





# Dallas Freeways

In freeway-focused North Texas, Dallas is the most freeway-focused city. Nearly everything of interest in Dallas and the adjacent suburbs is alongside or near a freeway. In recent decades, even the freeways themselves have become architectural monuments as Central Expressway, Woodall Rodgers Freeway and the High Five interchange have been enhanced and embellished with distinctive designs. Since the freeway era began with Central Expressway in 1949, nearly all the large and notable freeway opening celebrations have taken place in Dallas and its adjacent suburbs.

**Also see:**

Chapter 3: Central Expressway, the Original, page 77

Chapter 4: Central Expressway, page 120

Chapter 5: Stemmons Freeway and the John F. Kennedy Assassination, page 151

Chapter 7: Freeway Adventures in the Big City, page 348

Chapter 9: Tom Landry Highway, page 393

There's no doubt, Dallas has earned the honor of being the number one freeway city in North Texas.



## Interstate 35E North Stemmons Freeway

**W**hen Stemmons Freeway opened in Dallas in 1959, the freeway of the future had finally arrived. With its roomy and convenient design, ten main traffic lanes and surrounding wide open spaces to accommodate the city's growth, it was the freeway vision local leaders had worked toward for all of the 1950s. The freeway opening celebration was among the two largest dedication events in the history of North Texas freeways with a formal gala attended by 2400 and an opening-day parade which ranked as Dallas' largest parade up to that time. Stemmons Freeway would go on to become the power corridor of Dallas in the 1960s with its concentration of business and industry, including the Dallas Market Center and numerous major corporate headquarters. For over fifty years after its opening, Stemmons Freeway remained the widest freeway in North Texas when considering regular main lanes for a sustained distance.\*

The freeway itself in Dallas has changed very little since its original construction, standing the test of time better than most 1950s-era freeways but inevitably showing its age. The glamour of the 1960s commercial boom in the lower Stemmons corridor faded long ago and its real estate is largely a relic of the glory days, relying on the Dallas Market Center and Parkland medical complex to remain vibrant while most corporate interests have moved on to trendier developments. Still, the future may be bright

\* In 2013 SH 114 at the DFW Connector north of DFW Airport displaced Stemmons Freeway as the widest freeway in North Texas for a sustained distance.

**Also see:** Photographs of freeway opening events, pages 8-10, 32-33 and 38

**Also see:** Chapter 5, Stemmons Freeway and the John F. Kennedy Assassination, page 151

for lower Stemmons Freeway with redevelopment of the Trinity Industrial District, particularly close to downtown. Plans to widen and modernize lower Stemmons, on hold in 2013, may eventually move forward. And further north in Denton County, the suburban Interstate 35E North corridor has seen continuous growth over the last fifty years. Work on a \$1.4 billion expansion began in 2013, the first phase of a planned \$5 billion upgrade between IH 635 and Denton.

### Origins

Dallas County Commissioners Court initiated formal efforts to build a freeway along the US 77 corridor northwest of downtown in February 1952 when it directed the County Engineer to identify an alignment for the "superexpressway", then called the Highline-Riverview Road, and proceed with acquiring a 250-foot-wide right-of-way strip. In September 1952 a delegation of political and business leaders went to Austin to make a formal proposal to the Texas Transportation Commission for the construction of the freeway. The proposed route at that time was somewhat to the west of the actually built alignment of IH 35E. Local officials continued to lobby for improvements



## Leslie A. Stemmons, 1876-1939



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Dallas native Leslie A. Stemmons was a leader of the effort to build the Trinity River levees, which were completed in 1932. The idea for rerouting the Trinity River and placing the new channel in a wide floodway contained within levees originated after the great flood of 1908 and was officially proposed in a 1911 report prepared by city planner George Kessler. Stemmons' efforts achieved results as the Dallas Levee Improvement District was created in 1926 and voters approved bonds for construction in 1928. Bonds would be repaid by taxes on the 10,500 acres reclaimed from the floodplain, and in 1928 the Industrial Properties Corporation headed by Stemmons was formed to develop the land. During the Great Depression of the 1930s there was no demand for land, so the bonds defaulted as landowners were unable to generate revenue with land sales. Stemmons died in 1939 without seeing his development goal realized. But with economic recovery after World War II and the age of freeways about to begin, the future became bright for the reclaimed land and Industrial Properties Corporation. The land remained mostly undeveloped in the 1950s and provided an ideal path for Interstate 35E. The freeway was officially named Stemmons Freeway in 1954, and in 1955 the Stemmons family donated 102 acres to speed construction. Leslie Stemmons' son John M. Stemmons (1909-2001) would go on to lead Industrial Properties Corporation and become an influential civic leader.<sup>199</sup>

### Quick Facts for Interstate 35E North

- First section in Dallas opened in 1959, freeway complete to Denton in 1963
- Commonly called "Stemmons" or "Stemmons Freeway" in Dallas and the northwest suburbs
- The third-busiest freeway in North Texas with 263,000 vehicles per day north of Woodall Rodgers Freeway in 2010
- Reigned as the widest freeway in North Texas in terms of regular traffic lanes for a sustained distance from 1959 to 2013
- Three miles of toll lanes under construction 2011-2015; \$1.4 billion expansion between IH 635 and Denton under construction between 2014 and 2017

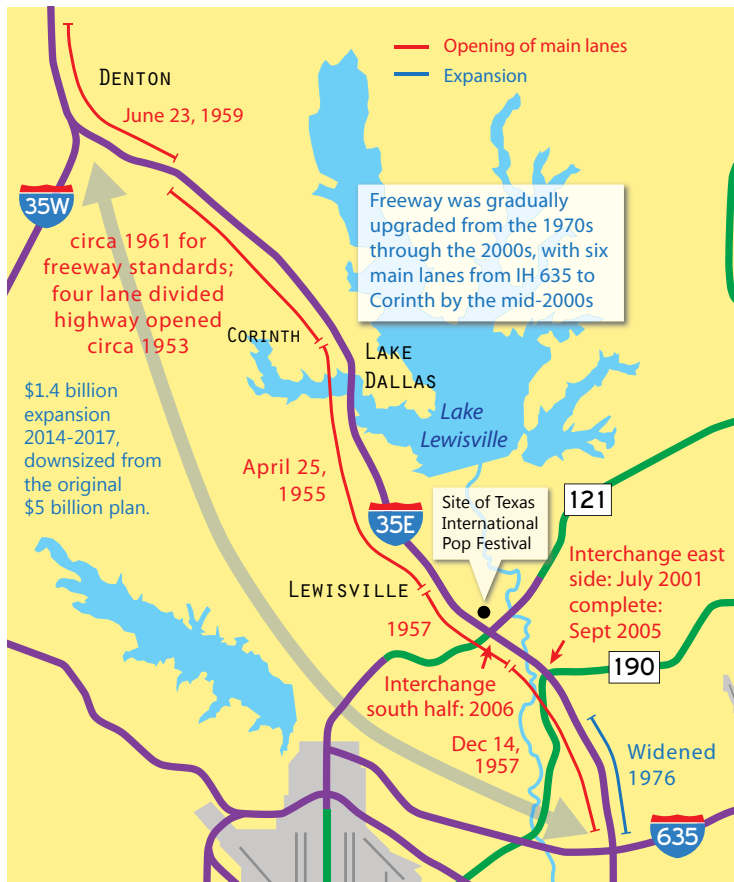
to the existing US 77 (Harry Hines Boulevard), visiting Austin in April 1953 to push for widening of the highway to a four-lane divided facility from Northwest Highway to the Denton County line. State approval and construction funding was secured, but by January 1954 the project was on hold because the right-of-way was not yet acquired. Further north in Denton County the freeway was complete from Lewisville to Lake Dallas in April 1955, including realignment and a new bridge to accommodate the new Lake Lewisville.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, plans were being finalized for IH 35E through downtown Dallas. Dallas was fortunate to have a large undeveloped swath of land along the original Trinity River channel on the west side of downtown, greatly simplifying the task of bringing the freeway through the

### Key Dates in the History

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>1952</b>      | First proposal for a freeway in Dallas County  |
| <b>1953</b>      | First highway on present-day alignment opened in Denton County from Denton to Lake Dallas  |
| <b>1954</b>      | Named Stemmons Freeway   |
| <b>1955</b>      | Land developers donate 182 acres for right-of-way in Dallas; freeway opened in Denton County from Dallas-Denton county line to Lake Dallas   |
| <b>1957</b>      | The first building in the Dallas Market Center, the Home Furnishings Mart, opens   |
| <b>1959</b>      | The Dallas Trade Mart opens in February; eight miles of freeway open in Dallas in December with a huge celebration including a gala and freeway parade                                     |
| <b>1963</b>      | Freeway is completed in Dallas County; the limousine with President Kennedy's body takes Stemmons Freeway from the Dealey Plaza assassination site to Parkland Hospital                    |
| <b>1980</b>      | Reunion Arena opens downtown   |
| <b>2001</b>      | American Airlines Center opens   |
| <b>2009</b>      | Reunion Arena is demolished  |
| <b>2011</b>      | Work begins on the first toll lanes as part of the \$2.7 billion IH 635 reconstruction; plans for a massive \$5 billion expansion from IH 635 to Denton are downsized due to lack of funds |
| <b>2013-2017</b> | Reconstruction of the downtown Mixmaster and first phase of widening between IH 635 and Denton   |





center of the city. By February 1954 TxDOT had identified the location for the downtown Dallas Mixmaster interchange and was beginning to formulate plans. The *Dallas Morning News* reported that "Engineers expect to transform this waste area with a collection of smoothly curving roadways, called an interchange, which will weave over and under each other by means of a number of grade separation structures." The Texas Turnpike Authority purchased the needed right-of-way as part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike project, allowing TxDOT to begin the first phase of Mixmaster construction in 1955.<sup>2</sup>

### Building the Lower Stemmons Freeway

Prior to the signing of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, local governments in Texas were responsible for 100% of the cost of right-of-way for new freeways. With the planned extensive network of freeways in North Texas, local governments faced a huge financial obligation and neither the City of Dallas nor Dallas County had the resources to acquire right-of-way quickly enough to meet demand and expectations. Consequently, progress was slow on the freeway construction program and work on IH 35E, then called the US 77 expressway, was on hold, awaiting right-of-way acquisition.

Original plans for the US 77 expressway aligned it along Harry Hines Boulevard. Dallas Planning Director Marvin Springer and his staff at the planning department reviewed the alignment for potential cost savings and in September 1954 identified a new alignment south and west of Harry Hines, passing through vacant land closer to the Trinity River and eliminating the need to acquire expensive property along Harry Hines. TxDOT approved the new alignment in October 1954, but even with the new alignment the City of Dallas still did not have sufficient funds to purchase the right-of-way. The new alignment crossed through land reclaimed from the Trinity River flood plain by the levees. In recognition of the key role of Leslie A. Stemmons in building the levees, Dallas City Council officially named the freeway Stemmons Freeway on November 8, 1954. It was the first freeway in Dallas to be named for an individual.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps there was another reason for naming it Stemmons Freeway. Much of the land needed for the freeway was owned by the Stemmons family through their Industrial Properties Corporation, headed by John M. Stemmons, son of Leslie A. Stemmons. John Stemmons was developing the Trinity Industrial District on the property, focusing on offices, warehouses, manufacturing plants and light industrial facilities. The freeway would be a great asset to the Trinity Industrial District, speeding trucks and workers in and out of the property. TxDOT had the money ready and was waiting to begin construction—the only holdup







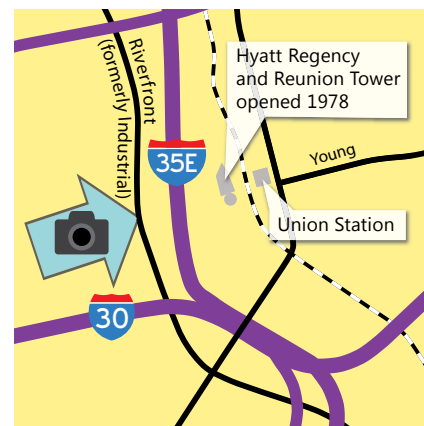
This August 1965 view shows Tom Field Circle, the traffic circle at the intersection of Harry Hines Boulevard and Northwest Highway. Prior to the construction of IH 35E, traffic used US 77 which was aligned on Harry Hines and passed through Field Circle. Field Circle was always among the most accident-prone intersections in Dallas in the 1950s and 1960s, frequently ranking number one in annual accidents. Ironically, the traffic circle was constructed in 1940 to eliminate a dangerous traffic hazard at the junction, then called the Five Points intersection. With the opening of the final section of Stemmons Freeway in 1963, through-traffic was removed from the circle. Field Circle was replaced with a modern-design, grade-separated interchange in 1976.<sup>201</sup>

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### ***Before Stemmons Freeway in Dallas***

This 1954 view shows the prefree-way land use near the Union Station railroad terminal. Union Terminal Park was purchased by the City of Dallas in 1946 and two baseball fields were developed on the property. The east side of the property, close to the railroad station, featured a parking lot and a tunnel underneath the tracks to the station. Plans for IH 35E and the nearby Mixmaster interchange were finalized by 1954, and Union Station Park was gone by 1956 when construction began. IH 35E was built in the near foreground, and in the 1970s the Hyatt Regency and Reunion Tower were built close to the railroad station. Riverfront Boulevard (formerly Industrial Boulevard) is visible at the bottom of this view.<sup>202</sup>

City of Dallas archives





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This 1953 view shows construction of the IH 35E bridge at Lake Lewisville. This branch of the lake was known as Hickory Creek at the time of this photo. The lake's dam was completed in 1954 but the reservoir remained mostly empty due to the severe drought of the 1950s, the worst multiyear drought in Texas history. The drought was finally broken in April 1957 by heavy rains and floods, filling Lake Lewisville and inundating the area shown in the photo.<sup>204</sup>

was the lack of right-of-way.

So officials looking to get the freeway built had an idea: why not convince the landowners to donate the needed right-of-way to speed construction of the freeway? It turned out to be fairly easy to sell John Stemmons on the idea. A few photographs showing the development occurring along Industrial Boulevard (present-day Riverfront Boulevard) and Central Expressway clearly showed the value of highways in promoting development and increasing land prices.<sup>†</sup> Landowners of the Brookhollow and Inwood Industrial Districts further west also agreed to donate land.

It was the first large-scale land donation for urban freeway right-of-way in Texas—a total of 176 acres valued at \$2 million (approximately \$17 million in 2013 dollars) with Stemmons providing 102 acres. The donation was announced by mid-1955, and on May 4, 1956, Stemmons, David Bruton of the Inwood Industrial District and W. C. Windsor Jr of the Brookhollow Industrial District signed the documents to transfer the deeds. Only the section from Oak Lawn Avenue to Commerce Street remained to be acquired with public funds, and Dallas had funds ready for the estimated \$2.5 million cost. Stemmons Freeway was on the fast track to construction, and the dirt would soon be flying.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>†</sup> In a 1981 interview, John M. Stemmons stated that the solicitation for land donation was made by Dewitt Greer, the head of TxDOT. However, press reports from the period indicate that Marvin Springer, planning director for the City of Dallas, was responsible for arranging the land donation. There is no other documentation of Greer's involvement so it is uncertain if Greer was in fact involved or Stemmons referred to the wrong person.<sup>4</sup>

## Reason to Party

Bids for the first construction contract on Stemmons Freeway, the frontage roads north of Oak Lawn, were opened in mid-August 1956, about six weeks after President Eisenhower launched construction of the Interstate Highway System by signing the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 into law on June 29.

Stemmons Freeway was locally reported to be the first completely new highway to start construction under the auspices of the interstate highway program.<sup>‡</sup> By January 1958 all contracts were awarded and construction was proceeding at full speed. Excitement was building to a crescendo for the completion of the six-mile section of Stemmons Freeway in December 1959.<sup>6</sup>

Although North Central Expressway had been completed to McKinney in 1958 and the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike had opened in August 1957, neither represented the vision and promise of Stemmons Freeway. Compared to Stemmons, North Central Expressway seemed to be something out of the dark ages of freeway design with its lack of capacity, roller coaster grades, virtually nonexistent merging space at on-ramps and overall constricted design. The Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike was more modern, but with fewer lanes than Stemmons and the reviled toll booths. Stemmons Freeway was the realization of the

<sup>‡</sup> While Stemmons Freeway may have been the first contract for an all-new freeway, the Federal Highway Administration officially recognizes the date of the first interstate highway contract as August 2, 1956, for IH 44 in Missouri, and the first actual paving on an interstate highway on September 26, 1956, on IH 70 near Topeka, Kansas.<sup>7</sup>

## *the Freeway Right-of-Way Donation*

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In the mid-1950s TxDOT was ready to build Stemmons Freeway but the project was on hold because the City of Dallas, which was responsible for purchasing right-of-way, didn't have the money to buy the land. Land developers donated 176 acres for Stemmons Freeway right-of-way to expedite construction, allowing work to begin nearly immediately. In the upper photo, landowners sign documents to transfer the land to TxDOT on May 4, 1956. From left to right are David Bruton Jr of the Inwood Industrial District (39 acres), W. W. Overton Jr, president of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, John Stemmons of Industrial Properties Corporation (102 acres) and W. C. Windsor Jr of the Brookhollow Industrial District (35 acres). The land was worth approximately \$17 million in 2013 dollars. In the lower

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photo, Dallas Mayor R. L. "Bob" Thornton presents a plaque to the Stemmons family in appreciation of the land donation. From left to right are John Stemmons, Mrs L. Storey Stemmons, Mrs Elizabeth Stemmons Bishop of New York City, L. Storey Stemmons, Mayor Thornton, Mrs Leslie A. Stemmons Jr, Mrs Leslie A. Stemmons, widow of the freeway namesake, Leslie A. Stemmons Jr, and Mrs John Stemmons.<sup>205</sup>





This September 1956 view shows work just underway on Stemmons Freeway at Inwood Road. Construction crews had traced out a path on land that was formerly the Trinity River flood plain. The original channel of the Trinity River is visible on the right. Construction of the levees and rerouting of the river in 1932 reclaimed the land from the flood plain and made it an ideal path for the freeway, much less disruptive than the original plan of running the freeway along Harry Hines Boulevard. Below is a nearly identical perspective from August 1958 with the frontage lanes open to traffic and construction of the overpass at Inwood underway.

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Industrial Properties Corporation

dream freeway with its modern design, unprecedented ten main lanes, frontage roads and convenient connections. A little bit of celebration and bragging was called for.

In fact, there was so much celebrating to do that the opening ceremonies spanned three days. On Friday evening, December 4, a banquet for 2400 was held in the grand courtyard of the Dallas Trade Mart, with attendees filling up the floor and the balconies. The atmosphere was like a Hollywood gala, and two big names from the entertainment industry, Yvonne de Carlo and Kirby Grant, were in attendance.<sup>§</sup> On the menu: a multi-course meal featuring roast prime rib and lobster thermador. The evening's festivities concluded when the crowd gathered at the corner of Inwood Road and Stemmons Freeway for the lighting of

§ Yvonne de Carlo (1922-2007) was a film and television actress with a career spanning from 1941 to 1995. Her best-known roles were opposite Charlton Heston in *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and as Lily Munster in the television series *The Munsters* (1964-1966). Kirby Grant (1911-1985) was a television and B-movie actor best known for his lead role in the television series *Sky King* (1951-1959) in which the storylines featured Grant's character using an airplane.





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This view looks northwest along the Stemmons Freeway corridor in October 1957 with frontage road construction underway. The freeway corridor was nearly completely vacant except for Cobb Stadium in the foreground and the Home Furnishings Mart just past the stadium. Work was about to begin on the Dallas Trade Mart on the property adjacent to the Home Furnishings Mart. Cobb Stadium, owned by the Dallas public school district and called Dal-Hi Stadium until 1957, was demolished in 1985 and replaced by the Infomart office building. The Home Furnishings Mart was renovated and re-named the International Trade Plaza in 1999. This photo appeared in the October 13, 1957, edition of the *Dallas Times Herald*.<sup>210</sup>

the freeway Christmas tree, which was encircled by decorations from New York's Rockefeller Center.<sup>8</sup>

To formally open the freeway Saturday morning, political officials gathered in the bed of a pickup truck which smashed through a ceremonial wood beam highway barrier as fireworks popped and balloons were released. The first traffic on the freeway was the Stemmons Freeway parade, a two-hour event featuring 300 items on display, easily qualifying as the longest parade in Dallas up to that time. The theme of the parade was the "Cavalcade of Transportation", illustrating the development and progress of transportation beginning with an Indian riding a pony and completing with the 1960 model year vehicles. In between, just about everything that could be paraded on a freeway was included: covered wagons, army tanks, a military rocket, military equipment, a 200-bed mobile hospital, fire trucks and an airplane with Grant in the cockpit, as well as the usual complement of marching bands, drill teams and

horses. As the parade wrapped up there was a flyover of nine C-119 aircraft, a military transport nicknamed the flying boxcar. Due to the 40-degree cold and 20 mile-per-hour winds, many spectators watched the parade from their vehicles parked on and alongside the freeway, prophetically inaugurating the freeway as a figurative "parking lot". By the afternoon motorists were cruising the new Stemmons Freeway, enjoying the wide expanse of lanes which had never before been seen in North Texas. An exhibit called "Pathways to Freeways" featuring roadbuilding equipment, antique cars, midget auto races and firefighting demonstrations continued on Sunday to complete the three-day celebration.<sup>9</sup>

### North of Dallas

Steady progress was being made on IH 35E north of Dallas in the late 1950s. A particularly dangerous six-mile section of the original US 77 between Lewisville and Carrollton,





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This April 2, 1957, view from the Dallas Morning News Building shows construction of Stemmons Freeway downtown, with Union Station in the foreground and the partially complete overpass at Reunion Boulevard (then Rock Island Road) in the background. Oh, there was also a historic event taking place on the day of this photo—the Oak Cliff tornado, a landmark event in the history of meteorology. The Oak Cliff tornado was the first tornado to be extensively photographed through all phases of its life cycle, greatly contributing to scientific understanding of tornadoes. For additional information about the tornado and another photo, see page 99.<sup>211</sup>

called the “death stretch” by local residents due to its high fatality rate, was upgraded to freeway standards and dedicated in a ceremony on the Valwood Parkway overpass on December 14, 1957. Engineers at Texas Instruments built a high-tech electrical device to cut the ribbon, using a photovoltaic cell to convert sunlight to electricity and then running the current through transistor amplifiers to create an electrical arc to burn through the ribbon (see photos page 38). It was the first high-tech stunt used for a North Texas freeway opening, and thanks to both ingenuity and bright sunshine it was a success.<sup>10</sup>

Original plans called for IH 35E between Loop 12 and IH 635 LBJ Freeway to be built along Harry Hines Boulevard, which was then the alignment of US 77. However, passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 made 90% federal funding available for right-of-way acquisition, and in August 1957 TxDOT revealed the new alignment west



Industrial Properties Corporation

**Miss Stemmons Freeway** Martha Ann "Tina" Heath (1942-2006), a 1961 graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School who also served as Miss Dallas 1961, was chosen to be Miss Stemmons Freeway for the 1959 opening celebration. She was featured at the opening gala, shown in the photo, and on a float in the freeway parade.<sup>213</sup>

The gala's program cover featured flags of Canada and Mexico in recognition of Canadian and Mexican officials in attendance, as well as the fact that Interstate 35, when complete, would connect Laredo at the Mexican border to north Minnesota near the Canadian border. Canada had not yet adopted the maple leaf as its flag in 1959.



The celebration on Saturday, December 5, 1959, was kicked off when officials gathered in the back of a pickup truck to break through the ceremonial opening barrier on Stemmons Freeway as fireworks popped and balloons were released. The Stemmons Freeway parade began soon afterward. See additional photo of the barrier-breaking on page 8.







Industrial Properties Corporation

This view shows the Stemmons Freeway opening parade on December 5, 1959. It was the largest parade held in Dallas up to that time, featuring around 300 items on display. At the bottom of the photo the three floats representing Interstate 35, Canada and Mexico are positioned to join the parade. For additional photos of the parade and opening, see pages 8-10.



Industrial Properties Corporation

A large ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of Stemmons Freeway on August 15, 1963. Kids grab some Stemmons Freeway balloons in the left photo, and below the crowd watches the color guard. The ceremony also featured a high-tech ribbon-cutting using signals from Canada and Mexico. See additional photos on page 32.



Industrial Properties Corporation

This view looks southbound (in a southeast direction) toward downtown in 1963 showing the freeway at the Oak Lawn Avenue overpass. The original bridge structure did not have interior or exterior shoulders, which were later added.

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These views of the original Stemmons Freeway, at the curve near Oak Lawn Avenue circa 1960 (above) and at Inwood Road in October 1962, show that the freeway lacked a median barrier and opposing traffic was separated only by the paved median with low curbs. Construction on the median barrier at these locations was underway in December 1963. The color photo certainly suggests that turquoise was a popular color for autos in the late 1950s.<sup>214</sup>

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of Harry Hines Boulevard and authorized right-of-way acquisition. The final section of Stemmons Freeway opened on August 15, 1963, with a large ceremony featuring a ribbon cutting by electrical impulses from teletype signals originating from buttons pressed on the desks of the governor of Nuevo Leon, Mexico in Monterrey and the Attorney General of Ontario, Canada, in Toronto.<sup>11</sup>

### The Stemmons Freeway Boom

Dallas was booming in the 1950s and John Stemmons' Trinity Industrial District was poised for a new wave of growth with the opening of the freeway. Construction of warehouses and offices continued, but the development which became a lasting landmark is the Dallas Market Center, located alongside the freeway just north of downtown. John Stemmons and Trammell Crow first met by chance in 1948 at a garden show while waiting for their wives to





TxDOT Travel Information Division



The Marriott Motor Hotel was a landmark on the southeast corner of Stemmons Freeway and Market Center Boulevard from its opening in 1960 until its demolition in 1989. The above photo is from circa 1960 and the lower photo is from circa 1970. The hotel featured drive-in registration windows, allowing guests to register from their cars and then proceed to park in the 600-space guest lot. After an expansion to 500 rooms completed in September 1963, J. Willard Marriott Sr proclaimed the hotel to be the world's largest motor hotel. Motor hotels and motels were a growth industry as the Interstate Highway System took shape in the 1950s and 1960s. Although the hotel remained popular and continued to perform well financially in the late 1980s, its dated design was no longer representative of the Marriott brand, so in 1988 the decision was made to raze the property and redevelop it with two new hotels.<sup>216</sup>

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Author, April 2012

This April 2012 view shows the Dallas Market Center along Stemmons Freeway with the Market Center Boulevard crossing in the foreground. The Dallas Market Center was the first large-scale commercial development along Stemmons Freeway and continues to be vibrant in 2013 while most of the freeway corridor's commercial property is well past its prime. The Home Furnishings Mart on the right side of the photo, opened in 1957, was renovated in 1999 and renamed the International Trade Plaza. The building on the left is the Dallas Trade Mart opened in 1959 and in the middle is the World Trade Center, opened in 1974 and expanded in 1979. For more information on the Dallas Trade Mart and the John F. Kennedy assassination, see page 177.

finish shopping. It was the beginning of a partnership that would transform the landscape along Stemmons Freeway, with Stemmons providing the land and Crow constructing the buildings for the Dallas Market Center (DMC).<sup>12</sup>

The DMC serves as a showroom for manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors who display their products to retail industry buyers at approximately fifty industry-specific events throughout the year. Originally focused on home furnishings, the DMC has grown to include apparel, fabric, lighting, toys, holiday decorations and gifts.

The DMC had its origins in 1953 when representatives from the furniture and home furnishings industries asked Crow to build a single location for displaying merchandise. The Dallas Decorative Center opened in 1955 just south of the freeway and the first building located alongside Stemmons Freeway, the Home Furnishings Mart, opened in 1957. The Dallas Trade Mart, opened in February 1959, was the first large-scale building in the DMC complex and firmly established the DMC as a regional hub for the

industry. Growth continued steadily in the following years with the Dallas Market Hall in 1960, Apparel Mart in 1964 (demolished in 2007), World Trade Center in 1974, Infomart in 1985 (no longer part of the DMC) and numerous expansions of the existing facilities. Trammell Crow took full control of the DMC in 1972. In 2013 the DMC promotes itself as the most complete wholesale merchandise resource in the world, with 5 million square feet of space in its four buildings along Stemmons Freeway.<sup>13</sup>

Several prestigious corporate names made their home in the Stemmons Freeway corridor during its glory days. Frito-Lay, formed by the 1961 merger of Dallas' Frito Company and Atlanta's H.W. Lay Company, was headquartered at Exchange Park on Harry Hines Boulevard about a mile from the freeway until relocating to a new campus in Plano in 1986. Braniff International Airways was also headquartered at Exchange Park from 1957 until it moved to Dallas-Fort Worth Airport in 1978, four years before its 1982 bankruptcy. Mary Kay Cosmetics began with a small



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This view from circa 1967 looks southbound along Stemmons Freeway with the Dallas North Tollway interchange just ahead. On the left is the most recognizable billboard in North Texas, featuring an artificial waterfall which has promoted various products over the years. The billboard was built in 1962 on Goat Hill overlooking Stemmons Freeway to promote Pearl Lager beer, with the sign touting its origins “from the country of 1100 springs”. The billboard was completely renovated in 2009 with a new waterfall to promote its product at that time, Coors Light.<sup>219</sup>

Author, September 2009

office at Exchange Park in 1963, expanding into other facilities in the Stemmons Freeway corridor and opening its headquarters building at the corner of Stemmons and Regal Row in 1977 where it remained until relocating to Addison in 1995. A remaining corporate headquarters in 2013 is industrial manufacturer Trinity Industries at 2525 Stemmons Freeway.<sup>14</sup>

For many, the first industry that comes to mind with the mention of Stemmons Freeway is the adult entertainment industry. Running parallel to Stemmons Freeway just to the east, Harry Hines Boulevard between Northwest Highway and LBJ Freeway was historically a mecca for topless bars, adult bookstores, nude modeling studios, “hot-sheet” motels and lingerie studios. In its illicit heyday

during the 1980s, Harry Hines Boulevard was known as “Hooker Hines” in recognition of the widespread prostitution in the corridor. Law enforcement eliminated most illegal activity by the early 1990s, and there has been a shift to more law-abiding, upscale “gentlemen’s clubs” in the area. Since the area consists mostly of warehouses and office buildings with no nearby neighborhoods, churches or schools, it is an ideal location to concentrate adult-oriented businesses and not incite community opposition. In 2013 the area around the intersection of Stemmons Freeway and Northwest Highway is the hub of the Dallas gentlemen’s club industry. And as long as the law permits, it’s a safe bet that it will be an enduring industry in the Stemmons Freeway corridor.<sup>15</sup>



## *the Texas International Pop Festival, Lewisville*

The Texas version of Woodstock took place along Stemmons Freeway in Lewisville on Labor Day weekend 1969, just two weeks after the original Woodstock Music and Art Fair in Bethel, New York, the watershed event for the 1960s hippie counterculture. Officially called the Texas International Pop Festival, the three-day event took place on the grounds of the Dallas International Motor Speedway drag strip just east of the present-day intersection of Stemmons Freeway and Hebron Parkway. The event drew 120,000 attendees to see some of the biggest names in music of the era, including Led Zeppelin, Chicago, Janis Joplin, Santana and Sly & the Family Stone. In the photo below, parked vehicles filled vacant land alongside the freeway with the main stage visible in the upper right of the photo. Dallas International Motor Speedway opened in 1969 and closed in 1973 after years of financial difficulty. The site is now apartment complexes.<sup>221</sup>



*Dallas Morning News*







Dallas Public Library<sup>220</sup>

This evening view from winter 1974 shows Stemmons Freeway at the Dallas North Tollway. The billboard on Goat Hill, on the left edge of the photo, was promoting Salem cigarettes. This photo suggests that the traffic pattern in 1974, just like today, was heavier traffic and congestion on the inbound freeway during evening rush hour. Also visible in this photo is the Dallas Steam Power Generating Plant (also called the Dallas Power and Light Plant) and site of the future American Airlines Center. See page 201 for more about American Airlines Center.

## Future Plans

Plans have been developed for a massive rebuild of Stemmons Freeway from the downtown Mixmaster to Denton. In general, one free main lane in each direction and two tolled “managed” lanes in each direction will be added, although plans vary from section to section.

The first actual construction is the elevated managed lanes in northwest Dallas between Loop 12 and IH 635 LBJ Freeway, underway in 2011 as part of the \$2.7 billion rebuild of LBJ Freeway with a public-private partnership scheduled for completion in 2015. The downtown Mixmaster and adjacent bridges over the Trinity River on IH 35E and IH 30 received funding in 2011 for reconstruction between 2013 and 2016 in a project named the Horseshoe.<sup>16</sup>

The next section slated for work is north of LBJ Freeway to Denton, a 29-mile stretch originally planned to have eight general-purpose lanes, four toll lanes and improved

frontage roads. In 2011 the project’s estimated cost was \$4.7 billion, including \$1.2 billion for right-of-way acquisition. In November 2011 TxDOT announced that available public funding and private investment based on revenue from the toll lanes fell far short of the \$4.7 billion price tag. In March 2012 officials developed a new, downsized plan with a price tag around \$1.4 billion, consistent with available public funding. The downsized project generally adds one new free lane in each direction and includes two reversible tolled lanes in the center of the freeway rather than the originally planned four toll lanes. The smaller freeway footprint allows it to fit in the existing right-of-way. The original plan could be fully realized in a future phase if public funding is available and toll revenue can support it.<sup>17</sup>

Expansion of lower Stemmons Freeway, from downtown to Loop 12, is part of the comprehensive Project





Angel Aguirre, AGL Constructors, October 2013

Denton County elected officials shovel ceremonial dirt at the kickoff event for the 35E Express project on October 3, 2013. The \$1.4 billion first phase of work on the overall \$5 billion planned expansion from IH 635 to Denton will include new regular traffic lanes, managed lanes, a new bridge over Lake Lewisville and new direct connection ramps at the interchange with SH 121/Sam Rayburn Tollway. In the photo from left to right: Commissioner Hugh Coleman, Commissioner Ron Marchant, County Judge Mary Horn, Commissioner Bobbie J. Mitchell and Commissioner Andy Eads.



At the south end of Stemmons Freeway, work began in 2013 on the \$798 million Horseshoe Project. The Horseshoe project will rebuild the downtown Mixmaster interchange with Interstate 30 and construct new bridges over the Trinity River for both Interstates 35E and 30.

Author, November 2013

Pegasus plan to modernize all freeways on the south and west sides of downtown. In 2013 Project Pegasus has been placed on hold due to lack of funding with no construction planned prior to 2035, but Project Pegasus could be revived if the planned Trinity Parkway toll road paralleling the freeway is canceled (see page 328 for details on the Trinity Parkway). Since the Trinity Parkway's main purpose is to provide traffic relief to lower Stemmons,

construction of the parkway could mean an indefinite delay or perhaps cancellation of improvements for lower Stemmons. If the Trinity Parkway is not built, improvements to lower Stemmons will become more critical and the project will likely become a higher priority. As always, everything depends on the availability of funding which is always uncertain. ■





UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>222</sup>

**Reunion Arena, 1980-2009** This June 1980 view shows Reunion Arena at the southern tip of Stemmons Freeway just after the arena opened in April 1980. The arena served as Dallas' main venue for sports, concerts and special events until the opening of American Airlines Center in 2001 about a mile north on Stemmons Freeway. Two notable events at the arena were the 1984 Republican National Convention and the 1986 NCAA Final Four. The downtown Dallas skyline was still underdeveloped in 1980. The wave of construction from the early to mid-1980s defined downtown, transforming it with numerous architecturally distinctive skyscrapers. After American Airlines Center opened, Reunion Arena was minimally used and became a money loser for the City of Dallas. In June 2008 Dallas City Council voted to close the arena, and it was demolished in 2009. As the July 2009 photo below shows, the interior of the arena was removed, leaving only the roof. The roof was pulled down and dismantled for scrap. The site is targeted for redevelopment and was transferred to private ownership in December 2012.<sup>223</sup>

Author, July 2009







UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>224</sup>

This September 1965 view shows Stemmons Freeway and the site which would become American Airlines Center 36 years later. American Airlines Center, opened on July 28, 2001, with a concert by the Eagles, was built on the grassy area just beyond the water tank. The Dallas Steam Power Generating Plant (also called the Dallas Power and Light Plant) was located just south of the arena location. It remained operational until 1995 and was demolished in 2002 to clear the way for the Victory Park real estate development. The \$420 million American Airlines Center has been a huge success, allowing the City of Dallas to pay off its \$125 million in bonds for the arena in 2011, ten years ahead of schedule. The adjacent Victory Park retail development, however, performed far below expectations and was mostly vacant in 2012.<sup>225</sup>

Author, May 2005







Author, April 2011

Two new multilevel interchanges were built in the 2000s on IH 35E north of Dallas. Above is the four-level interchange at the Bush Turnpike, looking northbound along IH 35E in April 2011. The east (right) half of the interchange opened in July 2001 in conjunction with the adjacent section of the turnpike, and the west side opened in September 2005 with the opening of the turnpike to the south. The view below looks northbound along IH 35E toward the five-level interchange at SH 121/Sam Rayburn Tollway, opened in July 2006. Only the south side of the interchange was built and four new ramps will be added as part of the freeway expansion with construction between 2014 and 2017.

Author, April 2011







Author, May 2005

This May 2005 view looks southbound at Medical District Drive (formerly Motor Street). The first large building on the left (not in the immediate foreground) was the Dallas Apparel Mart, demolished in 2007.

Stemmons Freeway had its glory days in the 1960s when it was the corporate power corridor in Dallas. By the 1980s companies were leaving the corridor for newer, trendier developments and the adult entertainment industry became well-established along the freeway. Nearly all the gentlemen's clubs in Dallas are in the Stemmons Freeway corridor, with the densest concentration around the intersection with Northwest Highway. This view shows a billboard along Stemmons Freeway for the XTC Cabaret near Regal Row.

Author, December 2011

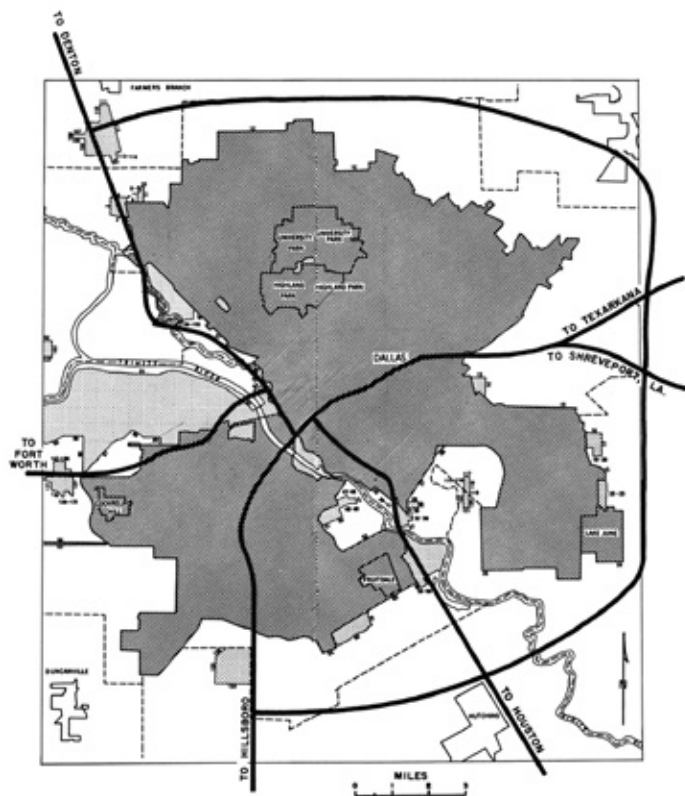




# Interstate 635

## Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway

The idea of a loop bypass which ultimately became Interstate 635 appears to have originated in the summer of 1955 when the head of the TxDOT Dallas district office recommended its addition to the regional plan. The bypass was in the original plan for highways to be included in the Interstate Highway System, the so-called “Yellow Book” which was published in September 1955. The Yellow Book planning map showed a bypass loop from present-day IH 35E North to IH 35E South. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 launched the large-scale construction of the Interstate Highway System and the route appeared on local planning maps starting in 1957. Right-of-way acquisition was underway in 1958 and the process was relatively painless compared to the freeways built near the city center since the alignment crossed mostly undeveloped prairie and farmland. The only casualties were three



This is the original plan for Interstate 635 as shown in the 1955 “Yellow Book”, the report which proposed highways to be included in the Interstate Highway System. The freeway extended from IH 35E north of Dallas to IH 35E south of Dallas.

