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# NTTA hopes to alleviate Dallas North Tollway traffic in Collin County

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Published: 02 September 2012 11:00 PM

Jason Money almost always encounters traffic on the Dallas North Tollway while driving south from his Frisco home.

A logjam usually forms on the right side near the Bush Turnpike as drivers try to enter and exit, he said.

"There is big-time congestion," said Money, who drives through the interchange on his way to work at various sites around Dallas for his medical devices company. "I have seen a couple of accidents. They are bumping into each other and trying to cut over."

The North Texas Tollway Authority aims to change that. In the next four years, the authority hopes to complete more than \$200 million in construction to alleviate congestion north of the Bush Turnpike.

"This interchange is in dire need of capacity improvements," Elizabeth Mow, NTTA assistant executive director for project delivery, said at a recent Plano City Council meeting.

The project includes several major changes. Direct ramps between the tollway and the turnpike will be widened to two lanes to increase traffic flow. Those ramps will also become accessible from Park Boulevard. NTTA will build new entrance and exit ramps at Windhaven Parkway. And a fourth lane will be added to the Dallas North Tollway between the Bush Turnpike and the Sam Rayburn Tollway.

The goal, NTTA officials said, is to accommodate some of the massive growth that has occurred along the Dallas North Tollway over the past 20 years. Since the tollway was extended through Collin County in 1994, the county's population has more than doubled. Now, 134,945 cars drive the affected section of road each day, according to NTTA.

"It is a case that you see on many roadways: If you build it, they will come," said Michael Rey, an NTTA spokesman.

The projects are expected to cost \$200 million to \$250 million combined, NTTA officials said. The authority hopes to pay that with cash from tolls; officials say no bonds will be needed. NTTA expects Plano to contribute about \$5 million from its community investment program and is in talks with Collin County about additional assistance.

Development and design on the project are scheduled to begin next year. The NTTA hopes that construction will be complete by 2016, though factors like weather, funding and right-of-way acquisition could extend the timeline.

Money, who lives less than a mile from the tollway, has mixed feelings about the plans. He said he will be happy if some of the congestion is cleared, but he also worries that construction will make traffic worse before it gets better.

And he said he has lived in Frisco long enough to know that the area will continue to grow and create new traffic. It is simply something he tolerates to live in the area he loves.

"That's the price you pay for being in the center of the world," he said.



