

Rebuilding Illinois in 2023: Summary of IDOT Projects Across the State This Year

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SPRINGFIELD— Under the leadership of Gov. JB Pritzker and Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman, the Illinois Department of Transportation continued to modernize and revitalize transportation and mobility across the state in 2023. Fueled by Gov. Pritzker’s historic, bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital program, the investments in highways, transit, railroads, airports, waterways and active transportation options touched every corner and community in the state, improving quality of life, safety and reliability while creating jobs and long-term economic opportunity.

Passed in 2019, Rebuild Illinois is investing \$45 billion into the state's aging transportation system over a six-year span, creating jobs and promoting economic growth. As of Sept. 30, just on the highway system alone, Rebuild Illinois has made \$9.6 billion in improvements statewide on 5,522 miles, 553 bridges and 814 additional safety improvements, ranging from routine maintenance projects and minor resurfacings to extensive interstate and bridge reconstructions.

“Here in Illinois, we're on a mission to modernize our infrastructure and make transportation more reliable for commuters, families, and businesses,” said Pritzker. “2023 was another historic year for our Rebuild Illinois capital program, with record investments towards modernizing and maintaining all modes of transportation. Thanks to the hard work of IDOT, local governments, and union laborers, we're making transportation safer and more reliable across our state.”

In July, Gov. Pritzker and IDOT released [the largest multi-year program](#) to repair and modernize infrastructure in state history: \$41 billion over six years, showcasing the reach and impact of Rebuild Illinois. Covering fiscal years 2024 - 2029, the multi-year program is the first time in more than a decade IDOT released a comprehensive approach to invest in all modes of transportation: roads and bridges, aviation, transit, freight and passenger rail, waterways, as well as bike and pedestrian accommodations.

“The past year at IDOT was another for the history books under Gov. Pritzker,” said Osman. “We are proud to deliver these improvements for the public and appreciate your continued patience and support as we Rebuild Illinois.”

Among the 2023 highlights:

Highways and bridges

In Chicago, work wrapped up on the first year of the [three-year, \\$150 million Kennedy Expressway](#) (Interstate 90/94) rehabilitation project, with construction taking place in the inbound lanes. Improvements include fixing 36 bridges and the reversible lanes system, replacement of overhead sign structures as well as the installation of modern LED lights. Work resumes in the spring.

Several projects were completed or advanced in Cook and the collar counties. In Lake Forest, an [\\$18.3 million pump station](#) and other safety upgrades at Deerpath Road and Skokie Highway (U.S. 41) addressed longtime flooding issues. In the south suburbs, a \$98.9 million project is underway to rebuild [Wood Street/Ashland Avenue](#) in Harvey, Dixmoor and Riverdale. In November, an \$82.1 million investment wrapped up to improve [nearly 20 miles of I-57](#) on Chicago's South Side and south suburbs.

Work is progressing on the [\\$1.3 billion reconstruction of I-80](#) in Will County. Completed in 2023 were the conversion of the Houbolt Road interchange into a diverging-diamond design, replacement of bridges at Shepley Road and Wheeler Avenue as well as the installation of temporary pavement on I-80's westbound lanes between Ridge and River roads to accommodate traffic in the work zone during the upcoming construction seasons. Replacement of Briggs Street and River Road bridges also are underway.

A cornerstone of Rebuild Illinois, the overall I-80 project will redesign and rebuild 16 miles from Ridge Road in Minooka to U.S. 30 in Joliet and New Lenox while adding capacity to improve safety and reduce congestion. More than 30 bridges will be rehabilitated or replaced, including those over the Des Plaines River.

In Rockford, [a \\$247.6 million multiyear project to improve I-39](#) from U.S. 20 to Harrison Avenue began in July with the reconstruction of the I-39 and U.S. 20 interchange. Work completed this year included grading for the new interchange ramps and bridges, construction of new Linden and Perryville road bridges. The interchange will be completed by the end of 2024, with the entire project expected to wrap up in 2027.

The new eastbound \$167 million [McClugage Bridge](#) between Peoria and East Peoria continues to progress with the decking of the new span as well as assembly and installation of the 650-foot steel arch. The bridge is expected to open to traffic in fall 2024.

Also in the Peoria area, the [Bob Michel Bridge](#) and the [Lacon Bridge](#) were rehabbed during long closures. Expected to reopen this week, the \$24.6 million Bob Michel Bridge project installed a new deck and reconfigured its narrow sidewalks into a 14-foot-wide multiuse path protected from Illinois 40 traffic by a concrete barrier. In Lacon, an \$11.3 million rehabilitation project for the Illinois 17 bridge provided concrete deck overlays, pier protection repairs, structural steel repairs, painting and drainage improvements.

In Champaign, a multiyear project to reconstruct the [I-57/74 interchange](#) entered a new phase with the installation of girders for two flyover ramps. Modernizing an interchange built more than 50 years ago to improve safety and mobility in the area, the \$251.8 million project is anticipated to be substantially complete in late 2025, with some work remaining in 2026.

Farther south, work is finishing on the first of a [four-year project to reconstruct Fayette Avenue](#) in Effingham. The \$27.1 million project will expand the road, which carries Illinois 33 and U.S. 40, from four to five lanes, with accommodations for those who

walk, bike and roll on the town's main thoroughfare. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

The [I-24 corridor](#) received several improvements in 2023. Patching and resurfacing was completed on 22 miles, a \$41.4 million total investment. A \$7.2 million bridge replacement also is underway at milepost 27.5. A \$2.1 million resurfacing was completed on the bridge crossing the Ohio River. In southern Illinois, [the ongoing effort to make I-57 six lanes](#) and strengthen a key link in the National Highway Freight Network continued in 2023.