**Also see:** Photographs of the freeway opening events, pages 31, 37 and 39; Lady Bird Johnson at event, page 23; the High Five Interchange, pages 136-141; the cookie-cutter interchanges, page 321

### Quick Facts for Interstate 635

- First section opened in 1967, freeway complete in 1981
- Commonly called “LBJ” in Dallas
- The second-busiest freeway in North Texas (after Central Expressway), with 266,000 vehicles per day near Preston Road in 2010
- Was featured in the opening sequence of the 1999 cult classic film *Office Space*

### Key Dates in the History

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>1955</b>      | First planning for the freeway, which is included in the “Yellow Book” original blueprint for the Interstate Highway System; Texas Instruments buys 300 acres for its north Dallas campus along Central Expressway at the future location of LBJ Freeway |
| <b>1956</b>      | The freeway from IH 35E North to IH 35E South becomes part of the originally designated Interstate Highway System  |
| <b>1961</b>      | Named Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway  |
| <b>1967</b>      | The first section of freeway opens   |
| <b>1970</b>      | The first modern-design four-level interchanges in North Texas open at IH 30 and US 80   |
| <b>1971</b>      | The south section is designated as Interstate 20; Town East Mall opens in Mesquite   |
| <b>1973</b>      | Valley View Mall opens in north Dallas   |
| <b>1981</b>      | The final section in northwest Dallas County opens, completing the freeway   |
| <b>1982</b>      | Galleria Dallas opens at the Dallas North Tollway  |
| <b>1980s</b>     | The LBJ Freeway corridor in north Dallas is at the peak of its real estate value   |
| <b>1997</b>      | HOV lanes open from IH 35E to US 75  |
| <b>2000s</b>     | Real estate along the LBJ Freeway corridor in Dallas goes into decline   |
| <b>2005</b>      | The High Five interchange opens at US 75   |
| <b>2008</b>      | HOV lanes open from US 75 to IH 30   |
| <b>2011-2015</b> | \$2.7 billion reconstruction and expansion from IH 35E to US 75, with all new lanes tolled   |
| <b>Future</b>    | Expansion east of US 75  |



## Lyndon B. Johnson 1908-1973

At 2:39 PM on November 22, 1963, aboard a warm and crowded cabin of Air Force One at Dallas Love Field, Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn in as the 36th president of the United States just two hours after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. It was the culmination of perhaps the most remarkable career in Texas politics, rising from modest means in central Texas through a succession of increasingly powerful positions until fate handed him the presidency.<sup>226</sup>

Johnson was born August 27, 1908, in Stonewall, Texas, 60 miles west of Austin. In 1937 at the age of 29 he attained his first elected position as United States representative, which he held until seeking a Senate seat in 1948. The 1948 Democratic primary runoff was among the most legendary elections in Texas history, with the infamous late-arriving and allegedly fraudulent ballot box from Jim Wells County providing a 201-to-1 vote margin for Johnson in the election which he ultimately won by 87 votes. Johnson went on to become Senate Majority Leader in 1955 and joined John F. Kennedy on the 1960 democratic ticket as vice president. Kennedy and Johnson won the close election with Johnson delivering Texas to the Democrats, although Texas alone was not decisive in the electoral vote count.<sup>227</sup>

Dallas City Council named Interstate 635 the Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway on October 2, 1961, while Johnson was still vice president. Of course, the events of November 22, 1963, propelled Johnson into a turbulent presidency and made him a highly influential figure in United States and world history. On domestic issues Johnson is known for his Great Society social programs including Medicare and Medicaid. He also presided over the construction of the Interstate Highway System, which had been underway since 1956 and continued at full speed in the mid-1960s. But foreign policy and in particular the Vietnam War ultimately undermined his presidency and on March 31, 1968, Johnson announced "I shall not seek and I will not accept the nomination of my party as your president." Johnson died on January 22, 1973, at his central Texas ranch.<sup>228</sup>



Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

This famous photograph shows Lyndon Johnson being sworn in as the 36th president of the United States on Air Force One at Dallas Love Field. Jackie Kennedy is to LBJ's left; Lady Bird Johnson, the new first lady, is to LBJ's right. Only four other presidents have taken the oath of office outside of Washington DC—George Washington, Chester Arthur, Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge.



Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

President Johnson greets a guest after addressing the delegates of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association convention at Dallas Municipal Auditorium on February 27, 1968. It was Johnson's first and only visit to Dallas during his presidency, coming more than four years after the assassination which unexpectedly made him president. In the background is Johnson's daughter Luci, wearing a yellow outfit. Also looking on are Miss Rural Electrification and Miss Texas Rural Electrification, both sporting big hair.<sup>229</sup>





UT-Arlington Library Special Collections, 1958<sup>230</sup>

**Preston at LBJ, 1958** This December 1958 view looks west along Valley View Lane with the Preston Road intersection at the lower left. LBJ Freeway was built along Valley View Lane with work underway in 1964. A Sears store opened in the foreground in 1965 and Valley View Mall opened in 1973. The corridor was fully urbanized by the 1980s. Below is a similar view in June 2009. In 2012 work was in progress on the \$2.7 billion LBJ Express project.

Author, June 2009

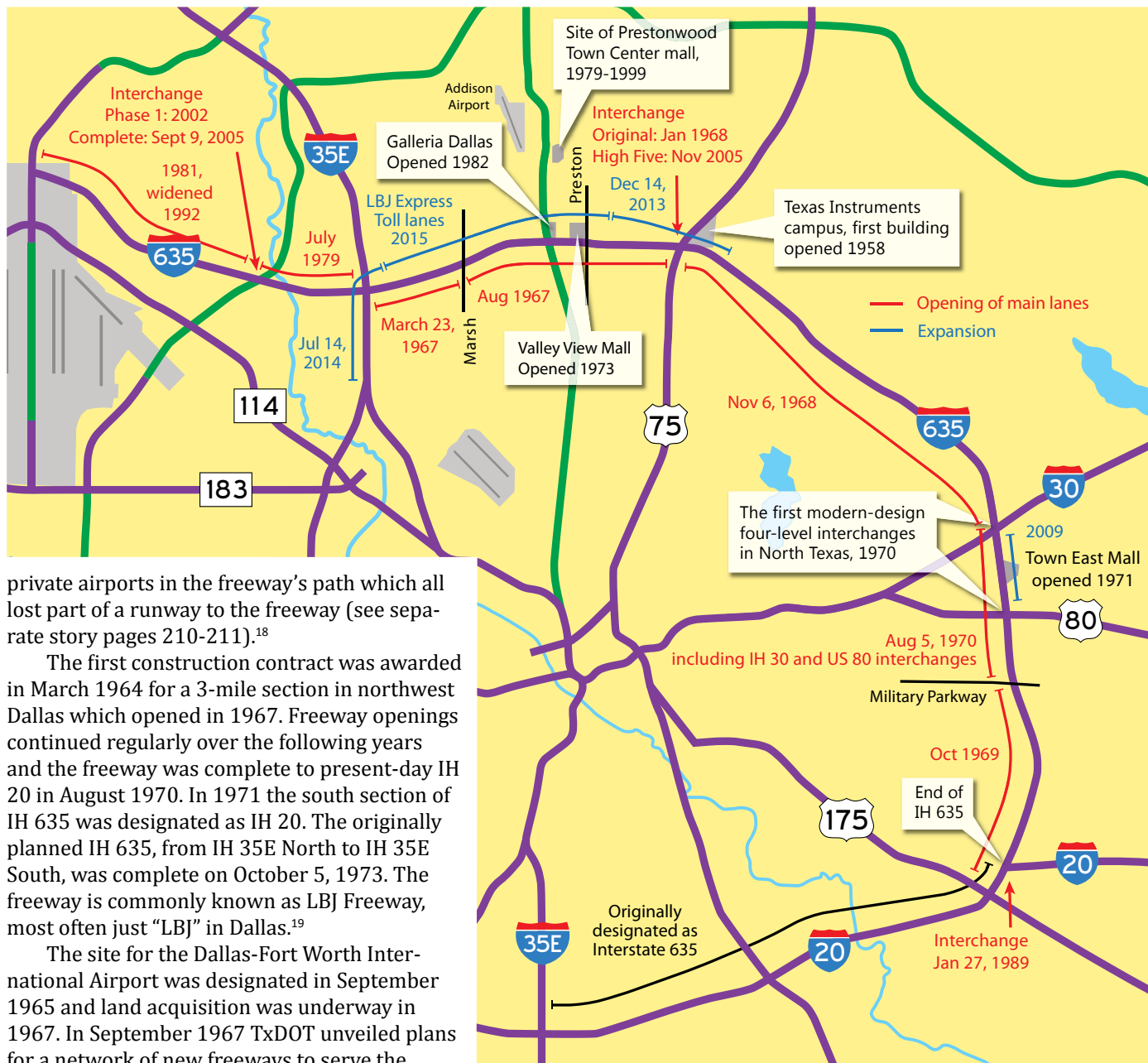






UT-Arlington Library Special Collections, 1965<sup>231</sup>

This view looks west over LBJ freeway in October 1965 when construction was well underway. Preston Road crosses from left to right in the lower part of the photo. The Sears store on the northwest corner of the LBJ-Preston intersection opened in 1965, and Valley View Mall opened adjacent to the Sears store in 1973.



private airports in the freeway's path which all lost part of a runway to the freeway (see separate story pages 210-211).<sup>18</sup>

The first construction contract was awarded in March 1964 for a 3-mile section in northwest Dallas which opened in 1967. Freeway openings continued regularly over the following years and the freeway was complete to present-day IH 20 in August 1970. In 1971 the south section of IH 635 was designated as IH 20. The originally planned IH 635, from IH 35E North to IH 35E South, was complete on October 5, 1973. The freeway is commonly known as LBJ Freeway, most often just "LBJ" in Dallas.<sup>19</sup>

The site for the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport was designated in September 1965 and land acquisition was underway in 1967. In September 1967 TxDOT unveiled plans for a network of new freeways to serve the airport, including the 9-mile westward extension of IH 635 in northwest Dallas County to the north entrance of the airport. Officials hoped to have all the new freeways complete by the airport's planned opening date in 1972 (which slipped to January 1974), but the extension of IH 635 would take much longer.<sup>20</sup>

Public hearings for the western extension were held in 1969 and right-of-way acquisition was underway in 1972. In 1973 the Federal Highway Administration denied TxDOT's request to add the extension to the Interstate Highway System, citing a freeze which prevented the addition of any new mileage. As a practical matter, this meant that the project would receive only 50% federal financing rather than the 90% for interstate highways, delaying the project several years. During this period TxDOT finances were in steep decline with funds for new construction becoming

very scarce due to rampant inflation of highway construction costs and stagnant fuel tax revenue.<sup>21</sup>

Fortunately the bad news was temporary, and the western extension of IH 635 was officially designated as an interstate highway in July 1974, providing the much-needed 90% federal funding to get the project moving. Construction was underway in 1975 and the entire Interstate 635 was complete in December 1981.<sup>22</sup>

### Business is Good

Texas Instruments acquired 300 acres along North Central Expressway in 1955 for its new campus and work on the first building was underway in 1956. The initial planning for IH 635 was also in 1955, placing the tentative alignment very close to the campus. The final alignment placed the freeway alongside the south edge of the campus. The



Dallas Public Library, 1959<sup>22</sup>

This 1959 view looks north at the site of the future LBJ Freeway near the Texas Instruments campus. LBJ was built across the lower part of the photo, with work underway in 1965. At the time of this photo the Semiconductor Building, opened in June 1958, was the only manufacturing facility on the Texas Instruments campus and work was in progress on the first expansion.

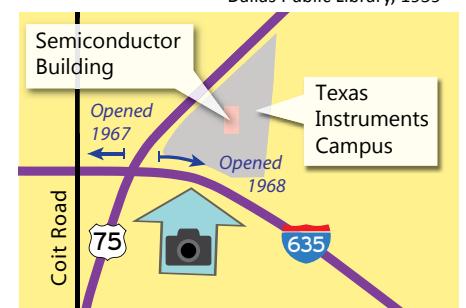
Texas Instruments north Dallas campus, on the north-east corner of LBJ and Central Expressway, experienced phenomenal growth during the 1960s, adding several buildings and expanding employment to around 25,000 by 1969. The opening of IH 635 at the TI campus in 1967 and 1968 was certainly a godsend for employees commuting from the east and west.<sup>23</sup>

The LBJ Freeway corridor quickly became the business and retail backbone of affluent north Dallas after its opening in 1967. Developer Trammell Crow announced plans for up to 30 office buildings at the Park Central development on LBJ at Coit Road in June 1970, built on the property of the former Highland Park Airport. Valley View Mall opened in 1973, incorporating the Sears store which opened in 1965. The crown jewel of LBJ commercial

development, Galleria Dallas, opened in 1982 and was accompanied by numerous large office buildings and hotels. With the opening of the Galleria, LBJ Freeway featured two very large shopping malls within a half-mile of each other, with a third major mall, Prestonwood Town Center\*, only two miles to the north along the Dallas North Tollway.<sup>24</sup>

The LBJ corridor in north Dallas reached the peak of its commercial success in the 1980s and 1990s, but by the 2000s the glamour of the corridor was fading due to aging structures, declining demographics and competi-

\* Prestonwood Town Center mall closed in 1999 and the two remaining anchor stores closed in 2001. Final demolition took place in 2004



# LBJ Freeway **Airport Destroyer**

The path of LBJ Freeway across the north and east fringe of Dallas was mostly vacant land in the early 1960s, making right-of-way acquisition for the freeway relatively easy and minimally disruptive. But LBJ Freeway took a toll on local general aviation, impacting three small airports and likely accelerating the closure of all three.

Opened in 1951, Park Cities Airport at the southeast corner of LBJ and IH 35E Stemmons Freeway lost 200 feet of its main runway in 1964 when the first construction project on LBJ began. The airport did not close immediately, but was closed sometime during the period of 1965

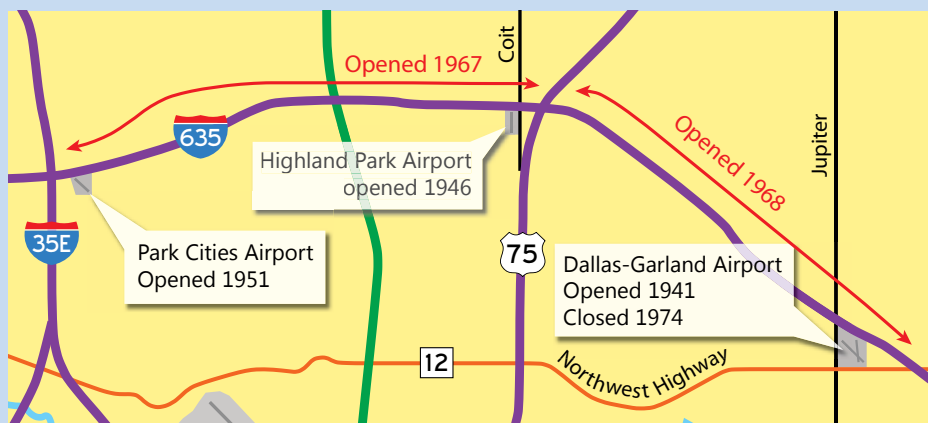
to 1967 and was developed with a car dealership and warehouse-style businesses.<sup>233</sup>

Highland Park Airport at the southwest corner of LBJ and Coit Road opened in 1946 and was the best-known private airport in north Dallas. It lost approximately 150 feet of its runway to freeway construction in 1964, reducing it to a barely adequate 2300 feet, well below the desired minimum of 2800 to 3000 feet at the time. Thirteen hangars were displaced, and only three could be moved to remaining airport property. A 1964 news report stated that Highland Park Airport already had plans to relocate when its lease expired at the

end of 1966, but it appears that the airport may have been operational as late as 1968. The airport was definitely closed when plans for the large Park Central office development on the airport property were announced in June 1970.<sup>234</sup>

Dallas-Garland Airport opened in 1941 as Hudson Airport, later was renamed Garland Airport and became Dallas-Garland in 1958. LBJ Freeway was built on elevated embankment at the north end of the airport's north-south runway, and the FAA required the closure of the runway for safety reasons. The airport continued operations with its remaining runway until closing on June 30, 1974. The value of the airport's land had skyrocketed due to its proximity to LBJ Freeway, making commercial and residential development a more suitable use for the property.<sup>235</sup>

With or without LBJ Freeway, these airports were endangered species in the 1960s due to encroaching development and rising land values. And happily for general aviation interests, Addison Airport, opened in 1957, was positioned to become the hub of aviation in north Dallas.

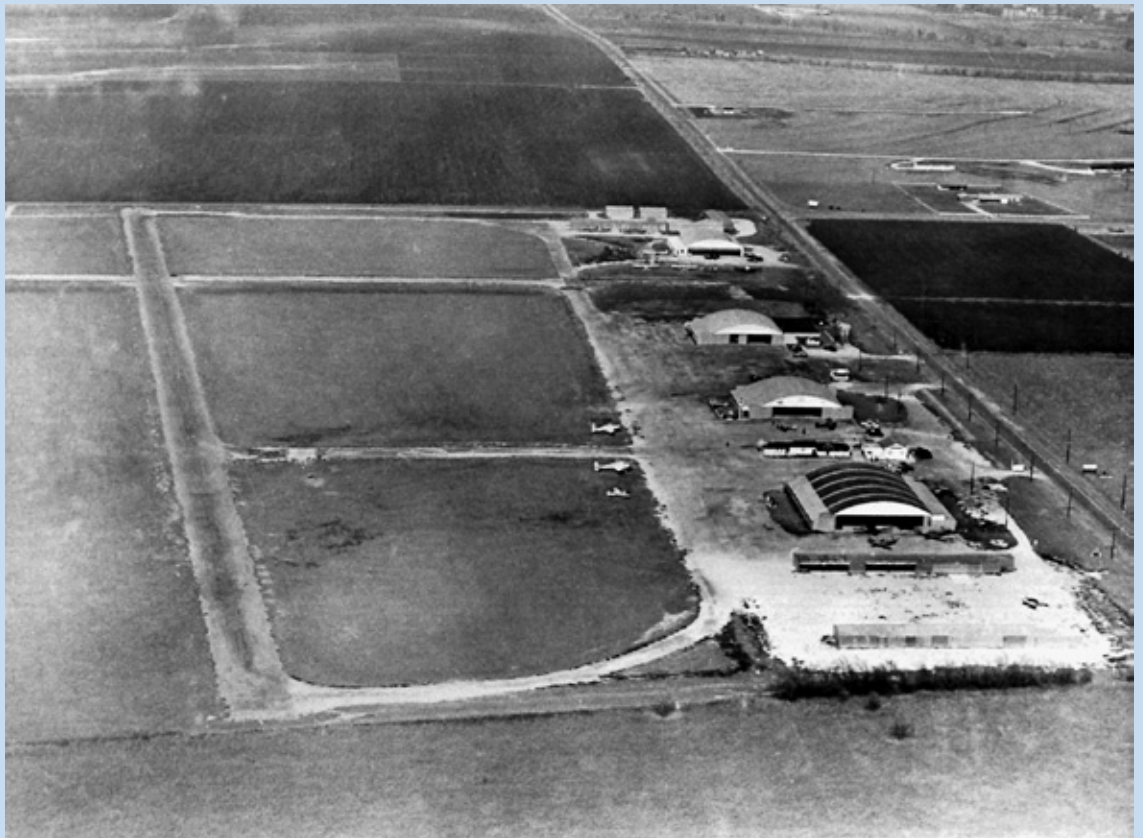


This 1965 view looks north over Park Cities Airport. Construction on Interstate 635 was underway and the eastbound frontage road can be seen cutting across the end of the airport runway. Park Cities was a minimally developed airport, so converting it to commercial real estate was easy—only about six hangars and one building needed to be cleared.

UT-Arlington Library  
Special Collections, 1965<sup>236</sup>



This undated view looks north over Highland Park Airport, most likely in the late 1940s. Coit Road is along the right side of the photo. Construction of LBJ Freeway began in 1964 and cut across the north edge of the property, taking about 150 feet off the end of the runway. The end of the truncated runway stopped just short of the eastbound LBJ frontage road. The circa 1972 photo below looks southwest across the intersection of Coit Road and LBJ Freeway after the closure of the airport, with the path of the runway and taxiways still visible.

*Dallas Morning News**Dallas Public Library*<sup>237</sup>





Dallas Public Library<sup>238</sup>

The above view shows the original interchange at LBJ Freeway and Central Expressway looking west circa 1970. The view below shows a similar perspective in June 2009. The High Five Interchange opened to traffic in November 2005.

Author, June 2009







Dallas Public Library<sup>239</sup>

This view from circa 1970 looks east along LBJ Freeway with the Coit Road overpass just ahead. The end of the runway and a taxiway of the closed Highland Park Airport are visible on the right. This section of freeway was rebuilt and expanded as part of the High Five interchange project, which was fully open to regular traffic in November 2005.

tion from newer developments further north. In the 2000s Valley View Mall was in steep decline with the loss of two of its four anchors in 2008, and in 2012 the owner of the mall announced plans to demolish the mall and redevelop the property. Galleria Dallas remained the crown jewel of the LBJ corridor, continuing its success and enhancing its status with a renovation in 2004 and new upscale development on adjacent property.<sup>25</sup>

### The Expansion

By the late 1970s LBJ Freeway in north Dallas had become one of the most congested freeways in North Texas. The first formal study to develop a plan for improvements from IH 35E Stemmons Freeway in northwest Dallas to US 80 east of Dallas was underway in 1987. In 1988 six options were identified for further study, ranging from a transit-only option to expansion with 18 main traffic lanes. In 1989 TxDOT was focusing on a plan with 10 main traffic lanes

and two HOV lanes.<sup>26</sup>

By 1992 a new plan emerged. In the most congested section of LBJ between Stemmons Freeway and Central Expressway, the plan called for ten lanes for regular traffic, two HOV lanes and four elevated express lanes. Right-of-way acquisition would displace 84 homes, 66 businesses and 148 apartments. It was time for the controversy to begin. Homeowners groups organized to oppose the project, forming the Community Response Coalition. The opposition attacked the proposal at a February 1992 Dallas City Council meeting, and in April 1992 five Dallas City Council members stated their opposition to the project. It appeared this could become another epic battle in freeway construction, similar to the Central Expressway double deck controversy (1974-1986) and the Fort Worth Lancaster Elevated brawl (1979-1989). But on LBJ there would be no protracted battle. Perhaps by this time TxDOT had realized that elevated structures were nothing but trouble,



TxDOT Dallas District Office

**The tunnels that weren't** This view shows the deep-bored tunnels which were planned for the expansion in north Dallas. The tunnels would have extended about two miles between Preston Road and Midway Road, and would have been the longest and widest bored tunnels in the United States. Planning and design had progressed to being construction-ready, but in 2006 it was determined that toll revenue was not sufficient to pay the high cost of the tunnels, and the tunnels were scrapped in favor of a less expensive open trench design.

and in October 1992 TxDOT withdrew its plans for the LBJ megafreeway and sent the project back to the feasibility study phase, establishing a new project office dedicated specifically to the task of finding a solution. Although the process ahead wouldn't be as divisive as previous battles, it was far from easy.<sup>27</sup>

In 1993 TxDOT established the LBJ Executive Board, composed of city council representatives from each city along the corridor, to guide the planning process. A new set of ideas was presented in 1994, ranging from minimal improvements to large capacity expansions, with right-of-way acquisition greatly reduced from the 1992 plan. There was no agreement on which plan was best, but there was an emerging consensus that any improvements should not raise the freeway any higher than it already was or require

the acquisition of right-of-way. Of course, this made it much more difficult and expensive to provide the needed additional capacity.<sup>28</sup>

By October 1995 the list of alternatives had been narrowed to three, all adding toll and HOV lanes in tunnels or overhanging structures to minimize the right-of-way requirements. The idea of adding tolled express lanes, called managed lanes, to Dallas freeways had been suggested by the regional planning council in 1991 and became the centerpiece of the updated LBJ proposals.<sup>29</sup>

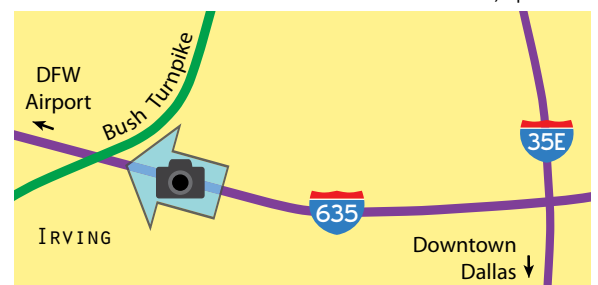
After three years of study the LBJ Executive Board was finally ready to present their recommended alternative in May 1996. In the controversial section from IH 35E to Central Expressway, the final plan retained the eight existing freeway main lanes and added six managed lanes, squeez-





Author, April 2011

This April 2011 view looks west along Interstate 635 in Irving with the Bush Turnpike interchange in the foreground. The west section of IH 635 was the last to be completed, with the final segment opening in 1981. The interchange with the Bush Turnpike was completed in 2005. The freeway features a very wide right-of-way with a wide grassy median, providing plenty of room for any needed expansion. In contrast, the older section of IH 635 in north Dallas was built on a narrow right-of-way, making expansion very difficult and costly.







Author, December 2009

While most of the LBJ corridor in north Dallas has been in decline since its glory days of the 1980s and 1990s, Galleria Dallas remains a shining beacon of upscale success in the corridor. This view looks across the ice rink in December 2009.

ing the new lanes into the corridor using tunnels, stacked structures and overhanging structures. The plan included twin bored tunnels, approximately two miles long from Preston Road to Midway Road, which were proposed to be the longest and widest bored tunnels in the United States. In the less controversial section east of Central Expressway, the plan called for ten main lanes and four managed lanes using conventional construction methods. The local neighborhoods may have been happy, but the complex design substantially increased the cost to an estimated \$1.4 billion and ensured that drivers would have to pay steep tolls to use the managed lanes.

For the next several years the engineering team refined the plan and closely studied the bored tunnels to

ensure their technical and financial feasibility. During this time the “Big Dig” construction project in Boston (Mass.), which replaced an elevated freeway with tunnels, was massively over budget and local officials were being extra cautious to verify that the bored tunnel plan would not introduce undue risk. Officials also were considering how to finance the project using tolls collected from vehicles on the managed lanes.

While planning for the major expansion moved at a glacial pace, the only relief for freeway motorists was the opening of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, which were created by converting the interior shoulders into traffic lanes. The HOV lanes from IH 35E Stemmons Freeway to Central Expressway opened in March 1997, and the HOV lanes from Central Expressway to IH 30 Thornton Freeway opened in January 2008.<sup>30</sup>

In 2003 local officials were ready to start moving the project forward, making the first commitment of local funds. Parts of LBJ Freeway were closed at night to allow crews to obtain core samples of the earth beneath the freeway for final engineering of the bored tunnels. State legislation in 2003 authorized new arrangements called comprehensive development agreements (CDA), partnerships with private firms to finance and build transportation projects which are called public-private partnerships in most places outside Texas. In 2004 the political leadership steering the project stated its support for the use of a CDA on the LBJ project. The CDA would allow a private firm to collect tolls on the managed lanes in exchange for financing a large share of the overall construction cost. Proposals were solicited in May 2005 for the west section of LBJ, from IH 35E to Central Expressway, and a section of IH 35E south of LBJ. The estimated cost had risen to \$1.5 billion for the west section alone, with only \$420 million available from conventional highway funding sources.<sup>31</sup>

The twin bored tunnels in the plan would have been a unique and distinctive feature of the Dallas-Fort Worth freeway system. They also would have been very expensive. And cost is what ultimately killed them. When CDA proposals were received it was clear that the bored tunnels were financially infeasible—the high cost simply could not be supported by tolls. In November 2006 a new plan was presented, eliminating the tunnels and replacing them with a trenched open channel in the center of the freeway with non-tolled main lanes overhanging the trench. The new design was expected to reduce the cost by \$300 to \$500 million. New bids were received in early 2009 and in February 2009 a winner was chosen. A team called LBJ Infrastructure Group led by Spanish toll road operator Cintra was selected for the project. Construction began in 2011 with a total project cost of \$2.7 billion, with \$490 million in TxDOT funds and the rest paid for by LBJ Infrastructure Group, which will receive revenue from the toll lanes which will initially cost around 75 cents per mile at peak periods. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2015.<sup>32</sup> ■





## Interstate 30 East Robert L. Thornton Freeway

Interstate 30 through downtown and east Dallas was the most difficult and controversial alignment decision in the original planning for Dallas freeways. There were many politically influential stakeholders involved, each with its own ideas and agenda. Downtown interests wanted to be well served. The State Fair of Texas wanted convenient access. Oak Cliff wanted an expressway. The City of Dallas, responsible for right-of-way acquisition, wanted to minimize land acquisition cost. TxDOT wanted to serve the path of greatest traffic demand and also minimize construction cost. The potential freeway corridors were heavily urbanized and the freeway would displace many homes and businesses along its route. And then there were the questions with no obvious answer. Should the freeway go north or south of downtown? North or south of Fair Park? There were so many variables and so many interests to please, making a quick decision was impossible.

Starting in the 1940s the project was called the east-west expressway. However, it followed the alignment of US highway 67, so it was an east-west corridor only from downtown eastward and proceeded south from downtown along modern-day IH 35E. While the early proposals included a freeway west of downtown Dallas toward Fort Worth, that

**Also see:** Photograph of the freeway opening, page 36

### Quick Facts for Interstate 30 East

- First section opened in 1951, freeway complete in 1966
- Commonly called “R.L. Thornton” in Dallas
- Maximum traffic in 2010 is 202,000 vehicles per day just east of IH 45

### Key Dates in the History

<b>1944</b>	First planning by TxDOT for an east-west freeway
<b>1951</b>	Highway opened from Loop 12 to Rockwall
<b>1953</b>	The Dallas alignment is defined after ten years of study and politics
<b>1959</b>	Officially named the R. L. Thornton Freeway
<b>1966</b>	The downtown “Canyon” opens, completing the freeway
<b>1967</b>	The freeway is realigned and raised to accommodate Lake Ray Hubbard
<b>1996</b>	HOV lane with a movable barrier opens from downtown to Jim Miller Road
<b>2005</b>	A study defines the future plan for reconstruction of the downtown canyon and Mixmaster
<b>2013-2017</b>	Reconstruction of the downtown Mixmaster as part of the \$798 million Horseshoe Project
<b>Future</b>	Reconstruction of the downtown canyon

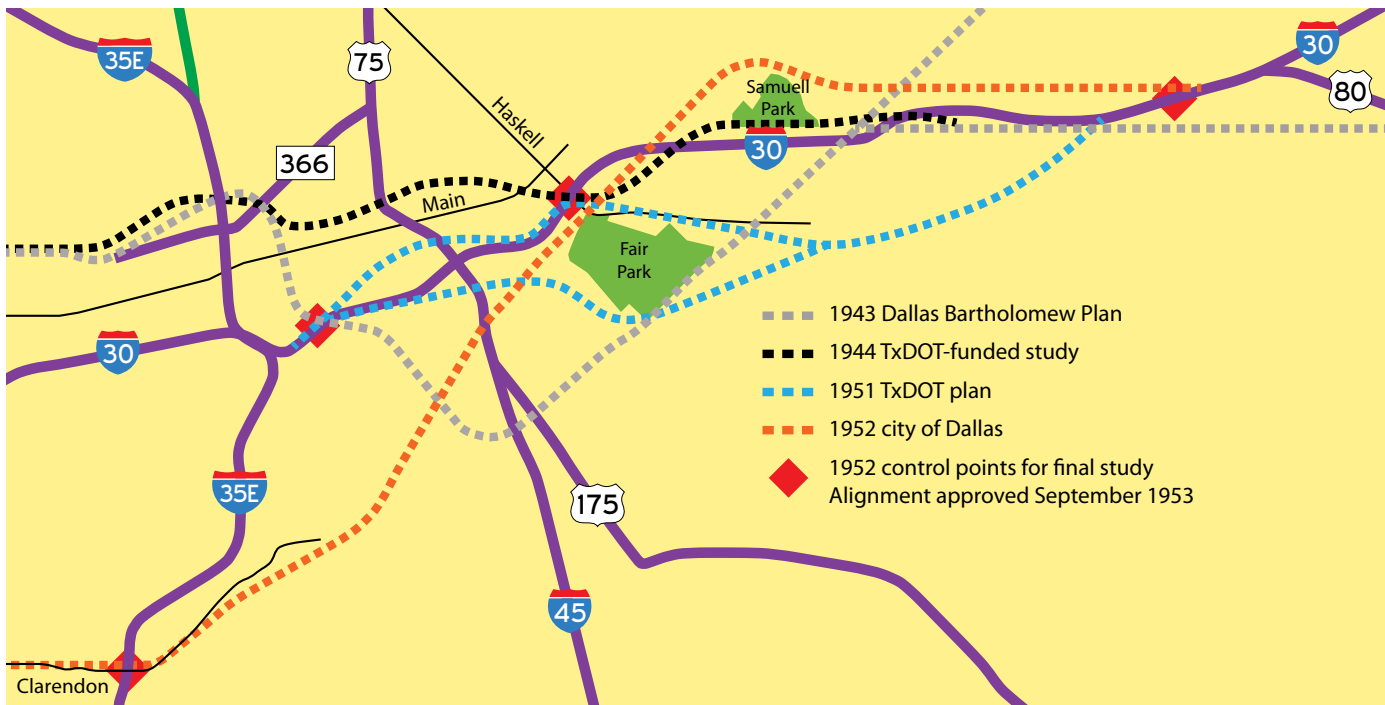


City of Dallas archives

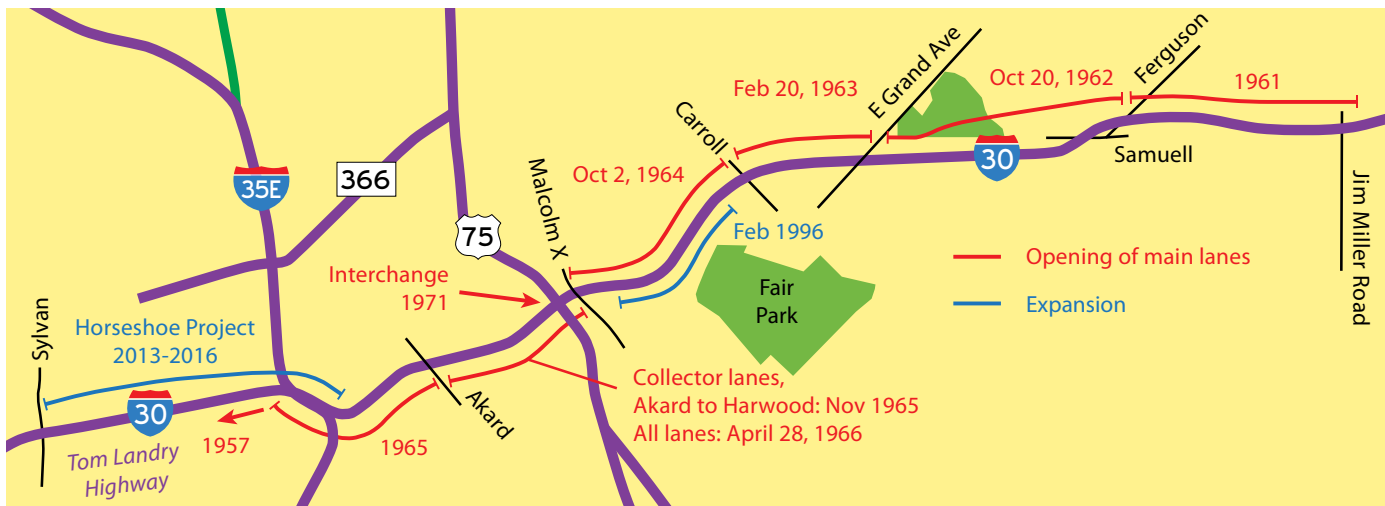
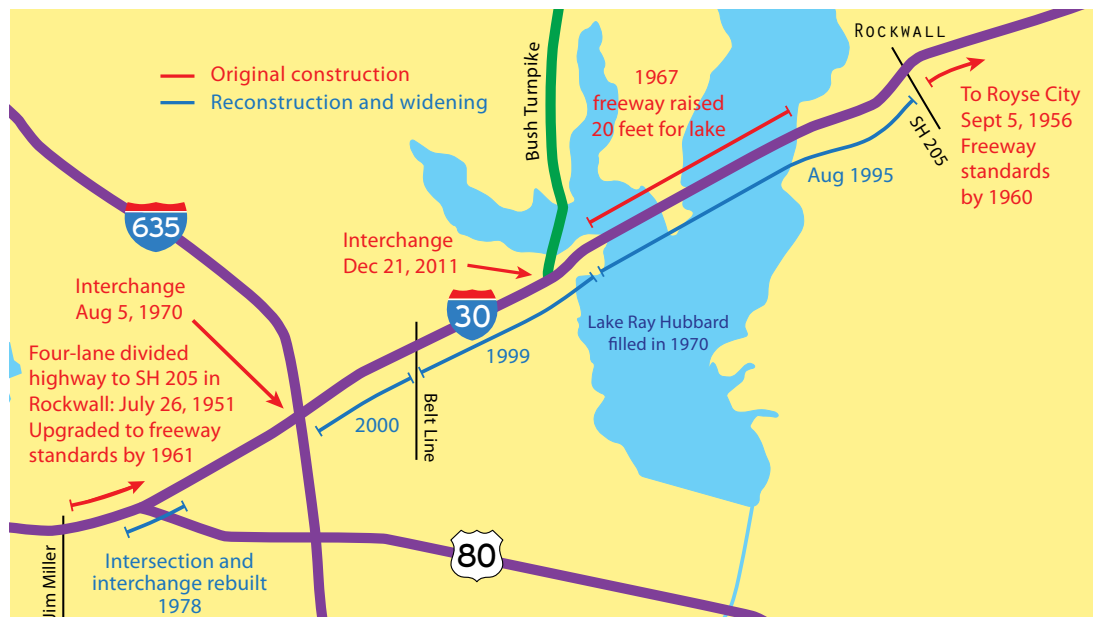
### Robert L. “Bob” Thornton, 1880-1964

Robert L. “Bob” Thornton is the most influential and respected civic leader in the history of Dallas. His formal positions included president of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce from 1933 to 1936, president of the State Fair of Texas from 1945 to 1963 and mayor of Dallas from 1953 to 1961. Thornton is credited with bringing the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition to Dallas, providing publicity and recognition for the city. He was given the nickname “Mr Dallas” for his civic service to improve the city, and he was commonly called Mr Bob or, in his later years, Uncle Bob. His efforts and encouragement to “keep the dirt flying” became his signature political slogan. Thornton was an active supporter of freeway planning and construction in Dallas.

Thornton was born August 10, 1880, in Hamilton County, about 100 miles southwest of Dallas, the son of a tenant farmer. At the age of seven he moved with his family to Ellis County, just south of Dallas, where he completed high school, and moved to Dallas a few years later. In 1916 he borrowed \$6000 to found a bank which became the highly successful Mercantile National Bank, a \$400 million institution at the time of his death on February 15, 1964.<sup>240</sup>



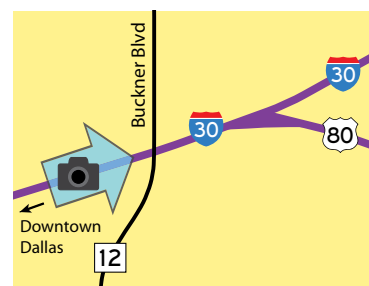
Above: The alignment of Thornton Freeway through downtown and east Dallas was the most difficult and politically contentious alignment decision in the original planning for the Dallas freeway system. This map shows the alignments that were proposed during the period from 1943 to 1951, with the final alignment receiving approval by Dallas City Council in September 1953.







This January 4, 1951, view shows the first section of Interstate 30 (then US 67), looking east at the Loop 12 (Buckner Boulevard) intersection in the foreground. The four-lane divided highway was officially dedicated on July 26, 1951, extending 16.6 miles to Rockwall. A stub-out is visible on the right for the future US 80 freeway. The intersection in the foreground was called a two-bridge rotary and was reported to be the first of its kind in the Southwest. It was also among the last of its kind in Texas, since rotary-style intersections were soon discarded in favor of other designs. This interchange, including both the rotary and US 80 split ahead, were modernized and expanded in 1978, removing the rotary entirely.



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section became the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, a separate project.

The first comprehensive study for an east-west super-highway across the Dallas-Fort Worth area came in 1944 with a detailed report for TxDOT from Parsons Brinkerhoff engineers. With a then unheard-of \$61 million price tag for the complete project including \$13.5 million for right-of-way, the proposal aligned the Dallas section on the north side of downtown. This plan was unpopular with both TxDOT and the City of Dallas, and in 1945 discussions were already underway to identify alternate alignments. Studies continued for the next several years with the City of Dallas, TxDOT and the Dallas Chamber of Commerce closely involved. In 1949 alignments on the north and south sides of both downtown and Fair Park were still under consideration. A formal study was launched in late 1949 and by early 1950 an alignment north of downtown emerged as the leading candidate. In October 1951 TxDOT proposed its

preferred alignment, north of Fair Park and south of downtown. Alignments north of downtown were ruled out from that point forward, but the alignment at Fair Park, either north or south, still remained under discussion. In January 1952 three alignments were being considered, the TxDOT proposal north of Fair Park, a second proposal south of Fair Park supported by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and a substantially different alignment devised by the City of Dallas which catered to interests in Oak Cliff (see map).<sup>33</sup>

By September 1952 the process reached a stalemate, so TxDOT and the City of Dallas agreed to launch a new alignment study with four predefined control points the freeway would cross. The control points established that the alignment would be north of Fair Park, south of downtown and continue into Oak Cliff. In September 1953 the study was complete and Dallas City Council officially approved the alignment which defines present-day IH 30 from downtown eastward to Loop 12 and IH 35E south

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Prior to the construction of Interstate 30 south of downtown Dallas, traffic had to pass through the center of downtown. This view, dated 1967, looks east along Commerce Street with Akard Street just ahead. The Adolphus Hotel is on the left, with a Braniff International Airlines ticket office at street level. The signpost shows that US 67, US 80 and US 175 were all aligned on Commerce Street prior to the completion of IH 30 in 1966. US 67 traffic would have been aligned on the new Interstate 30, and the signs probably had not yet been removed, or perhaps the date on the photo is incorrect. The US 75 shield also was obsolete at the time of this photo and appears to be a relic from the period in the 1940s and 1950s when US 75 entered downtown from the south via Lamar Street. Dallas-based Braniff Airlines ceased operations in May 1982 when it went bankrupt.



