



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
PAT QUINN

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Governor Quinn Announces Major I-55/Weber Road Improvement Project Moving Forward

Reconstructed Interchange and Weber Road Upgrades Will Accommodate Increased Traffic and Drive the South Suburban Economy Forward

ROMEDEVILLE – Governor Pat Quinn today announced that the \$69.2 million Interstate 55/Weber Road improvement project in Will County is moving forward, with the first construction projects to be awarded soon. The state of Illinois and Will County are sharing the cost of the project, with the state's share coming from Governor Quinn's *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital construction program. Today's announcement is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to create jobs, improve our 21st century transportation infrastructure and drive Illinois' economy forward.

"A reconstructed interchange and upgrades to Weber Road will accommodate increased traffic and business development in the south suburbs," Governor Quinn said. "Ensuring the people of Will County have a 21st century infrastructure will help create jobs and drive the entire region's economy forward."

"Improving the interchange at I-55 and Weber Road is one of Will County's highest priority highway projects," Will County Executive Larry M. Walsh said. "It has become a chokepoint for the more than 350,000 residents who live in an area of the County that has seen tremendous growth in both population and employment. Will County is committed to working with Governor Quinn to share the cost to construct a safe and modern interchange as soon as possible. I commend Governor Quinn for investing in this more than \$69 million project which will continue to make Will County and Illinois economically competitive into the 21st century."

The project will include widening Weber Road to six lanes between 119th and 135th streets and building a new "diverging diamond" interchange with Interstate 55 that will allow motorists faster access to and from the interstate. The stretch of I-55 through Romeoville is the busiest in Will County and the Weber Road interchange currently serves more than 40,000 vehicles per day. This project will make traffic flow more freely and safely while improving access to homes and businesses in the area. The total cost will be \$69.2 million, of which the state will pay \$32.7 million and Will County \$36.5 million. Will County will use their portion of the regional RTA tax plus any additional federal funds that can be secured to fund their share of the project.

In September the first construction bids were let in with contracts to be awarded by the end of October. The initial work, estimated to cost approximately \$250,000, will include grading within the existing Interstate 55 right-of-way to prepare the site for the entrance and exit ramp work to come next year. In the meantime, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will continue to work with Will County to secure the right-of-way necessary to construct the Weber Road improvements. The main construction contracts are tentatively scheduled to be awarded next summer.

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“Will County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation,” State Senator Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant (D-Shorewood) said. “We need roadways that can keep up with population growth and handle increased traffic so that residents and commuters are able to travel safely. This project will help us accomplish that.”

“Rebuilding the Weber Road interchange means reducing congestion, improving safety and setting the stage for economic growth in an important part of the state,” Acting IDOT Secretary Erica Borggren said. “This investment has been a collaborative effort with our local partners that will create jobs now and in the long term, while enhancing the quality of life throughout the area.”

Governor Quinn earlier this year signed legislation to ensure that the Interstate 55/Weber Road interchange project can proceed. Senate Bill 1219 allows the Weber Road Interchange project to proceed whether or not certain state property is sold to help finance it. Previous legislation tied the Weber Road project to the sale of 200 acres of surplus Illinois Department of Corrections land in Will County. The state is holding onto the surplus land until property values in the area rise and a better sale price can be obtained. However, state officials did not want this land sale delay to hold up the Weber Road Interchange project. The bill passed unanimously in both houses of the General Assembly.

Meanwhile, another major interchange project is well underway in Will County. The \$39 million Interstate 57/Stuenkel Road/University Parkway interchange near University Park will improve traffic flow and accessibility in this growing area of Will County that includes Governor’s State University. The project, also part of Governor Quinn’s *Illinois Jobs Now!* construction program, involves a new interchange where Stuenkel Road currently passes over Interstate 57. Work began this summer and will be complete in 2015.

The I-55/Weber Road and I-57/Stuenkel Road projects are part of Governor Quinn’s \$31 billion *Illinois Jobs Now!* program, which will support more than 439,000 jobs over six years. *Illinois Jobs Now!* is the largest construction program in Illinois history, and is one of the largest construction programs in the nation.

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