



# The Long, Slow Death of the Trinity Toll Road

BY TIM ROGERS ([HTTP://FRONTBURNER.DMAGAZINE.COM/AUTHOR/TIM/](http://frontburner.dmagazine.com/author/tim/)) | 04/23/2014 | POSTED IN [TRANSPORTATION](http://frontburner.dmagazine.com/category/transportation/)



<http://frontburner.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Trinity-Parkway-drawing.jpg>

Not going to happen. (concept drawing via NTTA)

The number of people who still think we need a toll road built along the Trinity River has dwindled, it appears, to two: Michael Morris of NCTCOG and Bill Hale of TxDOT. You'll recall the [op-ed](http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140407-i-345-bridge-repair-cant-wait-for-highway-removal-study.ece) (<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140407-i-345-bridge-repair-cant-wait-for-highway-removal-study.ece>) they wrote on April 7, in which they argued that we couldn't talk about tearing down I-345 until we build the toll road as a reliever route. We argue in our [May issue](http://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2014/may/the-next-dallas-boom-and-interstate-345) (<http://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2014/may/the-next-dallas-boom-and-interstate-345>) that the Trinity toll road is dead. And this morning the Morning News published an [op-ed](http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140422-linking-i-345-and-trinity-road-revives-same-old-inaccurate-claim.ece) (<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140422-linking-i-345-and-trinity-road-revives-same-old-inaccurate-claim.ece>) saying the same thing. This salvo comes in direct response to Morris and Hale. It was fired by former city council member Angela Hunt and current members Sandy Greyson, Scott Griggs, Philip Kingston, and Adam Medrano. If you can read it and come away still thinking that we need that toll road, then consider the following:

Let's say that the Army Corps of Engineers gives us the green light to build the road. That decision would come in December. Before anything with the road can happen, though, the Corps says we have to move the river (in part because restoring its natural meander was the plan all along). The city's

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portion of that work will cost [\\$185 million](http://www.dallasnews.com/news/transportation/20140418-corps-of-engineers-report-says-529-million-must-be-spent-moving-trinity-river-addressing-flood-risks1.ece) (<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/transportation/20140418-corps-of-engineers-report-says-529-million-must-be-spent-moving-trinity-river-addressing-flood-risks1.ece>), and the project would take [nine years](http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140422-linking-i-345-and-trinity-road-revives-same-old-inaccurate-claim.ece) (<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20140422-linking-i-345-and-trinity-road-revives-same-old-inaccurate-claim.ece>) to complete. Our next bond vote will come in 2017. Don't forget that the bond vote will have to address [\\$900 million](http://cityhallblog.dallasnews.com/2014/02/dallas-needs-to-spend-more-than-900-million-to-repair-its-streets-or-it-could-just-lower-the-passing-grade.html) (<http://cityhallblog.dallasnews.com/2014/02/dallas-needs-to-spend-more-than-900-million-to-repair-its-streets-or-it-could-just-lower-the-passing-grade.html>) worth of needed street repairs. Let's just say we tack on the \$185 million for river meandering (a \$1.085 billion bond!), and it passes. That means the river project can theoretically begin in 2017. Nine years later, construction of the toll road could begin — if a broke TxDOT can find a private partner willing to pay for it.

2026: that is the soonest that work on this toll road could begin. 1998: that was the year we first voted to build the road. Twenty-eight years is a long time to push for a road that only two people now want.

Which raises a question: aren't Morris and Hale both approaching retirement age?

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