The first interstate-style highway marker to be installed on the Texas highway system was along Interstate 30 between Rockwall and Greenville in December 1958. Officials are shown admiring the new sign which would soon become ubiquitous along interstate highways nationwide. The shield was designed in Texas by TxDOT employee Richard Oliver who submitted it to the Bureau of Public Roads in 1956 as the Texas entry in a nationwide competition to determine the standard shield for the new Interstate Highway System. Oliver chose the design because the shape indicated federal authority and could be easily manufactured. In 1957 word was received that Oliver's design had won, allowing him to see his design all over the United States.<sup>243</sup>





*Dallas Morning News*

This aerial view looking west in winter 1962 shows construction in progress with the Samuel Boulevard crossing in the foreground. Interstate 30 passed through a fully urbanized area of Dallas in the direction of this photo, making the right-of-way clearance for the freeway one of the most difficult and costly in the construction of the Dallas freeway system.





TxDOT Travel Information Division

Mary Thornton, widow of R. L. Thornton, cuts the ribbon for the opening of the final section of Thornton Freeway in downtown Dallas on April 28, 1966. R. L. Thornton had died two years earlier in 1964. In the photo, from left to right: Earl Hayes, chairman of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce Central Highway Committee; Jack Kultgen, member of the Texas Transportation Commission; Henry Brian of General Motors; Mrs Thornton; Lawrence Jones of the Bureau of Public Roads; and Dallas Mayor Eric Jonsson. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce had organized the public education campaign for the freeway opening with financial backing provided by General Motors. This is the only documented freeway-related event attended by Dallas Mayor Eric Jonsson, whose term in office from 1964 to 1971 was a busy freeway-building era. Except for this event, Jonsson had no visible involvement in promoting freeways, instead focusing his efforts on restoring Dallas' image after the John F. Kennedy assassination, planning and construction of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, designation of the University of Texas at Dallas, downtown planning and efforts to build a new city hall.<sup>244</sup>

from downtown to US 67 (Marvin Love Freeway).<sup>34</sup>

IH 30 from east Dallas to the downtown Mixmaster required one of the most extensive and costly right-of-way clearances in the history of North Texas freeways. Right-of-way acquisition had historically been the responsibility of local governments, but fortunately for the City of Dallas (and all local governments) the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 transferred 100% of the right-of-way cost for interstate highways to the federal and state governments,

with the federal government covering 90% of the cost. The 3-mile section from Ferguson to Haskell required the acquisition of 484 parcels of property, including a large shopping center on Grand Avenue, pushing the right-of-way cost to \$7.75 million, higher than the construction cost of \$6.0 million.<sup>35</sup>



SMU DeGolyer Library<sup>245</sup>

This is a wider view of the final ribbon-cutting on Thornton Freeway in the downtown “canyon” on April 28, 1966.

### The Downtown Section

The opening of the downtown section of IH 30 was a huge milestone for Dallas freeways, connecting east Dallas into the downtown Mixmaster and finally providing an east-west freeway through the city. The new link also introduced never-before-seen complexity to the freeway system, with eleven entrances and exits in the 1.8-mile link and a design featuring both main lanes for through-traffic and collector lanes for traffic originating or terminating downtown. Local officials were concerned that motorists would be overwhelmed. With funding from General Motors, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce launched an educational campaign to prepare motorists for the new freeway. The theme of the campaign was “Know your route. Find your sign. Stay in your lane.” The message was featured in billboards, posters, radio and television announcements, and printed brochures which were distributed at service stations and grocery stores.<sup>36</sup>

The final section of Thornton Freeway opened on April

28, 1966, when the widow of freeway namesake R. L. “Bob” Thornton cut the ribbon. So were motorists ready for the freeway and its jumble of connections? Probably not, according to press reports. In August 1966 a *Dallas Morning News* article reported “Tire skid marks all along the new freeway and its exits have drawn black patterns of human confusion, indecision, wrong turns and changed minds.”<sup>37</sup>

### Improvements and Future Plans

Study of bus lanes began in 1974 and in 1975 TxDOT announced a plan to implement a contraflow bus lane operation in which the inside lane of the off-peak direction would be used for buses traveling in the peak direction. However, the idea of contraflow lanes was dropped by 1977 due to safety and cost issues. The bus lanes were revived in 1983 when they were included in the plan of service for the new transportation authority, DART. Once again, bus lanes were on hold by 1986 due to cost and technical issues. By 1990 plans were back on track using a







# Good news, Dallas!

## Soon all the freeway systems will hook up!

With completion of the new Downtown Loop of the R. L. Thornton Freeway (Interstate 20), all major routes in and out of, around and through, Dallas will meet. This folder from the Central Highway Committee of the Chamber of Commerce shows you how to use the new loop and how to get the most out of your Dallas freeway system.



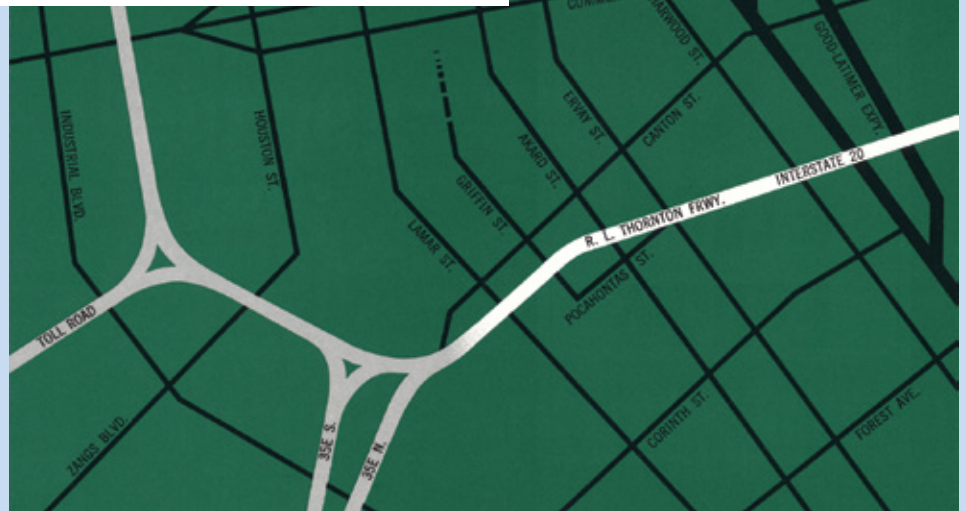
**Know your route.  
Find your sign.  
Stay in your lane.**

The big, green Thornton Freeway signs will tell you everything you need to know. Find your signs and stay in the lane directly under them. Before your turn-off, the freeway signs will guide you into the proper exit lane with ample advance warning.

Know your route. Find your sign. Stay in your lane. You'll get where you're going faster and with more convenience than ever before.

In anticipation of the completion of the final section of R. L. Thornton Freeway, the "canyon" on the south side of downtown Dallas, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and General Motors partnered to conduct a campaign to educate drivers on how to navigate the new downtown interchange complex. This brochure was distributed at service stations, and similar messages were featured on billboards and posters, and in radio and television announcements.<sup>246</sup>

(facing page) The "Thornton Maze" cartoon is adapted from a graphic which appeared in the *Dallas Times Herald* in February 1966, just prior to the April opening of the downtown "canyon" section of freeway. The cartoon had a little fun with an exaggeration of the freeway complexity. The original graphic (and this new version) include an obscure historical reference to "54-40-or fight", which was a campaign slogan of 1844 presidential candidate James Polk. Polk advocated taking control of the entire Oregon Territory, even if it meant war with Great Britain. The Oregon Territory then extended to latitude 54°40' to include about half of present-day British Columbia. Polk won the election, and the boundary was set to present-day 49° in the 1846 Treaty of Oregon.



### The new freeway loop will untangle the downtown knot.

The new Downtown Loop of the R. L. Thornton Freeway (Interstate 20) connects the freeways on the east side of town (North and South Central Expressway and Interstate 20 East) with the ones on the west side of town (Stemmons Freeway, the Fort Worth Turnpike, and Interstate 35E). You will be able to drive from the east side systems to the west side systems without going through downtown. Just get on any expressway, head for the center of town, and follow your signs!

Want to go from NorthPark to Waco? Take Central Expressway south to Interstate Highway 20 West; pick up your lane to Interstate Highway 35E South; follow the signs — and you're in Waco without ever touching the busy streets of downtown Dallas.

It's just as easy to get from Mesquite to Grand Prairie; or Farmer's Branch to Corsicana; or Oak Cliff to Fair Park. Dallas will be easier to get around in than it has been in years! Use your great new freeway! Get on—follow your signs — and you can't miss.



Dallas Public Library<sup>247</sup>

**Photoshopped...with 1966 technology** This photo appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* on July 20, 1966, with the title “Trails of Confusion” and the caption “Motorists are finding the new 1.8-mile Thornton Freeway interchange provides an easy way around downtown Dallas but also is extremely confusing. At this exit just west of Lamar, drivers often have difficulty deciding whether to exit right or go left...leaving many a skidmark.” However, the original photo clearly shows that the skidmarks were added with a black marker. It was low-tech image manipulation—how it was done before the age of digital photography and software like Photoshop.

movable-barrier design and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in December. The high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane opened on September 23, 1991, and was so heavily used it almost became a victim of its own success in the following months.<sup>38</sup>

In 1989 TxDOT announced plans to widen IH 30 to ten main lanes from IH 45 to the US 80 split, including redecking of the elevated structure north of Fair Park. The work to rebuild the elevated structure proceeded out of necessity and was completed in February 1996, but the planned widening did not proceed. TxDOT did move forward with rebuilding and widening a 13-mile section from Interstate 635 LBJ Freeway to Rockwall, completing the project in

2000.<sup>39</sup>

By the late 1990s and 2000s, planning efforts focused on the downtown section of freeway—the trenched “canyon” section of freeway south of downtown, the Mixmaster interchange with IH 35E and the aging bridge over the Trinity River, which is part of Tom Landry Highway, not Thornton Freeway. In 1994 the City of Dallas launched the ambitious Trinity Corridor project which in 1999 first proposed the construction of three architecturally distinctive “signature” bridges over the Trinity River—a new bridge for an extension of Woodall Rodgers Freeway and replacement bridges for both IH 30 and IH 35E. The IH 30 bridge, originally opened in 1957 with the construction



Dallas Public Library<sup>248</sup>

**Lake Ray Hubbard - before the lake** This undated view from circa 1968-1969 shows the IH 30 crossing over Lake Ray Hubbard before water had reached the freeway. The freeway was raised 20 feet in 1967, mostly on embankment, to accommodate the lake. The dam's floodgates were closed in April 1970 and heavy rains in the following months filled the lake. The City of Dallas acquired 27,655 acres for the lake between 1959 and 1970. The IH 30 crossing was rebuilt and widened in 1995.<sup>249</sup>

of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, was envisioned to be the second signature bridge to be built. Internationally renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava was hired as the designer of the bridges, unveiling the design of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge in 2003. The Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge, named the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, encountered numerous delays due to cost overruns and construction difficulty but was finally opened to traffic in March 2012.<sup>40</sup>

Next in line was the IH 30 bridge, planned by Calatrava to have four slender arches parallel to the freeway. However, by 2011 the signature design by Calatrava was expected to add \$200 million to the cost of the bridge, but only \$92 million was available for the signature components and work needed to proceed due to the deteriorating condition of the bridge. In 2011 the decision was made to build the main lanes of IH 30 as a conventional pier-and-beam

bridge and use the available \$92 million for enhancements to the two pedestrian bridges which will feature 300-foot-tall arches. In November 2011 officials launched the \$798 million Horseshoe Project, scheduled for construction between 2013 and 2016, which will rebuild the downtown Mixmaster and build new bridges over the Trinity River for both IH 30 and IH 35E.<sup>41</sup>

The Mixmaster and adjacent "canyon" section of IH 30 was the focus of study during Project Pegasus, which developed a comprehensive plan for modernizing IH 30 and IH 35E through downtown Dallas. The study, which began in 2001, reported its recommendations in 2005 calling for a complete rebuild of the downtown canyon. In 2013 the project is not slated to move forward to construction prior to 2035, but its priority could change if the planned Trinity Parkway toll road is canceled or becomes infeasible.<sup>42</sup> ■





Author, November 2009

This November 2009 view shows repositioning of the movable HOV barrier on Interstate 30 at Dolphin Road using the “zipper machine”. The zipper machine positions the barrier to take one lane from the off-peak traffic direction for use by high-occupancy vehicles traveling in the peak direction. When it opened in 1991 it was the first HOV lane in the United States to use a movable barrier. It remains the only freeway in North Texas with a movable barrier. The April 2007 view below looks west across the Lake Ray Hubbard crossing, which was expanded to its current configuration in 1995.<sup>250</sup>

Author, April 2007





# Dallas North Tollway

If you are looking for premium residential property in Dallas, get on the Dallas North Tollway, take just about any exit and you'll find million-dollar properties nearby. North of LBJ Freeway you'll also find upscale shopping and major corporate hubs, including the sprawling Legacy corporate campus in northwest Plano. More than any other freeway or tollway corridor in North Texas, the Dallas North Tollway is surrounded by money from its beginning to its end.

But you never get the impression of extravagance on the actual toll road. For much of its length it is squeezed into the narrowest possible corridor for its number of lanes, and the tollway design falls well short of modern standards. The tollway was built on the cheap, while everything around it tends to be upscale. In spite of its shortcomings, the tollway has empowered the perennial development boom in the northern suburbs of Dallas as the tollway steadily marched northward toward Oklahoma.

## Origins

The idea of a boulevard or highway on the Cotton Belt railroad alignment originated with the City of Dallas Major Street Plan prepared in November 1943, which suggested placing a major thoroughfare street in the corridor. The Department of City Planning 1957 Master Plan recommended an expressway-type facility. The first efforts toward construction of a traffic artery were made in January 1960 by the Central Business District Association (CBDA), a coalition of businesses and property owners working to promote downtown and provide improved access. Mayor R.L. "Bob" Thornton was a strong supporter of the Cotton Belt expressway and helped arrange preliminary discussions. It soon became clear that rerouting the trains on the Cotton Belt railroad would be fairly easy, but obtaining conventional highway funding for the project would be impossible for the foreseeable future because of the extensive commitments already made by TxDOT to build the interstate and state highway systems. In March 1960 the CBDA began discussions with the Texas Turnpike Authority (TTA) to make the project a toll road.<sup>43</sup>

However, gaining approval for a toll road requires comprehensive traffic and revenue studies, and someone was going to have to pay for them. A partner at the TTA's engineering consultant performed an initial study at no cost, and the preliminary study indicated that the project was feasible. In May 1961 the CBDA arranged for fourteen firms and individuals to underwrite an \$80,000 bank loan

## Quick Facts for the Dallas North Tollway

- First section opened in 1968
- The second toll road to be built in North Texas, after the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike which opened in 1957
- North of IH 635 LBJ Freeway, the tollway is a major retail, business and corporate headquarters corridor
- First electronic tolling in North America, August 1989
- The most recent main lane extension opened in 2007

## Key Dates in the History

<b>1943</b>	The Dallas 1943 Major Street Plan proposed a traffic artery in the Cotton Belt railroad corridor
<b>1957</b>	Dallas street plan recommends an expressway
<b>1961</b>	First feasibility study
<b>1964</b>	The Texas Turnpike Authority officially approves construction between downtown Dallas and IH 635
<b>1968</b>	The tollway opens between downtown and IH 635
<b>1979</b>	Prestonwood Town Center mall opens at Belt Line
<b>1982</b>	Galleria Dallas opens at the tollway and IH 635
<b>1985</b>	The first corporate headquarters open in the Legacy Business Park in Plano
<b>1986</b>	The first extension north of LBJ Freeway opens
<b>1989</b>	Electronic tolling begins
<b>1994</b>	A long extension opens to SH 121
<b>1999</b>	Prestonwood Town Center mall closes and is fully demolished in 2004
<b>2000</b>	The first phase of Legacy Town Center opens. Stonebriar Mall opens in Frisco near the tollway.
<b>2001</b>	The Shops at Willow Bend mall opens in August
<b>2005</b>	The soccer stadium for FC Dallas and sports complex opens in Frisco, named Toyota Stadium in 2013
<b>2007</b>	The tollway is extended from SH 121 to US 380
<b>2013</b>	The "Circle D" sign for the tollway is retired
<b>Future</b>	Further northward extensions

(approximately \$620,000 in 2013 dollars) to fund a more detailed study. It was a definite risk for the underwriters, because if the project was found to be infeasible the underwriters would be left to cover the cost. By the fall of 1962 the new study found that the project was definitely feasible, and then a \$135,000 engineering study was required



# THE COTTON BELT RAILROAD



SMU DeGolyer Library

A steam locomotive cruises through the University depot on the Cotton Belt railroad at Lovers Lane in this undated photo.

For 65 years before cars were cruising on the Dallas North Tollway between downtown and LBJ Freeway (IH 635), trains of the Cotton Belt railroad ruled the corridor. The Cotton Belt railroad was formed in Tyler (Tex.) in 1871 and by 1886 had built a network extending from St. Louis, Missouri to Waco, including the railroad through the

northwest corner of Dallas County which passes through Addison. In 1901 the railroad link from Addison to downtown Dallas was built, forming the corridor which would become the tollway. Officially known as the St. Louis and Southwestern, the Cotton Belt was acquired by Southern Pacific in 1932. One of the notable features of

the Dallas-to-Addison section was the University platform on the northeast corner of the Lovers Lane intersection. The “Lone Star Limited” train departed Union Station on the east side of downtown Dallas at 5 PM and enjoyed heavy patronage from commuters traveling from downtown to the University Park area. The trip took only 12 minutes, far faster than the bus, and cost only 15 cents.<sup>251</sup>

Acquisition of the Cotton Belt railroad right-of-way turned out to be fast, painless and fairly inexpensive, sharply in contrast to the costly 30-year struggle to acquire the Houston & Texas Central railroad for Central Expressway. Times had changed since serious efforts to acquire the H&TC began in the 1920s. By the 1960s truck transport had taken much of the freight market from the railroads, and consolidation of railroads in the Dallas area made it easy to shift the Cotton Belt trains to other tracks.



SMU DeGolyer Library



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>252</sup>

This December 1954 view looks east along Lovers Lane showing the crossing at the Cotton Belt railroad. The idea of transforming the Cotton Belt corridor into a traffic artery was first suggested in 1943. The tollway at this location opened in 1968 with an overpass over Lovers Lane.

to provide complete documentation for a bond sale. At this point the cities of Dallas, Highland Park and University Park stepped forward to provide the additional required funding. The inception of the Dallas North Tollway was the result of some risk-taking by the project backers, and generations of motorists can be thankful that those individuals took the initiative to make it happen.<sup>44</sup>

With the preliminaries taken care of, the TTA was ready to become fully involved in the project. In August 1963 the TTA began negotiation to acquire the needed right-of-way, and in August 1964 the TTA formally voted to approve construction. After some legal wrangling the Interstate Commerce Commission approved the abandonment of the railroad in March 1965 and the 9.6-mile-long, 100-foot-wide railroad strip was purchased in December 1965 for \$1,090,160, approximately \$8 million in 2013 dollars. While the railroad corridor was the backbone of the tollway, a total of 312 parcels of right-of-way needed to be acquired, mainly at intersections and on the section

near downtown. The total right-of-way cost including the railroad was about \$7 million.<sup>45</sup>

A legal dispute erupted in north Dallas in 1965 when homeowners sued to prevent the bond sale until the planned overpasses at Walnut Hill, Meaders, Royal, Northaven and Forest were redesigned to become underpasses. It was the first organized protest and legal action against a highway project in Dallas. TTA agreed to use underpasses at all intersections except Forest where an underpass would have caused unacceptable drainage problems. The bond sale proceeded and \$33.5 million in funds were received in June 1965. A groundbreaking ceremony was held at the tollway intersection with Lemmon Avenue on March 24, 1966, and construction was soon underway. The first section opened in February 1968 and the tollway was completely open between downtown and LBJ Freeway on July 1, 1968. Motorists could drive the full length of the tollway for 15 cents, about \$1.00 in 2013 dollars.<sup>46</sup>





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This July 1969 view looks north along the Dallas North Tollway at its original terminus at Interstate 635 LBJ Freeway. The area was minimally developed at the time, but by the 1980s the three vacant corners at the intersection were developed with high-rise office towers, including Galleria Dallas on the northeast corner.

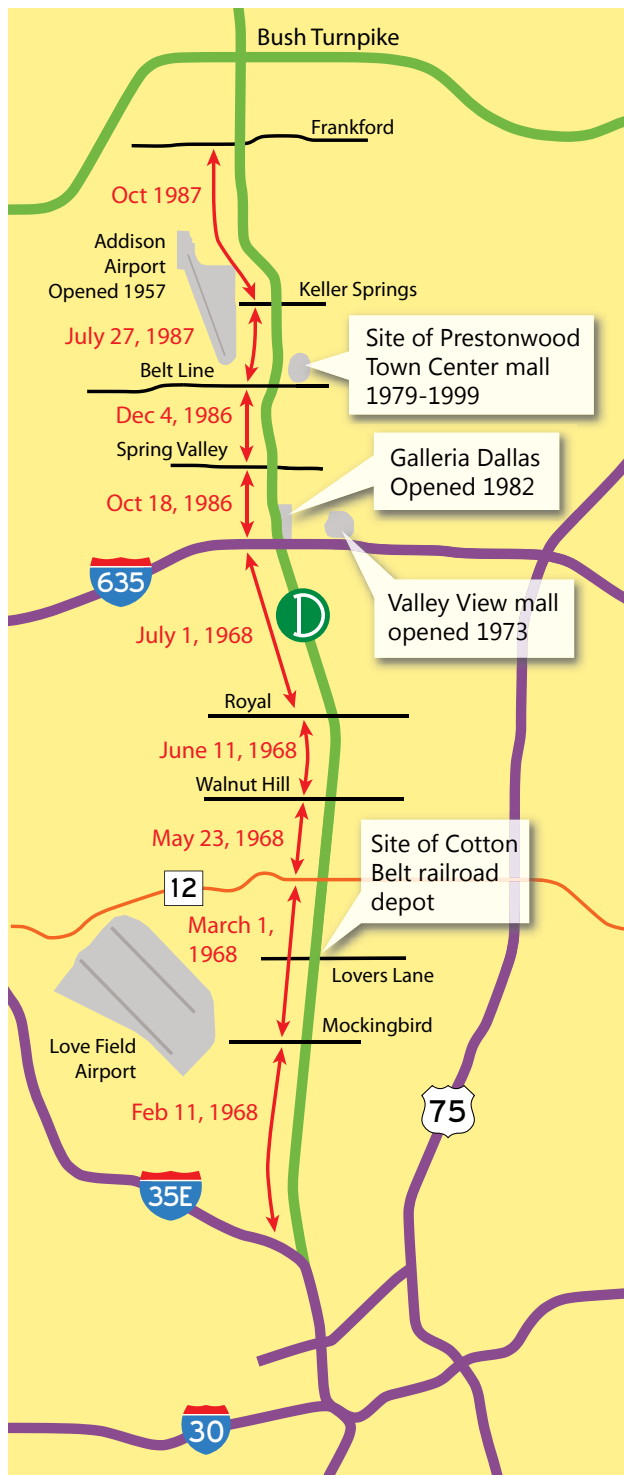
### Extensions and Improvements

The first study to extend the tollway north of LBJ Freeway began in January 1979. The tollway followed the alignment of the Dallas Parkway, once again introducing corridor width issues. While the original section of the Dallas North Tollway was constrained by the 100-foot width of the Cotton Belt railroad corridor, the northward extension necessitated the acquisition of expensive real estate along the Dallas Parkway. Further north, between Keller Springs and the present-day Bush turnpike, landowners were unwilling to donate land, forcing a compromise which placed the tollway on the narrowest feasible corridor. A groundbreaking ceremony for the first extension was held on November 17, 1983, and the first extension opened on October 18, 1986. A steady progression of openings followed, bringing the tollway to SH 121 in Frisco in 1994 and to US 380 in 2007 (see map).<sup>47</sup>

In 2008 and 2011 the NTTA board approved the sche-

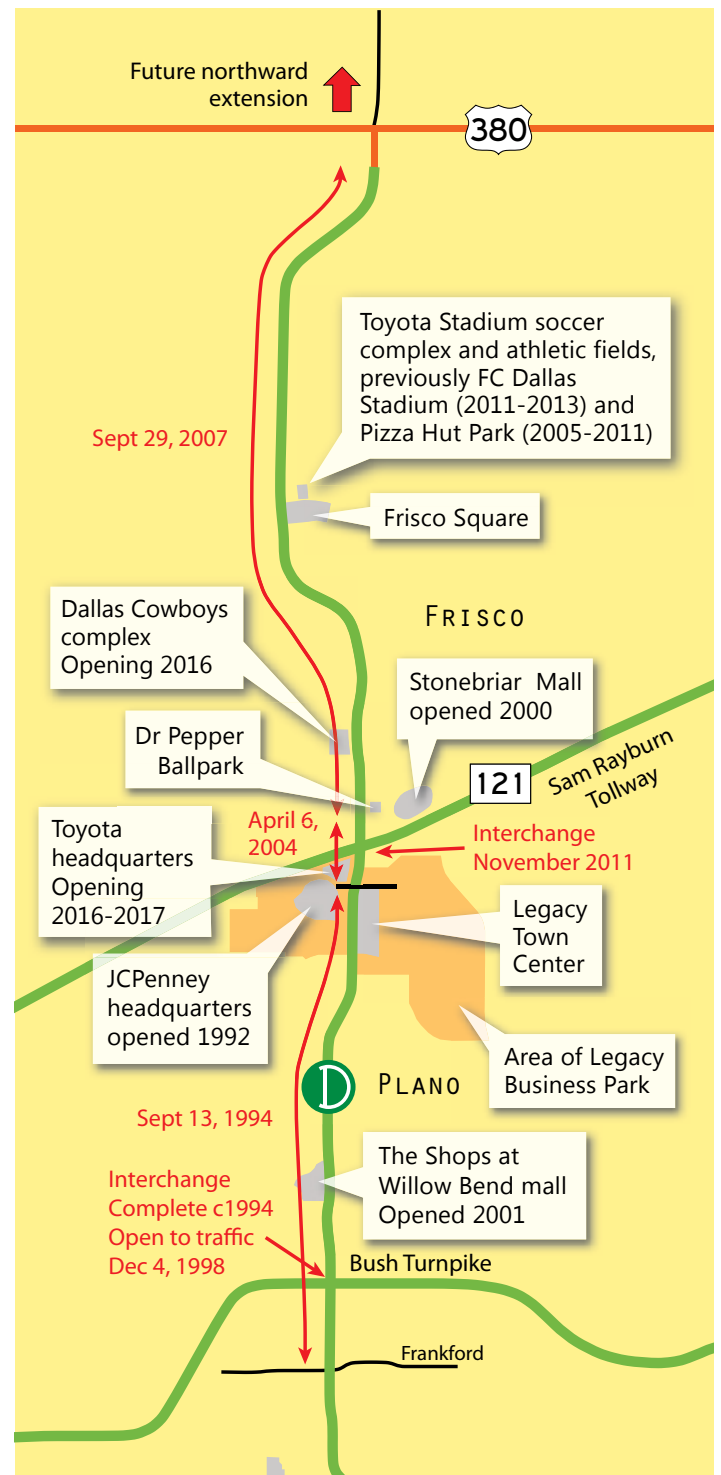
matic design and environmental documents for sections 4A, 4B and 5 which will extend 18 miles north from the present terminus at US 380 to near the city of Gunter in Grayson County. In 2013 there are no imminent plans to construct main tolled lanes on the extension; section 4A, from US 380 to the city of Celina, will be built first.

Improvements to the existing Dallas North Tollway have been small-scale enhancements to remove bottlenecks and improve flow, mostly the addition of merging lanes at entrances and exits. The first major expansion of the Dallas North Tollway will take place in Plano on the section between the Bush Turnpike (SH 190) and the Sam Rayburn Tollway (SH 121). The project, estimated to cost \$200-250 million with completion by 2016, will expand the toll road to eight main lanes and modernize the poorly designed interchange at the Bush Turnpike, which has become the main cause of backups as traffic on the Dallas North Tollway and Bush Turnpike has increased.<sup>48</sup>



### Electronic Tolls

To most motorists, the idea of stopping at a toll booth to throw coins into a basket is as outdated as stopping at a convenience store to use a payphone. In 2010 the option to use coins or pay an attendant disappeared entirely when the NTTA completed its transition to all-electronic tolling. The progression of technology to make manual toll collection obsolete began on the Dallas North Tollway in 1989. It was the first installation of electronic toll collection in



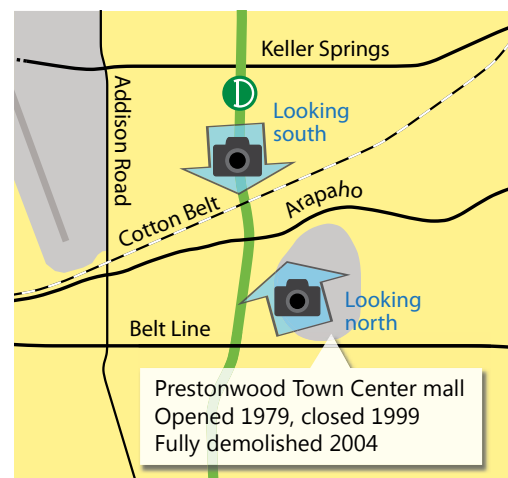
North America and was brought to Dallas by a local entrepreneur who received funding from Ross Perot, founder of Electronic Data Systems.

In the mid-1980s local entrepreneur David Cook approached the Texas Turnpike Authority, then the operator of the Dallas North Tollway, about electronic toll collection. But the TTA wasn't ready to push into the uncharted territory of electronic toll collection, which had never been done in the United States. But to Cook, eliminating the



Dallas Public Library<sup>254</sup>

This aerial view from circa 1977 looks south along the Dallas Parkway just north of present-day Arapaho Road. Work was just underway on the Prestonwood Town Center shopping mall on the left, but the rest of the landscape in the corridor was almost entirely vacant. This area was densely developed in the 1980s following the opening of Prestonwood Town Center in 1979. The railroad in the foreground was part of the original Cotton Belt system which included the railroad corridor which was converted into the Dallas North Tollway between downtown Dallas and LBJ Freeway. In 2013 efforts are underway to convert the railroad shown in the photo into a transit corridor.





Dallas Public Library<sup>255</sup>

This circa 1977 view looks north along the Dallas Parkway at the location of Arapaho Road with work on Prestonwood Town Center just underway on the lower right. The Dallas Parkway was a two-lane road crossing through a mostly vacant landscape.

manual toll collection was not only a huge convenience to motorists but also a good business opportunity. So with \$6 million in backing from Ross Perot and Mort Meyerson (namesake of the Dallas symphony center), Cook's firm Amtech developed the electronic toll collection system for the Dallas North Tollway. Amtech took on a big risk since the TTA had an option to cancel the contract with a 24 hour notice at any time.<sup>49</sup>

Tolltag operation began on August 1, 1989, on all 60 tollbooths on the then 17-mile-long tollway. Within a month 8000 motorists had signed up for a tolltag, and in ten months 22,000 tolltags were in use—about 15% of motorists on the tollway. Electronic toll collection was a success. The Dallas North Tollway paved the way for wide-

spread use of electronic tolling and eventually electronic-only toll roads. Amtech would go on to become a leader in the industry, later becoming Transcore after a period of financial difficulty in the 1990s.<sup>50</sup>

While the majority of toll road motorists were using electronic tolling by the 2000s, motorists could still pay via traditional methods—tossing coins into a basket or with a toll collection attendant. After much study, in 2008 the NTTA made the decision to transition to an all-electronic, cashless toll collection system. Vehicles without tolltags would be photographed and billed using license plate information. The Bush Turnpike became all-electronic in 2009 and in late 2010 the conversion on the Dallas North Tollway was complete, including demolition of three major





City of Addison

This undated view from the early 1980s looks northbound along the tollway corridor just north of Keller Springs Road when the Dallas Parkway was still a two-lane road. The right-of-way set-aside for the tollway is clearly visible. The tollway at this location opened in October 1987. Below is an undated ground-level view from the early 1980s in the middle of the original Dallas Parkway north of Spring Valley Road. The tollway at this location opened in December 1986. On the left is a Fiat sign for the Ewing Buick automobile dealership, which also sold Fiats and Opels. Fiat left the United States market in 1983 and returned in 2011 to offer the Fiat 500 through its partnership with Chrysler.

City of Addison







City of Addison

These undated views look southwest across the Dallas Parkway at the Belt Line Road interchange. The upper photo is from circa 1980, and the lower photo is from circa 1983. The tollway at this location opened in July 1987. Belt Line to the west of the Dallas North Tollway has the densest concentration of restaurants in North Texas, and also has an ample selection of retail and liquor stores.

City of Addison







UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>256</sup>

**Dead mall** This view looks south along the Dallas North Tollway corridor at Arapaho Road circa 1984 when work was just underway on construction of the toll road. The toll road followed the alignment of the Dallas Parkway, an arterial street, and widening of the corridor was needed to accommodate the toll road. Due to the high-value commercial real estate along the Dallas Parkway, right-of-way acquisition was expensive and the toll road was built on the narrowest possible corridor, making a much-needed widening very difficult and possibly financially prohibitive. On the lower left is Prestonwood Town Center mall which opened in 1979. With two other major malls (Valley View Mall and Galleria Dallas) about two miles away along Interstate 635 LBJ Freeway, this area was probably the most heavily malled area to ever exist in the United States. While all three malls performed well during north Dallas' peak of affluence in the 1980s, ultimately there was too much mall capacity and in 1999 Prestonwood Town Center closed. Two remaining open anchor stores closed in 2001 and final demolition took place in 2004. The site was promptly redeveloped with a Super Walmart and a strip shopping center. Demographic decline in the 2000s contributed to the demise of Valley View Mall, and in 2012 plans were announced to demolish the mall and redevelop the property. After the redevelopment of Valley View is complete, only Galleria Dallas along the Dallas North Tollway will remain from the glory days of north Dallas mall shopping.



This 1986 view shows construction in progress looking north at Belt Line Road. This section opened to traffic in July 1987.



City of Addison

This view from circa 1984 at Galleria Dallas shows work just underway on construction of the first extension of the Dallas North Tollway. This section opened to traffic in October 1986.

Dallas Public Library<sup>257</sup>





The Dallas North Tollway through far north Dallas and Addison was built on an extremely narrow corridor, and this cartoon recycles an old joke to have some fun with the substandard, low-quality design.

toll plazas as well as the replacement of scores of collection points on individual ramps. In North Texas, traditional toll collection was extinct.

The conversion was a costly effort, requiring \$92 million. In 2010 about 15% of motorists drove on the system without tolltags and 5% of system motorists could not be billed, costing NTTA about \$18 million in lost revenue. But in spite of the growing pains, all-electronic tolling was expected to save about \$12.5 million per year in administrative and toll collection costs.<sup>51</sup>

### Real Estate Booms

Since the late 1970s the Dallas North Tollway has been the scene of an almost continuous real estate boom, starting near LBJ Freeway and then steadily progressing north into Frisco in the 2000s.

Galleria Dallas, an upscale shopping mall with 1.8 million square feet of retail space, opened in 1982 and several adjoining high rise office towers opened in the 1980s. About two miles north along the tollway the city of Addison saw an office and hotel boom in the early to mid-1980s, with infill development continuing until the 2000s. Belt Line Road west of the tollway became a leading commercial strip with the densest concentration of restaurants in North Texas, and the Addison Circle mixed-use community alongside the tollway first opened in 1998.

In 1979 the land along the present-day Dallas North

Tollway south of SH 121 in northwest Plano was nothing more than cotton fields and cow pastures. But Dallas billionaire Ross Perot had a vision for transforming the rural area and he began acquiring land, originally purchasing over 2000 acres which ultimately became the 2665-acre Legacy Business Park. Perot's active involvement in the development ended in 1984 when General Motors purchased Perot's firm Electronic Data Systems and Perot's appointee Robbie Robinson guided future development. But Perot had laid the groundwork for what would become a highly successful and influential real estate property.<sup>52</sup>

The first major corporate offices in the development opened in 1985, new headquarters for Frito-Lay and a 362-acre headquarter campus for Electronic Data Systems. In July 1987 J.C. Penney, then the nation's third largest retailer, announced its plans to construct a headquarters complex in the Legacy project, opening the offices in 1992. The completion of the Dallas North Tollway through the Legacy development in 1994 ensured steady growth in the following decades, transforming Legacy Business Park into a regional corporate hub. The Legacy Town Center retail and residential development along the tollway first opened in 2000 and became a huge success with numerous expansions in the subsequent years.<sup>53</sup>

In the 2000s the real estate boom shifted even further northward into Frisco with the opening of Stonebriar Mall in 2000 followed by numerous office buildings and retail





Author, June 2009

developments just north of SH 121, the Sam Rayburn Tollway. The Dr Pepper Ballpark for the minor league Frisco Roughriders baseball team opened in 2003. Further north at Frisco Town Square, the soccer-specific Toyota Stadium for FC Dallas (originally named Pizza Hut Park) opened in 2005. The prestige of the Dallas North Tollway was further enhanced in 2014 when Toyota announced it would move its North American headquarters from California to a site along the tollway in Plano at the intersection with the Sam Rayburn Tollway, and the Dallas Cowboys began construction of a new headquarters, training and entertainment complex along the tollway in Frisco. Plenty of vacant land remains along the tollway in both Plano and Frisco, ready to accommodate the next wave of development. ■

This June 2009 view looks inbound at Mockingbird Lane, showing the narrow tollway corridor as it passes through Highland Park ahead. The original tollway was built in 1968 on the Cotton Belt railroad corridor which was only 100 feet wide, just barely wide enough for a six-lane facility. The tollway section shown was the first to open.

The January 2012 view below shows the terminus of the tollway at US Highway 380 in far north Frisco. If history is any guide, this vacant land will become heavily developed with offices and retail as development continues to move north along the tollway.

Justin Cozart, January 2012







Author, 2005

This May 2005 view looks northbound along the Dallas North Tollway in far north Dallas with the runway for Addison Airport visible in the background. Addison Airport, opened in 1957 in a rural landscape, is now surrounded by dense development and serves the general aviation market.

Author, 2004

The Addison Circle urban-style development first opened in 1998 along the tollway just north of Arapaho Road. The housing component of the development was a big success but the street-level retail fared poorly, most likely due to competition from the concentration of restaurants and retail along nearby Belt Line Road.







Author, April 2011

The above April 2011 view looks northbound along the tollway at Tennyson Parkway. Legacy Town Center, just ahead, is part of the larger Legacy Business Park which features numerous corporate headquarters and campuses. The office building below was among the first buildings at the development in 1985. It was the headquarters for Electronic Data Systems until Hewlett-Packard purchased EDS in 2008.

Author, April 2011





SPUR  
**366**

## ***Woodall Rodgers Freeway Spur 366***

Author, April 2012



**W**oodall Rodgers Freeway is the most action-packed two miles of freeway in North Texas. It provides great views of downtown Dallas. It has become the trendiest strip in downtown Dallas, the focus of the arts community and the location of nearly all new downtown development in the 2000s. Klyde Warren Park on top of the freeway's tunnel and the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge are among the most distinctive structures in North Texas. If only Woodall Rodgers could see what his namesake freeway has become, he would be proud.

But nearly every aspect of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway was a struggle to build, culminating most recently with the near-miracle second-round bid which allowed the signature Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge to proceed. From its beginning in the early 1950s, every phase of the freeway required more time and money than initially anticipated.

