

Would you like to Keep MoPac Toll Free?

Thoughts on Proposed Managed Toll Lanes for MoPac

Are High-Speed Tolloed Managed Lanes on MoPac really a good idea for what we want to retain as an inner city parkway? Are tolls really the answer to road congestion?

There are some serious concerns:

Noise & Neighborhood Encroachment: The proposed changes will make MoPac, not IH-35, the primary thoroughfare through Austin. Managed toll lanes will add another lane of high speed traffic both ways on MoPac--that will bring the total to 8 to 10 lanes, versus only 6 to 8 lanes for most of IH 35. MoPac is being used to carry traffic that TxDOT could shift to IH-35. TxDOT is asking neighborhoods along MoPac to tolerate an interstate thoroughfare that they will pay tolls on.

Some people think that if MoNAC (MoPac Neighborhood Associations Coalition) agrees to proposed tolled managed lanes on MoPac, there will be sound walls built in exchange. But our neighborhoods have had broken promises since the 1970's on the sound walls and on other agreements for MoPac. --Where is the money they first appropriated for sound walls? --How do we get them to keep another promise?

Create a Problem and Profit by the Solution: Some outside traffic experts have observed that much of MoPac's most severe congestion is the result of "gozinnas" --where 3 lanes of traffic flow on MoPac goes into one traffic light. TxDOT is creating a problem by bottle-necking traffic headed south at stop lights at William Cannon Drive and MoPac, and another stop light north at the construction sight at 183 A and North MoPac. Such artificial blockages hinder the traffic flow throughout MoPac, but their design serves TxDOT's agenda of adding toll lanes as the "Only Solution" to Austin's traffic problems. It's like leaving an uncleared accident as a rationale for widening roads.

Expense: The toll rate will cost users over \$500 per year. That assumes a 5-mile, 2-way commute 200 days per year. The two biggest costs in every household are housing and transportation. Increasing transportation costs blows a gaping hole into the family budget.

With managed lanes the toll lanes will sit empty until the free lane traffic slows a lot--typically only about 6 hours per day. Because of the toll cost, free lane users will still suffer congestion delays. This method discriminates against the poor who cannot pay to drive in the managed toll lanes.

--Failure to pay a toll is a criminal offense. You can face over \$300 fine and possible jail time. Good luck fighting an error... and they do make mistakes.

Loss of Public Control and Foreign Ownership: Toll Roads are subject to privatization, and leasing to big corporations, often in foreign countries. Once a road becomes privatized, according to Texas House Bill 3588 and 2702, it is the property of a private corporation that can build, regulate, and control it in the way they wish. Local highways have already been paid for, so why convert them, and then toll them?

-- Special interest and foreign companies will profit at our expense. Your bond tax dollars are already ending-up in the coffers of CINTRA (Spain) from Rick Perry's Trans Texas Corridor (TTC 35). It is just a matter of time before many more of our future toll roads render ownership to private and foreign companies. This would not happen with gas tax funding. The public was not given the right to vote on these decisions.

If you are interested in working to keep Mopac toll free, you can email georgeeliot2009@yahoo.com, or Texans@texansagainsttolls.com.

Complements of TexansAgainstTolls.com