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New I-290 Ramp: 8 Things to Know

Stay up-to-date on construction progress, lane closures and accidents.

By Anicka Slachta (Patch Staff) - (<http://patch.com/users/anicka-slachta>) December 1, 2016 10:02 am ET
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DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The new flyover ramp bridge connecting eastbound I-290 to eastbound Illinois Route 390 is finally complete and open to traffic, Move Illinois announced Wednesday.

The idea of the newly finished ramp is to create free-flow movement within the I-290 interchange and reduce travel times, according to a press release. The ramp is a three-level, multi-span structure with two 12-foot lanes, a 10-foot outside shoulder and 12-foot inside shoulder.

Read on for some helpful information about the new bridge and how it could affect your driving patterns.

1. Only one lane is open for use right now.

The right lane of the ramp opened for business at 1 a.m. Wednesday, but the left lane won't be open until working on the interchange is fully complete in 2017.

2. This won't congest traffic, because a light will be removed and another lane opened.

It does sound like a one-lane opening will do the opposite of what the ramp wants to do in reducing travel times, but the traffic signal at the existing intersection of the ramp from eastbound I-290 to eastbound Route 390 will be removed so that traffic will flow better. A third lane on westbound Route 390 between Hamilton Lakes Drive and I-290 will also open.

3. The ramp cost a whopping \$38.3 million.

It was funded 80 percent by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and 20 percent by the Illinois Tollway.

4. When completed, the I-290 Interchange Project promises to reduce travel times by up to 35 percent.

Three traffic signals have already been removed along Route 390 and Thorndale Avenue, including the ones at Rohlwing Road and at the eastbound I-290 and westbound I-290 ramps to Thorndale Avenue. More lights are set to be removed in 2017 between Park Boulevard and Illinois Route 83 when the Route 390 Tollway mainline is complete.

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5. As frustrating as it may be, all this construction does mean slower speed limits and higher consequences for breaking them.

A 45-mph speed zone limit is in effect on Route 390 at all times throughout the construction season. On I-290, the max speed limit is 55 mph. The minimum penalty for speeding in a work zone is \$375, and if you hit a road worker, you could be facing a \$10,000 fine and 14 years in jail.

6. By 2030, the results of this project are expected to increase car travel through the Route 390/I-290 area by 100,000 vehicles.

One of the goals of the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway is to create direct access to and from the tollway in all directions. Currently, around 83,000 cars per day use ramps at the Route 390/I-290 interchange. By the new ramp's full opening in 2017, 127,000 vehicles are expected to use them. And while 240,000 vehicles travel through the area now, that number is projected to increase to 340,000 by the completion of the project.

7. The I-290 Interchange Project is expected to be fully completed by 2017...the very end of the year, that is.

The \$440-million project, which will include 17 new ramps and 15 new bridges, should be done by the end of next year.

8. You can follow along with the progress of this work.

It's easy. Camera images here will offer bird's-eye views of the construction and its progress, and you can check real-time travel time estimates here. Roadway incident information can be found on Twitter, and calling 1-800-TOLL-FYI will advise you of daily lane closure information.

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