### The North Side Freeway

A freeway on the north side of downtown Dallas was first proposed in November 1944 as part of a comprehensive engineering study for an east-west freeway across the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The proposed alignment was parallel to and just north of Pacific Avenue, placing the freeway in a trench. However, Dallas officials immediately expressed displeasure with the alignment due to the high cost of right-of-way acquisition and disruption to the core of downtown. Defining the path of the east-west freeway through Dallas turned out to be the most difficult and controversial alignment decision in the original formulation of the Dallas freeway plan, and studies continued through the late 1940s into the early 1950s. An alignment north of downtown on the north side of Pacific Avenue

remained under consideration until October 1951 when TxDOT recommended an alignment on the south side of downtown. The final alignment for the east-west freeway south of downtown was approved by Dallas City Council in September 1953.<sup>98</sup>

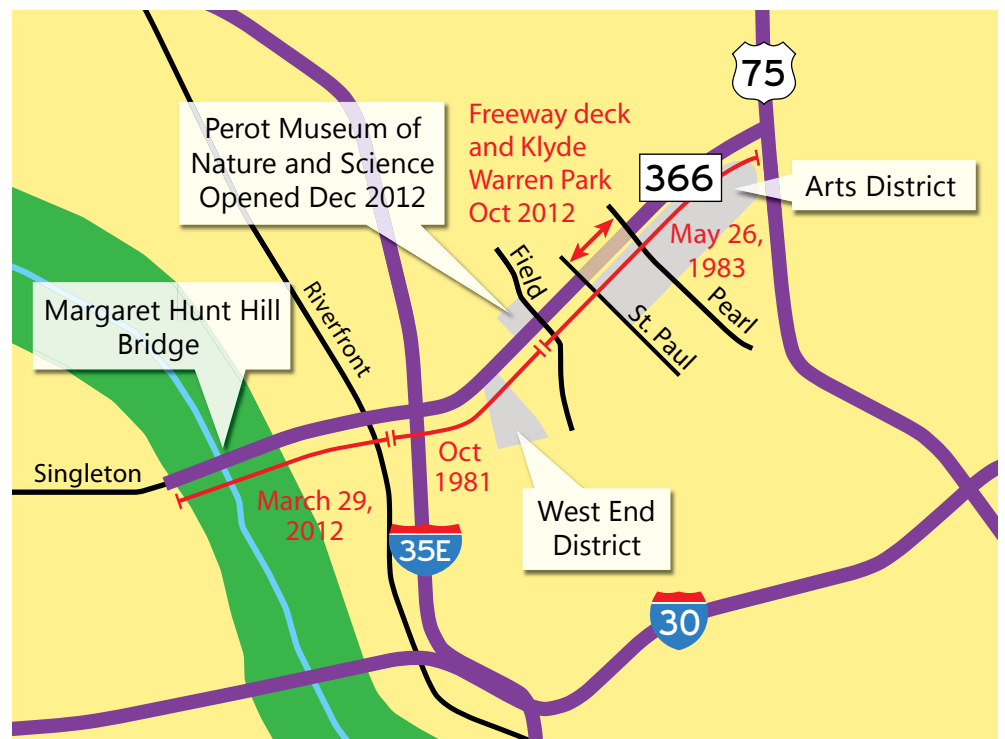
Traffic congestion in downtown Dallas was increasing rapidly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, threatening to reach gridlock proportions and make downtown an unattractive location for business. Starting in 1950 the City of Dallas began an aggressive program to relieve traffic congestion, initially focusing on bottleneck elimination, parking management and the creation of one-way streets. But it was clear that streets alone could not handle the crush of

### Quick Facts for Woodall Rodgers Freeway

- Named for James Woodall Rodgers, Dallas Mayor 1939 to 1947 who provided key leadership to move Central Expressway to construction
- Completion of the original freeway on May 26, 1983, was long delayed due to the high cost of right-of-way
- Hosted the largest-ever celebration for a freeway opening in North Texas for the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge on March 2-4, 2012
- Features the only freeway tunnel in North Texas underneath Klyde Warren Park

### Key Dates in the History

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1952</b> | A downtown freeway loop is first proposed  |
| <b>1958</b> | TxDOT approves the freeway   |
| <b>1967</b> | Right-of-way acquisition halts when the City of Dallas runs out of money. An agreement with Dallas County to fund remaining acquisition is reached in 1968.                    |
| <b>1968</b> | Dallas commits to a trenched design; TxDOT concurs in 1971   |
| <b>1974</b> | Right-of-way clearance is completed  |
| <b>1976</b> | The freeway design is approved   |
| <b>1983</b> | The originally planned freeway opens on May 26   |
| <b>2012</b> | The western extension and Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge is celebrated with the largest-ever North Texas freeway celebration in March. The Klyde Warren deck park opens in October. |





cars, and a freeway system would be the long-term solution to keep traffic flowing. In September 1952 Dallas city traffic engineer Lloyd Braff first recommended a complete freeway loop around downtown including a new freeway on the north side on a location very close to the present-day Woodall Rodgers Freeway. The north segment of the downtown loop was informally called the Cochran-Munger Expressway since its alignment was parallel to Cochran and Munger streets.<sup>99</sup>

In August 1955 detailed plans were revealed for the

complete downtown freeway loop including the Cochran-Munger Expressway on the north. However, only the west section of the loop (IH 35E) and south section of the loop (IH 30) were approved and officially part of the state highway system. On July 1, 1958, a delegation of Dallas civic and business leaders led by Mayor R.L. Thornton went to Austin to make a presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission to request designation of the Cochran-Munger Expressway as part of the state highway system. Dallas offered to cover the entire cost of right-of-way acquisition

## James Woodall Rodgers, 1890-1961

Civic leader and Dallas Mayor from 1939 to 1947, James Woodall Rodgers is viewed as one of the best and most influential mayors in the history of Dallas. Rodgers left a lasting legacy on Dallas by establishing a process of long-range planning to accommodate growth. In 1943 he initiated the first comprehensive master plan to meet modern-day needs, hiring renowned urban planner Harland Bartholomew who produced the “Bartholomew Plan” which was advanced with a then-huge \$40 million bond issue in 1945. (The 1911 Kessler plan was mostly obsolete by the 1940s.)

A native of Alabama, Rodgers earned a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin and started a practice in Dallas just after World War I. The law practice became one of the most successful in Dallas, propelling Rodgers into civic leadership positions where his tireless energy inspired his informal designation as a dynamo. As mayor, Rodgers played a key role in advancing the long-delayed Central Expressway to construction. Rodger’s successor as mayor, James Temple, attempted to name Central Expressway for Rodgers but was unable due to a rule preventing the naming of a city project for a living person. Rodgers also launched the expansion of Love Field Airport, making it one of the nation’s top airports of the 1950s and 1960s and establishing Dallas as an airline industry hub.<sup>279</sup>



Dallas Public Library<sup>280</sup>

## Margaret Hunt Hill, 1915-2007

Margaret Hunt Hill was the first-born child of legendary Texas oilman H.L. Hunt Jr, namesake of Dallas-based Hunt Petroleum. H.L. Hunt achieved great wealth in the east Texas oilfields in the 1930s, making him one of the richest persons in the United States. Margaret Hunt worked for her father as executive secretary before marrying Al Hill in 1938.

Margaret Hunt Hill dedicated her life to family, charitable causes, historic preservation and her interest in gardening. The Trinity River bridge on Woodall Rodgers Freeway was named the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in February 2005 in recognition of Hunt Petroleum’s \$12 million donation to the Trinity Trust landmark parks project. Unfortunately, she did not see the bridge completed due to her death in 2007.<sup>281</sup>



Dallas Morning News



City of Dallas Archives

**The cause of the fuss** This circa 1970 aerial view looking northeast from a point near Stemmons Freeway shows the Woodall Rodgers Freeway corridor with right-of-way clearance partially complete. In the upper part of the photo the cleared right-of-way for the freeway is visible, but numerous large structures still existed in the foreground. The City of Dallas had exhausted all available funds for right-of-way acquisition and was unwilling to allocate more funding, so city officials attempted to transfer the remaining costs to Dallas County. A nasty rift erupted between the City of Dallas and Dallas County in 1967 but an agreement was reached in 1968 in which Dallas County would cover \$5 million of the remaining \$10 million in costs. In 1975 the City of Dallas designated the West End Historic District in the foreground area, preventing the demolition of remaining buildings.



Funds for Woodall Rodgers Freeway right-of-way acquisition were included in 1958, 1962 and 1964 bond programs. The 1962 program included \$4 million for the freeway, approximately \$31 million in 2013 dollars, more than twice as much as any other single item in the \$25.2 million bond issue. Still, the \$8 million set aside in the three bond programs was far short of the total needed to clear the entire corridor.



Dallas Public Library<sup>282</sup>

This August 1976 view shows the cleared corridor for the Woodall Rodgers freeway. The upper two-thirds of the corridor had been clear for about 10 years, awaiting funding for the purchase and demolition of the structures that existed in the foreground. Freeway construction began in 1977.

but the right-of-way acquisition became a promise that was very costly to deliver, and there was a long road ahead before construction could begin. Dallas City Council officially named the freeway for Woodall Rodgers on October 10, 1960.<sup>100</sup>

### Acquiring the Right-of-way

The City of Dallas had taken an optimistic view of the project cost in 1958, estimating \$6 million for right-of-way acquisition and \$4 million for construction. TxDOT, however, estimated right-of-way costs at \$11 million and construction at \$6.25 million. It turned that even TxDOT's numbers were too low, and the unanticipated cost for right-of-way resulted in controversy and long delays.<sup>101</sup>

Using bond programs, the City of Dallas allocated \$2 million in 1958, \$4 million in 1962 and \$2 million in 1964 for a total of \$8 million, approximately \$60 million in 2013 dollars. By 1966 the eastern two-thirds of the corridor, from Field Street to Central Expressway, had been acquired and cleared, allowing construction of the frontage roads to begin on that section. However, the City of Dallas had spent nearly all the

for the originally planned 1.42-mile freeway, with TxDOT responsible for the construction cost. Three months earlier in April, the City of Fort Worth made a similar proposal to the commission for construction of the downtown Fort Worth freeway loop, offering to pay half of the right-of-way acquisition cost. In August 1958 the Texas Transportation Commission accepted the Dallas proposal and took no action on the Fort Worth proposal. It was a big win for Dallas,

available \$8 million and the final section, from Field Street to IH 35E Stemmons Freeway, would be the most difficult and costly since it required the demolition of several large warehouse structures similar to the remaining structures in the West End District.<sup>102</sup>

In 1967 Dallas City Council was no longer willing to provide more funds for right-of-way acquisition and the council deliberately omitted the project from a planned

bond issue, opting instead to attempt to transfer responsibility for the remaining acquisition to Dallas County. Dallas County commissioners were not willing to cover the additional costs, and the City of Dallas held firm in its refusal to provide more funds. By January 1968 a major rift developed between the city and county, and land acquisition came to a halt.<sup>103</sup>

Powerful interests including the downtown business establishment wanted to get the project moving and politicians were under pressure to reach a solution. In June 1968 Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson brokered an agreement in which the county agreed to pay for 50% of the remaining costs which were estimated to be \$10 million, with the county contribution not to exceed \$5 million. Right-of-way acquisition was complete in 1973 and demolition of structures was finished in 1974.<sup>104</sup>

The final cost of right-of-way acquisition was reported to be \$16.3 million. In 2013 dollars, this translates to approximately \$105 million. The City of Dallas and Dallas County also paid \$6.7 million for drainage. The years in which the drainage expense was incurred is not reported, but assuming the expense was incurred evenly during the 1970s, this translates to approximately \$29 million in 2013 dollars.

### Deciding on the Design

Prior to 1960 there was no official indication that the middle section of the freeway was planned to be an elevated or subsurface design. A June 1957 artist's depiction of the downtown freeway loop showed an elevated freeway, but a map published in 1957 and 1958 showed the freeway in a trench.<sup>105</sup>

The first official statement for the freeway design came in December 1960 when the City of Dallas and TxDOT announced that an agreement had been reached to elevate the full length of the freeway. The elevated design was expected to minimize right-of-way acquisition and construction costs.<sup>106</sup>

In September 1961 the City of Dallas changed its mind and designed the section from Pearl Street to Akard Street as a subsurface freeway, receiving tentative TxDOT approval for the trenched design in May 1963. Due to the high cost of the subsurface design, however, the City of Dallas agreed to return to the TxDOT-preferred elevated design in April 1965. In August 1965 the influential Dallas Chamber of Commerce and Central Business District Association both endorsed the elevated design.<sup>107</sup>

Plans for the elevated freeway were once again under scrutiny in July 1968 when the City of Dallas hired traffic engineering consultant Warren Travers and planning consultant Vincent Ponte to review the design. In October the consultants recommended a subsurface design with a deck over the freeway between Akard and St. Paul streets. Travers suggested that parking garages or other structures could also be built above the freeway. It was obvious the subsurface design would be much more expensive than the

elevated design. The City of Dallas, having already financed most of the costly right-of-way acquisition, stood firm in its support of the subsurface design. TxDOT was responsible for paying for construction and was hesitant to agree to the new design.<sup>108</sup>

In April 1970 a formal TxDOT design study still strongly recommended the elevated design due to cost, safety and ramp design issues, but in December 1971 TxDOT agreed to the subsurface design when the City of Dallas agreed to cover some of the added costs. Then more problems arose. The steep grade required to transition the elevated east end of the freeway to the subsurface middle section was in violation of design standards, and disputes arose over the number of entrance and exit ramps, with local interests lobbying for more ramps and design standards requiring less. Studies and revisions continued until May 1976 when the Federal Highway Administration reluctantly approved the design only after the most unsafe elements were removed. The final design included an 8% down-grade and 7% up-grade at the east end of the freeway. Even with fewer ramps than the City of Dallas wanted, special designs were needed to accommodate the large number of entrances and exits on the short freeway.<sup>109</sup>

### Construction

With the right-of-way cleared by 1974 and the non-controversial interchange at Stemmons Freeway ready for construction, it seemed like work could finally begin. But there was yet another problem. TxDOT was out of money. In the early-to-mid 1970s gasoline tax revenue was stagnant and construction costs rapidly escalated as inflation was running rampant. By 1975 TxDOT was in a deep financial crisis with almost no money available for new construction. In October 1975 Texas Transportation Commission member Charles Simons, who was from Dallas, summarized the status of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, saying, "Frankly, the picture is bleak. ... We don't have the money and I see no prospects for getting it unless Congress should vote more federal funds for freeways in metropolitan areas." In July 1976 TxDOT submitted a construction plan for 1977 which did not include the Woodall Rodgers Freeway.<sup>110</sup>

But there was funding available for a minimal amount of new construction, so local officials designated the first phase of Woodall Rodgers Freeway construction to be the top priority in North Texas and continued to lobby TxDOT to provide funding. In September 1976 good news arrived: TxDOT funded construction of the first phase of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway main lanes, the section west of Field Street including the interchange with Stemmons Freeway. When bids were received in March 1977, the winning bid of \$13.2 million (\$51 million in 2013 dollars) was well below the estimate of \$23 million, inspiring optimism that the second and final construction contract would also be funded. In January 1979 TxDOT awarded a \$27.5 million (\$88 million in 2013 dollars) contract to build the subsurface section of freeway between Field Street and Central



## Explo '72

Due to the long delays which plagued the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, the cleared right-of-way through downtown was vacant for about a decade between the late 1960s and late 1970s. In 1972 Explo '72, an international youth training congress on evangelism, took place in North Texas. The weeklong event culminated with a Christian-themed concert on the Woodall Rodgers Freeway right-of-way. The event was officially called the Jesus Music Festival and informally called Jesusfest '72. An estimated 150,000 people attended the event from its 7 AM start to 3 PM conclusion on Saturday, June 17. Well-known personalities performing or speaking included Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson and Billy Graham. With the 2012 completion of Klyde Warren Park on the deck above the freeway, the freeway corridor is once again ready to host concerts.<sup>283</sup>



This aerial view shows the huge crowd on the Woodall Rodgers Freeway right-of-way for the Jesusfest '72 concert. An estimated 150,000 people attended.

Dallas Public Library<sup>284</sup>





Dallas Public Library<sup>285</sup>

This ground-level view looks west along the Woodall Rodgers Freeway corridor during the Jesusfest '72 concert.

Expressway. The first main lanes of Woodall Rodgers Freeway opened in October 1981 and the full length of freeway was dedicated on May 26, 1983, with a large ribbon-cutting ceremony on the Field Street overpass.<sup>111</sup>

### The Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge

The monumental 1967 *Regional Transportation Study* (see page 51) was the first plan to propose extending Woodall Rodgers Freeway, with new sections both to the east and west. The westward extension was a very short link into the east side of the Trinity River floodway where it would connect with a proposed new freeway then called the River Freeway and now called the Trinity Parkway. However, there was no bridge over the Trinity River. The proposed eastern extension of Woodall Rodgers was dropped from the plan in 1974, but the western extension remained in subsequent long-term plans, always into the east side of the floodway with no bridge over the river.<sup>112</sup>

There was no serious consideration of actually building the freeway extension until 1994 when the Trinity River Citizens Committee prepared a new long-term master plan for improving the Trinity River corridor. The plan revived the idea of the Trinity Parkway inside the floodway to allow traffic to bypass the congested downtown Mixmaster interchange, but instead of terminating Woodall Rodgers Freeway into the Trinity Parkway like prior plans, the new plan extended Woodall Rodgers Freeway over the

river to connect into west Dallas to help spur redevelopment of the blighted area. In 1997 local officials approved a comprehensive plan to ease downtown freeway congestion including the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge and improvements to IH 35E and IH 30.<sup>113</sup>

By 1998 the bridge had wide support and officials were working to make the bridge a “signature” span, an artistically designed structure that would become an architectural asset to the city. Dallas voters approved a \$246 million bond proposition in May 1998 for the overall Trinity River improvement program with \$28 million earmarked for the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge. The consultant developing the comprehensive plan hired renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava to help develop ideas for up to five Trinity River bridges—the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge, new bridges for IH 30 and IH 35E, and two potential bridges for the Trinity Parkway based on its preliminary design with highway lanes on both sides of the river. The bridge concepts first shown in February 1999 all featured arches in their designs and the Woodall Rodgers bridge was described as a “tri-arch” with the structural arches running parallel to the traffic direction. In June 1999 Calatrava made a presentation to Dallas City Council which endorsed the bridge plan with a 14-1 vote.<sup>114</sup>

Signature bridges would be substantially more expensive than a basic pier-and-beam bridge design, and





UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>286</sup>

This October 1980 view looking southwest shows construction underway on Woodall Rodgers Freeway. The south (far) side of the freeway corridor was nearly entirely vacant and was designated to become the future Dallas Arts District in 1978. The freeway opened on May 26, 1983, and the first structure in the arts district, the Dallas Museum of Art, opened in 1984. Major venues opened regularly until completion of the arts district in 2012.

TxDOT would pay only for the cost of a conventional pier-and-beam bridge with the City of Dallas or other agencies responsible for covering the extra costs. The estimated \$67 million cost for the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge included \$18 million for the signature enhancement, and all five bridges were estimated to cost \$120 million more than conventional designs. It appeared that funds would be available for the Woodall Rodgers Freeway bridge, but the other bridges remained unfunded and would ultimately become the responsibility for a future generation of politicians. In November 1999 TxDOT officially approved its involvement in the Woodall Rodgers bridge project, allocating \$30 million in state funds. Officials were relying on private donations to cover Calatrava's design fee, then estimated to be \$4.7 million. Also in November preliminary design work was able to move forward when \$2 million was received from an anonymous donor who was later identified as Margaret McDermott, widow of Texas Instruments co-founder Eugene McDermott.<sup>115</sup>

In 2001 an additional \$2.7 million in private donations

was still needed to cover the design fee, which had risen to \$5.9 million. Three Dallas billionaires came to the rescue in May 2001 to provide the needed funds—Mark Cuban, Tom Hicks and Ross Perot Jr all made unspecified contributions to eliminate the \$2.7 million deficit. The final tab for bridge design was \$6.3 million.<sup>116</sup>

The final bridge design was unveiled in June 2003. The earlier designs with arches parallel to the highway were replaced with a new design featuring a single, soaring parabolic arch over the centerpoint of the bridge with geometrically arranged cables supporting the deck span. The design was the "cable-stayed" type, a very popular design for modern bridges. The estimated \$73 million needed for construction was fully funded. In February 2005 the City of Dallas officially named the bridge for Margaret Hunt Hill, the matriarch of the H.L. Hunt family whose Hunt Petroleum Corp. made a \$12 million donation to be used for parks and design work on the planned third signature Trinity River bridge, the IH 35E crossing.<sup>117</sup>

Excitement reached a crescendo with the daylong





Author, 2006

**Lots of bad memories** The Suzanne L. Kays Detention Facility (jail) along Riverfront Boulevard was demolished for the freeway extension to connect to the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. Surely many folks with memories of the inside were pleased to see it razed. TxDOT paid Dallas County \$36 million for the property. Suzanne Kays was a Dallas County deputy who died in the line of duty on January 4, 1989, just six days after graduating from the training academy.

project groundbreaking celebration on December 9, 2005. After a private luncheon at the Meyerson Symphony center and a public lecture by Calatrava attended by hundreds, the entire Dallas political establishment, the Spanish ambassador to the U.S. and guests braved the cold and wind for a carnival-like kickoff ceremony on the Continental Street bridge just north of the project location. Just after sunset the ceremony concluded with fireworks and streamers, wrapping up the most extensive groundbreaking ceremony in the history of Dallas-Fort-Worth freeways.<sup>118</sup>

### The Budget is Busted and the Savior Emerges

But there was still a major hurdle to be cleared: awarding the construction contract within budget. In March 2006 the City of Dallas officially maintained that its cost estimate of \$51 to \$57 million was still valid, but the *Dallas Morning News* reported that project insiders expected the cost to be closer to \$100 million, potentially leaving a huge gap in the budget which the city was not prepared to fill. The moment of truth came on June 8, 2006, when three bids for the construction contract were opened. Officials were shocked and stunned at the price tag on the bids: \$113 million from Houston-based Williams Brothers, \$122 million from Indiana-based Traylor Brothers and \$133 million from North Texas-based Austin Bridge and Road. Mayor Laura Miller and other city officials immediately stated that the

cost would need to be brought down to within about \$10 million of the estimate, even if it meant redesigning the bridge or downsizing it.<sup>119</sup>

Amid the gloom of the budget-busting bids, officials may not have realized that their best and only hope for building the bridge as originally envisioned was already a player in the process—Williams Brothers Construction, the low bidder at \$113 million. Williams Brothers is among the largest highway construction firms in Texas but is little-known in North Texas since it does nearly all its work in the Houston area. Williams Brothers has a reputation for lowering the cost of construction projects with its aggressive bids, delivering top-quality work and, in the 2000s, completing projects on or ahead of schedule. And, most importantly for the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, Williams Brothers is 100% owned by a living legend in the Texas highway construction industry—James “Doug” Pitcock (born 1928). Pitcock joined Williams Brothers Construction when it was founded by the Williams brothers in 1955 and has run the company ever since, gaining full ownership of the firm in 1991. Pitcock has shown a particular interest in having his firm build the most impressive and largest projects in the Houston area, and the monumental Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge was perhaps an opportunity which he couldn’t resist.

Calatrava’s firm, the City of Dallas and TxDOT reviewed





Jay Barker

Author, March 2012

The opening celebration for the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge during the weekend of March 2-4, 2012, was the largest freeway celebration in the history of North Texas. Saturday featured a well-attended festival on the bridge which included the Parade of Giants, a procession of 15-foot-tall puppets of historical west Dallas figures. This puppet depicts Victor Considérant, a French explorer who founded the French-speaking La Reunion colony in what is today west Dallas.



This view shows the bridge festival on Saturday March 3. An estimated 40,000 people attended events on the bridge during opening weekend.

**Also see:** Additional photos of the opening celebration page 4

Fireworks concluded the day's festivities on Friday and Saturday night.

Author, March 2012







Williams Brothers Construction, 1991

When the funding situation for construction of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge became grim in June 2006 after budget-busting bids were received, a new savior of the project emerged—Houston's Williams Brothers Construction Company.

In the original bidding Williams Brothers submitted the lowest bid, \$113 million, which was nearly 100% above the original estimate of \$57 million. The bridge cost had to be dramatically lowered in order to move forward. Williams Brothers was the only contractor to continue to a second round of bidding in October 2006. Williams Brothers worked closely with TxDOT and its Italian steel fabrication partner Cimolai to identify cost savings. Williams Brothers' owner, rarely photographed Texas highway construction legend Doug Pitcock shown above in 1991, surely had an influence in making the project happen. Williams Brothers reduced the cost to \$69.7 million, allowing the bridge construction to proceed. Above, employees of Williams Brothers Construction participated in the Parade of Builders during the opening celebration on March 3, 2012.



Author, March 2012

This April 2012 view looking north shows the bridge span between the levees of the Trinity River floodway. The freeway terminates on the left (west) side of the bridge at a traffic signal. The bridge is a cable-stayed design.

Author, April 2012





The final section of steel to complete the arch was lifted into position 400 feet above the ground on June 24, 2010. The steel was fabricated by Cimolai in Italy, arriving at the Port of Houston and then shipped to the bridge site on special carriers.

iStock

the design for cost reduction, changing the central arch to a circular cross-section from the original seven-sided design and making other minor changes which did not affect the bridge appearance. The arch and cable-supported sections of the bridge are made of steel, and federal law allowed the use of foreign steel only when the total project cost (not just the steel cost) was reduced by a minimum of 25%. Williams Brothers entered into a partnership with Italian steel supplier Cimolai, a firm well-experienced in producing steel for complex bridges including designs by Calatrava.<sup>120</sup>

The make-or-break moment for the bridge came on October 4, 2006, when TxDOT scheduled a second round of bids. There was only one bidder, Williams Brothers Construction. The atmosphere of apprehension and uncertainty was instantly changed to elation when the bid was revealed to be \$69.7 million, still slightly above the revised estimate of \$65 million but within the range that was feasible to proceed.<sup>121</sup>

The dramatic cost reduction raised some eyebrows—after all, how could the construction cost be reduced by 38% with a few minor changes? But skeptical observers failed to recognize the influence of Doug Pitcock, a man who believes in getting things done. Williams Brothers and Cimolai steel met the challenge of delivering the project within budget, and Dallas would get its first signature bridge.<sup>122</sup>

### More Problems

Preliminary work on the bridge began in June 2007, but more troubles were ahead. In mid-2008, nearly two years after the contract award, there was very little progress on the bridge—only some pier footings in the Trinity River flood plain and nothing actually rising above the ground. In August 2008 it was reported that Cimolai steel had difficulty completing the engineering analysis of the bridge, delaying approval of the design. The steel fabrication job missed its scheduled slot in Cimolai's production shop schedule, forcing the job to be pushed back ten months.<sup>123</sup>

After the levee failures in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 the Army Corps of Engineers dramatically increased oversight of any activities which affected levees. The Corps monitored work on the bridge, and in 2008 sand was discovered in the soil where holes were being drilled for the bridge, including sand underneath the west levee discovered in 2009. Although not a risk to the bridge, the sand did pose a risk to the levees since water migrates easily through sand and could potentially migrate from the sand layer up into the levee along the shaft of the bridge footing. The sand discovery prompted an extensive review of the integrity of the entire levee



system. Construction of the bridge sections near the levees was allowed to proceed in December 2009 when the Corps approved remedial measures to strengthen the levees.<sup>124</sup>

### Finally, the Bridge Starts to Rise

After all the delays and controversies, 2010 promised to be the year that real progress on the bridge would finally be realized. The first shipments of steel arrived at the Port of Houston in March 2009 and the huge steel sections of the main arch began to reach the construction site in July. The first section of the steel arch was lifted into position in late May 2010, and when the soaring arch was completed on June 24 it became clear that the bridge would be a stunning addition to the Dallas skyline.

Finally in early 2012 the bridge and adjacent section of new freeway connecting to the existing Woodall Rodgers Freeway was nearly complete and local officials formulated plans for a huge celebration—the largest-ever freeway celebration in North Texas. The festivities took place during the weekend of March 2-4, beginning with a \$200-per-ticket, sold-out Friday night gala on the bridge which featured entertainment by Lyle Lovett and His Large Band and a fireworks show. Saturday featured an all-day festival on the bridge including the Parade of Giants, a procession of fifteen large puppets representing historical figures which have impacted west Dallas. The day concluded with a second fireworks display. Sunday featured an early-morning official dedication with Calatrava and top political leaders. Instead of a traditional ribbon cutting, hundreds of





Author, June 2009

**Before the deck** These 2009 views show the Woodall Rodgers Freeway just prior to construction of the deck for Klyde Warren Park. The above view looks west with Pearl Street crossing in the foreground. The deck extends from Pearl three blocks west to St. Paul Street. The view below looks east from St. Paul, with the area of the view now inside the tunnel.

Author, September 2009







Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation

Key political leaders and project backers gathered along Woodall Rodgers Freeway on November 30, 2009, to launch construction of the deck over the freeway. Included in the photo are Mayor Tom Leppert (second from the left), U.S. Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (third from the left) and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood (fourth from the left).

local girl and boy scouts were positioned at opposite ends of the bridge and ran to the middle of the bridge holding ribbons. Separate from the bridge events was the Bridge-O-Rama festival in west Dallas featuring over 30 events with everything from art exhibits to a lowrider rally. For additional coverage of the huge celebration, see page 4. The bridge opened to traffic on March 29. The final cost of the project including engineering, right-of-way, construction and other expenses was \$182 million.<sup>125</sup>

### Decking the Trench

While the purpose of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge was to achieve maximum visibility of the signature structure, another group of downtown advocates was seeking to hide the subsurface section of the freeway by covering it with a deck to provide a platform for a new park.

The 1968 study which recommended sinking the Woodall Rodgers Freeway into a trench had suggested overdecking the freeway for one block between Akard and St. Paul streets, but the concept was nothing more than wishful thinking by urban planners and was surely ruled out by cost considerations since officials were in a struggle to get funding for the basic design.<sup>126</sup>

By the 2000s, however, Woodall Rodgers Freeway had become far more than a just a freeway. It was the center and focus of the most vital and active part of downtown, including the Arts District, the nearby American Airlines

center and Victory Park, the burgeoning Uptown district to the north and along its south side the only new downtown office towers built in the 2000s. Woodall Rodgers Freeway had become the best part of downtown, and downtown promoters believed it could be made even better by covering the freeway with a park. The Real Estate Council, a Dallas organization of real estate professionals which organized charitable efforts to support their industry, revived the idea of a deck park in 2002 and raised \$1.5 million to fund a feasibility study, publicly announcing the grant and the deck-building campaign in February 2005. Of course, raising the funds to build the deck would be the biggest challenge and proponents envisioned that the estimated \$60 million cost would be covered by \$20 million in state funds, \$20 million in local funds and \$20 million in private donations.<sup>127</sup>

The park received strong support from the downtown business community and detailed plans for the park were revealed in June 2006. By October 2006 park advocates had secured \$20 million in City of Dallas bond funds, \$20 million from TxDOT and \$17 million from private donors, within \$10 million of the revised cost of \$67 million. Reaching the needed total proved to be elusive, but the delay turned out to be very fortuitous. The cost of construction dropped with the great recession of 2008 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$16.7 million in funding. Limiting the tunnel to a





Author, April 2012

*Dallas Morning News*

This April 2012 view looking northeast shows Klyde Warren Park atop the freeway deck nearing completion. The 42-story glass-clad Museum Tower with luxury residences on the right side of the freeway was also nearing completion. The Museum Tower became highly controversial soon after its completion since its glass surface reflected bright glare on the next-door Nasher Sculpture Center.

**Also see:** Photos of the park opening celebration page 25

Below: Park name-sake Klyde Warren raises two ribbons which were symbolically joined at the park dedication on October 27, 2012. Just behind Klyde is his father Kelcy Warren who purchased naming rights for the park for around \$10 million.

three-block section between St. Paul and Pearl streets also kept the project within budget. By May 2009 \$77 million in government and private funding was secured for the project, and the winning bid for the physical deck came in at \$44.5 million, leaving the remaining funds to expedite completion of the actual park. An official kickoff celebration was held on September 14, 2009, and major work was underway soon afterward. Beams covering the freeway to form the deck for the park were installed in 2010 and 2011, creating the only freeway “tunnel” in North Texas. In February 2012 Dallas billionaire Kelcy Warren obtained naming rights to the park by making a large donation to the project, the amount not officially disclosed but reported to be in the neighborhood of \$10 million. The park was named Klyde Warren Park in honor of Warren’s 9-year-old son. The park was completed and opened to the public with a weekend celebration on October 27 and 28, 2012. The final cost of the project was \$110 million.<sup>128</sup> ■





NO WORRIES...  
WE CAN DO THE  
**IMPOSSIBLE.**

THE MESSIAH  
BOLD TX 198  
BOLD TX 161  
BOLD LOP 9

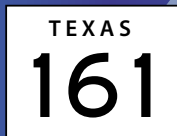
LONDON

DALLAS

BEIJING

Legalonic  
Woman





## Bush Turnpike SH 190 and SH 161

Building the Dallas outer loop would have been so simple if voters had approved a bond issue to finance its right-of-way in 1964. But the bond proposition fell short of the two-thirds majority required for approval, and the project became an epic struggle spanning half a century.

**T**he idea for the Dallas outer loop originated in the 1957 Thoroughfare Master Plan prepared by the Dallas Master Plan Committee which was heavily influenced by City of Dallas Planning Director Marvin Springer. Springer was a leader of North Texas street and freeway planning during the 1950s and 1960s, and was nationally recognized for his expertise (see photo page 47). The outer loop was originally envisioned as a major arterial street or a highway. Springer's first efforts to define the alignment were in Richardson in 1959, and in January 1960 the City of Richardson approved the designation of a highway-type route on a 140-foot-wide corridor on Campbell Road. In 1961 the Dallas Chamber of Commerce began efforts to launch a more comprehensive study, and in April 1963 the Greater Dallas Planning Council hired Springer to fully develop the outer loop concept. By early 1964 the outer loop project had been designated as a freeway on

*(facing page)* This illustration pays tribute to the near-superhero efforts which were required to build the Bush Turnpike. Due to the controversy and lawsuits engulfing the project in the 1970s and 1980s, it seemed like a mission impossible to get the freeway built. The illustration scene is a room like the Hall of Justice, the fictional headquarters for superheroes, where our superheroes are receiving instructions from the veteran manager, a guy modeled after the character "Q" in James Bond films. ("Q" is the eccentric mastermind responsible for Bond's high-tech gadgets.)

The first superhero on the left is Legalonic Woman, inspired by Wonder Woman. She represents the power needed to achieve victory in the lawsuits against the project. The middle superhero is Captain Toll, inspired by Captain America. He represents the role of tolls in making it financially possible to build the turnpike. The right superhero is Super TxDOT-man, inspired by Superman. He pays tribute to TxDOT's perseverance in planning and developing the project, keeping it alive through the freeway dark age of the 1970s and the controversy of the 1980s.

### Quick Facts for the Bush Turnpike

- Named for George H.W. Bush, Texas businessman and politician who served as president from 1989 to 1993
- Originally designated as Loop 9
- First frontage roads opened in 1989, first main lanes in 1993, most recent section opened in 2012
- The Carrollton and Grand Prairie controversies rank number two and three on the list of top freeway controversies in the history of North Texas (see page 64 for detailed rankings).

### Key Dates in the History

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>1957</b>      | A non-freeway outer loop is first proposed   |
| <b>1964</b>      | The loop is designated as a full freeway; a bond issue for right-of-way acquisition fails  |
| <b>1969</b>      | The project is designated as Loop 9 by TxDOT   |
| <b>1970</b>      | First controversy on the corridor, in Richardson   |
| <b>1976</b>      | The project is near death due to public opposition, escalating costs and lack of funding   |
| <b>1977</b>      | Improved TxDOT finances allows the resurrection of the project. The Loop 9 designation is canceled and replaced with SH 190 on the north and SH 161 on the west. |
| <b>1978</b>      | The alignment through far north Dallas is defined  |
| <b>1983</b>      | A lawsuit is filed against SH 161 in Grand Prairie. It remains active until 2000.  |
| <b>1984</b>      | A lawsuit is filed against SH 190 in Carrollton. It is decided in favor of the freeway in 1989.  |
| <b>1989</b>      | Controversy erupts in Garland and Rowlett, and is settled in favor of the freeway in 1994. The first frontage roads open in Garland in 1989.                     |
| <b>1994</b>      | A section of free main lanes opens on SH 161 in Irving; all future main lanes except the US 75 and IH 35E interchanges are tolled.                               |
| <b>1995</b>      | The project is converted into a toll road  |
| <b>1999-2001</b> | Tolled main lanes opened on SH 190 from IH 35E in Carrollton to SH 78 in Garland   |
| <b>2001</b>      | The first tolled main lanes on the SH 161 alignment open in Irving   |
| <b>2012</b>      | The final section of toll lanes on SH 161 opens  |
| <b>Future</b>    | Southward extension of the east segment  |





Bush Presidential Library

## George H.W. Bush born 1924

George H.W. Bush first moved to Texas in 1948, settling in Midland after completing World War II service as a pilot and graduating from Yale. He co-founded Zapata Petroleum in 1953 and in 1958 moved the headquarters to Houston. Bush served as United States congressman for a Houston district from 1967 to 1970, and made unsuccessful bids for the United States Senate in 1964 and 1970. (See election billboard page 356.) Bush served in numerous high-level appointed positions in the 1970s before running for the Republican nomination for president in 1980, losing to Ronald Reagan. Bush joined Reagan as the vice-presidential candidate on the 1980 Republican ticket, serving as vice president during the Reagan administration



Dallas Morning News

The Bush Turnpike was officially named at a November 6, 1996, event in Plano which featured the unveiling of a ceremonial sign. Former first lady Barbara Bush, on the right, attended. On the left is prominent Dallas lawyer David Laney, chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, and State Senator Florence Shapiro, who led the effort to name the highway for Bush while Plano mayor from 1990 to 1992.

from 1981 to 1989. Bush defeated Michael Dukakis to become the 41st president of the United States, taking office in 1989. Bush exited the White House in January 1993 after losing to Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential election, spending his post-presidency in Houston and at his summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Efforts to name the turnpike for George H.W. Bush were initiated by Plano mayor Florence Shapiro in 1991,

and in July Plano City Council voted to officially name the turnpike for Bush. Other cities followed Plano's lead, but some cities, including Dallas, were hesitant to name the turnpike while Bush was still serving as president. By 1996 all entities along the corridor approved the name and an official sign unveiling was held in Plano on November 6 with former first lady Barbara Bush in attendance.<sup>271</sup>

a 300-foot-wide right-of-way, generally following a path inside Dallas County near the county limits. Dallas County planners emphasized the need to acquire the right-of-way before suburban sprawl encroached on the corridor, saying land costs were escalating at rate of \$1 million per month.<sup>59</sup>

A vote on a \$20.25 million bond issue (about \$152 million in 2013 dollars) was scheduled for December 12, 1964. Dallas County decided to make the bonds an obligation of a Dallas County Road District rather than a general obligation bond since the county's tax rate for general obligation bonds was limited to 0.95% and commissioners did not want to use remaining available taxation authority for the road bonds. Although the Dallas County Road District had no tax rate limit, it required a two-thirds majority for approval rather than the simple majority required for general obligation bonds.<sup>60</sup>

By fall 1964 most business groups, cities, and officials

were rallying around the outer loop concept but support was not unanimous. Some were concerned about possible tax increases to finance the bonds, some were concerned about the lack of details particularly relating to alignment and some felt the plan was not yet ready for voter consideration. The bonds received 57% approval by the voters, short of the needed 67%.<sup>61</sup>

Had approval been obtained, the Dallas outer loop would have been on the fast track to construction in an era when there was virtually unanimous support for freeway construction and minimal environmental regulation. In retrospect, one can only wonder how relatively simple and painless the construction of the outer loop could have been. This setback to the outer loop would be the start of decades of controversy, legal battles, financial challenges and political disputes. And in the end, the Dallas outer loop could prevail only as a tollway.



