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Collin leaders to TxDOT: Don't toll carpool lanes on 75



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The Texas Department of Transportation's plans to turn Central Expressway [carpool lanes into tolled express lanes](#) just got some serious organized opposition. Several state lawmakers and Collin County commissioners [co-authored a letter](#) yesterday that told new [TxDOT executive director Joe Weber](#) that Collin County residents are essentially feeling toll fatigue. Not surprising since the county's three other major thoroughfares (Dallas North Tollway, President George Bush Turnpike, Sam Rayburn Tollway) are completely tolled.

"There is a strong feeling in our communities that they are already paying too much for travel upon our roadways due to tolling of the three major highway corridors in Collin County," the letter says.

(It's probably important to note here that the TxDOT plan would not toll all of Central — just the underutilized carpool lanes.)

Four of the letter's 12 authors weren't immediately available this morning. Neither was a TxDOT spokesman. But I'll update you when I hear back.

It will soon be more difficult to find a North Texas thoroughfare that doesn't feature some sort of tolling. Here is a look at existing and planned toll roads and highways with toll lanes.

- Existing toll roads
- Planned toll roads
- Planned toll lanes
- Planned partial toll lanes



SOURCES: North Texas Tollway Authority; Texas Department of Transportation; Regional Transportation Council
Staff Graphic

North Texas is about to have [the largest network of managed toll lanes in the country](#). They are being added to some highways — like [LBJ Freeway](#), [Interstate 35E](#) and [State Highways 114 and 183](#) — as a way to finance renovations and widenings. Other highways — like Interstate 30, Central and the eastern portion of LBJ — are seeing their carpool lanes turned into managed toll lanes. The newest addition to that network are the [bridges between 35E and LBJ](#), which open this month.

The state has repeatedly turned to tolling components to pay for road projects. TxDOT for decades has faced funding woes because state lawmakers repeatedly dodge finding meaningful, long-term revenue solutions. Neither state nor federal lawmakers have raised their respective gas taxes, the main funding source for transportation projects, in more than 20 years.

Central is among the minority of North Texas highways that would only have partial tolled lanes. That means carpoolers will still be able to use the express lanes for free — as long as they have a toll tag and register their trip ahead of time online.

The carpool lanes on Central have been controversial since they opened because there is no entrance from or exit to Richardson. Instead, drivers must go all the way from LBJ in North Dallas to central Plano. The officials' letter to TxDOT didn't let an opportunity to point that out slide by.

"The current HOV lane, built with clean air funds, is a constant irritant that causes frustration for many drivers who use US75," the letter says.

So what's their solution? Well, it's one that probably every North Texan would support when it comes to toll lanes.

"While we cannot correct the past, we can immediately add almost twenty percent capacity to our most important commuter highway by opening another general purpose lane on the existing HOV lane," the officials wrote.

[Collin County Officials Oppose TxDOT plan to toll Central HOV Lanes](#)



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