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## DART to keep an eye on N. Central, and with launch of new website it hopes to make commuters' lives less stressful



By Robert Wilonsky

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There are myriad transportation agencies spread throughout several municipalities keeping an eye on the day-to-day doings along N. Central Expressway, among them the cities of Dallas, Highland Park, Richardson and Plano; Dallas Area Rapid Transit; the Texas Department of Transportation and the North Texas Tollway Authority. But beginning next month, just one will be in charge of collecting and dispensing that information to folks who use U.S. 75: DART, which has spent several years and millions of dollars in an effort to make riding Central — or avoiding it altogether — easier for commuters.

It's called Integrated Corridor Management, which is just what it sounds like: DART will take everything it knows about conditions along Central and warn motorists when they need to hop off the expressway and take Greenville Avenue, where the timing of traffic lights will be altered to handle a heavier load, or just maybe hop a DART train instead. They will be told when and where traffic is being diverted, and why. And they will be told when to expect delays in the future. This will be done in several different ways, most notably with a new website — [511DFW.com](#) — that will launch in coming weeks.

"It's information-sharing for the commuter," says DART spokesman Morgan Lyons, "which is the easiest way to describe Integrated Corridor Management. Right now it's not as coordinated as it could be. The idea is to catch people sooner. If you're about to pull on to Central and you're in the access road and find out there's an accident, it's a little late. Now we can intercept that motorist earlier and say maybe you want to come down Coit, maybe you want to take Greenville, maybe you want to take transit. It answers the question: How can we share information and push that o

DART's been working on this for years — well before it received \$5.3 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation — and has spent more than closer to \$9 million, with the feds kicking in an additional \$900,000 and local agencies

Dallas is among a handful of the feds' so-called Integrated Corridor Management "pioneer sites" brought on by the more than 266,000 vehicles that use the corridor daily (and that's just between Dallas and Greenville). The program was prepared by the USDOT, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, to solve the problems the inability to "exchange and share real-time data" that would allow drivers to "shift" th

Of course, drivers already have myriad options for checking their travel routes, from traffic websites to news radio to morning TV.

"You do get that information, but it's from a lot of different sources," says Lyons. "And that works pretty well if you just travel in one jurisdiction. But right now nothing pulls all those bits of information together. By doing that I get a more complete picture of what's going on in my commute. It gives people a more complete picture of what's going on. It's not different from the flat newspaper and the online newspaper: You can give people a richer experience."

In addition, DART's also installed a few dozen Bluetooth detectors along travel routes, which will send info to DART and allow it to recommend alternate routes. And it will monitor parking situations at the Red Line stops along Central.

"When this thing comes together, and it's gotta mature over time, people will experience a smoother commute because people can make different choices," says Lyons. "Think about the things you hear on traffic reports in the morning: 'Don't get on Central, go Greenville.' Well, when enough people use those roads, they get backed up. But as you start to spread the load out over the different routes, that's how you notice the differences. Your trip goes more quickly, particularly on incident days — and every day's more or less an incident day."

The Dallas City Council's Transportation and Environment Committee will get a sneak peek at the website and the ICM program on [Tuesday](#); shortly after that the site will go public.

"If I know I have an option — and know it soon enough — I can make a different choice," says Lyons. People say you can never get everyone on DART. And that's right. For some people in some corridors we're not the best choice for you. But if we can get enough to use DART or other transit alternatives, you can relieve congestion from those highways. That's where people start to see the benefits."

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 **Wylie H Dallas** 1 hour ago

Another thing that would really help would be if DPD were properly trained in expedited traffic accident clearance procedures, including the deployment of rapid response tow trucks along the route.

Spending an extra few hundred thousand to million bucks per year could yield the same benefits as spending several hundred million to a billion dollars on new highway infrastructure.

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