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State Grant to Fund Study of Capping Eisenhower Expressway

A \$250,000 grant to study capping the Eisenhower Expressway in Oak Park was announced Thursday by Governor George Ryan.

The Illinois Tomorrow program grant will allow the Village to update and expand the 1987 Air Rights Study that originally investigated the feasibility of covering the expressway through much of Oak Park. The Village anticipates that the updated study will become part of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) ultimate plans for reconstructing I-290.

"This is exciting news for the citizens of Oak Park," said Village President Joanne E. Trapani. "The Eisenhower created a physical divide and we are eager to explore ways to reconnect the community. A cap could use green space or recreational areas and rebuilt transit stations with bicycle and pedestrian links to bring this part of our community back together."

The new study will look at the technical aspects of constructing a cap across the highway, as well as conduct a public planning process to help further develop the concept, she said.

Anticipating the state support, the Village's proposed 2003 budget includes the 10 percent matching funds required to receive the state grant. In addition, the Eisenhower citizen advisory commission had already established a subcommittee to focus on capping the Eisenhower.

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IKE Cap Grant  
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Since IDOT began a multi-year study to determine if a new lane should be added to each side of the Eisenhower Expressway, the Village has taken an aggressive approach to advocate alternatives to highway expansion, and to ensure that any changes benefit Oak Park.

Village initiatives include forming the Eisenhower Citizens Advisory Commission to advise the Village Board and be a conduit of information to the community, and hiring outside technical and legal assistance to ensure the community's interests are protected. Village officials also have traveled to Washington, D.C. and the state capital to make sure community concerns are considered.

More information on the proposed Eisenhower project is available on the Village website, [www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us). Click on news, then special reports.

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