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## Tolls proposed for part of U.S. 75 in Collin County



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State transportation officials are proposing a plan to turn HOV lanes into toll lanes for some vehicles along a section of U.S. 75, one of the area's remaining toll-free major highways.

The "U.S. 75 Express/HOV Lane Project" would affect the existing HOV lanes from LBJ Freeway to just south of McDermott Drive in Allen.

Single-occupancy vehicles would be allowed to use the managed HOV lanes by paying a toll, under the plan that was unveiled in separate presentations Monday to the Plano and Richardson city councils.

Car poolers could still use the HOV lanes for free by preregistering, using their TollTag information.

Officials say the plan would improve mobility along the congested stretch of the highway in Richardson and Plano, and provide a seamless link between U.S. 75 and I-635 when it is rebuilt.

The existing HOV lanes and access ramps would be maintained. Tolling equipment, signs and an enforcement area would be added for a scheduled start date in early 2016.

While the proposal provides a way for car poolers to use HOV lanes for free, that might not always be the case.

Long-term plans for most major highways in the Dallas-Fort Worth area include expanding the use of toll lanes.

In the interim, the current HOV lanes along U.S. 75 are not being fully used. The express lane plan would nearly quadruple the use of those lanes, said Brian Swindell, vice president of HDR Inc., a contractor for the Texas Department of Transportation.

The addition of single-occupancy vehicles "maximizes the use of HOV lanes," he told the Plano council.

"The reason the HOV lanes are not being utilized is because Richardson residents can't get in," said Plano council member Pat Miner, referring to the pylons that separate the HOV lanes from the other traffic lanes.

These flexible pylons run continuously along U.S. 75 through Richardson.

Drivers entering the HOV lanes in Dallas don't get a chance to exit until they approach Parker Road in Plano or Bethany Drive in Allen.

"We need to continue to push for entries and exits for U.S. 75 and better signage," said Richardson council member Steve Mitchell.

Richardson leaders questioned whether it's practical to require HOV drivers to preregister. They also showed concern about the disruption that construction would create along the busy highway.

"It just seems to me like the pain is not worth the gain," Richardson council member Mark Solomon said.

Staff writer Julieta Chiquillo contributed to this report.

### AT A GLANCE: Public meeting

A public meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Grand Hall at the Richardson Civic Center, 411 W. Arapaho Road.

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**Anonymous** 14 hours ago

"The reason the HOV lanes are not being utilized is because Richardson residents can't get in," said Plano council member Pat Miner, referring to the pylons that separate the HOV lanes from the other traffic lanes.

No, the reason the HOV lanes are not being used is no one commutes with a friend. Tear out the useless pylons and open all lanes to all traffic, and THEN you'll see the stupid wasteful HOV lanes get used.

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**Anonymous** 5 hours ago

You said it, remove the HOV lane and let the traffic flow.

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**Paul Hurst** 5 hours ago

True, but it is kinda funny they built an HOV lane through Richardson with no access in Richardson.

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**Garrison Griffin** 4 hours ago

Our tax dollars at work???

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