



Congress Parkway improvement project

Michigan Avenue to Wells Street



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor



Congress Parkway improvement

- Starting in October 2010, CDOT will upgrade and improve Congress Parkway from Michigan Avenue to Wells Street
- Plans in works since 2005.
- Project received federal stimulus-program funding (\$9 million) in 2009
- Total construction cost: \$16.9 million



Congress Parkway, looking east

Congress Parkway improvement

History/background

- Congress Parkway was widened and extended in the 1940s to accommodate the high volume of vehicular traffic from the newly constructed expressway system to the office buildings in the Loop and the warehouses in the South Loop
- Since then, corridor has remained mostly unchanged
- Recently, the area surrounding Congress Parkway has been one of the fastest growing employment, residential, higher educational and commercial areas in the City.
- These changes have altered the travel patterns and significantly increased the amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the area



Congress Parkway construction, 1920s

Congress Parkway improvement

Project goals

- Improve pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety
- Accommodate and improve conditions for the 63,000 vehicles per day that need to pass safely and efficiently through this corridor
- Beautify and create a world-class gateway into the City.

Congress Parkway improvement

Project scope

- Realign roadway to eliminate weaving lanes
- Narrow and reduce lanes to provide wider sidewalks to accommodate heavier pedestrian traffic and landscape improvements, and decrease the crossing distance of intersections
- Interconnect traffic signals and install countdown pedestrian timers to improve the flow of vehicles and pedestrians through intersections
- Modify a State Street median to facilitate vehicles turning onto eastbound Congress Parkway
- Landscaped, irrigated medians with pedestrian refuge areas
- In-ground and above-ground landscaped planters



Sidewalk planter with gateway element

Congress Parkway improvement

Project scope (continued)

- Street furniture throughout corridor
- Maintaining bicycle lane connection across Congress Parkway at Plymouth Court and adding bicycle parking
- A LED decorative lighting system, including freestanding fixtures in the median and lineal fixtures attached to decorative metal trellises and the viaduct walls under One Financial Place



Decorative lighting

Congress Parkway improvement

Project schedule

Fall 2010-late 2012

Traffic impacts

- Congress will be reduced to three lanes inbound (eastbound) and two lanes outbound (westbound) for most of the project with temporary, off-peak eastbound lane closures reducing the inbound lanes to two lanes.
- This configuration aligns with the lane configuration at the Congress Parkway bridge, which IDOT is reconstructing.
- State Street at Congress will see temporary lane reductions

Congress Parkway improvement

Public outreach

The Congress Parkway improvement project has received significant public input that has helped hone the design:

- 2003 – CDOT participated in a design charrette sponsored by the Friends of the Downtown
- 2008
 - Task Force meetings: May 5, June 7, September 16
 - Community organization meetings: Chicago Loop Alliance (June 5); State St. Commission (June 19), Near South Planning Board (July 1 and July 17)
 - Public meeting: October 23, 2008

Congress Parkway improvement

The Congress Parkway project will occur along with three other major ongoing projects by the State of Illinois and City of Chicago:

- 1. Eisenhower Expressway resurfacing—Circle interchange to Thorndale (IDOT)**
- 2. Congress Parkway bridge over Chicago River rehabilitation (IDOT)**
- 3. Wacker Drive reconstruction—Randolph to Congress (City of Chicago)**

Why do all these projects at the same time?

While tackling each project simultaneously will undoubtedly create inconvenience, it lets us minimize the duration of the disruption. If tackled separately and sequentially, these projects would stretch construction over 10 years or more.

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For more information:

Internet

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IDOT projects (Eisenhower resurfacing and Congress Parkway Bridge reconstruction)

www.dot.state.il.us