

# SUPER-HIGHWAY GIVES CITY IDEA OF ITS FUTURE

## It's Majestic Symbol of Huge Project

[Another chapter in the story of metropolitan Chicago's fabulous growth since the end of World War II.]

BY JOSEPH EGELHOF  
Chicago's best glimpse of the future is along the Congress st. super-highway being built west from the city's heart. Most of the project is in an unattractive stage, deep cuts filled with water, rows of concrete supports, and rubble of old buildings.

Near the Loop the broad highway comes into view, arched on its stilts, graceful and majestic, symbol of a half billion dollar plan to bind the metropolis with fast driving routes radiating to the north, northwest, west, southwest, south, and southeast.

The project was started since World War II as a joint effort of city, county, and state. Since then, a country-wide system of super-roads has taken shape. They point to Chicago, indicating that the city's expressways are destined to be the crossroads of the turnpikes. A recent addition to the plan is a seven mile expressway to go from State and 66th sts. to link with the projected Indiana turnpike at 106th st.

**Face Many Obstacles**  
Right of ways for the big streets must be plowed thru homes and industry. There are legal, social, economic, and transportation obstacles. No one knows what the ultimate cost will be or what new problems may be met.

North and southeast the super-highways will be extensions of Chicago's great Lake Shore dr. Work has started on the north extension. The south and southwest routes are plans and no more.

Under construction is a subsystem of the big plan. It consists of the west route along Congress, the northwest route which will swing up from Congress at Halsted st., and an extension of Wacker dr. south on the west side of the Loop to link with the west route. Construction of the Congress st. expressway began in December, 1949, and is expected to be completed to the county line by 1957 or 1958. Most of the Wacker dr. work is finished. Much land has been purchased and razing started for the northwest route.

**Cloverleaf Plaza**  
The Wacker dr. and Congress st. ribbons will be tied with a huge cloverleaf plaza. Another plaza will join the west and northwest routes. A third major interchange will be at Erie st., linking the northwest route with the proposed 400 million dollar civic center development on the near north side.

From there the northwest route will swing up to a fork at about Cicero and Montrose avs. One branch will continue northwest and the other will go north to link with the Edens hwy., itself a post-war achievement.

Chicago's engineers have conquered one problem after another in building the west expressway. Virgil E. Gun-

## Progress in Construction of Chicago's West Side Expressway



View eastward from Halsted st. of completed portions of pavement for Congress expressway. In background is main postoffice, beneath which the expressway will run. Doors in foreground close tubes in which CTA trains will run.

lock, commissioner of public works, has listed some of them. Most of the buildings, ranging from garages to 12-story structures, were torn down, but in one place a five-story factory was moved a block. Thirty-five feet of a 102 foot wide building, seven stories high, were sliced off.

### Arcades Cut In

Ingenuity permitted the builders to get by more economically between Michigan av. and State st., where the original sidewalk area is being taken over for the highway. Arcades are being cut into buildings for new sidewalks. The south end of the big Sears, Roebuck & Co. store has been arcaded, and the Congress hotel and the old Auditorium building soon will be.

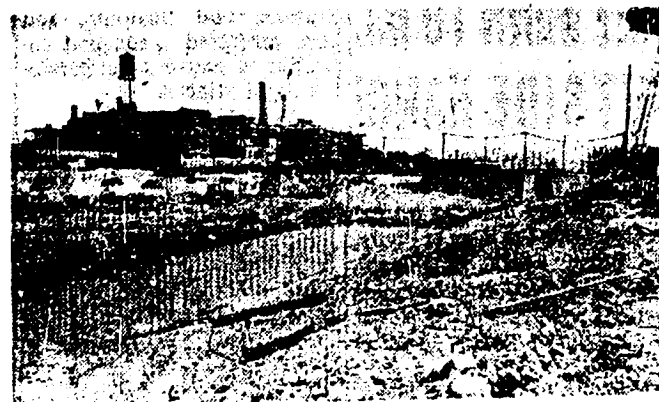
One of the toughest problems was building thru the La Salle st. railroad station. The substructures had to be placed during tunneling of

the Milwaukee-Dearborn-Congress subway extension.

Even spanning the river offered unusual difficulties, because of the road width and the bend in the river. The solution was the 5 million dollar "Siamese twin" bascule bridge nearing completion. It has four independent leaves instead of the usual two.

### Goes thru Postoffice

West of the river the highway will go thru the huge main postoffice, under which an arcade was provided when the 13 story building was erected in 1933. Gunlock points out that the subway extension beneath the highway will compel the removal of the lower parts of eight caissons. Engineers have worked out a



At Western av. on route of the expressway, steel is being placed for overpass while the open cut in which road and tracks will run is now a water hole. (TRIBUNE Photos)

plan for the tubes to bear the load.

The subway will be built out to a portal in the super-highway. From that point the tracks to be used by rapid transit cars will be laid on an open cut in the middle of the road. It was necessary to demolish a large part of the elevated and rebuild the Garfield Park tracks on street level for temporary use.

### Financing Is Question

Financing is a question as the super-highways grow. Originally the city, county, and state were to share the burden. Now a plan has been proposed by William J. Mortimer, county highway chief, to charge tolls on the super-highways to provide funds to speed up the program.

He contends the public is willing to pay. Adding weight to this idea is the city plan to charge tolls on the new In-

diana turnpike link which will include a huge bridge over the Calumet river. It will be ready in three years, about the time the turnpike gets here.