

State rejects plea for funds to build new Dallas-Fort Worth roads 12:38 PM CT

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AUSTIN -- The Texas Transportation Commission today rejected pleas from North Texas leaders who urged the commission to spend more on new road construction in the greater Dallas area.

The five-member commission voted unanimously to accept a staff recommendation to spend most of its borrowed money authorized by the Legislature on projects outside the Dallas and Fort Worth districts.

Those two districts will see \$126 million in maintenance work, out of a total of about \$1.85 billion in work that will be funded by bond proceeds.

The staff proposal enjoyed huge support from other areas of the state, with both federal and state lawmakers speaking one after another this morning in praise of the spending plan.

The Houston and Waco areas will see the biggest share of the funds.

No state or federal lawmaker from North Texas spoke in favor of the position endorsed last week by the Regional Transportation Council, which voted unanimously to strongly oppose the spending plan. Eight area state representatives signed a letter urging a postponement.

Collin County Commissioner Joe Jaynes, a member of the RTC, conceded his was "a minority position," but told highway officials that North Texas leaders have a "perception that we are being punished" for embracing toll road policies that have allowed more miles of road to be built in the Dallas area than in other parts of Texas.

Transportation officials said the availability of toll roads played no role in the allocation of funds, other than that the Legislature has forbidden the highway department from using funds to pay for toll roads.