

Fact Sheet: About the Texas Local Option Transportation Act

How It Would Work

The *Texas Local Option Transportation Act*, previously known locally as Rail North Texas, would give DFW-area citizens *local control* to decide *whether* and *how* to fund the region's most critical transportation needs, through a series of local option elections. The Texas Legislature must authorize such local option elections in order for citizens to have the ability to weigh in on potential revenue sources. The revenues could be used for mass transit projects to increase mobility options and lighten the burden on our existing transportation systems for all citizens, and in cities where transit is already funded, the revenues could be used for other priority transportation projects.

Why It's Important to North Texas Citizens

1. **Roadway congestion is increasing heavily, and the outlook for the future is even worse**, with the population of DFW expected to increase by 1 million every seven years, adding an additional 3 million residents by 2030. This congestion dramatically impacts citizens' *quality of life*, negatively impacts *the ability of companies to do business* (and the ability of cities to attract economic development) and contributes to the *nonattainment/ near-nonattainment status of the region's air quality* (for which mobile source emissions are the major factor).
2. **Highways alone won't solve the congestion problem.** Transit is a critical component of a comprehensive mobility solution. Transit ridership has dramatically increased, indicating that people want a choice in their mode of travel. Transit eases *congestion*, reduces *emissions* to help improve *air quality*, reduces *costly dependence on fossil fuels* and encourages *smart, sustainable land use* through transit-oriented development. *Even for non-users of transit*, getting more people on trains provides the benefit of reduced roadway congestion.
3. The DFW metropolitan mobility plan calls for adding 250 miles of additional commuter rail service through 2030, **but the costs of implementation (\$5.6 billion in today's dollars; \$9.6 billion over time) are not currently funded.** Neither Austin nor Washington, D.C. is likely to provide this funding, so our citizens should have the option of selecting their own source of funding, to ensure that our needs are met. *It's about local control to solve a local problem.*
4. **Local governments have little revenue-raising authority to address transportation needs.** Most have no remaining local sales tax authority, and no one wants to raise property taxes. Vehicle registration fees and motor fuels taxes are the principal sources of transportation revenue, and the state has not been willing to increase these enough. Future gas tax revenues may dwindle as usage declines. Therefore, our metro areas need the ability to address their own needs. Not surprisingly, given the tremendous impact of congestion and the growing concern for the future, *citizens have strongly indicated their willingness to pay reasonable amounts locally for more transit solutions.*