



Citizens Against the Sprawlway UPDATE

November 2006

IDOT Settles for 12-mile “Yorkville Bypass”

The proposed I-80 to I-88 Prairie Parkway won't go from I-80 to I-88, at least not in the foreseeable future.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has unbuckled the beltway in its five-year highway plan, which calls for building just 12 miles of the roadway from Illinois 71 in Yorkville to U.S. 30 between Big Rock and Sugar Grove.

That's about a third of the proposed Prairie Parkway, once intended to connect I-80 to I-88. The remainder of the project is beyond the 2012 planning document.

Funding for even the shortened project is still uncertain. Federal funds have been earmarked for part of the project, but the state must come up with its share before construction can begin.

IDOT's highway plan for 2008 to 2012 estimates this highway segment will cost \$263 million -- with \$207 million earmarked in federal funds for a connection between the two interstates but no clear source for the remaining \$56 million. In fact, the IDOT plan cautions that the "project may require significant additional state funds to fully implement."

Additional federal funding – needed to complete the full project – became less likely with Rep. Dennis Hastert's loss of leadership in Congress. After he steps down as House speaker, his ability to divert federal money to the Prairie Parkway will diminish greatly. And, with Hastert's loss of clout, Illinois leaders will be less likely to humor his support of the project.

Citizens Against the Sprawlway believes that the area's traffic needs are diverse and require diverse solutions rather than the one-size fits all approach of the Prairie Parkway. IDOT should focus on improving Illinois 47 while upgrading connections and capacity of other north-south routes.

The truncated Prairie Parkway will have just one intermediate interchange -- at U.S. 34 between Yorkville and Plano -- with entrances at Illinois 71 and U. S. 30. A Galena Road interchange has also been suggested, but not adopted by the state.

The Yorkville-to-U.S.-30 route will funnel motorists from the Yorkville area into Kane County on their way to jobs further east. How will they get to the Prairie Parkway and where will they go when it ends?

State to Provide Early Look Nov. 30

IDOT's Prairie Parkway study team will meet Nov. 30 with Citizens Against the Sprawlway and other opponents of the Prairie Parkway to discuss the status of the project prior to the public hearings Dec. 6-7 on the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

All are invited to the meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 30, at the old Kendall County Courthouse, 109 W. Ridge St. The Courthouse is located in Yorkville, south of the Fox River and just west of Route 47. From Route 47 (Bridge St. through Yorkville) turn west on W. Fox St., south on S. Main St., then east on W. Madison St.

Blagojevich lukewarm on Prairie Parkway

Governor Rod Blagojevich has repeatedly said that the Prairie Parkway is not a priority for him.

But the \$207 million earmarked for the project by Rep. Dennis Hastert continues to focus attention on the highway.

When the last-minute earmark was inserted into the Federal Highway Bill in 2005, the Governor wondered if the funds could be diverted to projects where there was a real need today, like expanding I-55.

Earlier this year he told Lynn Sweet of the Sun-Times that the Prairie Parkway was not a priority for him, and just this week Lisa Smith of the Daily Herald quotes a Blagojevich spokesperson, saying that the Prairie Parkway is not a “top priority” for the governor – “Our priorities have been on putting resources where there’s traffic congestion,” the spokesperson said.

Action Plan to Fight Prairie Parkway

Contact state and local officials:

1. Advocate improvement and expansion of Illinois 47 and other north-south routes including Wikaduke Trail and Eldamain Road. Use federal I-80 to I-88 connection funds for Illinois 47, instead of Prairie Parkway.
2. Funding \$1 billion Prairie Parkway will drain funds from other area transportation projects – ask ‘What won’t be built because of the Prairie Parkway?’
3. Building Prairie Parkway accelerates sprawl and halts county efforts to preserve farmland and open space.

