

## **Suggested Name: Interurban Tollway**

**Compliant with Policy: Yes**

**Recommended By: SPOC Committee**

**Background / Significance:** In the first half of the 20th century, interurban railways connected cities in Collin and Denton counties, brought people from rural communities in to the big city, and were system-financed and supported transportation projects.

- Interurban railways were a type of passenger railroad that enjoyed widespread popularity at the turn of the 20th century in North America. Interurbans were often extensions of streetcar lines running between urban areas or between urban and rural areas.
- The Texas Electric Railway (1908 - 1948) linked Denison to Waco, with connections to Fort Worth, Cleburne, and Denton possibly through the “hub” station in Dallas.
- Collin and Denton counties had interurban lines. The Collin County line followed the old Southern Pacific Route through Plano and McKinney north to Denison. The first interurban line in Texas was the Denison and Sherman Railway, completed in 1901.
- The interurban system was self-supported (system financed). The railway was paid for by the riders; the railways had to purchase their right of way, maintain their system, etc.
- At one point, there were 226 miles of interurban railway in central North Texas.
- The railway was meant to be a people mover and bring people into the big cities.
  - The railway brought mail, salesmen and new products to small towns and their stores. It gave rural residents a means to explore the bright lights and big city inexpensively and safely (economic development).
  - Entrepreneurs, capitalizing on ways to market this new transportation, developed systems throughout the U.S. that connected small towns and outlying farms to large, regional cities (forward thinking).
  - Isolated farm families now had easy and affordable access to opportunities and amenities available to urban populations (mobility).
- The Texas Electric Railway interurban provided much-needed transportation through North Central Texas. (1916-1948).

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### Drawbacks/Comments:

- Most interurbans could not survive following the widespread adoption of the automobile.
- The Interurban Railway Museum is located in downtown Plano.
- It is "interurban," not "intraurban."
- For those who would argue the interurbans were not close to the 121 Tollway or other NTTA toll roads:

