



July 9, 2014

Bill Hale, P.E.
Texas Department of Transportation
4777 E. Highway 80
Mesquite, Texas 75150-6643

City Council
Laura Maczka
Mayor
Bob Townsend
Mayor Pro Tem
Mark Solomon
Scott Dunn
Kendal Hartley
Paul Voelker
Steve Mitchell

Dan Johnson
City Manager

RE: US 75 Corridor Express HOV Lane Alternative Plan

Dear Mr. Hale:

The City of Richardson appreciates the opportunity to provide input and feedback throughout the process of evaluating both long term and interim solutions for improving mobility along the US 75 Corridor. Regarding the plan for converting the existing HOV lanes on US 75 to Express Lanes, the City has the following comments and requests:

1. The City of Richardson's US75 Corridor Vision and Guiding Principles (June 2013) states the necessity of having access both into and out of the Managed HOV Lanes in the future. TxDOT's current schematic design for the tolled Express / HOV lane project does not provide access within Richardson. The provision of access in Richardson would greatly benefit the public and eliminate many of the existing safety issues and public confusion regarding the lack of access to these lanes.
2. The City is concerned that elimination of access in Plano as shown on the draft schematics would further confuse the public desiring to use these lanes. This would result in even more motorists illegally driving over the pylons to enter or exit the lanes, thereby making the system even less safe. Richardson requests that the access in Plano be maintained in addition to new access in Richardson being provided.
3. The City is concerned that the proposed enforcement zone will not be an effective or safe means of ensuring toll collection or proper HOV occupancy. DART's enforcement of the HOV lane in the area of the Collins Blvd always resulted in significant delays and congestion to both the HOV and main lanes. This situation creates unnecessary delay and congestion as well as unsafe driving conditions. We request detailed information to understand how technology, officers, and enforcement vehicles would be used to enforce the Express/HOV lane requirements. Specifically, please explain how there would be a need for an "enforcement area" for multi-occupant HOV user registration-violators, when an unregistered lane user will be charged only the default toll rate for their trip (with or without multiple occupants.)



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4. The provision of an Enforcement Area within Richardson would also require widening the median and shifting the main lanes and shoulders outward toward the frontage roads. This would result in the loss of landscaping and beautification in that area, which the City believes must be restored as part of this project.
5. The Enforcement Area is proposed in the same location that is proposed for new access to the HOV Lanes in the latest US 75 Corridor Study. The City believes it would be in the best interest of the public to gain access rather than enforcement in this location.
6. Many existing retaining walls and traffic barriers along US 75 have peeling paint that needs to be maintained. The City requests that the aesthetic appearance of the entire corridor be improved as part of this project and that it be maintained at a higher standard in the future.
7. What is the breakdown of the estimated \$11,000,000 construction costs: each gantry, the enforcement area, and other facility elements?
8. What are the anticipated annual costs for operation and maintenance of the Express/HOV lanes facilities and for enforcement?
9. It seems that toll revenues could exceed \$7,000,000 annually based on the usage and toll rate numbers in the PowerPoint presentation shown at the public meeting. What are TxDOT's revenue estimates?
10. Regarding the Excess Toll Revenue if the HOV's are converted to toll lanes:
 - a. What is the projected timetable for recovering the estimated \$11,000,000 construction cost and other initial costs?
 - b. What are the anticipated annual excess toll revenues, after facility O&M costs?
 - c. What fund or account will toll revenues go to? (district or state control?)
 - d. Who determines how the revenue funds will be allocated?
 - e. The City requests that revenues be designated in part for: improved and more frequent facility maintenance; Incident Management and swift response programs (such as the staging of tow trucks); and the Integrated Corridor Management program.

In closing, we ask TxDOT to take a closer look at preserving and providing additional HOV access locations along the US 75 Corridor, eliminating or relocating the proposed enforcement area, and incorporating the repair of poorly maintained peeling paint along the corridor into the project.

Sincerely,


Laura Maczka
Mayor of Richardson

cc: Stephen Endres, TxDOT