

## Governor Quinn Praises Critical Vote to Move Illiana Corridor Project Forward

Written by Brooke Anderson  
Monday, 21 October 2013 10:32

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Critical Project Receives Yes Vote from MPO Policy Committee; Will Create Thousands of Jobs and Drive Economic Development Throughout Region

CHICAGO – After years of pushing to make it a reality, Governor Pat Quinn today announced that the Illiana Corridor Project – an innovative public-private partnership to build a much-needed, regional highway – is moving forward. Today's vote by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's MPO Policy Committee approved the project as a priority in the GO TO 2040 Plan. The Illiana, along with the South Suburban Airport, are key parts of Governor Quinn's agenda to drive economic growth throughout the South Suburbs and across Illinois.

Today's vote by the committee, which is comprised of members from throughout the Chicago region, means the Illiana project is eligible for federal funding and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) can proceed to obtain bids from the private sector.

"Today marks a major victory for economic development and jobs in the Southland, which will strengthen Illinois' economy and pave the way for future growth," Governor Quinn said. "I applaud the members of the MPO Policy Committee for making the Illiana a priority. This regional highway will not only serve the largest and fastest growing areas in Illinois, it will have a long-term economic impact of more than \$4 billion in the region."

In addition to the South Suburban Airport, Governor Quinn has been pushing to make the Illiana Expressway a reality since taking office as part of his economic vision for the south suburbs of Chicago. The Illiana will be a 47-mile, access controlled highway that extends from I-55 in Illinois on the west to I-65 in Indiana on the east. When built, the Illiana Corridor Project will be an invaluable regional asset for the south suburbs, the state and the broader Midwest, promoting and supporting the business environment, workforce, local and global economy and quality of life. Potential economic benefits include the creation of more than 9,000 construction jobs and 28,000 long-term jobs.

The South Suburban Airport will serve as the third major Chicago-area airport in the south suburbs and has been one of the Governor's key priorities since 2009. Building the global transportation hub will create more than 11,000 construction jobs and as many as 14,000 long-term jobs after it becomes operational. Earlier this year, the governor secured and signed a new law to break the longstanding gridlock that will allow the airport to be built.

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The Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation (IDOT and INDOT, respectively) have been engaged in planning the Illiana with the Federal Highway Administration since the spring of 2011. The preferred corridor for the limited access, four-lane toll road is being refined and discussed, with a public hearing on the proposed location later this year. Additional public input on the project will be sought during the state and federal agency and public-private partnership approval process. The Illiana planning process is expected to be complete in early 2014.

IDOT and INDOT will soon begin the process of selecting a private team to finance and build the Illiana Corridor project, the first public-private partnership of its kind in Illinois. This innovative financing method, which has already been used by Indiana on other projects, will bring new investment dollars into the state transportation system and allow IDOT and INDOT to make further infrastructure investments that will benefit the region. Studies by IDOT and INDOT have shown that the Illiana will provide local and regional congestion relief, create jobs, and serve as a much needed trucking corridor in the bi-state region.

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