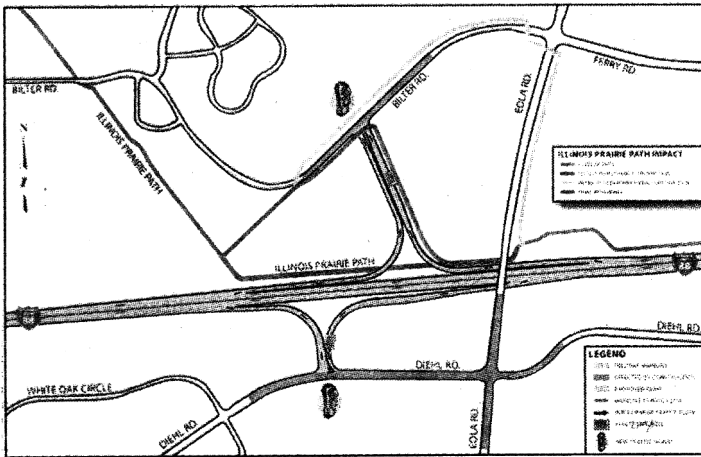


## Eola Road interchange breaks ground, will be done by year's end ...



SUBMITTED GRAPHIC

## ... tollway officials say

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For more than a decade, local leaders have been talking about an interchange off of Interstate 88 at Eola Road in Aurora. In a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday morning, tollway officials made a promise — the \$50 million interchange will be finished this year.

Construction will begin this



Find out more about the planned Eola interchange with our Web link at: [beaconnewsonline.com](http://beaconnewsonline.com)

month, and when completed, Eola Road will be the first in the system to be an I-Pass-only interchange.

Speaking from a podium set

❖ Turn to **EOLA, A2**

### PROJECT TIMETABLE

- Proposed schedule for construction of the Eola Road interchange
- April: I-88 mainline shoulder paving and roadway lighting work; utility relocation work on Diehl Road, Eola Road and Bilter Road.
  - Spring: Detour route for Prairie Path in place; mainline storm sewer work; construction of ramp pavement and toll plazas begins.
  - Summer: Bilter Road resurfacing; Diehl Road resurfacing, widening and median removal; intersection widening at Eola Road and Diehl Road.
  - Late fall: Prairie Path relocation complete.
  - By year end: Project complete.

Source: Illinois Toll Highway Authority

## EOLA

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up near the Illinois Prairie Path north of I-88 Wednesday, acting tollway Director Michael King officially launched the project, thanking the other governmental entities that helped fund it.

Under an intergovernmental agreement signed last year, the tollway will pay up to \$25 million of the project's cost. DuPage County will kick in up to \$19 million, leaving the city of Aurora to acquire the land on which the interchange will be built. Aurora leaders closed on the last pieces of that property last year, for a total cost of \$7.9 million.

U.S. Rep. Bill Foster, D-Genova, worked to secure a \$1 million grant for other infrastructure needs around the interchange.

The new interchange will decrease congestion on Route 59, officials said, and will give those coming to and from Aurora new alternatives. With this inter-

change, there will be five access points onto I-88 from Aurora: Orchard Road, Route 31, Farnsworth Avenue, Route 59 and Eola Road.

### I-Pass-only

The new interchange will also feature the tollway's first I-Pass-only toll collection system, for drivers entering eastbound and exiting westbound. Tollway spokesman Joelle McGinnis said Eola Road is the perfect place to try out this new system, since I-Pass usage in the Aurora area rises to 90 percent during rush hour.

The tollway isn't taking anything away from cash users, McGinnis said, because they will still be able to access I-88 at Farnsworth Avenue and Route 59. McGinnis said the tollway does not know if I-Pass-only will someday become systemwide.

Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner cited a study that shows economic development booming due to the interchange. That

study predicts 10,000 new jobs in Aurora over the next 10 years, Weisner said.

### Not really on Eola

Construction on the new interchange will begin this month with prep work on I-88. Traffic will be shifted onto the median shoulder and the two left lanes during this phase of the project.

The Illinois Prairie Path will be relocated during construction. McGinnis expects a detour route to be in place before summer.

Despite its name, the Eola Road interchange actually will not entail any on- or off-ramps on Eola Road. Westbound travelers will enter on Bilter Road to the north, while eastbound drivers will enter on Diehl Road to the south. This means that during the summer and fall portions of the project, traffic on those roads will be affected.

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