### Fighting a Losing Battle

As North Texas grew and sprawled rapidly in the 1960s, officials recognized the need for continued planning and included the project in the monumental 1967 regional transportation plan which proposed numerous new freeways in North Texas (see page 51). In 1968 a Dallas County Commissioners Court committee ranked the outer loop as number two on the region's list of top highway priorities, with the Woodall Rodgers Freeway in downtown Dallas number one. But an alignment for the outer loop freeway had not been defined and money was still lacking for any meaningful right-of-way acquisition.<sup>62</sup>

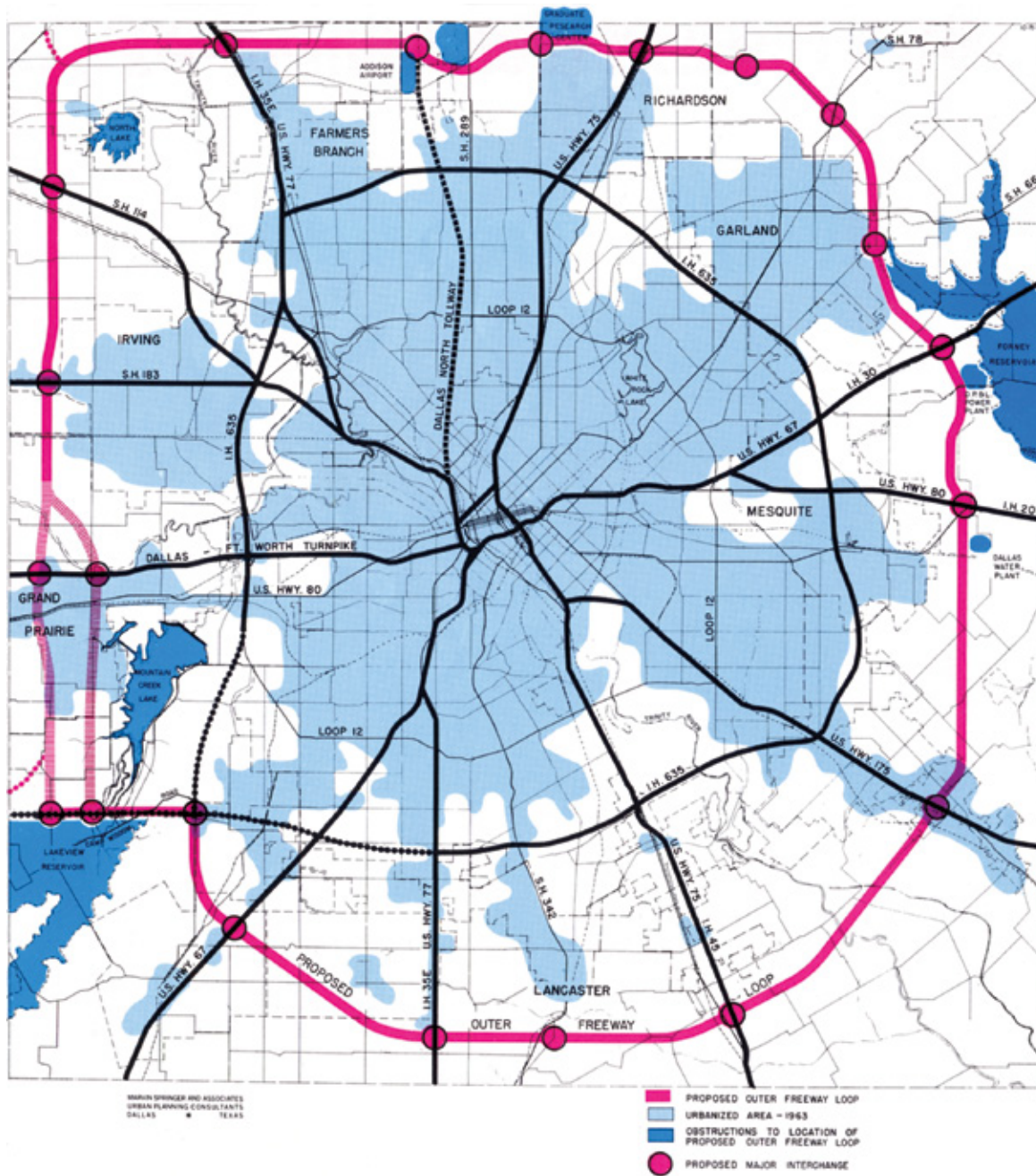
It was starting to become clear that Dallas County could not advance the outer loop on its own and assistance from TxDOT would be needed sooner rather than later. Local officials made a presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission in August 1968 requesting official adop-

tion of the outer loop into the state highway system.<sup>63</sup>

In February 1969 Dallas County earmarked \$5.8 million for right-of-way acquisition for the outer loop in a bond issue which was approved by voters. The allocation was only a tiny fraction of the estimated total right-of-way cost of \$94 million (approximately \$595 million in 2013 dollars) and was intended for purchasing land which was about to be developed. The Texas Transportation Commission was sufficiently pleased with the county's financial contribution and voted in May 1969 to adopt the outer loop into the state highway system, designating it as Loop 9.

TxDOT approval was certainly good news, but Loop 9 was poised to move forward just as the climate was starting to become increasingly hostile toward new freeways. Communities no longer automatically welcomed new freeways with open arms but instead often vigorously opposed them. Construction and land costs were skyrocketing, but funding





These images are from a 1964 brochure in support of the bond proposition for right-of-way for the outer loop. The image above shows the originally proposed alignment, which was generally closer-in than the actually built alignment. On the north it followed Campbell Road and Trinity Mills Road, and on the west it followed Belt Line Road. Only the section along Trinity Mills in Carrollton (north of Farmers Branch) was built on the originally proposed alignment. The bond proposition required a two-thirds majority to pass, and it failed with only 57% of the vote. If the proposition had passed, the construction of the outer loop would have been far easier than the subsequent 50-year struggle.

was stagnant. New federal rules required the preparation of comprehensive environmental impact statements.

Local officials became painfully aware that the new era had arrived at a public meeting at the Richardson High School auditorium on April 22, 1970. A hostile crowd of 700 filled the auditorium and TxDOT officials were booed by protesters. Opposition focused on the planned Campbell Road alignment, a corridor which had seen substantial residential development since the original plans were developed in 1964. Protesters and local officials urged TxDOT to move the alignment north into Collin County, but that introduced new issues since the project funding agreements were with Dallas County. However, by 1972 TxDOT had abandoned efforts to align the outer loop on Campbell and proposed a corridor in Collin County. In 1973 Richardson and Plano entered into an agreement to place the boundary between the cities along the newly planned alignment, making it necessary for the two cities to swap land in deals which were completed mostly in the 1980s. It turned out that the more contentious problems for the north section of Loop 9 would be further west, where the freeway passed through far north Dallas and Carrollton.<sup>64</sup>

Elsewhere around the loop other problems were simmering. The EPA rejected the initial environmental impact statements for the north and east sections in 1973, citing insufficient study of alternatives and adverse impacts. Other communities along the loop were generally supportive but there were concerns about the exact alignment. A 1975 scandal involving a land purchase on the recommended alignment in Rowlett by county commissioner Mel Price cast additional taint on the project.<sup>65</sup>

In Grand Prairie and Irving the freeway generated no substantial opposition, at least for the moment, so TxDOT officially selected an alignment from IH 20 in south Grand Prairie to north Carrollton in April 1971. Within a month the first reports surfaced of opposition in an affected residential area of Grand Prairie. That section of SH 161 in north Grand Prairie would later become the longest-running legal battle in the history of North Texas freeways.<sup>66</sup>

Already in September 1972 the combination of high cost, lack of funding and alignment controversies prompted the *Dallas Morning News* to declare the project in serious trouble and at risk for cancellation. In November the Dallas County director of public works expressed doubt that the project could ever be finished.<sup>67</sup>

TxDOT pressed on with preliminary work in 1973, focusing on the west section in Grand Prairie and Irving. Despite some early concerns from affected neighborhoods, there was strong support for Loop 9 from both citizens and political officials at a project hearing in Grand Prairie on June 14, 1973. In October 1974 TxDOT made the Grand Prairie segment its top priority on Loop 9 and instructed Dallas County to begin purchasing right-of-way in Grand Prairie. But there was an immediate problem: Dallas County did not have the \$18 million (\$94 million in 2013 dollars) needed for the land acquisition and would need

to sell bonds to generate the funds. The issue was further complicated when a May 1975 bond issue including funds for right-of-way acquisition was rejected by voters.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, the situation was no better for the north section of Loop 9. Although the alignment controversy in Richardson appeared to be solved, the alignment further west remained undetermined and a real estate boom in the area was driving up property values. There were no efforts to acquire right-of-way on the north side of the loop.

In 1975 TxDOT was facing a financial crisis as construction costs were skyrocketing due to the rampant inflation of the mid-1970s, while fuel tax receipts were stagnant. In April 1976 the Texas Transportation Commission ordered a halt to all land acquisition for future projects, including Loop 9 in Grand Prairie. An internal study to determine departmental priorities, called the McKinsey report, recommended that TxDOT focus on smaller, short-term projects and Loop 9 was very low on the priority list. Dallas County began discussion of converting the west Loop 9 into an arterial street.<sup>69</sup>

By August 1976 TxDOT stated it did not anticipate being able to construct the route for the indefinite future. Loop 9 appeared to be dead.<sup>70</sup>

### Resurrection, and the Real Battles Begin

But local officials were not willing to give up on Loop 9. They knew it would be critical for meeting future mobility needs, and if potential alignments became urbanized the opportunity to build the freeway would be lost forever. The Texas legislature took action in April 1977, injecting new funds into TxDOT to increase the budget from \$662 million in 1977 to \$922 million in 1978 and \$1.02 billion in 1979. As part of its resurrection, Loop 9 was rebranded in October 1977 to give it a fresh start. The north section, from IH 35E eastward, became SH 190. The west section from IH 635 south to IH 20 became SH 161. The east and south sections of the loop were removed from the project. By the end of 1977 TxDOT had allocated around \$15 million for right-of-way acquisition.<sup>71</sup>

Politically influential real estate interests including Hunt Properties also became more involved since there is nothing better than a freeway to boost land values. In the east section of the SH 190 corridor landowners banded together and offered to donate \$9 million in property needed for the loop. It was an offer that caught the attention of TxDOT and helped spur the resurrection.<sup>72</sup>

The outer loop was back to life, but just barely. And the biggest battles were yet to come.

### Battle #1, Far North Dallas

Far north Dallas was a boom area in the late 1970s with new development rapidly gobbling up available land and driving up prices. In 1977 Dallas annexed the previously independent City of Renner along Frankford Road near Preston Road, directly in the corridor of SH 190. Dallas was targeting the area for high-end residential develop-

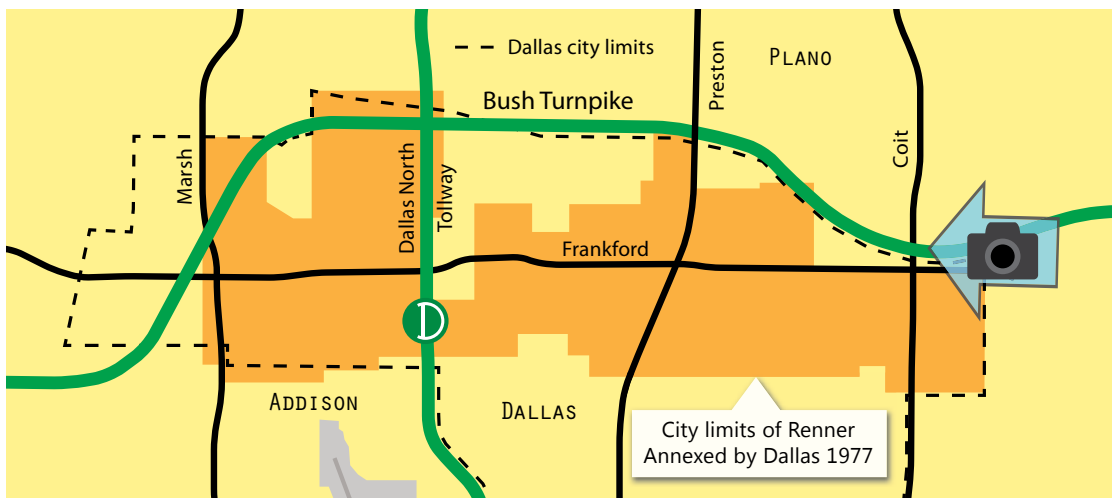




Author, April 2011

**Battle #1** This April 2011 view looks west along the turnpike at Coit Road in far north Dallas. Dallas annexed the area ahead, previously the city of Renner, in 1977 and did not want the alignment of the freeway to bisect the new territory. Dallas opposed the planned alignment in 1977 which took the freeway straight ahead. In December 1978 a compromise was reached, shifting the alignment northward to the far north edge of Dallas. In the above photo the freeway veers right to the north to avoid the Renner area.

The city of Renner, shown in the orange shading, had an inadequate water supply and was having serious financial problems in 1977. Both Dallas and Renner residents voted in favor of the Renner annexation in 1977. Renner was the last large tract of land available for annexation in far north Dallas and was highly desired by Dallas in the fast-growing area. This map shows how the alignment of the Bush Turnpike was curved northward to avoid the Renner area.<sup>272</sup>







Author, April 2011

**Battle #2** This view looks west along the Bush Turnpike in Carrollton, the scene of major controversy and litigation in the 1980s. Anti-freeway organizations wanted the alignment shifted northward away from residential areas shown in this view, and in 1983 Carrollton voters approved an ordinance requiring a 600-foot-wide buffer along both sides of the freeway, a requirement which was impossible to achieve and was intended to kill the planned alignment. In 1984 anti-freeway and pro-freeway groups filed lawsuits which were decided by the courts in favor of the freeway in 1989 and 1990. Carrollton City Council had shifted to become pro-freeway in 1985, and by 1990 the project was ready to proceed on the alignment shown above. The turnpike opened July 31, 2001. In retrospect, fears and concerns of the anti-freeway interests were not realized and the turnpike became a valued asset for Carrollton. When the extension from Carrollton to Irving, the so-called super-connector, opened in September 2005, Carrollton mayor Becky Miller commented, “When the George Bush was first proposed, I think a lot of people kind of felt a little negative toward it. They thought it would divide the city. But I’ve not seen any negative coming from it.”<sup>73</sup>

ment, not freeway-compatible commercial development, so the City of Dallas, historically a key promoter of freeways, found itself in the role of opposing freeway construction. Dallas was not willing to accept the planned alignment through the center of the Renner area and was pushing for additional alignment studies to find an acceptable route north of Renner.<sup>73</sup>

Dallas was under heavy pressure from TxDOT, Collin County, Plano, Richardson, Carrollton and Garland to approve an alignment. But a proposed compromise fizzled in June 1978, and in September the issue was taken over by the regional planning council (now NCTCOG) for further study. In November a consultant recommended a new alignment and Dallas began its review of the corridor. On December 20, 1978, the City of Dallas endorsed the align-

ment recommendation, ending the stalemate and allowing project planning to proceed. The final plan placed the corridor mostly on the north edge of Dallas, avoiding bisecting the Renner district, and included a noticeable southward dip near Coit Road at the insistence of the University of Texas at Dallas.<sup>74</sup>

### **Battle #2, Carrollton**

In April 1982 the Texas Transportation Commission voted to approve the alignment based on the 1978 compromise in north Dallas. The alignment continued west through Carrollton along Trinity Mills Road, alongside several residential areas where considerable opposition developed. The opposition was seeking to align SH 190 to the north of Carrollton, well away from their neighborhoods, inspir-





Author, April 2011

**Battle #3** This April 2011 view overlooks the scene of the longest-running and legally most contentious battle on the Bush Turnpike, in Grand Prairie about half a mile north of Interstate 30. The opposition lawsuit was filed in 1983 by residents of the neighborhood on the left side of the photo. On the right side of the turnpike is Waggoner Park, the focus of the legal challenge since the turnpike was slated to acquire land from the park, which is generally allowed only if there is no other feasible option. The courts ruled against the freeway in 1985, launching more than a decade of new environmental studies. In 1998 the courts approved the revised environmental documents and the planned alignment. The freeway opposition filed an appeal with the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals which ruled in favor of the freeway in 2000. The 17-year battle had finally ended. In the photo above looking north, the turnpike through the disputed area is complete with work in progress in the foreground on the main lanes toward the south.

ing their name and acronym: Citizens United to Relocate Vehicular Expressway, or CURVE. CURVE let its presence be known at a public hearing in fall 1982, prompting TxDOT in December to modify the design to be below ground level through most of Carrollton. CURVE had gathered enough signatures to force a referendum election on January 15, 1983, to require a 600-foot-wide buffer zone between each side of the freeway and adjacent residential areas. Opponents hoped passage of the ordinance would kill the SH 190 project because acquiring such a wide buffer was infeasible. The buffer was approved with 53% of the vote. In addition, Carrollton voters elected three new council members, providing a 4-3 majority against the Trinity Mills alignment. In May Carrollton City Council approved a resolution withdrawing its endorsement of the previously approved alignment and proposed new studies to identify an

alignment further to the north. Both the City of Carrollton and supporters of the original alignment presented their cases to the Texas Transportation Commission in June. In September 1983 the commission approved the originally planned route on Trinity Mills. Carrollton was facing an impossible task to comply with the buffer ordinance since 742 homes were within 600 feet of the freeway corridor. It was time to bring in the lawyers.<sup>75</sup>

A second opposition organization called HAVEN, Homeowner Association for Values Essential to Neighborhoods, began raising funds for a lawsuit. But even before HAVEN filed its case, Collin County filed a lawsuit against HAVEN and numerous other entities in March 1984, attempting to get a legal opinion supporting the sufficiency of the environmental impact statement and barring HAVEN from interfering in the construction of SH 190. HAVEN

responded with a \$6 million lawsuit against Collin County, asking for the damages in order to deter similar actions by others. By May 1984 the Collin County lawsuit involved virtually all the major players in the project as a plaintiff, with HAVEN, Carrollton and Dallas County as defendants. However, the court did not issue an injunction against the project so planning was able to proceed. In August 1984 one Carrollton council member reversed his position, allowing a 4-3 vote for a resolution favoring the Trinity Mills alignment. The April 1985 Carrollton City Council election strengthened the majority in favor of the Trinity Mills alignment, and from that point forward Carrollton became an active supporter of the project on the Trinity Mills alignment. The U.S. District Court ruled on the case on June 30, 1989, upholding the validity of the environmental impact statement and denying HAVEN's request to stop the project. The HAVEN lawsuit was finally dismissed on appeal in 1990.<sup>76</sup>

With the favorable legal ruling clearing the way, in September 1989 Carrollton proceeded with donating 30 acres of right-of-way and approved a resolution urging TxDOT to proceed to construction. Later that month TxDOT officially approved funding for the construction of SH 190 through Carrollton, from IH 35E to the Dallas North Tollway. However, the money was not available immediately and construction was not about to begin anytime soon.<sup>77</sup>

### **Battle #3, Grand Prairie**

By 1975 opposition to Loop 9 in northwest Grand Prairie had already become vocal. The section being protested was along Northwest 19th Street and Carrier Parkway just north of IH 30, where the alignment would have to either displace homes on the west side of the existing roadway or be built through a wooded parkland area, Waggoner Park, on the east side of the roadway.<sup>78</sup>

Local residents didn't want the freeway nearby and vigorously opposed it through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, urging TxDOT to align the freeway near Belt Line Road as proposed in the original 1964 bond election documents. TxDOT ultimately recommended the alignment along 19th Street and Carrier Parkway, choosing to avoid displacement of homes and build the freeway through Waggoner Park. Local residents wanted to preserve the wooded area and also had a viable legal basis for opposing the freeway since federal rules generally prohibited the use of parkland for freeways unless there was no other feasible alternative. On April 6, 1983, the anti-freeway homeowners group Association Concerned About Tomorrow for Grand Prairie (ACT) gathered at the park and announced the filing of a lawsuit to halt planning, financing and construction of the freeway.<sup>79</sup>

In April 1985 the case was ready to go to trial in the court of U.S. District Judge Harold "Barefoot" Sanders. It was a fortuitous court assignment for ACT since Sanders was well established as a liberal judge and was expected to be sympathetic to protest groups. Sanders heard eight days

of arguments with 20 witnesses and more than 40,000 pages of evidence. On April 8, 1985, Sanders issued his ruling, halting work on the project and requiring additional environmental studies before the project could continue. The impact on Waggoner Park was a key issue in Sanders' opinion. Victory in round 1 of the battle went to the freeway opposition.<sup>80</sup>

In 1986 a completely new and comprehensive study of alternatives and environmental impacts was underway. After years of study the recommended alignment was identified. It was determined that the only reasonable alignment through the contentious area of north Grand Prairie was the original alignment which passed alongside the neighborhood and through Waggoner park. Revised plans included remediation to offset the loss of parkland. In March 1990 the City of Grand Prairie endorsed the recommended alignment in spite of protests from residents. In 1994 a new environmental study was issued with public hearings continuing until 1996, and in April 1997 local officials asked Judge Sanders to lift the injunction against the project and allow it to proceed. Sanders agreed to hear the case and ACT began to raise the \$100,000 needed for legal expenses. Sanders appointed a mediator to attempt to reach a settlement, but the sentiments on both sides were just too strong. A nonjury trial with Sanders presiding was held in July 1998. On August 18, 1998, Sanders issued his ruling. The revised environmental statement was adequate and TxDOT could proceed with plans to build the freeway. Two months later Sanders denied ACT's request to rehear the case. Victory in round two of the battle went to the freeway.<sup>81</sup>

But the legal battle wasn't over yet. ACT was determined to continue the fight and in December 1998 filed an appeal with the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. On February 11, 2000, the appeals court upheld Sanders' ruling in favor of the freeway. Other than a futile appeal to the United States Supreme Court, ACT had run out of legal options. The 17-year legal battle was over. Victory in round three and the final decision went to the freeway.<sup>82</sup>

### **Battle #4: Paying for the Right-of-way on SH 190**

By 1984 the alignment for SH 190 through the north suburbs had been defined and it was time to move on to the next problem, paying for the right-of-way. The real estate boom in the area had caused explosive growth in the cost of the needed property, increasing from an estimated \$34 million in 1982 to \$366 million in July 1984 for the entire project from IH 35E to State Highway 78. Right-of-way cost was expected to be nearly as much as the estimated \$383 million construction cost. Comparable values for construction and right-of-way had historically been seen for inner-city freeways which plowed through densely developed urban areas but not for freeways built mostly over vacant land. Controversy raged about the cost of right-of-way in far north Dallas with critics labeling it a land scam benefit-



ing wealthy landowners and large real estate firms.<sup>83</sup>

As always, TxDOT had insufficient funds to meet its needs and an astronomical right-of-way bill would surely make the project a low priority for TxDOT. In order to improve the attractiveness of the project, in 1984 a consultant recommended that local entities provide at least 50% of the right-of-way.<sup>84</sup>

To close the funding gap, local officials were hoping to rely on land donations from the large real estate interests which owned most of the property in the corridor. But landowners were becoming impatient with the endless delays. In 1986 local officials offered to provide less than two-thirds of the right-of-way cost, and the Texas Transportation Commission was not satisfied. It wasn't enough. Suburban mayors realized the time had come for decisive action to save the project. In January 1987 local officials sweetened the offer to TxDOT as much as they could by providing 75% of the right-of-way, including 100% of the \$90 million in right-of-way from Renner Road to Coit Road. The City of Dallas would provide \$12 million for purchases between Coit Road and the Dallas North Tollway, estimated to cost \$46 million. The commission was satisfied and voted to officially approve construction of SH 190 from Renner Road to the Dallas North Tollway. In September 1987 work was underway on the frontage roads. It was a huge milestone to launch actual construction on SH 190. But it was just the beginning and getting more construction underway would become increasingly difficult.<sup>85</sup>

### **Battle #5: Garland and Rowlett**

Just as the Carrollton controversy was settled, new opposition started to boil over on the east end of SH 190 in Garland and Rowlett. In March 1988 TxDOT launched an alignment study of the east section of SH 190, from SH 78 in Garland to IH 20 in either Mesquite or Sunnyvale, depending on the path selected. By mid-1989 substantial opposition had developed.<sup>86</sup>

Opposition in Garland first became vocal in May 1989 at a town hall meeting where an angry crowd expressed its opposition to the project. By July 1989 a group of citizens had formally organized and formed an opposition group called Citizens for Fair Government. Garland City Council stood firm in its support for SH 190, voting 6-2 to continue Garland's involvement in the alignment study. On February 7, 1990, freeway protesters packed Garland City Council chambers to express their opposition prior to a vote on the freeway. Garland council received a chorus of boos after voting 7-2 to approve the planned alignment in Garland. Mayor Ruth Nicholson was voted out of office in May 1990 due to several issues including SH 190, but political and business community support for SH 190 in Garland remained strong so the project continued to move forward.<sup>87</sup>

Opposition to SH 190 in Rowlett also began to develop in 1989, with controversy focused on two potential alignments, the north-south alignment through the city and the east-west alignment through the north side of the

city which would take SH 190 to the east side of Lake Ray Hubbard. The dispute continued to build and in May 1992 Rowlett City Council, with three new anti-SH 190 members, voted 5-2 to oppose a north-south alignment. The contentious issue was far from settled, and in May 1994 the SH 190 issue was put on the ballot. By a 2-to-1 margin voters endorsed the north-south alignment through Rowlett, and pro-SH 190 officials were elected into city government.<sup>88</sup>

On the south end of the study corridor the community of Sunnyvale was officially in opposition to the project by 1990 and would remain in opposition. The section north of IH 30 was more urgent in terms of traffic relief, so the north section moved forward separately from the south section. In the mid and late 1990s the alignment north of IH 30 continued to be studied, scrutinized and adjusted. Local approval of an alignment through Garland and Rowlett was received in September 2003, and final federal approval came in January 2005. It was the conclusion of yet another long and painful struggle for SH 190, this one lasting 17 years. But of course it would not be the last struggle as efforts continued in the 2000s to define an alignment south of IH 30.<sup>89</sup>

The \$958 million extension of the Bush Turnpike through Garland and Rowlett, connecting SH 78 to IH 30, opened December 21, 2011.<sup>90</sup>

### **Tolls to the Rescue**

After years of bickering about the alignment, fighting lawsuits, lining up land donors and spending local funds for planning and right-of-way, local officials may have thought they could savor the accomplishment and hand over the job of construction to TxDOT. Well, they certainly could hand over the job, but there was no assurance the freeway would ever get built.

As part of the right-of-way donation agreement TxDOT began work on the frontage roads in late 1987 and the first section opened in Garland in October 1989. By early 1993 frontage roads were complete from Central Expressway to SH 78 in Garland, with work on the interchange at US 75 and a westward extension of the frontage roads to Coit Road underway. But the vast majority of the work and expenditure was still ahead, with virtually all of the main lanes still to be built. Just when SH 190 needed a big infusion of funding, a project with a voracious appetite for money was designated as a higher priority. The final and most costly phase of the Central Expressway reconstruction project in Dallas, sinking six miles of freeway into a trench, was underway, consuming virtually all of the funding available in the Dallas area. So there would be yet another delay, this time to wait for funding which wasn't assured to arrive anytime soon, if ever.<sup>91</sup>

As early as 1991 local officials began contemplating the idea of turning SH 190 into a toll road. In June 1994 a coalition of officials from Richardson, Plano, Carrollton and Collin County endorsed the conversion to a toll road and



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This early 1990s view looks north along Coit Road at the location of the future SH 190. The City of Plano marked the corridor location with signs designating the “Future 190 Freeway”. Year after year motorists saw the signs, but year after year there was no construction. In 1995 the project was designated as a toll road in order to expedite it. On the right in the background are towers for the Texas Instruments radio tower range on the northeast corner of the turnpike and Coit Road. The radio facility was dismantled in the 1990s and a retail center was built on the site in 2002.



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began to work with the Texas Turnpike Authority to do preliminary planning. The project was declared financially viable with toll revenue in April 1995. If the toll road was going to happen, it was going to require cooperation between agencies that historically were rivals—the Texas Turnpike Authority and TxDOT. It had become legal for TxDOT to participate in toll roads only four years earlier in 1991 with new federal and state legislation. TxDOT and the Texas Turnpike Authority required several months to reach an agreement on the financial terms of the project in October 1995, a small political battle which would foreshadow the much larger toll-related battles to come on the subject of toll revenue. Governor George W. Bush was on hand for the groundbreaking for the first section of the tollway on May 2, 1996 (see photo page 15). The first tollway section opened in December 1998 and the full length from IH 35E in Carrollton to SH 78 in Garland was complete on July 31, 2001 (see map).<sup>92</sup>

### **Super-connector, Relatively Super-easy**

It seemed that the only way a section of SH 190 could proceed without controversy would be if it crossed an uninhabited area. Fortunately, the westernmost section of SH 190, the so-called “super-connector” between IH 35E and IH 635, crossed an area with virtually no homes, only warehouses and flood plains. The super-connector section of SH 190 was approved by TxDOT in August 1988 after a short eight-month lobbying effort by local officials and landowners.<sup>93</sup>

But it couldn't be that easy, and it wasn't. The alignment skirted the wetlands of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River, and when the project did not receive environmental clearance on its planned schedule in 1998 it became subject to the much stricter requirements of the TEA-21 transportation legislation of 1998. Three more years were needed for additional environmental studies, and by 2001 the estimated cost had risen from the original \$179 million to \$428 million for the 5.4-





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These views show the interchange at US 75 Central Expressway. The above view from winter 1996 shows piers in place for the Bush Turnpike main lanes. The design of this interchange is unusual since it has main lanes on the top level, a design practice not used in Texas since the 1960s and at only one other interchange in North Texas, IH 45 at IH 30 in downtown Dallas. This is a short freeway section of SH 190 and motorists can drive through the interchange without paying a toll. Unfortunately the interchange suffers from substandard design at the merge points of connection ramps, causing backups for connecting vehicles. In 2012 Plano officials were working to secure funding for a \$34 million project to correct the most egregious design flaws of the interchange.<sup>274</sup>

Author, April 2005







Author, April 2011

This April 2011 view looks southwest across the interchange with IH 35E, showing the turnpike's curve toward the south. The east side of the interchange (in the foreground) was opened in conjunction with the completion of the turnpike through Carrollton in July 2001 and the west side was completed with the opening of the extension to IH 635 in September 2005.

mile link. The Elm Fork flood plain necessitated long bridge structures and an area of landfills along the alignment added complications. The final cost came in at \$338 million when the tollway section opened on September 9, 2005. But all things considered, it was the most painless section of the outer loop and a welcome relief for beleaguered local officials who had perhaps become weary of the endless battles.<sup>94</sup>

### The 161 Toll Battle

Except for a short section of SH 161 north of SH 183 which opened in 1994 as a freeway, the entire Dallas outer loop was designated to become a tollway. In the original 1995 negotiations between the Texas Turnpike Authority (TTA) and TxDOT for building the main toll lanes of the north section of SH 190, TxDOT was generally cooperative, granting the TTA the needed right-of-way and legal authority, leav-

ing financing and control to the outside entity. Construction of tolled main lanes for the north section of SH 161 also proceeded amicably. But TxDOT's policy toward toll roads began to shift in the following years as needs for new highway construction continued to vastly outpace available funding. Instead of viewing toll roads as a responsibility to be handled locally, TxDOT decided it would retain control and use them everywhere possible to build facilities more quickly and generate profits. Governor Rick Perry and his legislative allies pushed new landmark legislation through the legislature in 2003, empowering TxDOT to use an array of toll-based approaches to build new highways. Many toll road projects could be developed using an arrangement called a comprehensive development agreement (CDA). CDAs typically were complex financial contracts usually intended to convert future toll revenue into immediate cash for TxDOT by requiring the toll road developer to make a





Author, April 2011

This view looks southwest along the Bush Turnpike in Irving on the west side of the Las Colinas development with the MacArthur Boulevard intersection in the foreground. This area features the highest concentration of office buildings along the turnpike. These main lanes, opened in 2001, were the first to open on the SH 161 alignment of the turnpike. A section of free main lanes in the distance opened in 1994.

large upfront payment called a concession fee. Historically, toll rates in North Texas had been set to the lowest values which covered bond payments and highway maintenance. Now, toll rates would be much higher and control would be handed over to private, potentially foreign entities. The controversy over CDAs in North Texas became intense in 2007 with the proposed privatization of SH 121 to Spanish firm Cintra, which offered to make a \$2.1 billion concession payment and other toll-sharing arrangements (see page 310).

So, when it came time for local authorities and TxDOT to reach an agreement for the construction of the SH 161 main lanes south of SH 183, TxDOT was determined to squeeze every possible dollar out of the project by privatizing it for a concession fee. As a consequence, toll rates would be set very high and local interests would have little or no input in the control of the tollway and its fees.<sup>95</sup>

After the SH 121 controversy and statewide complaints about TxDOT's use of an iron fist to force local governments to accept toll road privatization, the Texas legislature passed new legislation in 2007 giving local entities the first opportunity to build toll roads and requiring TxDOT and

local toll authorities to agree on terms and control. For the SH 161 project, an agreement would need to be reached with the North Texas Turnpike Authority (NTTA). By November 2007 negotiations had broken down over projections for future traffic and revenue. Negotiations resumed and an agreement on business terms was reached at 10:28 PM on the TxDOT-imposed deadline of December 21, 2007, but the difficult task still remained—determining the exact amount of the concession fee NTTA would pay TxDOT. By February 2008 negotiations for the financial terms had broken down again and an April 16 deadline loomed to complete the agreement. NTTA submitted its “best and final” offer on April 7, but a final agreement could not be reached by the deadline and on April 17 it was unclear what would happen. Negotiations continued, with Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst becoming involved to turn up pressure on both sides to reach an agreement. Finally on April 18 an agreement was reached.<sup>96</sup>

The whole process had been very ugly and contentious, prompting the *Dallas Morning News* to publish an editorial on April 19 headlined, “Collision on 161 – Nastiness, confusion needless in toll road planning”. The article went





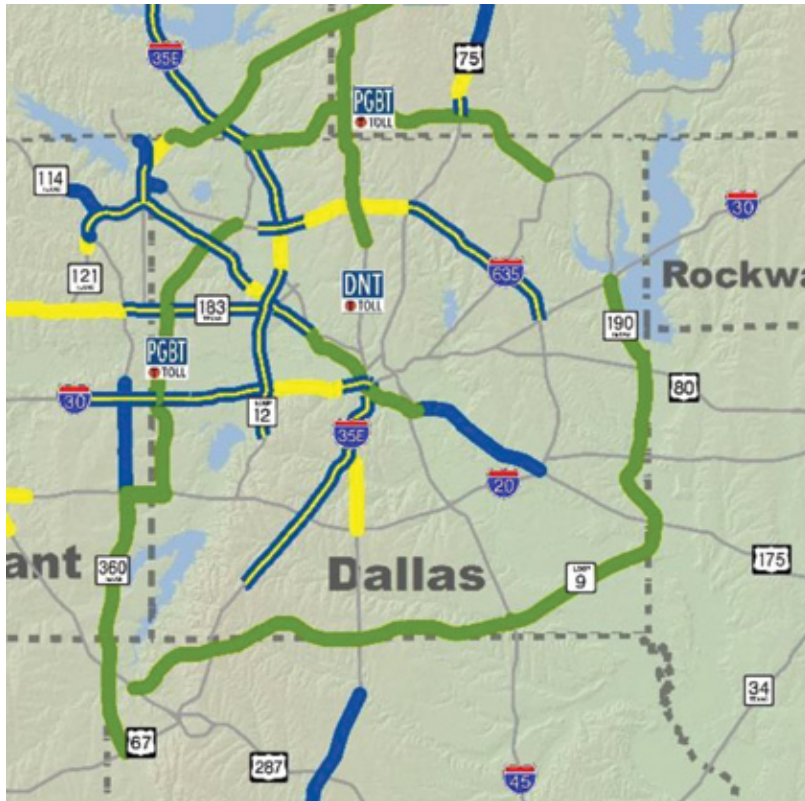
Author, April 2011

This April 2011 view looks north along the Bush Turnpike over the construction zone at the Interstate 30 interchange. The five-level interchange has frontage roads on the third level, an unusual design since frontage roads are on the first or second level of all other five-level interchanges in Texas. The March 2012 view below shows a ground-level view of work in progress. The Bush Turnpike main lanes and five connecting ramps opened to traffic in October 2012 and all ramps were open in early 2013.

Author, March 2012







This image shows the long-term 2035 mobility plan for North Texas. The routes annotated with colored lines are scheduled for construction or expansion before 2035. The southeastern section of the Bush Turnpike (SH 190) and the connecting section of Loop 9 on the south edge of Dallas County are shown on this map. If Loop 9 is built, the original 1964 vision for the Dallas outer loop will be realized.

on to say, “Sanity we don’t have in North Texas. Witness the hair-pulling, teeth-gnashing, mind-numbing process over the development of State Highway 161 in western Dallas County.”

But there was still more trouble ahead when the economic and financial meltdown of 2008 made it impossible for NTTA to obtain financing for the project. A new agreement emerged in October 2008, this time with TxDOT backing some of NTTA's debt in order to get acceptable terms in the credit market. The final agreement called for NTTA to make an upfront payment of \$458 million to TxDOT, with NTTA retaining the tolls for the first 52 years of the project and then splitting toll revenue 50-50 with TxDOT afterwards. In the end, state and local officials were patting each other on the back for the new spirit of cooperation, a marked departure from the previous years of TxDOT's hard line with local agencies. It was the conclusion of yet another painful battle in the story of the Dallas outer loop, but like all battles before, the result was that the project would move ahead to construction. The first section of the toll road, which was under construction during the negotiations, opened on August 2, 2009, and the final link between IH 30 and IH 20 opened on October 15, 2012.<sup>97</sup>

## Past, Present, Future

Starting with the original freeway plan in 1964 which ultimately became the Bush Turnpike, the Dallas outer loop

has been the most contentious highway in North Texas. During the 48 years from 1964 to 2012 there was nearly always a controversy in progress, including two of the three most intense controversies to occur in North Texas freeway history. And more challenges lie ahead in 2013 as officials continue efforts to move forward with the southeast section of the Bush Turnpike and possibly the south section which has the original highway designation, Loop 9.

As the dust settled after each battle, the highway always prevailed and was actually built. It is a testament and credit to the officials who kept the project alive, recognizing that the Dallas outer loop is a critical part of the regional transportation system.

The long-term mobility plan for North Texas approved by the regional planning council in 2011 includes both the southeast section of the Bush Turnpike and the south section of Loop 9 as projects scheduled to be constructed prior to 2035. A formal corridor feasibility study for Loop 9 was in progress in 2013. If Loop 9 is built, the original 1964 vision for the Dallas outer loop will be realized. The long-term plan also includes the addition of lanes to the north section of the Bush Turnpike. As always, improvements are dependent on the financial feasibility of toll-financed construction. And of course, new plans may be accompanied by the long-running tradition of the Dallas outer loop—controversies and opposition. ■



## Interstate 35E South R.L. Thornton Freeway South

Planning for Interstate 35E south of downtown was part of the highly political process for determining the alignment of the US 67 freeway through Dallas, at the time called the east-west expressway project (see page 218 for map and story). After nine years of study the final alignment of IH 35E south into Oak Cliff was approved by Dallas City Council in September 1953. Interests in West Oak Cliff which had promoted an alignment into their area along Clarendon Drive were upset that the approved alignment bypassed their area.<sup>54</sup>

The project agreement made IH 35E south into Oak Cliff the top priority for freeway construction in Dallas. Construction would begin with the Trinity River bridge and then proceed south into Oak Cliff, followed later by construction of IH 30 in east Dallas. Work on the Trinity River bridge, which incorporated the existing Cadiz Street bridge, was underway in December 1955 after a delay caused by

**Before the freeway** This undated view shows the predecessor of IH 35, US 67, aligned on Zang Boulevard through Oak Cliff just south of downtown at the intersection with Beckley Avenue. The three highway shields show that this alignment also served US 77 and US 80. The narrow streets leading into downtown were unable to handle increasing traffic after World War II, making freeway construction a top priority.

