

*THE KELLER CITIZEN*  
**NEWS**

## 'MY 35' seeks ideas to stop traffic congestion

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Residents can suggest ways to improve Interstate 35 and connecting roadways at public involvement workshops expected to be scheduled later this summer.

By pooling ideas from residents and local leaders, officials behind the MY 35 plan hope to take a local approach to unravel gridlock statewide.

MY 35 refers to the overall plan for improving the I-35 corridor from Laredo to Gainesville. North Texas, including Dallas and Fort Worth, represents one of four segments, with monthly meetings underway in each segment area to identify regional needs and potential transportation solutions for the corridor. After the Trans-Texas Corridor plan promised toll roads to relieve car and truck traffic statewide, it crumbled beneath public criticism earlier this year, and officials looked to local communities for answers.

"We're trying to do a bottom-up, grassroots approach that involves local governments and brings the public into the process much earlier, giving them a great deal more ownership in plans we have going forward," said Jeffrey Neal, program director with the North Central Texas Council of Government's transportation department in Arlington. The council is hosting a series focused on discussing road-based solutions that may be presented at public improvement workshops expected to be scheduled for August and September.

At the July 7 gathering, members of a committee focused on Tarrant, Denton and nine other counties collectively known as "segment one" and discussed ways to improve traffic on the increasing congested interstate.

"The greatest support was given to I-35 from downtown Fort Worth northward to [Alliance Airport](#)," said Neal.

That support was verbal; funding support is another matter and a key to making things happen. Up to \$2.5 billion is needed to construct improvements between Interstate 30 and Alliance Airport, and several proposals have been discussed, Neal said.

"Each of those requires infusion of some public funds."

No timeline has been decided. Neither have what cities would chip in and for how much.

But the overall roadway improvement plan, developed by North Tarrant Express officials, would see some reconstruction on Interstate 35, Loop 820 and State Highway 183 by 2020, Neal said. The North Tarrant Express is a \$2.5-billion, 13-mile project promising improved mobility along Loop 820 and state highways 121-183 in Northeast Tarrant County.

Those are examples of arteries included in the plan despite not being part of I-35.

"There are other projects on the plan that aren't directly on 35 or the 35 corridor but we believe these projects will help address the overall traffic issue concerning the overall corridor," Neal said.

Before renovations get under way, several steps must occur. The first has started, with the plan undergoing a TxDOT review. Then an environmental assessment must be completed to minimize construction's potential effects on wildlife and natural features along proposed construction zones.

After the plan receives state approval, residents would be invited to share their input at the public workshops.

"One thing we're aiming to do here is to develop an overall consensus of what projects need to be performed, but also the priority of these projects going forward to construction," Neal said.

The next monthly meeting is set for 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 4, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments office, Centerpoint II, first floor, Pitstick room, 616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington.

More information is available at [www.my35.org](http://www.my35.org).

Read more: <http://www.star-telegram.com/2010/07/20/2348702/my-35-seeks-ideas-to-stop-traffic.html#ixzz0uKaahoQA>