportation System Plan, which determined the state's ports create \$36 billion in economic activity annually and support 160,000 jobs.

Working with local partners

The governor and IDOT announced the third and fourth rounds of \$250 million each in Rebuild Illinois-funded grants to advance municipal, township, and county projects across the state. With the latest rounds, \$1 billion has been distributed by IDOT to address local transportation needs.

In the spring, IDOT awarded \$7 million for 21 projects that upgrade roads to accommodate local truck traffic, leveraging a total investment of \$36 million that will create jobs and boost economic activity throughout the state.

In June, Gov. Pritzker awarded \$106 million through the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program to expand travel options and enhance quality of life in communities. This year's program was the largest ever due to Rebuild Illinois and for the first time dedicates resources to communities that exhibit the greatest need.

A new pedestrian and bicycle bridge built by IDOT opened to rave reviews on the Kickapoo Rail Trail in Vermilion County. The new structure was built on top of an old railroad trestle above the Middle Fork Vermilion River. The project was made possible from \$1.7 million in ITEP funding.

Also in 2021, IDOT sought proposals for projects that will help children walk and bike to school through the Safe Routes to School program. Administered by IDOT using \$12 million in federal funds, Safe Routes to School supports projects that improve safety and reduce traffic in areas around elementary and middle schools. Awards are anticipated in 2022.

Diversity recognition

Secretary Osman and IDOT received top national honors from Women's Transportation Seminar International, a professional association that promotes the development and advancement of women in transportation. Osman received the WTS Recognition Honorable Ray LaHood Award for his longtime efforts to promote the advancement of women and minorities and help elevate the reputation of professionals in the transportation industry.

Office of Business and Workforce Diversity Director Pam Simon won Woman of the Year from the local WTS chapter.

The Building Blocks of Success workshop series went virtual due to COVID-19. The new format helped to draw a record of more than 1,200 participants interested in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, one of many IDOT initiatives to promote greater diversity on projects.

Innovative initiatives

The governor signed House Bill 253, requiring IDOT to implement a performance-based program to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's transportation system. Starting in 2022, IDOT is required to select certain projects for inclusion in its multi-year plan based on a process that weighs a variety of factors determined with input from the public.

More than 50 Alternative Fuels Corridor signs were posted on interstates statewide to guide motorists to electric vehicle charging stations. The Federal Highway Administration has designated 145,000 miles of interstate for promoting alternative fuels, including along Interstates 39, 55, 70, 74, 80, 90 and 94 in Illinois.

An improved winter road conditions map debuted on the popular Getting Around Illinois website. The map now offers greater detail into how weather events are impacting roads under the jurisdictions of the more than 120 snow-and-ice team sections that work out of IDOT facilities throughout the state.

Efforts by IDOT to promote pollinator habitat and the monarch butterfly continued going strong in 2021 with the opening of the Litchfield Route 66 Prairie. The result of a four-year partnership between IDOT and local Montgomery County environmental groups, the 10-acre prairie that's part of the Route 66 Monarch Flyway is home to more than 200 native plant species and several types of large and small animals.

Illinois continued to be recognized for its work nationally. The Interstate 255 rebuild in the Metro East, one of the first Rebuild Illinois projects to fix one of the worst roads in the state, won top honors for technology and innovation from the Midwest chapter of the

American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials The department's Office of Communications also was recognized by AASHTO for its work on an anti-littering campaign and the transportation impacts of COVID-19 on the public.