

MICHAEL S. RAWLINGS
Mayor of Dallas



October 7, 2016

Victor T. Vandergriff
Texas Transportation Commissioner
Delivered via e-mail

Dear Commissioner Vandergriff:

For much of my time as mayor, I have worked to develop a vision for the Trinity Parkway that can unify our city around this project. We commissioned a "Dream Team" of urban designers, planners, architects and transportation experts to take a fresh look at the project. We convened technical experts to determine how to make the new vision of a smaller, slower, meandering parkway a reality. We invited leaders with historically opposing viewpoints on the road to serve in an oversight role and provide independent commentary on the work we have done.

But one important assessment of the project that remains is a Dallas CityMAP review, including input from key stakeholders. The recently concluded Dallas CityMAP delivered a high-quality concept analysis of all of our options for each freeway corridor in the downtown area except the Trinity Parkway. Dallas CityMAP gave us concept data on how each option would reduce congestion, enhance mobility, provide economic development options and impact the quality of life and sustainability that the citizens of Dallas would like to see enhanced in the downtown area.

The success of Dallas CityMAP, and its universal acceptance of the process that was followed by those most interested in the future of downtown Dallas, was due primarily to the inclusion of all ideas. The Dallas CityMAP team listened to every self-identified party who had interest and then objectively laid out every option for each road. The omission of the Trinity Parkway leaves unanswered questions and a disconnect from Dallas CityMAP that should be rectified.

This is why I am asking the Texas Department of Transportation to reopen the analytical process it employed in the downtown corridor and add the Trinity Parkway to the Dallas CityMAP report. Whatever is ultimately accomplished with respect to goals and objectives we must address in the downtown corridor will not be complete unless we include consideration of the Trinity Parkway.

When it comes to the Trinity Parkway, at least two positions are clear: We should not build a six-lane, high-speed road with multiple flyovers cutting through what will become the grand Trinity River Park. We should not accept ever growing traffic congestion around downtown. On the other hand, the parkway gives us an opportunity to serve what we hope will be millions of area residents who will wish to access the park. Whatever the approach taken, the Trinity Parkway still must meet the purpose and need documented in the environmental report.

One thing is certain: we must improve mobility and connectivity on I-35E. This should be done in a new way that meets the needs of our city, including relief of congestion. TxDOT has demonstrated that it can deliver this type of data and analysis by its work to date in the Dallas CityMAP report.

When coupled with needed transit improvements, streetcar construction, potential high-speed rail and improved connections between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, Trinity Parkway has the potential to be a realistic way to bring improvements to the entire transportation system in the core of our city. But we must develop it in a manner that the citizens of Dallas will be comfortable with.

It is my hope and desire that TxDOT will accept this assignment and complete the work it has so successfully done by including the Trinity Parkway in Dallas CityMAP. Following this important process, we will solicit citizen input. I hope others will join me in my request. I welcome the opportunity to see if we can find common ground and finally stand up with a true compromise on the Trinity Parkway.

Best regards,



Michael S. Rawlings
Mayor of Dallas