

Substantial Support Remains for the IL Route 53/120 Extension

October 14, 2016

As a Board Member of the Lake County Transportation Alliance (LCTA), I recently attended the Transportation Management Association of Lake Cook Fall Meeting where Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn spoke about capital transportation needs in the state. In discussing the proposed IL Route 53/120 extension in Lake County, Mr. Blankenhorn stressed that state leaders need to know that there is ongoing third-party support for the project in order for it to have traction. In particular, Blankenhorn noted that the business community must weigh in and voice its support.

I am writing in response to this call to action to affirm that there is continued support among leaders in Lake County for the proposed IL Route 53/120 extension. To date, [40 Mayors have signed on to a letter of support for the project](#), citing that it will provide significant congestion relief, reduce travel times up to 30%, create regional connectivity and serve as a catalyst for future economic development. Furthermore, [40 additional letters of support have been submitted from businesses, organizations, municipalities and elected officials](#) including the Northwest Municipal Conference, EDC Company, TH Associates, Inc., Key Lime Cove, Visit Lake County, AMLI Residential, GOA Regional Business Association, the Grayslake Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Technology and Manufacturing Association, the Lake County Contractors Association and others.

In recognition of this strong support, the Illinois Toll Highway Authority Board unanimously approved a resolution in December 2015 to authorize an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. The EIS will include a detailed study of alignment alternatives, environmental impacts, financial feasibility and a “no build” scenario. It will also include a robust public information and engagement program with multiple opportunities for public input.

It’s now incumbent upon the state leadership to initiate the EIS to provide the Lake County community with fact-based information on the project that can be used to inform future decisions and opinions. Through this process, state leadership will be able to engage with local businesses, understand their level of support for the project and ensure that their transportation needs are met.

The IL Route 53/120 extension project represents a critically important opportunity for Lake County’s economic viability and its ability to thrive long term. It’s time for the EIS process to move forward as approved by the Illinois Toll Highway Authority Board so that stakeholders can make informed decisions on the appropriate long-term future of the project.

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