### Quick Facts for Interstate 35E South

- Follows the alignment of US 77
- First section opened in 1959, freeway complete in 1965
- Commonly called "R.L. Thornton South" in Dallas
- The Dallas Zoo is located alongside the freeway

### Key Dates in the History

<b>1953</b>	The freeway alignment is approved
<b>1959</b>	The first section, including the Trinity River bridge, opens
<b>1965</b>	Freeway complete
<b>2002</b>	HOV lane added in Dallas
<b>2004-2009</b>	Freeway rebuilt and widened south of Dallas from IH 20 to the south side of Red Oak
<b>2005</b>	The Southern Gateway study defines the future plans for expansion in Dallas
<b>2013-2016</b>	Construction of a new Trinity River bridge and reconstruction of the downtown Mixmaster as part of the \$798 million Horseshoe Project
<b>Future</b>	Widening in Dallas

For biographic information on R.L. Thornton, see page 217

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**Also see:** Freeway opening events on pages 28, 39, and 42

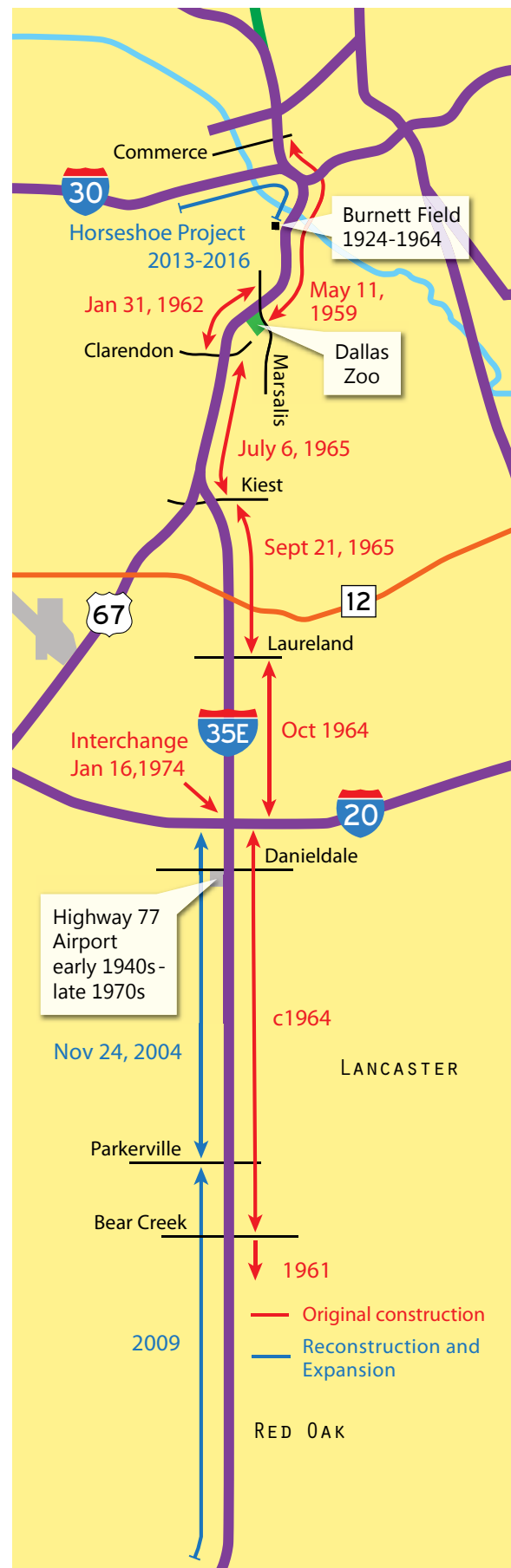
tight steel supplies. The first section of IH 35E including the bridge opened on May 11, 1959, and IH 35E south was complete in Dallas County on September 21, 1965 (see map).<sup>55</sup>

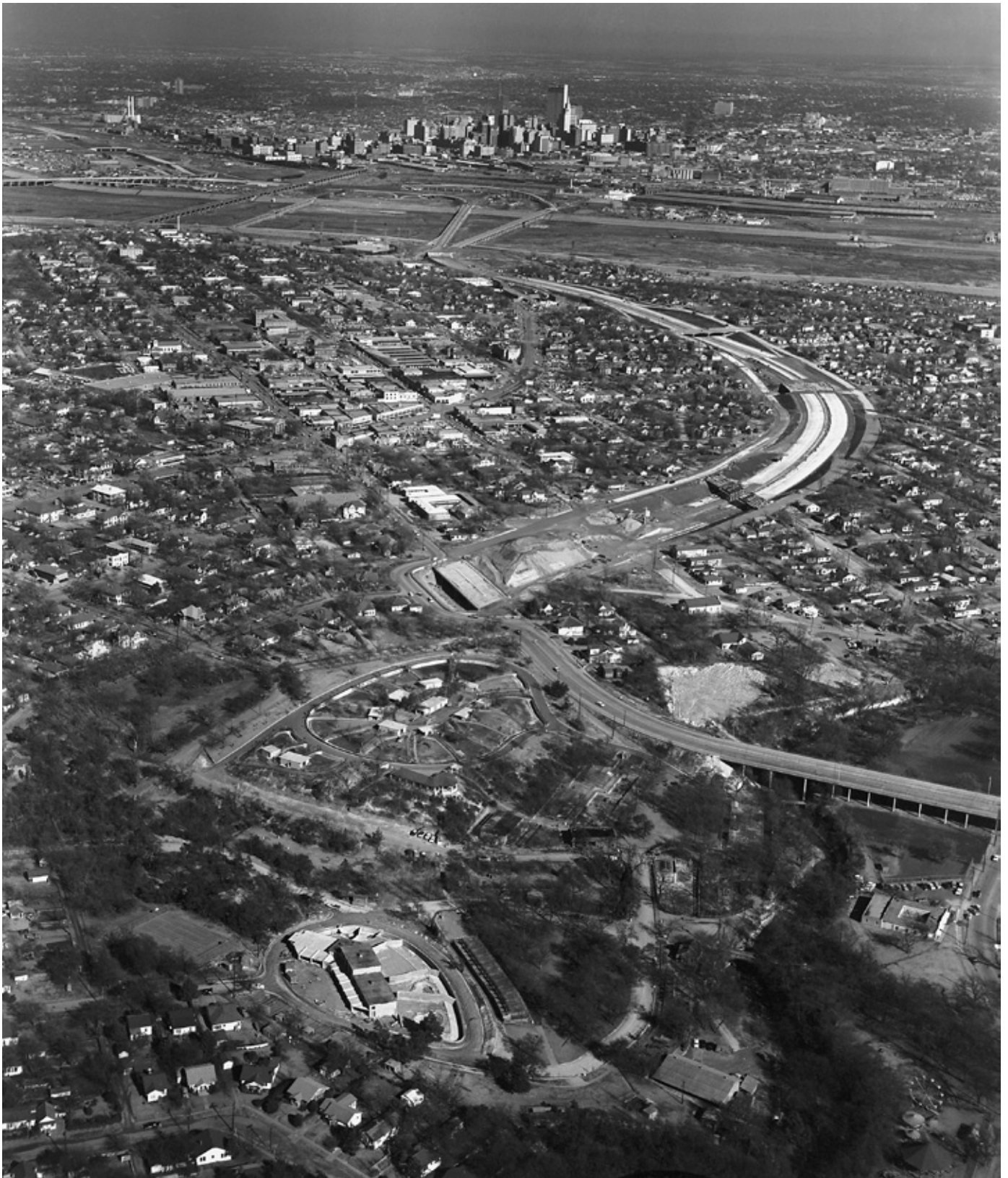
In Dallas the freeway serves an area which is mostly low-income and economically disadvantaged. The only notable landmark along the freeway is the Dallas Zoo and its large giraffe sculpture at Marsalis Avenue. The section of freeway between downtown Dallas and IH 20 remains in its original configuration with the only improvement the addition of the reversible HOV lane in the median in March 2002. South of IH 20 the freeway was reconstructed to modern standards and widened between 2004 and 2009.<sup>56</sup>

### Future Plans in Dallas

Planning for the future reconstruction and expansion of the freeway in Dallas was conducted from 2002 to 2005 as part of the Southern Gateway transportation study, which also included US 67. The planned improvements will expand the freeway to ten main lanes and two reversible HOV lanes from downtown to US 67, and add a single reversible HOV lane between US 67 and IH 20. In 2013 the project is unfunded with no construction scheduled.<sup>57</sup>

However, the oldest part of the freeway, the bridge over the Trinity River, was aging and had to be rebuilt in advance of the rest of the Southern Gateway project. The new bridge was envisioned to be part of the ambitious Trinity Corridor project, first launched in 1994 and later enhanced to include three distinctive “signature” bridges over the Trinity River on Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Spur 366), IH 30 and IH 35E. The Woodall Rodgers Freeway signature bridge designed by renowned architect Santiago Calatrava opened in March 2012. The IH 30 bridge was second in line and the IH 35E bridge was third. In 2011 the IH 30 bridge was urgently in need of replacement. The signature components of the IH 30 bridge were estimated to cost \$200 million above the cost of a basic bridge, but only \$92 million was available with little hope for closing the funding gap. In 2011 the decision was made to downsize the signature components of the IH 30 bridge to conform to the \$92 million budget and cancel the signature bridge for IH 35E. In November 2011 officials launched the \$798 million Horseshoe Project with construction between 2013 and 2016, which will rebuild the downtown Mixmaster and build new bridges over the Trinity River for both IH 30 and IH 35E. The IH 35E bridge will be a conventional pier-and-beam design.<sup>58</sup> ■





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This January 1959 view looks north along IH 35E with construction in progress on the first section. The Dallas Zoo is in the foreground.





This view shows the terminus of the first section of IH 35E at Marsalis Avenue in August 1959, just three months after the opening on May 11, 1959. The freeway blazed a new trail through Oak Cliff, necessitating right-of-way clearance on its entire path through the area.

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This view, taken just over a year later in October 1960, shows right-of-way clearance through Oak Cliff complete with freeway construction not yet underway. A section of new freeway on the distant right-of-way opened in January 1962, and the freeway opened in the foreground in July 1965.

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This view shows construction in progress on the southbound span of the Trinity River bridge in April 1957. On the right is the Cadiz Street viaduct, which was converted into the northbound lanes of IH 35E. The Cadiz Street viaduct was widened in 1965 to provide 12-foot-wide lanes and full shoulders. The flooding rains which filled the river floodway were a godsend for North Texas, ending the great drought of the 1950s and filling empty reservoirs, including the new Lake Lewisville north of Dallas. The years 1951 through 1956 had received below-average rainfall including a devastatingly low 21.75 inches in 1956.<sup>261</sup>

UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>262</sup>



This August 1959 view looks southbound across the Trinity River crossing with Burnett Field on the far side of the bridge. Built in 1924 and demolished in 1964, the stadium was home to the minor league baseball Dallas Steers, Rebels and Eagles of the Texas League and the Dallas Rangers of the American Association. The stadium site was vacant land until 2013 when it became the staging area for the construction of the Horseshoe Project, which includes a new Trinity River bridge for IH 35E.<sup>263</sup>

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This August 1959 view looks north at the downtown approach and the partially complete downtown Mixmaster interchange three months after the freeway opened on May 11, 1959. Interstate 30 (then Interstate 20) opened toward the right in 1965.



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These undated views from circa 1962-1963 show the original IH 35E through Oak Cliff. The upper view looks north just north of Colorado Blvd and the lower view looks northbound approaching 8th Street. The freeway was constructed without a median barrier, as was common for that era. The median barrier was added in late 1963.<sup>266</sup>

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This June 1960 view looks south just north of Bear Creek Road in Lancaster. The original two-lane US 77 is visible in the near foreground with work on the interstate underway ahead. This section of freeway was rebuilt and widened in 2009.

UT Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>268</sup>

This view from circa September 1963 looks north along the Interstate 35E corridor at Daniieldale Road with construction in progress. Visible in the lower left is the Highway 77 Airport, built in the early 1940s and closed in the late 1970s. The construction of IH 35E took a strip of land along the airport's east side, displacing two large hangars and leaving the two remaining hangars along Daniieldale Road. After closure of the airport, the site remained vacant land until 2013 when a warehouse was built. Reconstruction and widening to eight main lanes at this location was completed in November 2004.<sup>269</sup>

UT Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>270</sup>





Author, April 2011

**Wider, but nothing fancy** This April 2011 view looks northbound along the freeway with the Trinity River crossing in the foreground. Officials began planning for replacement of the aging spans in the 1990s, and starting in 1999 the crossing was envisioned to become the third of three architecturally distinctive “signature” bridges over the Trinity River. The first signature bridge, on Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Spur 366), opened in March 2012. However, in 2011 lack of funds for the remaining two bridges forced officials to downsize the second planned signature span on IH 30 and entirely cancel the plans for a signature span on IH 35E. The bridges shown above will be replaced by wider spans with a conventional pier-and-beam design with construction taking place from 2013 to 2016. Below, the giraffe sculpture at the Dallas Zoo is the only landmark along the freeway.

Author, October 2007







## Interstate 345 (signed as US 75, Central Expressway)

Prior to 2014, very few North Texans were aware of Interstate 345. Even TxDOT tried to keep it a secret. Motorists driving on the freeway signed as US 75 on the east side of downtown are actually driving on Interstate 345. The highway section has never been signed as IH 345 because it would create confusion in an area of downtown where the freeways are already complicated. Officially, the freeway between IH 30 and Spur 366 (Woodall Rodgers Freeway) is Interstate 345.

But the secrecy of IH 345 came to an end in 2014 when the *Dallas Morning News* and *D Magazine* launched a campaign to demolish the elevated freeway, referring to it by its official designation. The future of IH 345 was the focus of discussion in 2014, with TxDOT poised to move forward with a project to rehabilitate the structure to extend its life and anti-345 interests actively promoting its removal.

So why was the freeway designated as IH 345 rather than IH 45 or US 75? Local officials wanted the Interstate designation because it provided 100% state and federal funding for the freeway, whereas a US highway designation would have required a local contribution for the expensive right-of-way acquisition. At the time of the designation as an interstate highway in 1964, administrative policies for interstate highway numbering classified the route as a spur interstate. Spur interstates are numbered with three digits, an odd number followed by the two digits of the associated primary interstate route, which in this case is Interstate 45.

### Quick Facts for Interstate 345

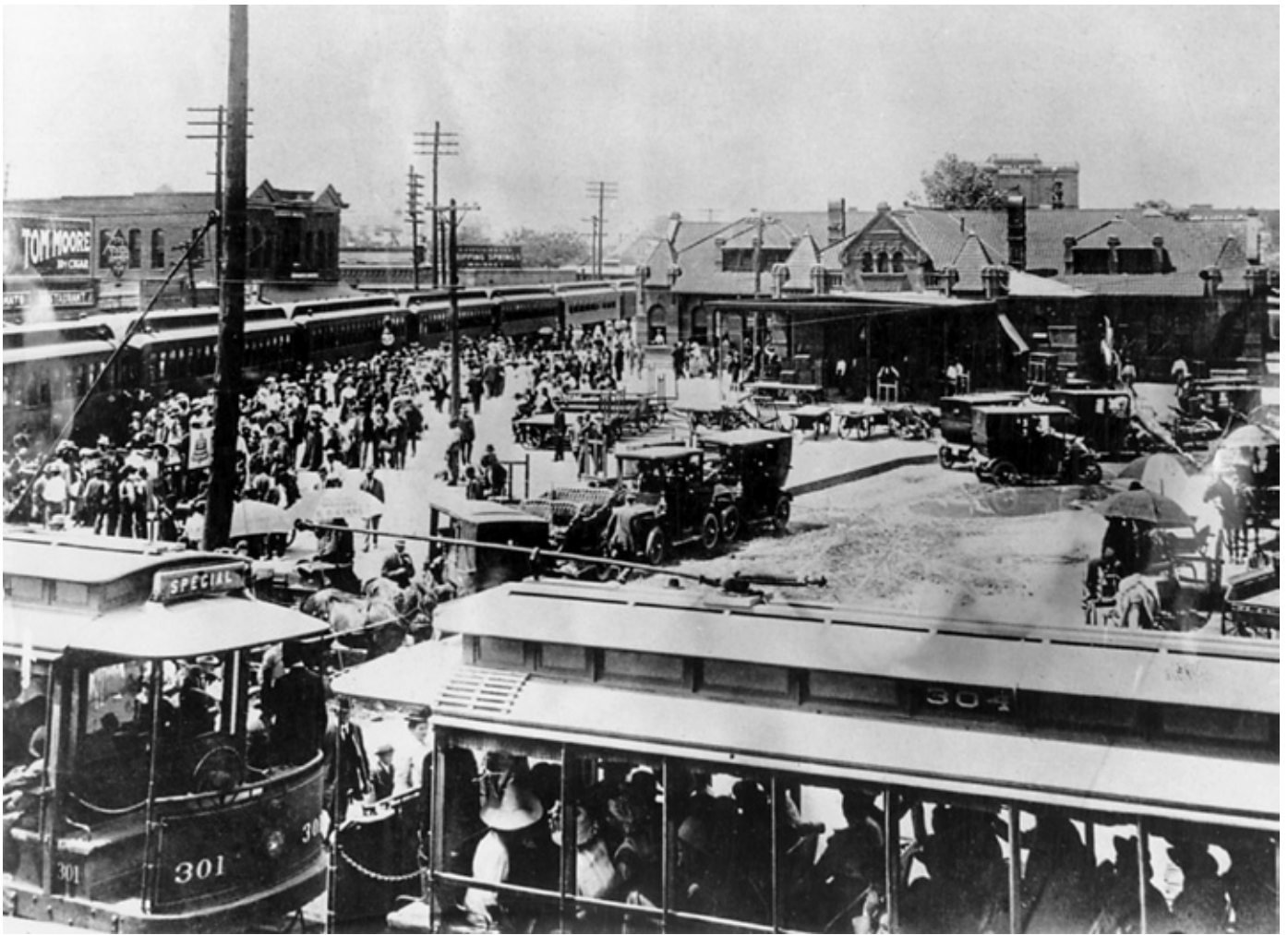
- The interstate is not signed with IH 345 markers. It is signed as US 75.
- 1.4 miles long
- Completed in 1973

### Key Dates in the History

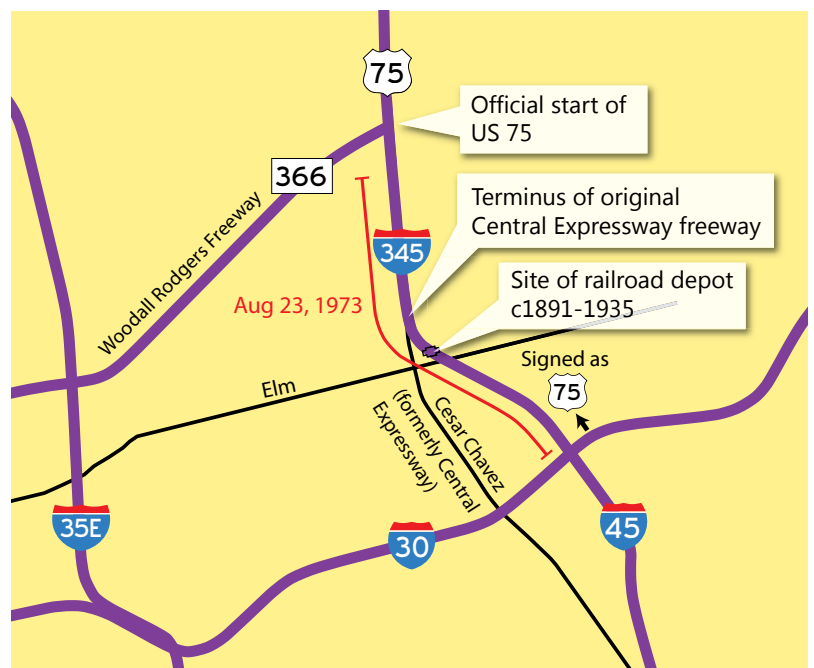
- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1952</b> | The need for a freeway is first identified             |
| <b>1956</b> | Efforts begin to obtain interstate highway designation |
| <b>1964</b> | Designated as Interstate 345                           |
| <b>1968</b> | Construction begins                                    |
| <b>1973</b> | The freeway is complete                                |



This 1959 planning map shows an alternate alignment for Interstate 345 to the east of the actually built freeway. No reports with a reason for the alternate alignment were found, but most likely it had less costly right-of-way. The alternate route was dropped from consideration by 1964.<sup>275</sup>

Dallas Public Library<sup>277</sup>

**Once upon a time** This undated photo shows the depot for the Houston and Texas Central railroad and Texas and Pacific railroad looking north from Elm Street. A streetcar is in the foreground and a passenger train is on the Houston and Texas Central tracks on the left. The depot was built around 1891 and fell out of use after 1916 when the five railroad stations in downtown Dallas were consolidated into Union Station on the west side of downtown. The building was used by the railroad for non-depot purposes until it was demolished in 1935. The Houston and Texas Central railroad corridor was converted into Central Expressway in the 1940s, although Central Expressway was not built through this location during the original construction of the freeway. Central Expressway is named for the Houston and Texas Central railroad. Interstate 345 through this location was completed in 1973 and today motorists drive over the location of the former depot on the freeway's elevated structures.<sup>276</sup>







Dallas Public Library<sup>278</sup>

This 1969 view looking north shows IH 345 under construction at the interchange with IH 30.

## Origins

The original plan for US 75 presented to the public in May 1946 showed two separate sections of freeway, with North Central Expressway terminating on the northeast side of downtown at Bryan Street and South Central Expressway terminating about one mile southeast of downtown at Grand Avenue. Between the two expressways vehicles would drive through downtown on upgraded streets.<sup>129</sup>

In 1952 planners first identified the need for a complete freeway loop around downtown and in 1954 the Dallas Chamber of Commerce began efforts to build an elevated freeway between North and South Central Expressways to bridge the gap. A 1955 artist's depiction of the freeway superimposed on an aerial view showed the elevated structure and, at the IH 30 intersection, a proposed four-level interchange, then a very new concept since only one four-level interchange existed in the United States, in Los Angeles.<sup>130</sup>

IH 45 south of IH 30 was included in the planned route list of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and was officially designated in 1959. There was no interstate highway designation between IH 30 and the terminus of North Central Expressway. Interstate status for the missing freeway section was highly desired since it would provide 90% federal funding for the project and relieve the City of Dallas of any responsibility for the costly right-of-way acquisition. In September 1956, just three months after approval of the federal highway act, Dallas City Council began efforts to designate the missing section as an interstate highway. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce joined the lobbying effort

soon afterward, but the coveted interstate status was not granted in the late 1950s or early 1960s.<sup>131</sup>

Starting in 1957 planning maps showed an alternate alignment to the east of the as-built alignment (see map). The alternate was still shown on maps in 1962, but by 1964 it had been dropped from consideration. Local officials achieved their goal of interstate status for the freeway in October 1964 when official federal approval as Spur Interstate 345 was secured.<sup>132</sup>

The project proceeded very quickly with a final public hearing in August 1965 followed by right-of-way clearance. Construction on the elevated freeway began in 1968 with the first lanes opening on July 9, 1971, allowing westbound IH 30 motorists to connect to northbound IH 345 and then exit at Main and Elm Streets. All northbound lanes were open in September 1972 and the freeway was complete when the southbound lanes opened on August 23, 1973.<sup>133</sup>

In 2012 TxDOT launched a study to identify a recommended action to address structural deficiencies of the elevated freeway lanes. The study prompted the organization A New Dallas to launch an effort to demolish the freeway with no replacement. In 2013 and 2014 both the *Dallas Morning News* and *D Magazine* embraced the idea and launched a campaign for the freeway removal. In January 2014 TxDOT disclosed tentative plans for a rehabilitation of the structure costing up to \$242 million, with completion slated for 2020, to extend the life of the IH 345 elevated lanes for at least 20 years. An approved, final plan for the structure remained pending as of August 2014.<sup>134</sup> ■



North Central Texas Council of Governments, 2007



TxDOT Travel Information Division

This October 2007 view looks north along IH 345 with the IH 30 interchange in the foreground. This interchange was proposed to be a four-level interchange as early as 1955, taking design inspiration from the nation's first four-level interchange in Los Angeles.

This undated photo taken shortly after the completion of the freeway in 1973 shows the Southland Life and Sheraton Buildings with their classic 1950s design featuring turquoise-colored cladding. The buildings opened in 1958 and the turquoise panels have been replaced. The Southland Life building is now a Sheraton hotel. In the foreground is a yellow AMC Gremlin, a distinctive but not-so-classic car of the 1970s.





## Interstate 45 Julius Schepps Freeway

The construction of Interstate 45 south of downtown Dallas was at the forefront of the modern era of anti-freeway protest in Dallas.\* In 1970 a group of local activists opposed TxDOT's plans to build IH 45 as an elevated freeway through their neighborhood. The timing was appropriately symbolic as the 1960s came to an end and freeways became engulfed in controversy, protest and cancellations in the 1970s. There was never any doubt that IH 45 would be built—connecting Texas' two largest cities was a top priority. But local government and TxDOT officials became painfully aware that freeway construction would never again be like it was in the 1950s and 1960s.

### Origins

In 1952 TxDOT authorized planning to upgrade US 75 between Dallas and Houston to a controlled-access freeway. Work proceeded promptly on the freeway south of Dallas. On October 20, 1959, a large dedication ceremony was held for the 14.5-mile section from Ennis northward to the Ellis-Dallas county line. The freeway was complete from near present-day Interstate 20 southward to the south limit of Ellis county in 1960.<sup>139</sup>

Work proceeded more slowly in the city of Dallas. The Dallas freeway system was substantially defined by 1957, but maps of the era still showed the alignment of the freeway on the present-day US 175, originally South Central Expressway and now the S.M. Wright Freeway. In 1958 TxDOT authorized engineering studies, alignment identification and right-of-way acquisition for IH 45 south of downtown Dallas. The alignment was defined soon afterwards, but construction did not begin until the 1970s.<sup>140</sup>

### Controversy

TxDOT planned to build IH 45 on a continuous elevated structure from downtown to the south end of the Trinity River bridge. In the one-mile section between Grand and Lamar, through an area then called the Spence neighborhood, the elevated design minimized right-of-way acquisition and displacements. In August 1970 the Spence Community Block Partnership voiced its opposition to the plans, citing visual blight of the elevated structure and lack of freeway entrances and exits in their neighborhood. The Spence Partnership

\* The first anti-freeway protest in Fort Worth occurred in 1945 for the downtown section of IH 30. In 1965 north Dallas residents filed a lawsuit to oppose overpasses on the Dallas North Tollway, and in April 1970 Richardson residents opposed the alignment of the planned Loop 9 (now the Bush Turnpike). This was the first significant protest against a state highway project in Dallas.

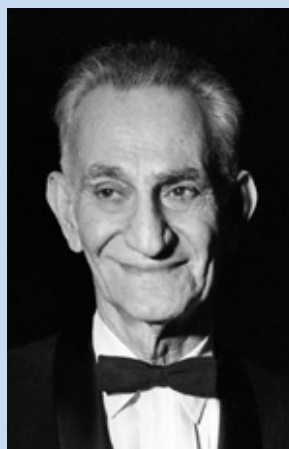
### Quick Facts for Interstate 45

- Completed on February 25, 1976
- The section south of downtown became the first major controversy for a state highway in Dallas
- Named for civic leader Julius Schepps but rarely called the Schepps Freeway

### Key Dates in the History

<b>1952</b>	Designated as a freeway
<b>1960</b>	Freeway completed from south of present-day IH 20 to Ennis
<b>1970</b>	The first major controversy on a state highway in Dallas erupts over plans for an elevated structure. The design is changed to ground level.
<b>1976</b>	Freeway completed on February 25
<b>2015-2020</b>	Planned connection to the new extension of US 175, part of the S.M. Wright Freeway removal

### Julius Schepps, 1895-1971



Dallas Public Library<sup>293</sup>

Julius Schepps was a Dallas civic leader best known for his service as president of the Park and Recreation Board. Other civic involvement included the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Salesmanship Club, Dallas Community Chest, Citizens Council, Jewish Welfare Federation and the State Fair Executive Committee. Schepps' father built a successful bakery business

that supplied 80% of the bread sold in Dallas in 1922. Julius Schepps was involved in numerous business interests and is best known for his proprietorship of the Schepps Wholesale Liquor Company, opened in 1933 after the repeal of prohibition. Schepps is not associated with present-day Schepps Dairy. Dallas City Council named Interstate 45 for Schepps on December 31, 1973. However, the freeway is rarely called Schepps Freeway.<sup>292</sup>



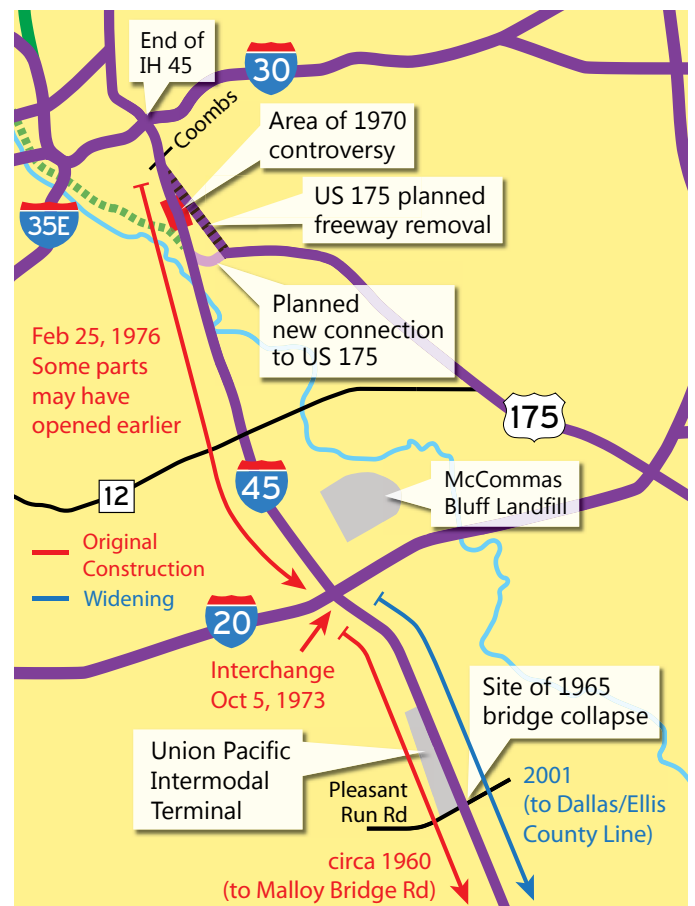
TxDOT Travel Information Division

On May 11, 1965, a tractor-trailer with a load of reinforcing steel struck the center support of the Pleasant Run Road overpass, causing the bridge to collapse and killing the driver. Each side of the bridge span weighed 182 tons, so the collapsed sections had to be dismantled to be removed. The bridge deck was broken off with jackhammers and then the beams were placed on the ground and also jackhammered to rubble for removal. Four days later the main lanes reopened to traffic.<sup>294</sup>

wanted the freeway lowered to ground level and preferably sunk into a trench below ground level.<sup>141</sup>

Within a week the Spence group had made a presentation to Dallas City Council and successfully persuaded the council to request TxDOT to schedule another public hearing on the project. It was yet another sign of the changing times. Local political leaders had previously supported highway department engineering plans without question, but in the changing political climate they did not hesitate to support the opposition group. A coalition including Dallas City Council, the complete 15-member Dallas-area state legislative delegation, two state senators and at least 11 prominent civic organizations joined forces to make a presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission on September 16 to ask for a restudy of the freeway's design. The request was granted.<sup>142</sup>

On November 6, 1970, TxDOT announced that it would alter the plans and build the freeway at ground level through the Spence neighborhood. It was a quick and decisive victory for the Spence Partnership, but not the ultimate victory of sinking the freeway into a trench. Funding was approved for the project in August 1973 and work was soon underway. The freeway through the Spence neighborhood opened on February 25, 1976, completing the final section between Dallas and Houston.<sup>143</sup>





*Dallas Morning News*

**The Park Cities of the homeless community** The area underneath the elevated structure of Interstate 45 at Coombs Street became the most prestigious address in the homeless community in 2005, with approximately 100 residents constructing a shantytown complete with portable toilets and electricity tapped from an outlet on a nearby billboard. The area underneath the freeway had been a favorite location for the homeless numerous times in the past, including 1994 when 200 residents were removed. In May 2005 authorities decided to clear the area due to drug and prostitution activity in the camp, as well as complaints from nearby neighborhoods. In the above photo, City of Dallas officials evict the last remaining residents. The area underneath the freeway was secured with an 8-foot-tall fence after the May 2005 clearance to prevent future camps from developing.<sup>295</sup>

### Interstate 45 Today

The IH 45 corridor in Dallas serves a mostly low income and sparsely populated region. The most notable features near the freeway corridor in Dallas are the Great Trinity Forest and the McCommas Bluff landfill. South of IH 20 at Fulghum Road, Union Pacific railroad opened a large inter-modal freight terminal in 2005 to move shipping containers between trains and trucks. The area has been targeted for additional logistics and warehouse development.

IH 45 south of IH 20 to Corsicana, originally constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was in poor

condition by the 1990s. During the 1990s and 2000s the 40-mile stretch was rebuilt and widened to six main lanes, with work finishing in 2010. The long-term transportation plan for North Texas, Mobility 2035, does not include any major improvements to IH 45. However, plans are moving forward to decommission the US 175 S.M. Wright Freeway (originally South Central Expressway) and construct a new section of freeway between the US 175 C.F. Hawn Freeway and IH 45 (see map). IH 45 will be modified to accommodate the new extension of US 175 and needed connections. Work is expected to take place in the 2015-2020 period. ■





Author, April 2011

Dallas Public Library<sup>296</sup>



These views show the section of Interstate 45 which caused the first major controversy on a state highway project in Dallas. TxDOT planned to build an elevated structure through this area, but quickly changed the design to be at ground level when opposition erupted in 1970. The view on the left shows construction in progress in 1975. The freeway through this area opened on February 25, 1976. The above view looks northbound along IH 45 in April 2011.





North Texas was transformed into a winter wonderland on February 12 and 13, 2010, after a record-setting snowfall. An all-time record snow accumulation for a 24-hour period, 12.5 inches, was recorded at DFW Airport. This view looks northbound along IH 45 near South Lamar Street.<sup>297</sup>





## US 175

# S.M. Wright, C.F. Hawn Freeway

On July 16, 1872, the first train to enter Dallas chugged into town from the south on the tracks of the Houston & Texas Central railroad. Today, motorists trace the same path when driving on the S.M. Wright Freeway section of US 175. The conversion of the H&TC railroad to an automobile traffic corridor was the original vision which launched the Dallas freeway system, first in 1949 with North Central Expressway and in 1956 with South Central Expressway, present-day S.M. Wright Freeway. The railroad which launched the transformation of Dallas from a small prairie outpost to a major urban center gave way to the technology of the automobile, which would propel Dallas to even greater success. The corridor is slated for yet another evolution—the planned decommissioning of 1.8 miles of freeway and conversion into an urban boulevard, scheduled to happen between 2015 and 2020.<sup>144</sup>

### Origins

The idea of converting the H&TC corridor north of downtown into a traffic artery originated with the Kessler plan of 1911 and the City of Dallas' first serious effort to acquire the railroad began in 1921. By the late 1930s the conversion of the railroad north of downtown to the envisioned Central Boulevard (later to become North Central Expressway) was the top priority of city hall. Civic organizations and political representatives in south Dallas insisted that the H&TC railroad in south Dallas also be removed and converted into a parkway or highway, effectively preventing North Central Expressway from proceeding independently.<sup>145</sup>

The demand from south Dallas greatly complicated efforts to purchase the railroad right-of-way from Southern Pacific, owner of the railroad. Southern Pacific was ready to abandon the H&TC track north of downtown in the late 1930s but not the track south of downtown since the south-

**Also see:** Complete history of Central Expressway page 77

The section of US 175 originally designated as South Central Expressway and now called S.M. Wright Freeway is aligned on the corridor of the Houston & Texas Central railroad, the first railroad to reach Dallas. The first train entered Dallas on July 16, 1872. On the right, officials unveil a plaque commemorating the arrival of the first train. The plaque was placed on the Southern Pacific Railways freight terminal in downtown Dallas on the southeast corner of present-day Cesar Chavez and Canton. The freight terminal was demolished and apartments now occupy the site.

### Quick Facts for US 175

- The north section was originally South Central Expressway, part of the first freeway planned for Dallas
- Serves mostly lower-income and sparsely populated southeast Dallas.
- The S.M. Wright Freeway section is planned to be converted into a boulevard, which will be the second demolition of a freeway in North Texas

### Key Dates in the History

<b>1930s</b>	South Dallas interests demand that South Central Expressway be included in the overall Central Expressway project
<b>1941</b>	The Houston & Texas Central railroad is purchased for the construction of Central Expressway
<b>1946</b>	Plans for South Central Expressway are finalized and revealed
<b>1953</b>	TxDOT designates freeway status for the full length of US 175 in Dallas county
<b>1956</b>	South Central Expressway opens
<b>1972</b>	Freeway completed in Dallas county
<b>2015-2020</b>	Planned demolition of the S.M. Wright Freeway and construction of a new link to IH 45







TxDOT Travel Information Division

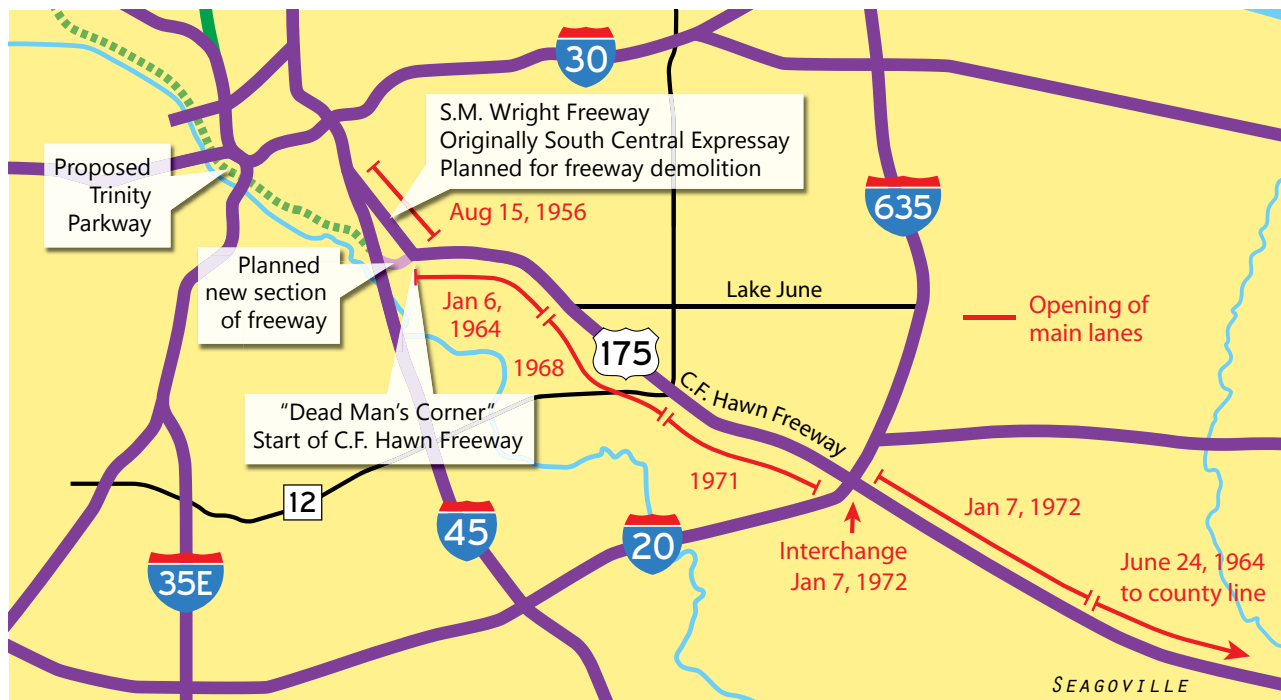
## Charles Hawn, 1907-1996

Charles F. Hawn was a civic leader from Athens, 70 miles southeast of Dallas, who served as a member of the Texas Transportation Commission from 1957 to 1963 and was influential in Dallas highway planning during his tenure. Born on October 3, 1907, Hawn attended the University of Texas at Austin and was a standout lineman for the Longhorn football team in 1929 and 1931, earning him a place in the Longhorn Hall of Honor. Hawn was active in his family's lumber business and also had interests in ranching, land development, oil production and banking. In 1961 Hawn helped defuse a funding controversy between the City of Dallas and Dallas County. He was very well liked and Dallas business interests held a huge tribute for Hawn in conjunction with the official naming of the freeway in January 1964.<sup>299</sup>

Dallas Public Library<sup>301</sup>

## S.M. Wright, 1927-1994

Born in Dallas in 1927, Sylvester Marilyn Wright was a civil rights leader who is credited with helping prevent civil unrest in Dallas during the turbulent 1960s. Before African-American political representation developed in the 1970s, he served as a liaison to the white Dallas establishment and represented the black community's interests. Wright was pastor of Peoples Baptist Church on Pine Street less than a mile north of his namesake freeway. The section of US 175 between IH 45 and SH 310, as well as SH 310 extending south from US 175 to Loop 12, was designated as the S.M. Wright Freeway by state legislation in 1995. The freeway was named in a formal ceremony at the Pine Street overpass with Governor Bush in attendance on July 12, 1995 (see photo page 14). With the planned demolition of the freeway, the corridor will become S.M. Wright Boulevard.<sup>300</sup>



This view shows construction of South Central Expressway (now S.M. Wright Freeway) at Forest Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr Blvd) on September 29, 1955. The Forest Cinema is visible on the lower right.



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>302</sup>

ern link served the railroad's downtown freight terminal. But south Dallas interests stood firm and the City of Dallas would not settle for anything less than the complete H&TC corridor, both north and south of downtown. In 1941 an agreement was reached to construct new track to the Southern Pacific downtown freight terminal and an agreement was signed for the acquisition of the full H&TC corridor by the City of Dallas. With the acquisition, TxDOT could proceed with the conversion of the railroad into a freeway both north and south of downtown. North Central Expressway was the first priority, with the first section opening on August 20, 1949. On August 15, 1956, South

Central Expressway was completed from Grand Avenue to the present-day "Dead-Man's Corner" at SH 310. It was the second distinct freeway to open in Dallas after North Central Expressway. The South Central Expressway section of US 175 was renamed the S.M. Wright freeway in July 1995 in honor of Sylvester Marilyn Wright (1927-1994), the influential pastor of Peoples Baptist Church near the freeway who was a civic leader and is credited with helping ease racial tensions in Dallas (see photo of the freeway renaming on page 14).<sup>146</sup>





UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>303</sup>

This November 11, 1955, view looks northbound along US 175 at Hatcher Street with the original construction in progress. The freeway opened on August 15, 1956. This section of the freeway was originally signed as US 75 and called South Central Expressway. This section is now the S.M. Wright Freeway, which is planned for demolition.



Dallas Public Library<sup>304</sup>

UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>305</sup>

These views show the original north terminus of the freeway prior to the construction of Interstate 45, which was completed at the freeway end in 1976. The aerial view, taken February 11, 1957, shows Pennsylvania Avenue in the foreground and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd (then Forest Avenue) crossing just behind the Forest Cinema. The undated ground-level view from the same period shows the end of the freeway with motorists having the option of going left to stay on Central Expressway or right on Good-Latimer Expressway, neither of which were freeways.





Dallas Public Library<sup>306</sup>

US 175 in Dallas County was completed on January 7, 1972, with the opening of the interchange at IH 20 and a section of freeway southeast of IH 20. Freeway namesake Charles F. Hawn is second from the left in this photo, cutting the ribbon. In the photo from left to right: TxDOT head J.C. Dingwall, Hawn, Chamber of Commerce Central Highway Committee Chairman Russell Perry and Chamber of Commerce President Gar Laux.