Key Addresses to Contact:

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Office of Lt. Governor
214 State House
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State Rep. Patricia Reid Lindner (50th Dist)
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State Sen. Chris Lauzen (25th Dist)
52 West Downer Place, Suite 201
Aurora, Illinois 60506
[Fax: 630-364-1566]
e-mail: chrislauzen@lauzen.com

State Senator-Elect Linda Holmes (42nd Dist)
(Currently Kane County Board Member)
434 Wilder Street
Aurora, IL 60506
630-892-0776 (FAX)
e-mail: lholfmes@kanecoboard.org

Parkway Funds for Illinois 47?

The federal Highway Bill, with \$207 million for the Prairie Parkway, might instead fund expansion and improvements to Highway 47, depending on how the state interprets the funding.

The bill's language is not specific to the Prairie Parkway but rather for "Construction of the U.S. I-80 to I-88 North-South Connector" – and Illinois 47 is certainly a connector between the two interstates.

IDOT has said that it anticipates that Illinois 47 will be improved and upgraded as part of an in addition to the Prairie Parkway project. However, the IDOT 2008-2012 construction plan includes just Phase 1 project engineering (\$1.2 million) for Illinois 47 between Sugar Grove and Yorkville.

Ironically, the Illinois 47 project thought to be furthest along -- widening the highway through Yorkville -- is not even in the construction plan, although there's \$24 million in the governor's proposed bond program for the project. The federal highway bill also includes a \$4 million earmark for land acquisition for the widening project in Yorkville.

**Citizens Against the Sprawlway
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Supreme Court won't hear lawsuit

The U. S. Supreme Court has declined to hear an appeal of a lawsuit challenging the state Corridor Protection Statute used to record the Prairie Parkway corridor.

St. Charles attorney Tim Dwyer, representing owners whose property rights have been restricted since the corridor was recorded in 2002, has fought this case through the Kendall County Court, the Court of Appeals, and the state Supreme Court.

Only a small fraction of cases submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court are accepted, but Dwyer and the property owners were hopeful that the federal judges would recognize the unfairness of the corridor restrictions.

Hastert's Land Sale Questioned

Rep. Dennis Hastert sold land near the proposed Prairie Parkway just five months after he secretly inserted \$207 million for the project in the 2005 highway bill.

His \$2 million profit on the sale has raised eyebrows across the country, since a Washington watchdog group highlighted the link between the Prairie Parkway funding and Hastert's profits.

For more details and news coverage of earmarks and Hastert's profits, see the Citizens Against the Sprawlway web site:

<http://www.sprawlway.org>

Help support the fight against the Prairie Parkway. Your donation helps pay for this news letter, the annual 'Stop the Beltway Picnic,' and our campaign and research activities opposing the Prairie Parkway.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail address: _____ Telephone _____

Here's my donation _____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other \$ _____

Send to: Citizens Against the Sprawlway, PO Box 334, Big Rock IL 60511

IDOT SCHEDULES PUBLIC HEARINGS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

IDOT will present its Draft Environmental Impact Statement and receive comments in two public hearings, December 6-7. Public comments will be accepted at the hearings and in written form through January 16, 2007.

The DEIS covers the environmental impacts of the two proposed routes for the Prairie Parkway. Both routes run from I-88 at Kaneville south between Yorkville and Plano. One route then angles southeast to I-80 near Minooka while the other route goes south to I-80 near Morris. The DEIS also presents the impacts of a “no build” alternative – that is, not building the Prairie Parkway.

IDOT will evaluate and address the comments received and then issue the final Environmental Impact Statement, scheduled to be completed by mid-2008. The final document must be issued before IDOT can tap into the federal money earmarked for the initial stages of construction for the project.

**IDOT Open House Format Hearing
5:30 – 8 p.m.**

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Yorkville Intermediate School
Gymnasium Entrance
103 Schoolhouse Road
Yorkville, Illinois

Thursday, December 7, 2006

White Oak Elementary School Gymnasium
North Entrance
2001 Dupont Road
Morris, Illinois

Additional information:
<http://www.prairie-parkway.com>

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