

FRQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SH 121 Toll Re-Evaluation, Collin County

Q: When will tolling be implemented on SH 121 in Collin County?

A: Dallas North Tollway to Hillcrest will open in 2008 and Hillcrest to U.S. 75 will open in 2010.

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Q: SH 121 is already under construction. Isn't it a little late to put tolls on it?

A: In December 2003, the Texas Transportation Commission approved a policy instructing TxDOT to evaluate all controlled-access highway projects as possible candidates for tolling. This includes all projects, even those under construction and those in the planning stage involving new lane construction.

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Q: How much will the tolls be?

A: The toll rates for SH 121 will be consistent with other toll rates in the region. The toll rates guidelines for SH 121 are the result of public outreach and decisions made by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Regional Transportation Council (RTC). In April 2006, the RTC agreed on the following business terms for setting the toll rates on SH 121.

- (1) Maximum average toll rate in 2010 will be 14.5 cents/mile.
- (2) Transit vehicles are exempt from toll charges.
 - (a) Initially there will be a set toll of an average of 14.5 cents per mile for the

entire day. After some evaluation has been completed a set of peak and off-peak tolls are likely to be established to better optimize the facility operations.

Q: Will tolls ever be adjusted?

A: Toll rates will be adjusted every two years using the "all items" Consumer Price Index and "average household income." For Consumer Price Index values of three percent and under, the Index will be used and calculated applying annual compounded rates. For values over three percent, the "average household income" growth rate will be used as a comparison to determine how much of the CPI increase can be used.

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Q: Will trucks pay more to travel on this toll facility?

A: Yes, toll rates are based on vehicle classification.

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Q: Will my current toll transponder work on this toll facility or will I need a "TxDOT" toll transponder?

A: All toll facilities within the State of Texas will be interoperable, meaning that someone with a North Texas Tollway Authority TollTag®, a Harris or Fort Bend County Toll Road Authority EZ TAG, or the new TxTAG® will be able to drive on any Texas tollway and will be billed for the toll in the same manner.

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Q: What happens if I don't have a toll transponder? How much will the fine be?

A: If you do not have a toll transponder with an active account, your license plate will be recorded as a user of the facility. Based on this video monitoring, you will be sent a monthly invoice for your user fees. A premium will be applied to your invoice for this video billing service. Users of toll facilities are encouraged to open an account to benefit from not having to pay this premium.

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Q: Where will the revenue collected from SH 121 go?

A: The RTC has established a framework for the allocation of future revenue from toll projects in the North Central Texas region. Excess toll revenue is defined as annual toll revenue after the annual debt service, and after annual reserve funds have been set aside to cover facility operational costs, anticipated preventive maintenance activities, assigned profit and related expenses for the Comprehensive Development Agreement, and the expected cost of rehabilitation or reconstruction of the facility. Excess revenue generated from individual toll projects shall remain in the Dallas region.

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Q: I pay a gas tax now. By paying a toll, am I being double-taxed?

A: Currently, the state gas tax is being used for maintenance and rehabilitation of existing roadways. Paying to drive on a toll facility is an optional user fee, not an additional tax.

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Motorists who choose to drive the toll facility and pay the user fee should experience reduced travel time to their destination.

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Q: Are there any alternatives to paying the toll?

A: Drivers would have the option of using the non-tolled frontage roads for the entire length of the project.

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Q: Will the tolls ever be removed?

A: No, it is unlikely that tolls will be removed from SH 121. Revenue that is collected from the tollway will continue to support the operation and maintenance of the facility and to expand the transportation system to meet transportation needs of the traveling community.

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Q: Will other Dallas area roadways be considered for tolling?

A: Yes, The Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex is faced with a critical financial shortfall of \$55 billion in transportation needs. In response to this, local policy officials are developing an innovative way to leverage funds. By partnering together, state and local officials can leverage additional state transportation funds, freeing existing allocations for critical, but otherwise unbudgeted, safety, capacity and air quality projects. This shift allows new projects that were originally budgeted through gasoline tax revenue to generate tolls. However, the RTC policy remains intact that no existing freeway lanes will be converted to toll facilities.

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