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Roadside America

03 October 2024

Title of Your Report

I-635 is a highway that surrounds part of Dallas in a highway network. It is also called the Lyndon B Johnson highway. The highway was originally opened in 1969 and was made to handle far less traffic than it now gets. This has led to several problems, including backed up traffic, fatal accidents, and general aggression all on the road. That's not just from my own individual perspective, there are many people that share the same sentiment as me.

So why might the highway be as bad as it is? There are many variables to take into account for roadways. Popularity, ease of access, infrastructure, town growth and size, and location are just some of the things that can be taken into account for why a road or highway is painful to drive on. Dallas is a very large city, and it continues to grow. People need to be able to commute to places, which often means taking the highways when you live in America. The other option is to take a toll road, or other paid road to bypass the highway, and people don't always have the money to do that daily. There is also the option to take some back roads, but making all the turns can sometimes take just as long as it would be if you just went on the crammed highway. Dallas is a very large city, with all kinds of people living in it and going through it for whatever reason. This increases the likelihood of generally having to run into more people.

This accounts for the stopped up traffic, but what about the crashes and accidents and fatalities? There are many approaches that can be taken for this. You can go the sociological route, and say that it's the infrastructure of Dallas combined with the pain of being in stopped traffic. Or you could claim it as an individual problem, and say that it's really bad in the Dallas area because of all the aggressive and reactive drivers on the highway. While it is very possible that it is partly the last one, it is also likely that the infrastructure plays a part in the problem of road rage. Tightly packed and slow moving spaces, especially surrounded by really large trucks, can be nerve wracking for a driver. It can be even worse if you have to sit through this every day, or especially bad if you're late to something. Sometimes it's just simply a lack of patience and someone being unaware that can lead to such big problems. It doesn't help that crashes and wrecks also stop traffic and slow it down.

Since the highway has been so infamous, it is actually being worked on in an expansion project, set to finish in late 2024. It has been worked on for several years now and is finally going to be finished. It is very possible, however, that this will not actually fix the problem. As seen in many large cities in the US, there are many wide roads but still just as much traffic. Often, just simply adding some more lanes into the roads doesn't actually fix the problem. It either holds it off for a while or simply does nothing for traffic flow. Making better public transportation or making more space for merging or getting off of the highway, are just a few things that can be done that will help alleviate the problems on the road.

How has this changed the area around Dallas? Well the highway itself became a part of the large loop around Dallas, and a fundamental part of many peoples lives in order to get

around, but it also shaped the way people traveled in the city itself. When adding bigger roads, smaller places and roads get ignored more in favor of the more convenient and typically faster route.

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Honor code: I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not. /s/ Brennon Beebe _____