

Toll roads

- The fastest way to relieve congestion
- An option for drivers who want to save time

The current situation

In recent decades, the number of cars on Texas roads has increased much faster than highway capacity. Today, Texans drive twice as many (103 percent) miles daily than in 1980, while the highway system has grown by only 7.6 percent during the same period.

In addition to construction costs, highway expenses also include maintenance and improvements made over the life of the roadway. As our transportation system continues to age, these expenditures are steadily increasing.

Annual maintenance costs for the state highway system (\$2.2 billion) now exceed the money TxDOT receives annually from the 20-cent-a-gallon state gas tax (\$2.1 billion).

State and federal gas taxes, which currently finance most highway improvements, are yielding less and less revenue because the taxes are not tied to inflation, and today's cars use less gasoline per mile. The gas tax has become an inefficient way to fund roads.

If we continue to choose the traditional pay-as-you-go system exclusively to build or improve roads, transportation projects will proceed as usual – a few miles at a time, stretched over many years.

How congestion affects drivers

The extra time needed for rush-hour traffic has tripled since 1980.

Congestion causes drivers to not take certain roads, avoid driving during parts of the day, leave earlier for work and spend more time away from friends and family.

Part of the solution: toll roads

Tolls offer a way to relieve congestion sooner – years and even decades faster than the pay-as-you-go method.

Tolls will help pay for:

- Roads that can't be built soon enough with traditional funding
- On-going maintenance and operation of toll roads
- Other transportation improvements in the area

Unlike the gas tax, toll revenues will go exclusively to transportation improvements.

Toll roads are not the only solution to traffic problems, but they are a key component, along with traditionally funded highways, public transportation and rail.

New collection technology allows cars to be tolled while moving at expressway speeds, thus eliminating the need to stop for toll booths, which has been a problem on older toll facilities.