### Continuing to the South

Cities southeast of Dallas in Kaufman County were looking for speedy travel into Dallas and in December 1953 the Texas Transportation Commission approved a request from Dallas and Kaufman Counties to designate US 175 as a freeway. Plans for the project, including the new freeway link from South Central Expressway to the existing US 175 on South Second Avenue, were disclosed at a public hearing in April 1958 and construction in Dallas County was underway in 1960. The US 175 freeway in Dallas County was complete in 1972 with the opening of the interchange at IH 20.<sup>147</sup>

The construction of the US 175 freeway was pushed by Charles F. Hawn, a businessman from Athens (Tex.) and member of the Texas Transportation Commission from 1957 to 1963. Dallas and Athens were connected via US 175 and it was a top priority of Hawn to get a first-class highway between his hometown and Dallas. In 1961 Hawn helped defuse a dispute between the City of Dallas and Dallas County over freeway right-of-way funding, and as a gesture of appreciation local officials made the US 175

freeway a priority and promised to name the freeway for him, making the name official in August 1961. The naming ceremony coincided with the opening of the first section of the C.F. Hawn Freeway on January 27, 1964, followed by a luncheon in Hawn's honor at Dallas Market Hall attended by 1000.<sup>148</sup>

### From Freeway to Boulevard

The demolition of a freeway with no direct replacement has been a rare event in the United States. In fact, only four significant freeway removals and one minor removal occurred in the United States prior to 2010, and in all cases there were special circumstances which led to the freeway removal. The unsightly, dead-end Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco was demolished after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake damaged it, and a very short section of the elevated Central Freeway in San Francisco was also demolished due to earthquake damage. The West Side Highway in New York City was slated for demolition after a large section collapsed in 1973 and repair or rebuilding was financially infeasible. The 1-mile-long Park East Freeway





Author, April 2011

**S.M. Wright Freeway, rest in peace?** This April 2011 view shows the S.M. Wright Freeway section of US 175, originally South Central Expressway. Planning is underway to remove this section of freeway and convert it into a boulevard. In the foreground is the “Dead-Man’s Corner” intersection where US 175 makes a sharp turn. Plans for the freeway removal include construction of a new section of freeway extending west (left) from Dead Man’s Corner to connect to IH 45, visible in the distance crossing from left to right.



in Milwaukee became a short dead-end freeway after its connecting section was canceled, and the freeway was demolished in 2003. The Harbor Drive Freeway in Portland was a short dead-end freeway poorly aligned along a waterfront which became unnecessary for traffic flow when nearby interstate highways opened. The freeway was closed in 1974 and replaced by a park in 1978.

Freeway relocations and removals are expected to increase after 2010 due to the aging infrastructure and opportunities for urban redevelopment. In 2013 the largest freeway relocation project in progress is the \$3.1 billion Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program in Seattle. Several proposals are under consideration in other cities. In 2013 the freeway removal most likely to proceed next is the demolition of the S.M. Wright Freeway section of US 175. It will not be a “pure” freeway removal since it will involve the construction of a new freeway link to shift traffic onto nearby Interstate 45. But it will be distinguished by the fact that the freeway is a vital, functioning highway link, whereas all other removals have been dead-end or structurally deficient freeways.

Efforts to remove the freeway were partly motivated by the low-income, overwhelmingly African-American makeup of the neighborhood along the freeway and the belief that the original construction of the freeway was discriminatory. However, the original planning for the freeway in late 1930s and the May 1946 final plan including South Central Expressway (present-day S.M. Wright Freeway) took place when the area was entirely or overwhelmingly white. In the late 1930s the civic association representing the area, the South Dallas Improvement League, insisted on the removal of the railroad and construction of a highway-type facility. The transition from a predominantly white to a black neighborhood began after approval of the freeway plan. A map published in the *Dallas Morning News* in February 1950 showed the black areas of housing in south Dallas along the freeway corridor, and the area was still over 50% white. Freeway construction began in 1954 and was complete in 1956. Transition to a black majority occurred rapidly during the 1950s and by January 1959 the overall area of southeast Dallas was reported to be 57% black.<sup>149</sup>

The removal of S.M. Wright Freeway was originally proposed in June 2003 as part of a consultant’s review of the controversial Trinity Parkway toll road plan. A freeway or tollway in the Trinity River corridor connecting to US 175 at “Dead-Man’s Corner”, the sharp curve at the SH 310 intersection, had been first proposed in 1970 but the project did not move forward. Interest in the Trinity River highway was resurrected in 1992 and Dallas voters approved an \$84 million bond issue for the project in 1998, but controversy and discussion has continued nonstop since the mid-1990s. As the Trinity Parkway project experienced an



This graphic published in the February 26, 1950, edition of the *Dallas Morning News* shows South Central Expressway, depicted by the thick black line, and the racial makeup of the surrounding neighborhoods. The corridor was still over 50% white but rapid transition was in progress and by 1959 the overall southeast area of Dallas was reported to be 57% African-American.<sup>307</sup>

ongoing series of delays, challenges and cost increases, in 2009 local officials separated the freeway demolition from the Trinity Parkway so the demolition could move forward independently. Plans for the S.M. Wright Freeway corridor call for the removal of all freeway overpasses, removal of the frontage roads and construction of a six-lane boulevard with pedestrian trails, landscape features and gateway monuments.<sup>150</sup>

A new section of freeway is planned to connect US 175 to IH 45, eliminating the “Dead-Man’s Corner” curve. The entire project including the conversion of S.M. Wright Freeway was estimated to cost \$151 million in 2012 with construction taking place between 2015 and 2020. If the project proceeds as planned, it will be a milestone in North Texas and the United States—the first removal of an existing freeway in North Texas without a direct replacement\* and the first removal of a functioning, non-dead-end and structurally sound freeway in the United States.<sup>151</sup> ■

\* The section of IH 30 in downtown Fort Worth along Lancaster Avenue was moved to a new location in 2000 and the original freeway was demolished in 2001.

**LOOP  
12**

# Loop 12 Walton Walker Boulevard

The west section of Loop 12 originated in a 1940 highway construction plan which included a highway to provide access to the planned North American Aviation aircraft factory on Jefferson street in west Dallas along the boundary with Grand Prairie.\* However, World War II appears to have postponed construction and the project began to move forward as part of Loop 12 in the late 1940s. By 1951 there was a paved road built to minimal standards in the Loop 12 corridor, but parts of the road did not follow the present-day alignment. It appears that a two-lane paved highway following the final alignment was complete in 1955.<sup>135</sup>

The west section of Loop 12 was designated as a freeway in May 1959, forming the west segment of a freeway loop around Dallas which was comprised of several route numbers. Construction was underway in 1966 and the first freeway segment opened in 1969. The most costly segment was the Trinity River crossing. In the early 1970s the planned Trinity River barge canal was still very much alive and the bridge was designed to provide a

**Also see:** Chapter 8 Texas Stadium Freeways, page 370

## Walton Walker, 1889-1950



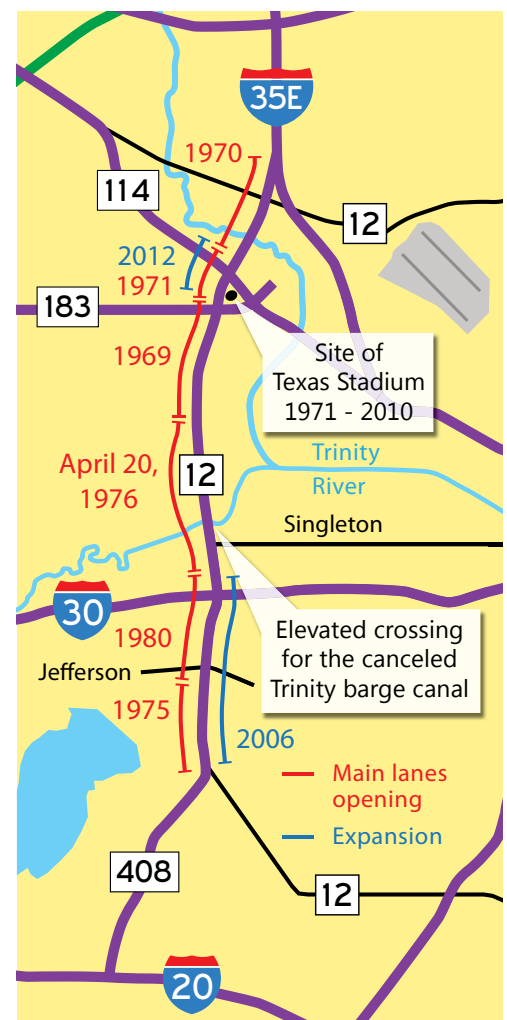
George C. Marshall Research Library

Walton H. Walker was a United States Army general who led the U.S. advance through Europe in World War II and served as commander of U.S. and United Nations forces in the Korean War. In June 1945 Walker became commander of the Eighth Service Command which was headquartered in Dallas. Walker left Dallas in June 1946 after the Eighth Service Command was disbanded. The west section of Loop 12 was named Walton Walker Boulevard in January 1951, one month after Walker's accidental death in Korea. Loop 12 was designated as a freeway in 1959.

\* The North American Aviation factory opened April 7, 1941. Since the 1960s the facility has produced structural components for aircraft and has been managed by numerous entities, including Chance Vought, LTV Corp., Northrop Grumman, Vought Aircraft Industries and, starting in 2010, Triumph Group. In February 2013 Triumph announced that it was shutting operations at the location and vacating the facility in 2014.

### Key Dates in the History

<b>1951</b>	Two-lane highway opens
<b>1959</b>	Designated as freeway
<b>1969</b>	First freeway section opens
<b>1971</b>	Texas Stadium opens
<b>1980</b>	The freeway is completed
<b>2010</b>	Texas Stadium is imploded
<b>2012</b>	Expansion completed at SH 114
<b>Future</b>	New interchange planned at SH 183. Corridor-wide expansion is unfunded with no timetable for construction.





# Who Was Walton Walker?

While millions of North Texans know the Walton Walker Boulevard freeway, the namesake of the freeway remains relatively unknown since he was overshadowed by the big names of World War II and the Korean War—Patton, Eisenhower and MacArthur.

Born in Belton, Texas, on December 2, 1889, Walton H. Walker began his army career when he graduated from West Point in 1912. Walker first gained widespread recognition for his service in World War II as commander of the XX (Twentieth) Corps which became known as “Ghost Corps” due to its speed of advance. Serving under General George S. Patton, Walker’s forces spearheaded the allied push through Europe starting in July 1944, taking XX Corps through France and Germany, reaching Austria in May 1945. Walker was regarded as one of the Army’s best tank commanders and was promoted to lieutenant gen-

eral, three stars, in April 1945.<sup>288</sup>

Walker’s Dallas connection began in June 1945 when he became commander of the Eighth Service Command in Dallas, which served as the administrative office managing Army operations in Texas and the four adjacent states. Walker was the highest-ranking officer stationed in Dallas up to that time and was welcomed with a proclamation of June 25 as General Walker Day and a large luncheon at the Adolphus Hotel. President Truman abolished the Eighth Service Command in May 1946 and Walker left Dallas to become commander of the Fifth Army in Chicago in June 1946.<sup>289</sup>

Walker’s most challenging assignment took him to Korea as commander of the Eighth Army and United Nations forces, reporting to General Douglas MacArthur. Major action began in July 1950 as Walton’s poorly trained and underequipped army

was pushed southward down the Korean peninsula by North Korean forces until Walker made a legendary defensive stand at Busan (Pusan) on the south coast of the peninsula. With reinforcements, Walker’s forces advanced north. As U.S. forces approached the Chinese border, Chinese forces entered the war in October 1950 and stopped the U.S. advance, inflicting serious damage with a massive attack in November. Walker was forced to retreat to a line near latitude 38° (the 38th parallel) in December 1950 to minimize losses. Walker was an on-the-ground commander, regularly speeding to the front lines in his specially equipped jeep. On December 23, 1950, Walker died in a jeep accident near the front lines. Walker was posthumously promoted to full General (four stars) in January 1951.<sup>290</sup>



**Two freeways and a Frenchman** Walton Walker (left), John W. Carpenter (center) and mayor of Metz, France Gabriel Hocquard inspect the barbecue at the Carpenter family ranch in Irving in March 1946. Hocquard was in Dallas to thank the United States and Walker for the liberation of Metz in November 1944 by forces under the command of Walker. Both Walker and Carpenter would have freeways named for them, with SH 114 being named the Carpenter Freeway.<sup>291</sup>



U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

This 1945 image in Germany includes the A-list of top U.S. Army Generals in Europe. On the far left, with his ivory-handled pistol in the holster, is General George Patton. Walton Walker reported to Patton. In the center is Dwight Eisenhower, supreme commander of European forces, looking somewhat angry in this photo. To the right of Eisenhower is Walton Walker, with two stars on his helmet. On the far right is four-star general Omar Bradley, who would later be promoted to a five-star general and was the last surviving five-star general on his death in 1981.

Walker reported to controversial general Douglas MacArthur during the Korean conflict. In this photo MacArthur greets Walker in Korea in December 1950, shortly before Walker's death in a jeep accident on December 23.

George C. Marshall Research Library







Dallas Public Library<sup>287</sup>

This undated view from circa the early 1960s looks southbound along Walton Walker Boulevard at Singleton Boulevard, showing the original two-lane Loop 12 highway. In the foreground is a guide sign directing motorists to the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, visible in the distance.

This April 2011 view looks northbound along Loop 12 with the Jefferson Boulevard and Davis Street overpasses just ahead. Interstate 30 Tom Landry Highway crosses from left to right across the top of the photo. In 2006 this section of Loop 12 was expanded from six to eight main lanes.

Author, April 2011







Author, May 2005

These May 2005 views show Texas Stadium alongside Loop 12. Texas Stadium opened in 1971 and was imploded in April 2010. The site is used by TxDOT as a construction staging area in 2013. The above view looks north with the SH 183 intersection in the foreground, and the lower view looks south with the SH 114 intersection in the foreground. In 2012 work was completed on an expansion project which widened Loop 12 between SH 114 and SH 183, and added two direct-connection ramps at SH 114.

Author, May 2005





52-foot vertical clearance above the average river level and a 350-foot-long main span. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 9, 1973, and four days later voters rejected a bond issue to provide the local share of financing for the Trinity barge canal. Although the canal was not officially dead until 1978, the rejection of the bond issue was, for practical purposes, the end of the project. Nevertheless, the river was still officially designated as a navigable waterway and the \$10 million bridge (approximately \$52 million in 2013 dollars) proceeded with the high-clearance design. The extra cost for the high clearance was \$2.5 million, a 33% increase over a basic design. The bridge was officially opened on April 20, 1976, and was the last high-clearance bridge constructed over the Trinity River.<sup>136</sup>

One last section, from Jefferson Boulevard to IH 30, remained to be upgraded to freeway standards in 1976 when TxDOT plunged into a financial crisis which threatened to bring all new construction to a halt. Officials managed to find the money to complete the missing link, awarding the final contract in September 1976 and completing the freeway in 1980.<sup>137</sup>

Loop 12 passes through a lightly urbanized area with mostly industrial and warehouse facilities north of the Trinity River and sparse residential development along its south half. The only landmark to exist along the freeway was Texas Stadium, opened between SH 114 and SH 183 in 1971. Texas Stadium was imploded in April 2010 and in 2013 the site is used by TxDOT as a construction staging

area.

### Modernization

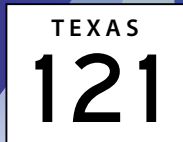
On its completion Loop 12 was a basic 6-lane freeway and lacked modern interchanges at all three freeways which intersected it—SH 114, SH 183 and IH 30. Only the SH 114 intersection has been brought to modern standards in a project completed in 2012 with the addition of two direct connection ramps and widening of the Loop 12 main lanes. The interchange at SH 183 is a tight-radius cloverleaf and will be upgraded to a full multilevel interchange in conjunction with the expansion of SH 183, a public-private partnership in the planning phase in 2013 and expected to be a multiphased project, with the first phase potentially beginning as soon as 2015. At IH 30 motorists navigate a circuitous connection which is a relic of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike toll collection system. There are long-term plans for the addition of a modern four-level interchange at IH 30.

Loop 12 received only minimal attention for overall corridor improvements until the late 1990s when TxDOT launched an official study for future reconstruction and expansion. In 1999 the study recommended a \$1.5 billion expansion of Loop 12 to eight main lanes and two reversible managed lanes. Environmental approval was received in 2002. However, in 2013 the project is a low priority on the long list of regional projects with no corridor-wide construction planned in the next 20 years.<sup>138</sup> ■

This October 2013 view looks northbound from the Texas Plaza Drive overpass with the SH 114 intersection ahead. This section of Loop 12 was widened and modernized in 2012, with two new connector ramps to SH 114 visible in the distance. There is a wide set-aside of pavement in the center for planned future managed lanes.

Author, October 2013





# SH 121 Sam Rayburn Tollway

**S**H 121 through Denton and Collin counties, the Sam Rayburn Tollway, was the scene of one of the most intense controversies in the history of North Texas freeways. But unlike most other freeway battles, the public had a minimal role in this controversy—it was a government vs. government conflict. On one side was TxDOT and the State of Texas, attempting to turn over the operation and finances of the tollway to a foreign private firm to maximize short-term financial gain. On the other side were local governments, attempting to retain control of the toll road, its toll rates and its expected long-term profits. In the end the local interests prevailed, but the cost of retaining local control was very high and only time will tell if the local victory pays off financially.

## Origins

The idea of a highway connecting Fort Worth to McKinney originated in Fort Worth in 1928 and an agreement was reached in which Fort Worth would build the highway in Tarrant County and TxDOT would build the eastern half in Dallas, Denton and Collin Counties. Fort Worth voters approved bond funds to build the Tarrant County section of the highway and it was completed to the county line in 1930. The highway was extended east to present-day IH 35E at Lewisville around 1940. TxDOT did not proceed with the eastern half until 1949, finally completing the original SH 121 to McKinney in 1951. In 1962 SH 121 was extended east from McKinney to Bonham, hometown of congressman and Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Sam Rayburn who died in November

## Quick Facts for SH 121

- Controversy over control of the toll road and its revenue was the most intense intergovernment dispute in North Texas freeway history
- Serves the affluent and growing far north suburbs of Dallas
- All toll and freeway main lanes completed in 2009; interchanges completed in 2011

## Key Dates in the History

<b>1928</b>	Highway first proposed by Fort Worth
<b>1951</b>	Original highway completed from Fort Worth to McKinney
<b>mid 1980s</b>	First efforts to make the corridor a freeway
<b>1999</b>	Frontage roads of the Lewisville bypass open
<b>2004-2005</b>	Most of the length is designated as a toll road
<b>2007</b>	NTTA takes over the project with a \$3.2 billion upfront payment
<b>2011</b>	Construction is complete on the Sam Rayburn Tollway
<b>2015</b>	Scheduled completion of new lanes in Grapevine

1961. There was discussion at that time of naming the highway the Sam Rayburn Memorial Highway, but the official naming would not occur until the opening of the

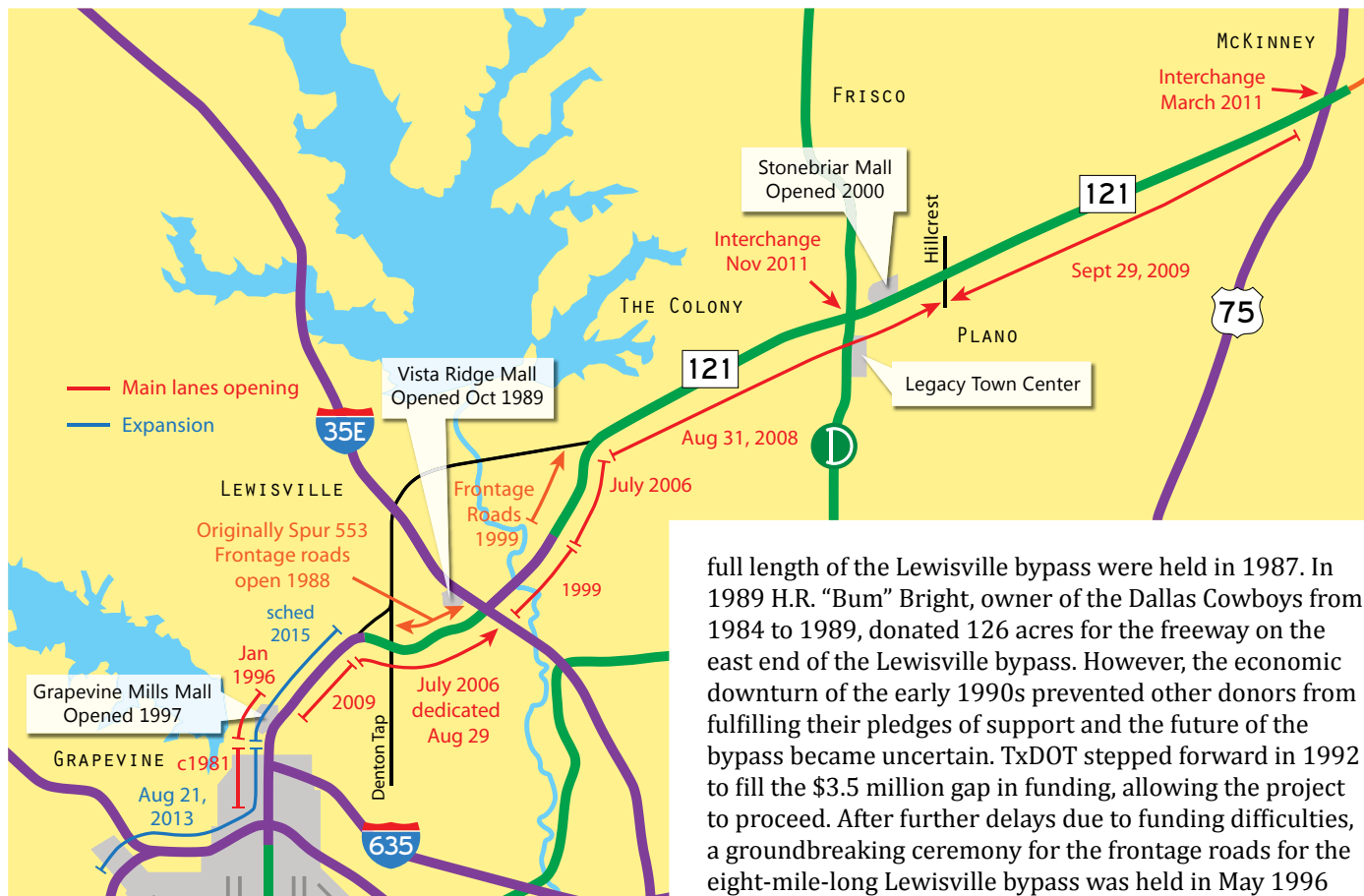
## Sam Rayburn, 1882-1961



Dallas Public Library<sup>309</sup>

Sam Rayburn was a United States congressman from Bonham, situated along SH 121 seventy miles northeast of the center of Dallas and forty miles northeast of the eastern terminus of the Sam Rayburn Tollway. Born in Tennessee on January 6, 1882, Rayburn moved to Texas at age five and was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1906. He became a U.S. congressman in 1913 and was Speaker of the House from 1940 to 1947, 1949 to 1953, and 1955 to 1961, the longest tenure of any speaker. Rayburn is among the three most influential Democrats in the history of Texas politics, the other two being President Lyndon B. Johnson and House Speaker and Vice President John Nance Garner IV, also known as “Cactus Jack”. Rayburn was a mentor to Johnson and a key ally of President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the New Deal era. The tollway was officially named the Sam Rayburn Tollway by the NTTA in March 2009 in spite of opposition from some board members who preferred a more relevant name.<sup>308</sup>





full length of the Lewisville bypass were held in 1987. In 1989 H.R. "Bum" Bright, owner of the Dallas Cowboys from 1984 to 1989, donated 126 acres for the freeway on the east end of the Lewisville bypass. However, the economic downturn of the early 1990s prevented other donors from fulfilling their pledges of support and the future of the bypass became uncertain. TxDOT stepped forward in 1992 to fill the \$3.5 million gap in funding, allowing the project to proceed. After further delays due to funding difficulties, a groundbreaking ceremony for the frontage roads for the eight-mile-long Lewisville bypass was held in May 1996 and the project was complete in 1999.<sup>154</sup>

tollway in 2009.<sup>152</sup>

### Planning the Freeway

By the mid-1980s the expanding northern suburbs of Dallas were about to reach SH 121, prompting business interests and political leaders to seek freeway designation for the highway. In January 1985 a large delegation went to Austin to ask the Texas Transportation Commission to grant SH 121 freeway status from DFW Airport to US 75 in McKinney, including the addition of a new bypass around Lewisville. Landowners along the route, including H. Ross Perot, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), IBM and Fox & Jacobs homebuilders, offered to donate 360 acres of right-of-way valued at \$31 million (approximately \$67 million in 2013 dollars). The commission was receptive to the idea but took no immediate action. In 1986 the official regional mobility plan designated the full length of SH 121 from DFW Airport to McKinney as a freeway.<sup>153</sup>

Planning to develop SH 121 to freeway standards began near DFW Airport and proceeded eastward. The City of Lewisville 1971 comprehensive plan included a non-free-way bypass for SH 121 through Lewisville shown about 1.5 miles north of today's bypass. A 2.3-mile section of frontage roads for the bypass from IH 35E west to Denton Tap Road opened in 1988 with the designation Spur 553. Studies and public meetings to determine the alignment of the

Efforts to advance the freeway east of the Lewisville bypass were ongoing in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1989 Collin County cities asked the Texas Transportation Commission to officially designate SH 121 as a freeway for its 16 miles in Collin County. When TxDOT authorized right-of-way acquisition and design work for SH 121 from Preston Road to US 75 in 1996, planning was officially underway for the full length of freeway. But as always, the issue of funding remained the most difficult challenge and the financing of the main lanes would go on to become one of the most intense controversies in the history of North Texas freeways.<sup>155</sup>

In 1999 Denton County officials began studying funding alternatives including tolling the main lanes or obtaining a loan from the State Infrastructure Bank. Denton County Commissioner Sandy Jacobs spearheaded the effort to secure funding, and in 2001 a \$170 million funding package was in place to build the toll-free main lanes in Denton County using \$120 million in TxDOT funds and a combination of regional discretionary funds, a State Infrastructure Bank loan and contributions from local governments to cover the remaining \$50 million. Construction on the section from north of DFW airport to the Dallas North Tollway was underway in 2004. Tolls remained the leading candidate for building the eastern section from the Dallas North Tollway to US 75.<sup>156</sup>



Author, April 2005

This view looks east along SH 121 at Legacy Drive in April 2005 with construction of the tollway underway. The four-lane divided highway which existed prior to the tollway construction is visible on the left. This construction project was financed with traditional highway funds from fuel taxes and was originally planned to be a freeway, but in 2004 and 2005 TxDOT converted the project into a toll road and incited a contentious battle over control of the toll road and its revenue.

### The Battle for Toll Road Control

But complications had only just begun for the western section even though it was already under construction. The philosophy for funding transportation in Texas was changing drastically in the early 2000s with the arrival of Rick Perry in the governor's office in 2001. In general, Perry wanted to toll everything that could possibly be tolled with the highest possible toll rates, using private firms to finance and deliver projects. His appointees on the Texas Transportation Commission, particularly Ric Williamson, and new legislation in 2003 empowered TxDOT to enforce this policy with little or no regard for local opinions or interests. Highway 121 in Denton and Collin Counties ranked as the most lucrative potential toll project in Texas in terms of the revenue it was expected to generate. There was money to be made, and there was no way Perry-influenced TxDOT was going to let SH 121 become a freeway even though it was already under construction to become a

freeway.<sup>157</sup>

In March 2004 TxDOT's plan to toll the already-underway western section of SH 121 became public, prompting strong opposition from the most-affected cities, The Colony and Frisco, and concern from other government officials in Denton County. TxDOT tried to gain support for the tolling by stating that tolling SH 121 would be the only way to raise funds for other needed projects in the region. TxDOT also earmarked toll profits for the widening of US 75 in McKinney, gaining McKinney's strong backing for tolls. Cities and governments in the corridor reluctantly voted to approve the toll road in September and October, culminating with a vote of the regional planning council (NCTCOG) in October 2004 to officially convert the Denton County section to a toll road.<sup>158</sup>

But even as the local governments succumbed, a myriad of complicated questions would need to be addressed. Who would fund and build the toll road? How would the





TxDOT Travel Information Division

This sign was posted on the location of the Lewisville bypass prior to the start of construction. The bypass was the subject of a formal alignment study in 1987 and plans for construction were finalized in 1992. The frontage roads were completed in 1999 and the tolled main lanes opened in 2006.



Brian Kosich

A 2.3-mile section of the Lewisville bypass between IH 35E and Denton Tap Road opened in 1988 as Spur 553. The highway was redesignated as SH 121 in 1999. This March 2011 view shows a legacy Spur 553 sign still in use in Lewisville.

profits be collected, up front as an advance payment or as they were generated? Who would get the profits, and would they stay in the toll road corridor? Would a foreign firm be allowed to operate the toll road? How high would the tolls be set? How much would the tolls increase over time? The biggest battle was still to come to answer these questions.

TxDOT believed that contracting with a private firm to build and manage the toll road would result in the highest upfront payment. The first private proposal, an unsolicited bid from Swedish firm Skanska, was received in February 2005 and TxDOT then proceeded with the solicitation of competing proposals. A study of the revenue-generating potential of the Collin County section of SH 121 released in April 2005 reported that toll profits over the following forty years would support an immediate \$381 million advance payment for other highway projects. With tolls seeming to be inevitable, Plano, Allen, Frisco and Collin County all reluctantly agreed to toll the Collin County section of SH 121 in August 2005, but their support was conditional on retaining local control. In October 2005 they proposed a Collin County local government corporation to oversee construction and operation of the toll road, keeping surplus revenue in the area for other construction projects. The idea of a Collin County toll corporation was dropped a month later, but local hopes were lifted in December when the North Texas Turnpike Authority tentatively agreed to bid on the project.<sup>159</sup>

By early 2006 TxDOT was evaluating four private proposals for building the toll road. In April 2006 the regional transportation council approved toll rates 20% higher than

other local toll roads with even higher rates during rush hour to generate more revenue\*, prompting the City of Frisco to withdraw its support. There was more bad news for Frisco in August when the NTTA withdrew its planned bid for the toll road as part of a comprehensive agreement with TxDOT for jurisdiction over planned North Texas toll roads. While all the wrangling continued, Governor Rick Perry dedicated the first section of SH 121 in Denton County on August 29, 2006, keeping the lanes temporarily toll-free until after the November election.<sup>160</sup>

In February 2007 TxDOT was finally ready to select a private firm to build and operate the toll road for fifty years. The winner was Spanish firm Cintra, which submitted a plan with a \$2.1 billion up-front payment and \$700 million in future payments in addition to the costs of building the toll road in Collin County and operational costs for the entire length of the tollway. It was a lucrative deal for TxDOT, but local interests still held hope that the deal could be matched by the NTTA, allowing toll road control to remain local. In March state lawmakers asked that the NTTA be allowed to submit a bid in a last-ditch effort to maintain local control. In May 2007 NTTA submitted its bid with a \$2.5 billion upfront payment and \$833 million in future payments, an offer which was later changed to a single upfront payment of \$3.2 billion. It appeared to be more lucrative than the Cintra offer, but TxDOT continued to support the Cintra plan. The recommendation of the Regional Transportation Council would be critical in ending the controversy which had raged for the previous three years.<sup>161</sup>

\* The higher rate for rush hour was not implemented.



North Texas Turnpike Authority

On November 30, 2007, the North Texas Turnpike Authority (NTTA) presented a ceremonial check for almost \$3.2 billion to local officials as part of the agreement to hand over control of the tollway and its revenue to the NTTA. The NTTA sold bonds to make the payment, placing it in heavy debt and ensuring regular toll increases on the entire North Texas toll road system. The \$3.2 billion was earmarked for use on other North Texas highway and transit projects.

In June 2007 the Regional Transportation Council voted 27-10 to recommend the NTTA proposal. TxDOT was not legally required to adhere to the local recommendation, but as a matter of standard practice the Texas Transportation Commission normally followed local guidance. But nothing was certain, given the tremendous acrimony which had engulfed the decision. A large delegation of local officials went to Austin for the June 28 vote of the Texas Transportation Commission. By a vote of 4-1, the Commission approved the NTTA bid.<sup>162</sup>

It was a victory for North Texas interests seeking to maintain local control, but it came with a huge price tag which would financially encumber the NTTA for decades into the future. In November 2007 the NTTA sold \$3.49 billion in bonds and on November 30 a check for \$3.2 billion was presented to the State of Texas. It was the second-largest upfront payment for a toll road in the United States, behind the \$3.8 billion Cintra and its partner paid to the State of Indiana in 2006 for rights to collect tolls on Indi-

ana toll roads for 75 years. In addition to the upfront payment, NTTA would cover the estimated \$700 million cost of completing the toll road in Collin County.<sup>163</sup>

Work proceeded quickly and the main length of toll road in Collin County opened on September 29, 2009. The interchange at US 75 opened in March 2011 and all planned construction was complete with the opening of the final two connections at the interchange with the Dallas North Tollway in November 2011.<sup>164</sup>

Due to the severe recession which began in 2008, traffic and toll revenue on SH 121 and other toll roads in the NTTA system lagged behind projections. In September 2009 motorists using NTTA toll roads felt the impact of the huge financial obligation imposed by the \$3.2 billion advance payment when the NTTA implemented an average 32% system-wide toll increase to maintain a financial position which complies with bond covenants. Regular 6% toll increases were scheduled to occur automatically every two years.<sup>165</sup>





Author, April 2011

This April 2011 view looks west along the SH 121 Sam Rayburn Tollway with construction in progress on the interchange at the Dallas North Tollway. The tollway was closed at the time of this photo for the positioning of steel beams for a connector ramp. The interchange was fully open in November 2011, completing all planned construction on the Sam Rayburn Tollway.

With the SH 121 deal and a smaller deal for the SH 161 section of the Bush Turnpike, political leaders have squeezed just about every possible dollar out of future toll revenue. For decades to come, toll-paying motorists will be reminded of the SH 121 controversy every time they see the large, and regularly increasing, entries from the NTTA on their credit card statements.

### DFW Airport

The SH 121 freeway continues south and west of the Sam Rayburn Tollway to the north entrance of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. A short section of main lanes

just north of the airport opened around 1981 in conjunction with the completion of the interchange with IH 635. The remaining section to the north was slowly upgraded during the following decades, with the full length finally reaching freeway status in 2009 when two signalized intersections were replaced with overpasses. The \$1 billion DFW Connector project, which expanded all freeways on the north side of DFW Airport and rebuilt the SH 114/SH 121 interchange, was officially dedicated on August 21, 2013. In 2014 work was scheduled to begin to add new free lanes between IH 635 and the start of the Sam Rayburn Tollway. ■



## Other Dallas Freeways

### US 80

Construction of US 80 from just east of Loop 12 to Forney was underway in 1955 and the 11-mile section was formally dedicated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 9, 1956. The entire corridor was built to freeway standards except for a two-mile section between IH 30 and IH 635; that short section was completed to freeway standards in 1959.<sup>166</sup>

US 80 distinguished itself as the first freeway in North Texas to serve as the home for an enclosed shopping mall. Big Town Mall, opened alongside the freeway on February 26, 1959, was the first air-conditioned mall in the south-west United States and featured a full lineup of leading retailers of the 1950s including Sangers, Woolworth Variety Store, Wrigley supermarket, Volk's and the first Montgomery Ward in Dallas. A huge crowd jammed the mall on opening day, with many in attendance hoping to win one of the six \$1000 bills (\$8000 in 2013 dollars) which were given away. The mall was highly successful in the 1960s but began a steady decline in 1971 when nearby Town East

**Also see:** Opening photo of US 67 page 29; opening photos of IH 20 pages 19 and 34

Mall opened. Retailers abandoned the mall in the 1990s and when Montgomery Ward closed in 2001 the mall was vacant. The mall was demolished in 2006.<sup>167</sup>

In 2012 US 80 remains mostly in its originally constructed configuration with only four main lanes. In 2004 TxDOT conducted a study to determine future improvements to the corridor. However, no substantial improvements are scheduled prior to 2035. US 80 is the only freeway in the Dallas area without a designated name and is known as "US 80".<sup>168</sup>

### US 67, Marvin Love Freeway and S.M. Alexander Freeway

Before the Interstate Highway System became the backbone of transportation in the United States, the United States highway system with the "US" designation formed the principal routes. US 67 was among the most important







UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>310</sup>

Huge crowds visited Big Town Mall during its opening celebration on February 26-28, 1959. The above view was taken on February 28 with US 80 in the foreground. Below is an undated, 1960s-era ground-level view of US 80 with the original Big Town sign visible.

UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>311</sup>



Big Town Mall started its decline in the 1970s and the mass exodus from the mall began in 1989 when Foley's closed its store. By the 1990s the mall was mostly vacant and Montgomery Ward was the last to close in 2001. This July 2006 view shows demolition of Montgomery Ward in progress with the mall sign in the background.



Author, July 2006

highways in Dallas. In fact, planning for the East-West Freeway in Dallas followed the corridor of US 67 from east Dallas into Oak Cliff (see page 219). Today US 67 still exists but is overshadowed by the interstate routes which it follows. In southwest Dallas US 67 breaks away from Interstate 35E and regains its own identity with the Marvin Love Freeway. The alignment of US 67 was defined in the late 1930s and was originally planned to be a four-lane divided highway. Right-of-way acquisition and construction were underway in 1939 with land costs in south Dallas County averaging \$35 per acre. The original highway on the US 67 alignment was complete by 1941 as a two-lane highway.<sup>169</sup>

US 67 southwest of IH 35E was designated as a freeway by TxDOT in 1958. Right-of-way acquisition was authorized in 1961 and final planning for the first construction was underway in 1965. The first freeway main lanes opened in 1969 and the freeway was complete to Duncanville in 1983. In 2012 the freeway remains mostly in its originally constructed configuration with four regular main lanes. HOV lanes were added between IH 35E and IH 20 in 2002. The Southern Gateway transportation study, conducted from 2002 to 2006, defined the long-term plan for expanding US 67. The planned expansion, which is slated to occur before 2035, will have six regular main lanes, two reversible managed lanes between IH 35E and IH 20, and one reversible managed lane south of IH 20 to Belt Line Road.<sup>170</sup>

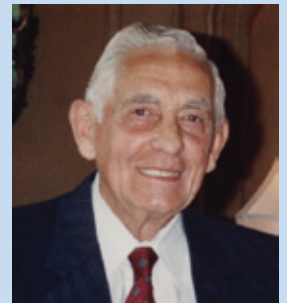
### Interstate 20 in South Dallas

The section of IH 20 in south and southeast Dallas east of IH 35E was originally designated as IH 635. It was redesignated



Dallas Public Library<sup>312</sup>

Marvin D. Love, died April 1964 age 69, was branch manager of the Oak Cliff division of Dallas Power & Light and a civic leader with a lengthy resume of leadership positions. Love, who has no relation to the namesake of Love Field Airport (Moss Lee Love), served as chairman of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce Central Highway Committee. The freeway was named for Love in June 1964.<sup>313</sup>



L. Alexander

S.G. "Gus" Alexander Sr, died October 1993 age 75, was a Duncanville civic leader who served as chairman of the Duncanville Chamber of Commerce Highway Committee and was influential in bringing transportation improvements to Duncanville, including US 67. US 67 through Duncanville was designated as the S.G. Alexander Freeway by the city council in 1989.





This view looks northeast along the US 67 corridor at Polk Street in November 1962, showing the original two-lane US 67 highway. Work was just underway on construction of the frontage roads for the freeway. The freeway main lanes at this location opened on July 29, 1969.

The lower view from circa 1972 looks west along IH 20 in south Dallas at the intersection with Houston School Road showing construction in progress. IH 35E is in the distance in the upper part of the photo.

Dallas Public Library<sup>315</sup>

UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>314</sup>



as IH 20 in 1971 and construction on the section formerly IH 635 was complete in October 1973. This section of IH 20 is named Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway.

The 20-mile eastern link of IH 20 between IH 635 southeast of Dallas and US 80 at Terrell was the last section of interstate highway to be completed in North Texas and among the last interstate links to be completed in the United States when it opened in 1989.\* Funding shortages and the availability of an existing freeway route via present-day US 80 were responsible for the delay. Public hearings on the alignment were held in 1974 and a final route was selected in 1975. After seven years of construction the freeway section was dedicated on January 27, 1989, completing Interstate 20 in North Texas.<sup>171</sup>

\* The originally planned Interstate Highway System was designated as complete in 1992 with the opening of a section of Interstate 70 in Colorado. Additional mileage has been added and proposed since 1992.





Author, April 2007

Motorists stop to appreciate the bluebonnets in the Spur 408 median in 2007. Spur 408 just north of IH 20 is typically one of the best spots for bluebonnets in North Texas.

### Spur 408

The Spur 408 freeway was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission in April 1965. The south terminus of the approved section was at IH 20, which had been officially designated as a freeway by TxDOT in April 1964 and as a federal interstate highway in October 1964. Spur 408 formed the final link of a loop of freeways around Dallas which consists of IH 20, IH 635, IH 35E, Loop 12 and Spur 408.<sup>172</sup>

The freeway was planned in the late 1960s to early 1970s, an era when freeways were designed with very wide right-of-way. IH 635 between IH 35E and DFW Airport was also planned in this era and has similar design characteristics. The 1967 long-term regional freeway plan showed Spur 408 extending south of IH 20 to connect with US 67 in Cedar Hill. The proposed extension remained in the official long-term plan until 1986 when it was removed (see pages 55, 58 and 73). It appears that little or no effort was expended on the proposed south extension.

