



How Dallas Can Really Challenge Its Transportation ‘Status Quo’

POSTED IN URBANISM (HTTP://FRONTBURNER.DMAGAZINE.COM/CATEGORY/URBANISM/) | JUN 09, 2014 AT 12:21 PM
BY PETER SIMEK (HTTP://FRONTBURNER.DMAGAZINE.COM/AUTHOR/PETER-SIMEK/)

Most Popular | Most Comments

- D Magazine's 40 Greatest Stories: The Von Erich Family Wrestlers** (<http://frontburner.dmagazines-40-greatest-stories-the-von-erich-family-wrestlers/>) by Jason Heid
- The 10 Most Beautiful Women in Dallas 2013** (<http://www.dmagazine.com/magazine/2013/december/t-10-most-beautiful-women-in-dallas-2013>) by Rava Ramsey
- The Exorcists Next Door** (<http://www.dmagazine.com/magazine/2014/june/exorcists-next-door>) by June Lyons
- The Greatest Hero America Never Knew** (<http://www.dmagazine.com/magazine/2010/july/colonel-robert-howard-of-waco-greatest-american-hero>) by Dan Roberts
- Sisu** (<http://www.dmagazine.com>)

Roger Jones [filed another post](http://transportationblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/prediction-on-the-trinity-toll-road-when-it-starts-to-build/) (<http://transportationblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/prediction-on-the-trinity-toll-road-when-it-starts-to-build/>) on the Trinity toll road late last week. He has become the highway's foremost defender in print, while his colleague, Rudy Bush, [continues to argue the other side intelligently](http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/video-its-too-early-to-bury-the-trinity-river-toll-road/) (<http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/video-its-too-early-to-bury-the-trinity-river-toll-road/>). And for the second column in a row, Jones ends his piece with a curious turn of phrase. "Is the AIA OK with the status quo on downtown's freeway traffic?," he writes in reference to [Bush's piece](http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/american-institute-of-architects-dallas-backs-off-anti-trinity-toll-road/) (<http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/american-institute-of-architects-dallas-backs-off-anti-trinity-toll-road/>) about the architectural community's about-face on the their Trinity toll road. It's a line similar to this line from [Jones' piece that "apologizes"](http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/apologize-for-rudy-bushs-anti-trinity-tollway-blog-item.html) (<http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/06/apologize-for-rudy-bushs-anti-trinity-tollway-blog-item.html>) for another of Bush's columns: "Do [Trinity toll road] think the status quo is good enough for Dallas' Central Business District?"

Challenging the "status quo."

This seems to be Jones' latest strategy in twisting the debate around the toll road, a sly little piece of rhetorical positioning that places highway building in line with a progressive approach to building Dallas' future. In his argument with more understandable concerns, that those who suffer most from congestion in the city (which the toll road, he argues, would ostensibly relieve) are those who live south of the city and have to commute to the north for work. He demands highway "capacity" on the grounds of social justice.

Roger Jones: the champion of the working man and the highways he drives on. It's a ridiculous, untenable position. The highways were once seen as harbingers of progress. They were certainly forces of change. In Dallas, they were constructed on land torn from the Cedars, dividing it from downtown. They were built by bulldozing Littlefield and other ghettos. They helped facilitate the steady growth northwards to cheap land, the exportation of value to suburban areas, the transfer of job centers away from the city center, and the reliance of those who make their homes south of the city on heavily congested roads to get to work. They helped to create today's status quo, which is the hardship that Jones describes: the commutes, the time in the car away from family life, the sprawl that makes public transit both expensive to develop and unreliable to use, the precious dollars from low wage jobs that are wasted on the means of getting to the job, the general wear and tear of auto-centric life.

And yet, somehow Jones' vision of progress is to merely perpetuate the development models that created today's situation. He even admits so much in his latest piece, that the way the Trinity toll road will be built is by starting small and then growing continuously. Jones is likely correct there. If it is built, there will be pressure on the toll road to continually expand it. This is what 60 years of highway development has taught us. Highways generate capacity, which swells to congestion, and they are then under pressure to expand capacity only to continue the cycle. It's also precisely why building the Trinity toll road is an asinine idea. In the long run, it will relieve nothing. It will only destroy the land it will run through, Dallas' most valuable green space.

RECENT COMMENTS

 (https://www.facebook.com/timmyrogers) **Commented on: Go See Rod Davis This Thursday at Louie's!** FrontBurner | D Magazine (<http://frontburner.dmagazine.com/2014/06/see-rod-davis-this-thursday-at-louies/>) 1 hour ago (Mon, 09 Jun 2014 12:05 GMT)

CURRENT ISSUES

D Magazine June 2014