Several bridges over the Mississippi River are in the process of being replaced or repaired.

In Chester, a combined \$307.1 million investment by Illinois and Missouri will replace the aging crossing that carries Illinois 150 and Missouri 51 with the [Don Welge Memorial Bridge](#). Through Rebuild Illinois, IDOT is investing approximately \$143.2 million into the bridge and Illinois approach. The new bridge is expected to open in late 2026.

Construction continues on the replacement of the [I-270 Chain of Rocks Bridge](#) in the Metro East. The \$496.2 million joint Illinois-Missouri project will replace the existing 57-year-old bridge with two wider structures to accommodate the eventual expansion of I-270 to three lanes in each direction. The bridge is expected to be complete at the end of 2026.

In the Quad Cities, work wrapped up on a three-year \$49.7 million joint project with Iowa to replace the deck of the [Sgt. John F. Baker Jr. Bridge](#) carrying I-280 in Rock Island. The project was paired with a \$16 million improvement that patched and resurfaced I-280 from the bridge to east of the Milan Beltway.

The state of rail

Illinois ushered in high-speed rail in 2023 with the completion of track upgrades that ultimately increased speeds from 79 mph to [110 mph between Chicago and St. Louis](#). The \$1.6 billion project was made possible by \$1.3 billion in federal funds and approximately \$300 million from a mix of state and non-federal sources.

In Springfield, a \$68.3 million project is underway to build underpasses at Madison and Jefferson streets as part of the [Springfield Rail Improvements Project](#), which is aimed at reducing congestion caused by at-grade crossings in the capital city.

In July, Metra was selected as the operator of restored passenger rail service between [Rockford and Chicago](#). Rebuild Illinois is providing \$275 million for the project, which has stations planned for Rockford, Belvidere, Huntley and Elgin. Service is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2027.

Multimodalism at work

Downstate transit providers received nearly [\\$114 million through Rebuild Illinois](#) to build bus shelters, stations and maintenance facilities that will expand and improve service. A total of 32 transit systems will receive funding to advance 44 projects.

The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program awarded [\\$127.9 million for 72 statewide projects](#) that include biking and walking paths, trails, streetscape beautification and other improvements designed to encourage safe travel across the various modes of transportation at the local level.

The [Illinois Competitive Freight Program](#) awarded \$197.5 million to 22 projects that will improve the movement of freight throughout the state, creating jobs and economic opportunity while enhancing safety and local quality of life. Administered by IDOT using federal funds, the program is designed to implement the goals of the Illinois State Freight Plan.

A \$5.4 million investment in several airfield improvements at the [St. Louis Downtown Airport](#) in St. Clair County will improve safety, reliability, and efficiency. The improvements will accommodate more than 500 yearly aircraft maintenance tests that require the operation of engines at high power on the ground for several minutes. The engine run-up will be isolated from airfield operations, reducing noise levels by more than 50% and accommodating the airport's largest aircraft.

The federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) passed in 2021 further strengthened the state's status as the transportation hub of North America. Through discretionary grants made possible by IIJA, Illinois in 2023 was awarded critical federal funding to support vital projects, including the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line extension to 130th Street, multiyear improvements to [Illinois 9 in Bloomington](#), upgrades to Chicago's Union Station and rehabs to four bridges along the Calumet River on the South Side.

In late 2023, IDOT received federal approval for its first Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. The assessment outlines strategies for safety programs, countermeasures and continued collaboration and combined efforts with municipal agencies and

stakeholders to address pedestrian and bicycle safety statewide. The department in 2024 will be developing tools to identify locations with potential for safety improvements and countermeasures.

Awards and recognition

In June, the new [District 6 headquarters in Springfield](#) was dedicated and renamed in honor of the late James Easterly, a former Director of Highways at IDOT and a mentor to many employees.

The reconstruction and modernization of Chicago's Jane Byrne Interchange and Will County's Weber Road interchange won top Midwest honors in the [America's Transportation Awards](#), sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Byrne was named a Top 12 finalist for national project of the year, the fourth time in six years an IDOT project made the cut.

The Office of Communications received AASHTO's highest prize for public awareness events for its creative, engaging partnership with the [Peoria Chiefs](#), a minor league baseball team, calling attention to work zone safety through the Orange Barrels mascot and promotion.

An [online dashboard](#) was launched last spring to inform the public about the progress of Rebuild Illinois. The dashboard includes information on the number of projects awarded, miles and bridges improved, safety improvements completed, as well as the total amount of investment that has been made possible by Rebuild Illinois.

The new [Illinois Certification and Research Track in Clinton County](#) will provide a closed facility to support pavement surface research, assess nondestructive testing equipment, evaluate materials for highway construction and certify equipment according to established standards.

Commitment to diversity

IDOT hosted the 32nd [“Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward”](#) conference in February in Springfield. The longtime conference hosted by IDOT's Office of Business and Workforce Diversity provides female- and minority-owned businesses with opportunities to make connections and develop skills to grow and succeed.

The department continued its commitment to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, including contracting and workforce participation through the [Building Blocks of Success](#), a series of free virtual workshops for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. The

workshops invite new and existing DBEs, as well as firms interested in becoming certified in the program, to help strengthen their skills, grow their business and bid on state projects.

The past year also was noted for progress on IDOT's latest [disparity study](#) to update the goals of its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. The disparity study is examining the current participation of all contractors on IDOT contracts, including minority- and women-owned firms, to help set future DBE participation levels.