The freeway was completed in 1976. The extension over IH 20 to connect to Clark Road was completed in 1990. In 1997 the state legislature officially designated Spur 408 as the Patriot Parkway in recognition of the nearby Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery operated by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs. The wide

freeway right-of-way just north of IH 20 is typically carpeted with bluebonnets in spring, making it a popular site for taking photographs. The freeway does not have frontage roads and is still in its originally constructed configuration with three lanes in each direction. No improvements are currently planned for Spur 408.<sup>173</sup> ■

This view looks north along Spur 408 at IH 20 in May 2005.

Author, May 2005





## A cartoon illustration of a boy and a girl standing in a kitchen, looking at a large oven. The oven door is open, revealing a rack of food inside. The oven has a control panel with various knobs and buttons. The background features a patterned wall and a window with a view of a city.



## The Cookie-Cutter Interchanges

Motorists driving along Interstates 20 and 635 in south and east Dallas are apt to get a feeling of *deja vu*. Each freeway-to-freeway interchange looks just like the previous one—and the next one ahead. In all, six interchanges opened between 1970 and 1974 have a nearly identical design, earning them an informal designation in this book as the cookie-cutter interchanges.

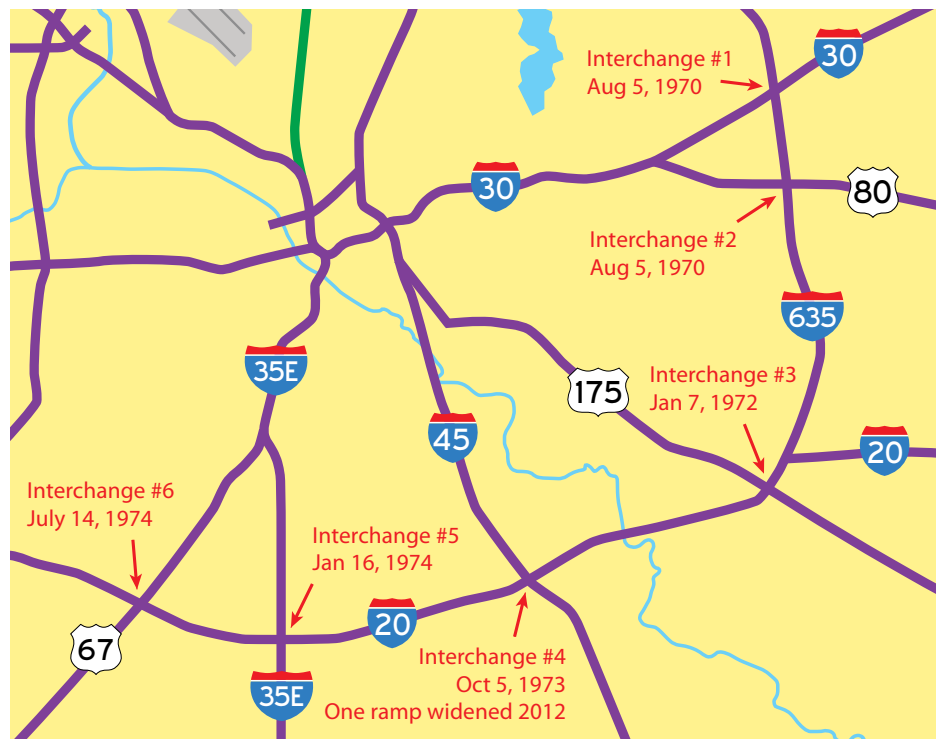
These interchanges are more than just a design curiosity. They were the first modern-design, four-level interchanges in North Texas. Until the opening of the first cookie-cutter interchange in 1970, North Texas had been an underperformer in freeway-to-freeway interchanges. Los Angeles opened its first four-level interchange in 1953, the iconic “stack” at the intersection of the Harbor (CA 110) and Hollywood-Santa Ana (US 101) Freeways. Houston opened its first four-level interchange in 1962. But by the late 1960s North Texas still had only one four-level interchange, the original Mixmaster in Fort Worth, which may have been “modern” when it opened in March 1958 but was soon exposed as substandard due to the sharp curves on its ramps, left lane exits, steep grades and inadequate merging zones.

While planning Interstates 635 and 20 in the early-to-mid 1960s\*, TxDOT determined that all freeway-to-freeway interchanges would be four-level designs with high-speed ramps for all connecting traffic. The design for the cookie-cutter interchanges was developed in the mid-1960s by TxDOT engineer James Dunlevy with the objective of minimizing the number of columns in the center of the interchange. Fewer columns would leave more space for roadways and was believed to be less distracting to drivers. The centerpiece of the cookie-cutter interchange is the central double-T pylon which supports the four connecting ramps between the intersecting freeways.<sup>193</sup>

The first construction contract was awarded in December 1966 for the first two interchanges on IH 635 at IH 30 and at present-day US 80

(then IH 20), and the section of IH 635 connecting the two interchanges. The \$12.7 million construction contract was the largest single contract awarded by TxDOT up to that time. The cost of the interchange at IH 30 was reported to be \$2.47 million for construction with an overall cost of \$3.5 million including right-of-way acquisition and engineering. That translates to \$18 million for construction and \$25 million overall in 2013 dollars when adjusted by the consumer price index—definitely a bargain since comparable interchanges today cost around \$100 million. The low inflation-adjusted cost confirms that the cost of highway construction has gone up much faster than the overall rate of inflation reported by the consumer price index.<sup>194</sup>

As the first interchanges started to take shape the construction zones attracted attention from many curious onlookers, especially local photographers. The center double-T pylon, symmetric ramps and small forest of piers created a landscape never before seen in North Texas. One amateur photographer to take notice was Texas Instruments engineer Jack Kilby, inventor of the integrated circuit in 1958. His photograph of the interchange at IH 30 is among his best-known photos and was featured on the



\* IH 635 originally extended around the south side of Dallas to IH 35E south before the south section was designated as IH 20 in 1971.





This 1969 construction view of cookie-cutter interchange #1 at Interstates 30 and 635 was taken by Jack Kilby, the Texas Instruments engineer who invented the integrated circuit in 1958 and received the Nobel Prize in 2000 (see photo page 106). This photo appeared on the cover of the guide for a 2009 exhibition of Kilby's photography at the Meadows Museum at SMU.

SMU Degolyer Library

cover of a brochure for a 2009 exhibition of his work at the Meadows Museum at SMU.<sup>195</sup>

The opening of the first two cookie-cutter interchanges on August 4, 1970, featured one of the most notable freeway opening stunts in the history of North Texas freeways when Clyde the cheetah from the nearby World of Animals in Mesquite broke through the ribbon to officially dedicate the freeway (see photo page 31).<sup>196</sup>

The third cookie-cutter interchange at IH 20 and US 175 was dedicated on January 7, 1972, with a ceremony honoring Charles F. Hawn, namesake of the US 175 C.F. Hawn Freeway. On October 5, 1973, a crowd gathered on the third-level ramps at the center of the interchange at IH 20 and IH 45 for its dedication ceremony, which coincided with the completion of the Dallas freeway loop from IH 35E north to IH 35E south. The fifth cookie-cutter inter-

change at IH 35E was dedicated on January 16, 1974, and the sixth and final at US 67 was dedicated on July 12, 1974. Comedian Phyllis Diller happened to be in town during the opening of the US 67 interchange and made an appearance at the opening event, biting and severing the ceremonial ribbon (see newspaper clipping page 43).<sup>197</sup>

The six cookie-cutter interchanges remain in their originally constructed configuration in 2013 except for the interchange at IH 45 which had one ramp widened in 2012. Although the era of new cookie-cutter interchanges ended in 1974, the double-T center pylon would make an encore showing in two four-level interchanges constructed in the 1990s. The interchanges on SH 190, the Bush Turnpike, at US 75 Central Expressway and the Dallas North Tollway both feature the double-T design to support the connecting ramps at the center of the interchange. ■



TxDOT Travel Information Division



TxDOT Travel Information Division

The above photos show the signature design feature of the cookie-cutter interchanges: the central double-T pylon which supports all four connector ramps at the center of the interchange. The left photo is at US 80 and the right photo is at IH 30. The lower view of construction at the IH 30 interchange shows the symmetry of the connecting ramps, a feature common to all the cookie-cutter interchanges.

TxDOT Travel Information Division







Author, April 2011

**Cookie-cutter interchanges #1 and #2** The first two interchanges opened together on August 7, 1970, in conjunction with the opening of IH 635 between the two interchanges. The above view looks west along IH 30, and the lower view looks north along IH 30, and the lower view looks north along IH 635 at US 80.

Author, April 2011







Author, August 2009

**Cookie-cutter interchange #3** The interchange at IH 20 and US 175 opened on January 7, 1972, completing the US 175 freeway in Dallas County.

Author, May 2005







Author, May 2005

**Cookie-cutter interchange #4** This view of the interchange at Interstates 20 and 45, opened October 6, 1973, looks south along IH 45. It is the only cookie-cutter interchange to be modified since original construction with the widening of one connector ramp in 2012 (not shown in this 2005 photo).

**Cookie-cutter interchange #5** This view looks south along IH 35 with IH 20 crossing from left to right. This interchange opened on January 16, 1974.

Author, May 2005







Author, May 2005

**Cookie-cutter interchange #6** The final cookie-cutter interchange to be built, at IH 20 and US 67, opened on July 14, 1974. Both views look east along IH 20.

Author, May 2009





# The Trinity Parkway

To many people, it's a great idea which can't be allowed to die. To others, it's a bad idea which needs to be killed off once and for all. Since its origins in 1967 the proposed tollway along the Trinity River has been studied and promoted nearly continuously. The incarnation of the project under consideration in 2013, the highly controversial Trinity Parkway, will be the final word on the project. Either it will be built, or it will die with no chance of ever being resurrected.

## Origins

The first official document to include a freeway alongside the Trinity River was the 1967 *Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Transportation Study*, the long-term plan for North Texas freeway and highway construction which was the product of three years of study. The route was called the River Freeway, and it began in Dallas at the west end of Woodall Rodgers Freeway and continued west to a terminus at present-day SH 161 in Grand Prairie just north of IH 30 (see map). The route remained unchanged in the 1971 update of the plan.<sup>174</sup>

The Texas Turnpike Authority (TTA) first discussed the route in December 1968 when a consultant advised the authority that a new turnpike would be needed to meet future demand arising from population growth. In April 1970 the TTA launched a formal study of a turnpike extending from Woodall Rodgers Freeway in downtown Dallas to the intersection of IH 820 and SH 121 in northeast Fort Worth.<sup>175</sup>

In October 1970 the engineering consultant studying the proposed River Freeway recommended that it be extended southeastward from Woodall Rodgers Freeway to connect with the C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175) southeast of downtown Dallas. The original concept had the turnpike crossing over the Trinity River near Continental and then proceeding on the south side of the river to US 175. This appears to be the first consideration of the tollway corridor which was ultimately proposed for the downtown section of the current Trinity Parkway project. However, the entire turnpike project, estimated to cost \$100 million (\$600 million in 2013 dollars), was placed on hold at that time due to rapidly increasing construction costs and high interest rates.<sup>176</sup>

Consideration of the Trinity Turnpike resumed when the formal engineering report was issued in late 1971. Fort Worth immediately expressed its op-

### Quick Facts for the Trinity Parkway

- Under study in numerous proposals since 1967; intended to relieve downtown freeway congestion
- Was the subject of a voter referendum in 2007
- Estimated cost in 2013 is \$1.8 billion

### Key Dates in the History

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1967</b> | First included in planning documents with an eastern terminus in downtown Dallas   |
| <b>1974</b> | The updated regional plan extends the highway southeast from downtown to meet with US 175; project is suspended due to lack of funding and support |
| <b>1988</b> | New studies completed, including a branch to Carrollton along the Elm Fork of the Trinity River  |
| <b>1992</b> | The project is revived as part of a new plan to relieve downtown traffic congestion  |
| <b>1998</b> | Allocated \$84 million in a Trinity Corridor bond issue approved by Dallas voters  |
| <b>2005</b> | Hurricane Katrina strikes New Orleans, prompting much closer scrutiny of levee integrity   |
| <b>2007</b> | Project opponents force a referendum on the project. Voters approve the project by a narrow margin.  |
| <b>2009</b> | Problems mount due to rising costs, concerns about impacts on the levees and lingering opposition  |
| <b>2012</b> | A recommended alignment is identified with a cost of \$1.76 billion  |





UT-Arlington Library Special Collections<sup>316</sup>

This illustration shows the original plan for the Trinity Parkway, first proposed in the 1967 *Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Transportation Study*, the long-term freeway planning document for North Texas. The tollway terminated at downtown Dallas with connections into Woodall Rodgers Freeway, Commerce Street and Reunion Boulevard. Below is an excerpt from a map in the 1967 plan showing the originally proposed alignment which was called the River Freeway.





position to a proposal to continue tolls on the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike beyond the planned toll removal date to finance the Trinity Turnpike. Around this time there was also a proposal to seek the designation of the route as an extension of IH 30 to obtain federal funding for a freeway.<sup>177</sup>

The TTA authorized a more detailed study in February 1972. By April 1972, however, political support for the project was fading. The state senate approved a resolution opposing the use of Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike tolls to finance the project, Governor Dolph Briscoe stated his support for a freeway rather than a turnpike, and Dallas and Fort Worth interests could not agree on a unified approach to promote the project. In July 1972 the regional planning council released a report which concluded there was no immediate need for the turnpike. Nevertheless, in August a delegation of 200 Dallas-Fort Worth officials went to Austin to ask the Texas Transportation Commission to continue studying the project, and the commission agreed. Studies continued until March 1974 when additional funding was needed. The Texas Transportation Commission denied additional funds to continue studies, effectively killing the Trinity Turnpike for the moment.<sup>178</sup>

### Keeping it Alive

Although the immediate future of the project was uncertain, a new revision of the long-term regional freeway plan released in June 1974 retained the project, still calling it the River Freeway. The new plan showed it extending from IH 820 in east Fort Worth to downtown Dallas and then continuing southeastward to US 175. This was the first official planning document to include the extension southeast of downtown Dallas. In November 1974 TxDOT included the downtown bypass in its 15-year construction plan.<sup>179</sup>

The project remained an item of discussion in the 1970s. The removal of tolls from the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike on January 1, 1978, eliminated the possibility of using turnpike toll revenue to help finance the Trinity Turnpike.

The project was revived in 1985 when business interests led by John Stemmons and his Industrial Properties Corporation began advocating construction of a freeway or tollway in the Trinity River corridor, using the originally planned route around downtown Dallas but then turning northward along the Elm Fork of the river to connect with IH 35E at Trinity Mills Road (present-day SH 190 Bush Turnpike) in Carrollton. The alignment was intended to be a relief freeway for Stemmons Freeway since chronic congestion on the freeway was making Stemmons' property along the freeway near downtown less attractive. After local governments endorsed the idea, TxDOT provided funding for a new study including both the original alignment from Dallas to Fort Worth and the newly proposed northern branch. In January 1988 the study concluded that the \$1.1 billion project was not financially feasible with toll revenue, but the project would be needed in the long term

and right-of-way preservation was recommended. However, local authorities were still committed to the idea and in July 1988 Dallas City Council offered to pay for ongoing studies of the project. TxDOT also agreed that a facility in the Trinity River corridor was probably the only hope for substantial traffic relief on Stemmons Freeway.<sup>180</sup>

### The Trinity Parkway

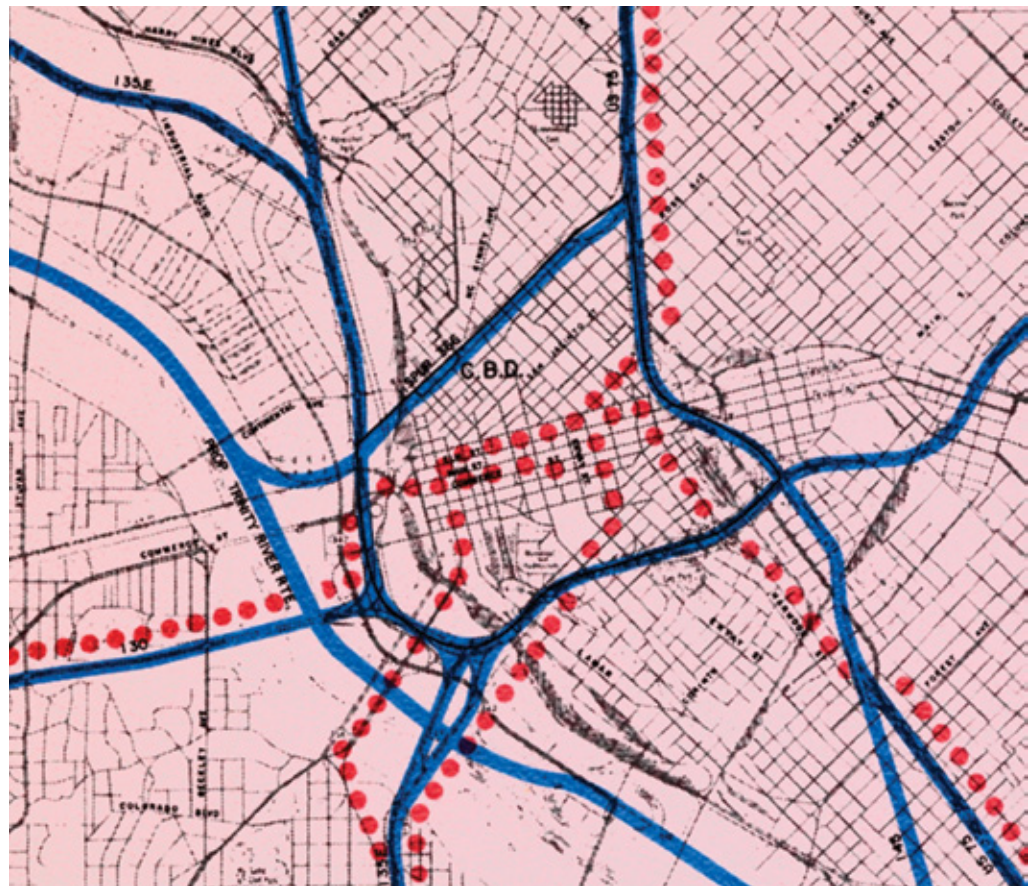
In 1992 a group of Dallas political leaders made a presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission to promote a new plan for building the section of the toll road around downtown Dallas, from SH 183 in northwest Dallas to US 175 in southeast Dallas. The new name of the project was the Trinity Parkway, and this proposal was the beginning of the current incarnation of the project which became a centerpiece of the more comprehensive Trinity Corridor plan. In the following years studies continued and political support continued to build. In 1995 Ron Kirk became Dallas mayor and the comprehensive project to improve the Trinity River corridor including the toll road was one of his top priorities. After the formulation of a detailed plan in 1997, in May 1998 Dallas voters were presented with a \$246 million bond issue for the Trinity Corridor project which included \$84 million for the Trinity Parkway. The bonds were approved with 51.6% of the vote, a slim margin which portended more controversy ahead. The cost estimate for the Trinity Parkway was \$424 million and the preliminary, conceptual plan was a split design with four southbound lanes alongside the west levee and four northbound lanes alongside the east levee.<sup>181</sup>

Some difficult questions needed to be answered first. Where exactly would the traffic lanes be built? How many lanes would it have? What would the speed limit be? How could any potential negative impacts on the planned park in the floodway be minimized? There was no obvious answer to any of these questions, and the entire Trinity Corridor project became engulfed in controversy and indecision for the next several years. Obtaining environmental clearance would prove to be particularly difficult since the tollway would impact the Trinity River wetlands and floodway levees, necessitating close involvement of the Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>182</sup>

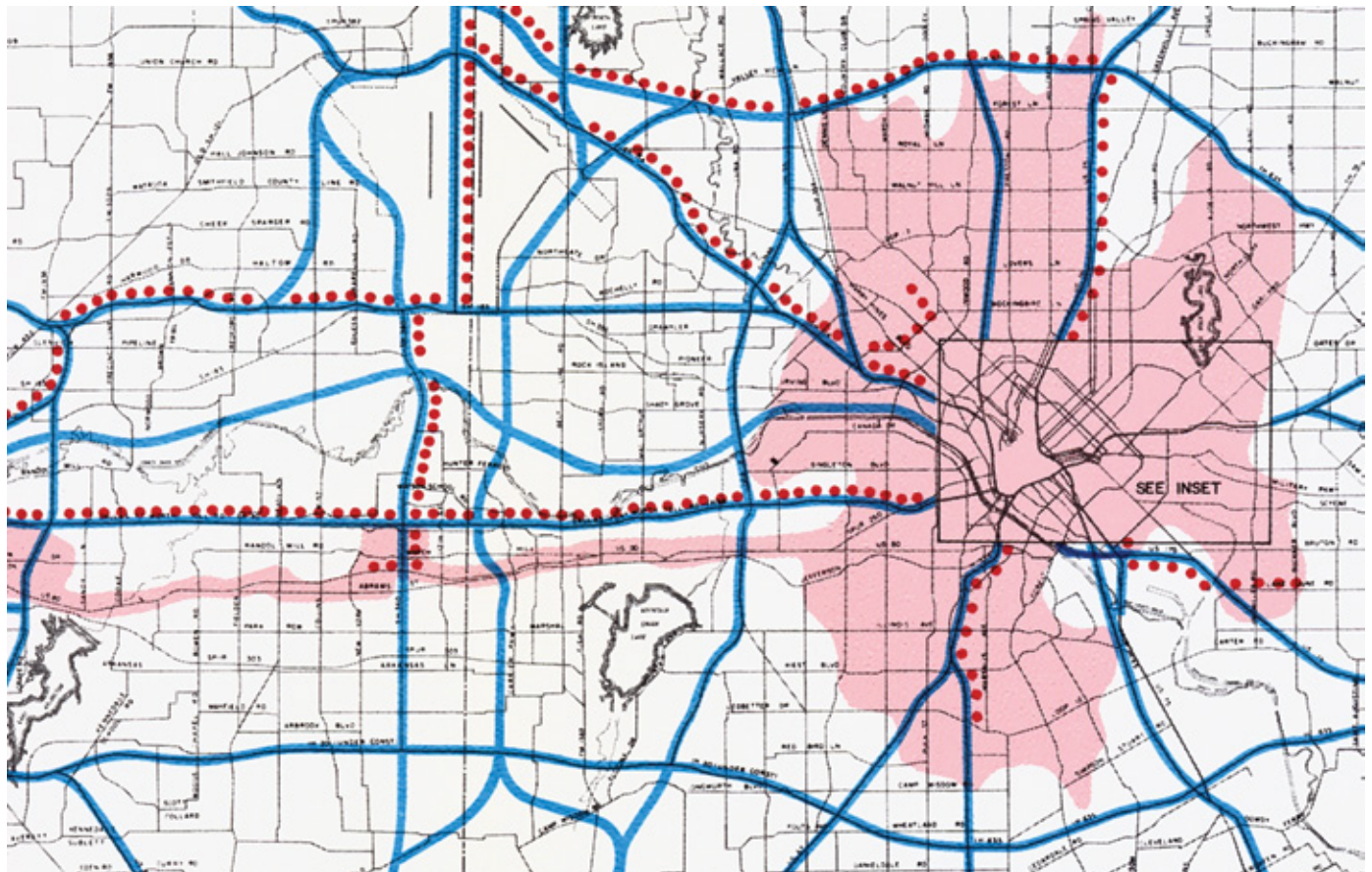
In August 2002 Mayor Laura Miller launched a new study with recognized national experts to review the entire plan. In June 2003 the consultants gave their recommendation, retaining the parkway in the overall plan but shrinking its size to six lanes north of downtown and four lanes through downtown and southward. The concept closely integrated the parkway and levees, an idea which ultimately would be infeasible as concerns about levee integrity mounted.<sup>183</sup>

Progress continued to be elusive, and on August 18, 2004, the project was designated as one of six projects in the United States to receive an accelerated federal environmental review. In April 2005 Dallas City Council reaffirmed

The 1974 *Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Transportation Study* was the first official planning document to extend the proposed Trinity River corridor freeway around the west and south sides of downtown to connect with US 175 southeast of downtown. The 1974 plan also extended the freeway westward all the way to downtown Fort Worth. The 1974 planning document removed numerous proposed new freeways which were included in the 1967 and 1971 plans, so the expansion of the planned route, called the “proposed Trinity River route” in this map, was a rare new freeway addition during a time when freeway planning was in serious decline.



Right: downtown inset  
of map below





# KEEP THEIR TOLL ROAD OUT OF OUR PARK.



## IT'S OUR CITY. IT'S OUR PARK. IT'S OUR CHOICE.

Right now, cities all over the country are spending millions to undo misguided projects like this. They learned the hard way that green spaces and waterfronts can be amazing economic engines when handled right.

There are special interests and high-priced lobbyists who really want to put their toll road in our park. And they didn't want to give us the right to vote on it. But it's not up to them. It's up to us.



Vote **YES!** for common sense.

Vote **YES!** for a better quality of life.

Vote **YES!** to keep their toll road out of our park.



The opposition to the Trinity Parkway adopted the slogan "Keep their toll road out of our park" for the 2007 referendum on the project. The message was prominently featured in mailings to Dallas voters and on numerous billboards around downtown. This billboard was along IH 30 at Fort Worth Avenue.

Author, 2007

*You are invited  
to a briefing with  
Mayor Leppert - see reverse.*

*The current design of the Trinity project includes  
more than 10,000 acres of park land, and only  
146 acres will be used for the new Trinity Parkway.  
Image provided by North Texas Tollway Authority.*



**Vote "No" on November 6.  
Protect parks, improve roads & clean our air.**



*Say **No** to taxes.  
**No** to traffic.  
**No** to flooding.*

A vote of "no" on the proposition was a vote in favor of the Trinity Parkway, and pro-parkway interests ran an extensive campaign to promote their case. The images on this page are excerpts from the many brochures mailed to Dallas voters prior to the election. The campaign slogan was "Vote No, Save the Trinity".



its commitment to the project and endorsed a \$691 million alignment with a single highway inside the east levee, one of six alignments under consideration.<sup>184</sup>

But on August 29, 2005, a huge complication emerged. Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans, flooding the city when levees failed. In the aftermath of the disaster, the management of the levees in New Orleans came under close scrutiny and as a result the Army Corps of Engineers became increasingly strict in its role of protecting levees nationwide. With the new awareness of the cost of levee failure, the Trinity Parkway was set to be studied even more closely to ensure it would not compromise the levees.

By November 2006 the Army Corps of Engineers was taking a more active role in the planning and required design changes to ensure that there would be no impact to the flood protection capabilities of the levees. Additional controversy arose in February 2007 when the Corps demanded rights to close and potentially damage the tollway in the event of a levee emergency.<sup>185</sup>

While the Trinity Parkway was strongly supported by the mayor, most members of city council and business interests, opposition from park supporters, environmental groups and anti-highway interests persisted. In 2007 the leader of the opposition movement emerged: city council member Angela Hunt, a first-term representative elected in 2005 whose top priority was to kill the Trinity Parkway. Hunt and her supporters believed the Trinity Parkway tollway was no longer consistent with the plan approved by voters in 1998. Hunt wanted the project to focus on the park aspect of the Trinity Corridor plan. Hunt and her supporters launched an effort to place a referendum on the ballot for Dallas voters. The referendum language limited the Trinity Parkway to only four traffic lanes with a 35 mile-per-hour speed limit—a restriction which would kill the tollway.

Hunt's team collected signatures in May and June 2007, submitting over 80,000 signatures on the June 30 deadline and receiving official certification on July 29 that the needed 48,000 valid signatures had been provided. It was only the third time that a specific highway project would be the subject of a ballot vote in North Texas, the first being a successful 1983 proposition in Carrollton for a buffer zone which was intended to kill the SH 190 project and the second a referendum on the alignment of SH 190 in Rowlett in 1994. To further complicate the issue, a vote in favor of the proposition was a vote against the toll road.<sup>186</sup>

The stage was set for a showdown on the Trinity Parkway, with Mayor Tom Leppert and business interests leading the pro-parkway effort using a campaign called "Vote No! - Save the Trinity". The parkway opposition slogan, "Keep Their Toll Road out of Our Park - Vote Yes! For Prop 1", was featured on billboards around downtown. Voter mailboxes were flooded with literature from both sides of the campaign, with the pro-parkway literature targeting the "Angela Hunt plan" and how it could derail the entire Trinity Corridor plan, not just the parkway.

The heated debate finally went to voters on November 6, 2007. The proposition failed in a close vote, receiving 47.1% in favor, handing the victory to the pro-tollway effort. It was a big victory for Mayor Tom Leppert, but also an impressive battle fought by Angela Hunt which underscored the divided sentiment on the issue. The Trinity Parkway had overcome the most difficult political hurdle in its path, but the path ahead was far from clear. In fact, trouble had only just begun.<sup>187</sup>

In January 2008 Mayor Tom Leppert had high hopes for expediting the project to early completion in 2013, holding a Trinity River summit meeting to jumpstart the process. But by the end of 2008 none of the critical issues to move the project forward had been resolved. The precise alignment and location of the parkway still had not been finalized. The project, with its minimum price tag of \$1.4 billion, was not funded and tolls would cover less than half the cost. The Federal Highway Administration had not approved the project. And, most serious of all, the Army Corps of Engineers was still studying the integrity of the levees and was nowhere near being able to approve the toll road. In an effort to resume forward progress, the North Texas Turnpike Authority (NTTA) awarded \$30 million in design contracts in December 2008 to work toward a milestone of completing 30% of the project's design, the threshold at which the Army Corps of Engineers could evaluate the project and potentially grant approval.<sup>188</sup>

In 2009 problems began to multiply. In February the NTTA announced that it was \$1 billion short of financing the estimated \$1.8 billion total cost, and there was no easy way to solve the funding shortfall. Also in February the Army Corps of Engineers reported results of a study which found the levee system deficient in 34 of 170 inspection categories. Although the parkway was always required to have no detrimental effect on the levees, now it appeared that the levee deficiencies would need to be corrected before any parkway construction could proceed. In March details emerged of a serious issue that was being closely scrutinized by the Corps—sand underneath the levees. Clay, the material used in levees, resists water well but in a flood situation water can flow through the sand deposits underneath the levees, and a bridge pier sunk through the layers of soil on or near a levee could provide a path for water to seep up into the levee, possibly causing failure. The prevalence of sand underneath the levees was discovered during construction of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in 2008 and sounded alarms at the Corps, which had become super-conservative in its granting of permits since the Katrina levee disaster in New Orleans. The sand issue added yet another layer of cost and uncertainty to the parkway project. In a worst-case scenario, levee repair alone could cost hundreds of millions of dollars before work could even begin on the parkway. To fully understand the sand issue and provide sufficient data to satisfy the Corps, Dallas City Council approved \$29 million for a comprehensive levee study including 1500 borings in June 2009.<sup>189</sup>

# The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

50 cents

Dallas, Texas, Wednesday, November 7, 2007

dallasnews.com

ELECTIONS '07

## Trinity tollway is a go

53 percent of voters reject plan to scrap highway; Leppert says it's time to move forward; Hunt praises grass-roots effort

Project still faces a long and winding road

By MICHAEL A. LINDENBERGER  
Transportation Writer  
mlindenberg@dallasnews.com

The battle over whether the Trinity Parkway belongs inside the Trinity River park may be over, but construction of the toll road is still years away. Plus, there are still obstacles to the high-speed highway's ultimate fate.



Turnout at polls exceeds forecast for city election

By BRUCE TOMASO, DAVE LEVINTHAL and RUDOLPH BUSH  
Staff Writers

The Trinity toll road lives. Dallas voters on Tuesday rejected a plan to kill the highway, a key element of the city's ambitious effort to transform the Trinity River Corridor. The vote means the city's



Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation

The November 2007 referendum on the future of the Trinity Parkway featured two Dallas politicians going head-to-head, pro-parkway leader Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert and anti-parkway leader Councilwoman Angela Hunt, shown here together in a photo. The proposition, which would have killed the Trinity Parkway if it passed, was rejected by a narrow margin of 53 to 47 percent. The newspaper headline accurately predicted that the "Project still faces a long and winding road". Six years later in 2013, the project remained alive but faced an uncertain future.

While the engineering issues were threatening to bring the project to a halt, prospects for obtaining the needed \$1.8 billion in funding continued to look increasingly grim. Legislation sponsored by Dallas state representative John Carona to allow voter-approved tax increases at the local level for transportation improvements died at the end of the 2009 legislative session. The financial standing of the NTTA continued to decline through 2009 and into 2010

as the massive payments for rights to the SH 121 and SH 161 toll roads forced a toll increase on existing facilities in 2009 and left no reserve funds or bonding capacity for projects like the Trinity Parkway. Other sources of funds, including federal stimulus and State of Texas bond issues, were allocated to other projects which were ready to move forward. There was no hope of a project bailout by TxDOT since traditional highway funding from the gasoline tax



# The Trinity Waterway, canceled 1978



Author, 2009

**Imagine a barge cruising the Trinity River below this bridge** Since the inception of Dallas in 1841 until the 1970s, political and business leaders dreamed of turning the Trinity River into a navigable waterway to allow barge traffic to reach North Texas. This view shows the Interstate 20 bridge over the Trinity River in southeast Dallas, with its 52-foot vertical clearance and long span to allow the future conversion of the river into a navigable canal. Three freeway bridges and one non-freeway bridge were constructed to navigation standards in North Texas between the official navigation designation in 1965 and the cancellation of the project in 1978.

Over the years many motorists have surely been intrigued by the hump in certain Trinity River bridges. Why are the bridges elevated? Why are some bridges elevated, and others not? Do boats cruise on the water below, or did boats navigate the river in the past?

The elevated bridges are a product of one of the longest-running dreams in the history of North Texas. Soon after the founding of Dallas in 1841, leaders dreamed of transforming the Trinity River into a navigable waterway. The first successful passage to Dallas was in 1868 followed by several other trips in subsequent years. In 1893 the *H.A. Harvey*, a 113-foot-long river boat, arrived in Dallas after a journey from Galveston which took two months and ten days, spurring a huge celebration in anticipation of regular river traffic. The *Harvey*

showed it was possible for a large vessel to reach Dallas on the Trinity, but travel remained unreliable and uneconomical. Water flow was highly variable, too low for vessels during much of the year, and the river was prone to becoming clogged with debris. Making the Trinity navigable would require a major engineering project to improve the waterway.<sup>317</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century efforts in Dallas focused on flood control after the great flood of 1908. Realignment of the river and construction of the levees was completed in 1932. After World War II North Texas political leaders revived efforts to obtain federal funding for making the Trinity River navigable for barge traffic, with influential Washington politicians Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson taking the lead at the federal level. The Trinity barge

canal was still just a proposal with no formal federal endorsement when the first freeways were built in the 1950s. The bridges for IH 35E and the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike (now IH 30) in downtown Dallas were built as regular structures, not designed to accommodate navigation.

In 1962 the U.S. Corps of Engineers completed four years of study and designated the barge canal as feasible, recommending that it receive federal support. The 1962 plan called for a 370-mile barge canal to the Gulf of Mexico with nineteen locks and numerous new reservoirs including a huge, 119,500-acre reservoir near Corsicana called the Tennessee Colony Reservoir. In 1965 Congress officially authorized the comprehensive Trinity River improvement program including the barge canal extending to Fort Worth and four new reservoirs

in North Texas. With congressional authorization, the project was eligible for funding. The improvements were estimated to cost \$911 million (\$6.7 billion in 2013 dollars), with the federal government paying for 81%, \$738 million.<sup>318</sup>

With the 1965 federal authorization, new bridges over the Trinity were required to have a 52-foot vertical clearance and a minimum main span of 300 feet. Freeway bridges being planned in the period included IH 20 in southeast Dallas, IH 45 south of downtown and Loop 12 in west Dallas. All three were built to accommodate navigation and have the elevation rise to achieve the 52-foot vertical clearance. One non-freeway bridge, the Jefferson Boulevard viaduct, was also built to navigation standards. In general, the cost of a navigation-compatible bridge was 33% higher than a regular bridge. All older bridges would need to be rebuilt to navigation standards, a huge cost for the 15 affected crossings in Dallas County and a total of 45 bridges along the entire length of the Trinity River from Fort Worth to the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>319</sup>

While the navigation-compatible bridges were being built, no signifi-

cant work was underway on the actual barge canal since no appropriations had been made. By 1973 the estimated cost had risen to \$1.6 billion (\$8.4 billion in 2013 dollars), with plans for a 384-mile canal, numerous new reservoirs including the Tennessee Colony Reservoir and about 20 locks to raise barges to the 480 foot elevation of North Texas. A crucial election was held on March 13, 1973, for voters in 17 counties to decide on a property tax increase to finance \$150 million in bonds for the local share of the project cost. The bond proposition was rejected by voters by an overall margin of 54% against and margins of 56% against in Dallas County and 53% against in Tarrant County.<sup>320</sup>

The vote was, for all practical purposes, the end of the Trinity River navigation dream and the end of navigation-compatible bridges. The groundbreaking for the Loop 12 Trinity River bridge was just four days before the election defeat, but bridge construction proceeded because the Trinity remained an officially designated navigable waterway. It would be the last high-clearance bridge to be built in North Texas.

Local political and business lead-

ers who had worked so long to realize the project were not yet ready to give up, however. Officials supported continued study of the river including navigation, and influential federal politicians including Fort Worth congressman Jim Wright kept the project alive in Congress. In April 1977 a delegation of hundreds of North Texans went to Washington to show support for Trinity River improvements at a House appropriations subcommittee hearing.<sup>321</sup>

But the forces working against the barge canal were just too much to overcome. Rapidly increasing construction costs, a declining benefit-cost ratio and environmental concerns all finally put an end to the dream. In August 1978 the U.S. Corps of Engineers released the results of a new study and officially declared the barge canal to be economically infeasible.<sup>322</sup>

The elevated river bridges in Dallas are the most visible historical artifacts of the plans for the Trinity barge canal. Until the one non-freeway and three freeway bridges in Dallas need to be replaced sometime in the distant future, motorists will continue to be intrigued by those mysterious elevated crossings.



This August 1965 photo shows members of the Trinity Improvement Association boarding an American Airlines jet to go to Washington DC to lobby for federal approval of the Trinity Waterway. The Trinity Improvement Association was a well-organized group of business and political leaders which waged an ongoing campaign to secure approval and funding for the canal. The person at the bottom of the staircase appears to be John Stemmons.





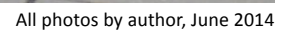
Author, April 2012

This April 2012 view looks south along the Trinity River and the floodway with the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in the foreground. If the Trinity Parkway is constructed, it will be along the east levee on the left side of the photo. Below is a ground-level view from the Hampton Road bridge. The planned tollway route follows the dirt roadways on the right side of the levee.

Author, November 2013







But officially the project was still alive and moving forward. It remained in the regional transportation plan and retained the support of key political entities which would ultimately decide its future. Above, the funeral procession of about 80 people rounded the corner. Below left, participants hold the symbolic casket for the Trinity Parkway. Former Dallas City Council member Angela Hunt, leader of the opposition during the 2007 referendum, served as a pallbearer and is shown in the return parade at lower right, wearing the large black hat.





was in decline and already overextended.

In March 2010 the *Dallas Morning News* reported on the increasingly grim situation for the Trinity Parkway. Key project supporters, including Mayor Tom Leppert, remained optimistic that the project would move forward. But other officials expressed concern that the project obstacles could become insurmountable.<sup>190</sup>

In 2012 project supporters once again began another push to move forward. Mayor Tom Leppert, who had worked to ensure the project's survival, had exited office in February 2011. The future of the project was now in the hands of Mayor Mike Rawlings who entered office in June 2011. Rawling's position on the project during his campaign was that he would review it before making a final decision to support or oppose it. In May 2012 a public hearing was held to present the findings of the latest study, the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or SDEIS. The SDEIS presented detailed studies of four alignment options for the toll road, including two options outside of the Trinity River floodway, and affirmed that the option for a single roadway inside the floodway along the east levee was the least expensive and most feasible. In conjunction with the public hearing, Mayor Rawlings announced his support for the project but later moderated his support, saying he could change his mind depending on

project cost and benefit data.

In June 2012 the Army Corps of Engineers reported that the Trinity River floodway levees were in much better condition than was determined in 2009 when a preliminary report was issued. The finding that the levees were safe minimized concerns over the impact of the Trinity Parkway on the levees, likely eliminating levee integrity as an issue which could block construction.<sup>191</sup>

In 2013 the path to construction remained difficult. The Federal Highway Administration is expected to select a preferred alignment in 2014. Then the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can proceed with a comprehensive analysis to determine if two permits will be granted to allow the project to move forward. If the permits are denied, or possibly granted only with financially prohibitive conditions, the project is dead. There is a substantial funding shortfall for the current estimated cost of \$1.76 billion. Opponents, including Angela Hunt and two other council members, continue efforts to kill the project. And if Mayor Rawlings changes his mind and opposes the project, it is also likely the end. The earliest the project could be completed is 2019. But if history is any guide, the best-case timeline for construction is unlikely to be achieved and only time will tell if the Trinity Parkway will actually be built.<sup>192</sup> ■

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