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Full I-90 interchange at Route 47 eyed as economic boon

By Marni Pyke

Illinois tollway and local leaders hope an economic boom will result from an improved interchange at the Jane Addams Tollway (I-90) and Route 47 in Huntley.

Work will start this spring on the nearly \$70 million project, which will allow tollway access to and from the west.

Tollway officials Thursday approved an intergovernmental agreement in which the agency will front 50 percent of the cost while the Illinois Department of Transportation, Huntley, and Kane and McHenry counties pay the rest. Construction should be complete by December 2013.

The authority expects to recoup its costs in 10 years and estimates the new ramp could generate about \$3 million in tolls in 2014.

Huntley Village Manager David Johnson said the interchange would spur business and retail growth in an area of more than 1,000 acres along Route 47, north of I-90.

But not everyone agreed the interchange was an appropriate use of tollway funds.

"Are we in the business of moving automobiles or are we in the business of economic development?" asked Bensenville resident Donald Dionesotes.

"I don't think they are mutually exclusive," tollway Chair Paula Wolff said.

"To me they are inextricably linked together," tollway Director and Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner said. "There is economic development that wouldn't be in existence if not for the Eola interchange (at I-88 in Aurora)."

Drivers now can exit onto Route 47 from westbound I-90 and enter the eastbound tollway from Huntley. The improvements will allow motorists to go west on I-90 from Huntley and permit eastbound drivers to exit onto Route 47.

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