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# After 10 years, I've dropped my support of the Trinity Tollway



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By [LARRY GOOD](#)

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Recent discussions about the merits of tearing down Interstate 345 have led me to think again about the wisdom of constructing the Trinity Tollway. How can we on one hand debate the removal of an existing freeway, and on the other hand keep the Trinity Tollway on the table as a good idea?

Ten years ago, I was an outspoken and dedicated proponent of the Balanced Vision Plan, including the Trinity Parkway. The parkway would relieve congestion on Interstate 35E and the Mixmaster. And it would provide needed access to the Trinity's parks and generate significant economic development.

I have changed my mind and now confess publicly my opposition to building this highway.

Dallas has made real progress in the past decade toward becoming a culturally rich, diverse, walkable city — one that belongs in the conversation with Seattle, Portland, Ore., Denver and San Diego as the kind of place that can attract the creative class and major corporations. We can attribute that progress to our investment in quality-of-life projects. The AT&T Performing Arts Center, Klyde Warren Park and the Perot Museum of Nature and Science have had the most impact. But several others have a nexus near the Trinity River Corridor.

The Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge has fulfilled its promise as a beautiful landmark that makes crossing the river a celebrated event. Trinity Groves has been an unquestioned success. Now Roger Staubach, Robert Shaw and others want to build residential villages nearby.

Although the Continental Bridge hasn't officially opened yet, I persuaded a friendly contractor to allow us to ride our bicycles across. The cyclist's perspective was wholly different from the driver's experience I've had for decades. As we looked down into the basin, we saw the nearly completed Trinity Skyline trails. The flow of the river was evident. We could hear the birds between the levees.

On that same Saturday ride, after pedaling to brunch in the Bishop Arts District, we returned by taking the new Santa Fe Trestle Trail from Moore Park on the south bank of the Trinity back across the river to Corinth Street and Riverfront Boulevard. We saw several river runners unloading kayaks from their trailers in preparation for a trip downstream.

Other quality-of-life improvements along the river are nearing completion. The Trinity Strand Trail will ultimately connect to the Katy Trail. The new Sylvan Avenue bridge includes pedestrian sidewalks and access ramps to Trammell Crow Lake and Park. The Trinity Skyline Trail has 4.5 miles of trails connecting Sylvan with Moore Park between the levees.

The modern streetcar is under construction, connecting downtown to Oak Cliff across the Trinity. Properties at each end of the line, such as Reunion and Oak Farms Dairy, are planning how to take full advantage of the streetcar and the proximity to the Trinity's trails, parks and recreation.

The public projects that have been completed (or are nearing completion) in the Trinity River Corridor are already changing the use and investment patterns along the river. The talented Dallas real estate development community is serving customers who want to live, work and play nearby.

If we begin construction of the tollway, we risk killing the goose that is laying this golden egg.

We would be wiser — and richer — to continue investing in the smaller projects that improve the quality of life there. Build the less-

expensive, smaller lakes; they'll still be beautiful and attract fauna. In lieu of constructing the tollway, invest a fraction of that amount in beautifying the Irving Boulevard-Riverfront Boulevard corridor into a complete street with bike lanes, wider sidewalks, a shady canopy of trees and slip lanes with parking to support new businesses.

On June 15, the Trinity Commons Foundation is hosting a celebration called the Trinity River Revel, built around the opening of the Trinity Skyline Trail, the Continental Bridge Park, the West Dallas Gateway Park and the Sylvan Bridge. Thousands will gather for a gospel brunch and fun run and to experience the great park that is evolving.

Mark your calendar. I think we will all remember it as the day the Trinity Tollway died.

Larry Good is chairman of Good Fulton & Farrell Architects and a longtime activist in city planning. His email address is

[larry.good@gff.com](mailto:larry.good@gff.com).

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