

2007 Collin County Transportation Bond Program

The Process and Results

10/5/07

Vote to Approve the Collin County Bond Program

If the proposed 2007 bond program is approved, nearly half a billion dollars will be made available for 113 capacity improvements within 19 communities.

On November 6, 2007 the citizens of Collin County will have the opportunity to approve a 328.9 million dollar bond program, divided into three parts:

Transportation	\$235.6 million
Facilities	\$ 76.3 million
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>\$ 17.0 million</u>
Total	\$328.9 Million

This bond program has been developed by three county-wide citizens committees and approved for the November ballot by the Collin County Commissioners Court.

You are urged to support all three parts as they will provide significant benefits throughout Collin County **without a county tax rate increase or an adverse impact on the County's AAA bond rating.**

As the Transportation bond proposal is the most complex of the three and directly addresses Collin County's most critical issue – traffic mobility/congestion – this paper explains the Transportation proposal.

- In 2006 Collin County added 88 people per day and 94 cars per day.
- Population wise, we are one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. The population in 2030 is estimated at 1,200,000 compared to about 700,000 today.
- Infrastructure must keep pace with the growth.
- The Commissioners Court appointed a 37 person committee representing cities and towns throughout the county to develop a proposed transportation bond program. This committee was supported by an independent consultant, as well as city/town and county staffs.
- The committee was exceptionally well staffed to make recommendations: many staff members were professional engineers, the consultant was Carter & Burgess a large, highly respected engineering firm, one of the co-chairs has a PhD in civil engineering, another co-chair, a former mayor, led the two prior transportation bond programs and hence has an intimate knowledge of the roads in the county, and Commissioner Jack Hatchell is a professional traffic engineer.
- Joint county and city funding and the use of a citizens committee representing numerous cities/towns assure the funds are spent wisely—where it is most needed to relieve current and future congestion.

- The Commissioners Court gave guidance that included a budget of about \$200 million for 2007 county bond funds, not to include funding for projects eligible for sharing of NTTA revenues (Comprehensive Development Agreement or CDA funds) or state reimbursement funds (pass through funding), and submit recommendations by mid June.
- The county and the cities and towns initially submitted 180 projects totaling \$1.3 billion. This listed the roads most needed to minimize congestion caused by local, county-wide, and through traffic over the next 5 years or longer. These projects were then screened primarily against the following criteria:
 - The road must be included on the County’s 2007 Mobility Plan to assure the road is or will be a significant thoroughfare critical to county as well as city/town traffic.
 - Capable of a construction start within 5 years to assure the project will have a relatively near term impact.
 - Must add capacity and/or provide operational improvement
 - City/town funding available for at least 50% of the project cost thereby leveraging the ability of the county and the city/towns to improve both countywide and city/town traffic flows. Without such leveraging many projects would not be affordable at the city/town level.
 - Must result in a fair, balanced program county-wide
 - Total county bond participation costs of approximately \$200 million
- The projects surviving the screening were evaluated by the consultant and prioritized by the committee on the following criteria:
 - Population growth trends
 - Average daily traffic volumes for year 2030
 - Congestion factor (volume/capacity)
 - Cost efficiency (cost/vehicle miles)
- The result of this intensive evaluation and discussion is **a transportation bond program of 113 projects in 19 cities and towns, as well as the county, totaling \$235.6 million in county funds. When the city and town funding is included, this totals \$484.7 million in transportation improvement benefits** to the citizens of Collin County. This is 17.8% over the Commissioners Court’s original guidance to the Transportation Committee. The county’s increasing growth and resulting traffic issues are so critical, the additional projects represented by this overage are warranted and **will not increase the county’s tax rate or adversely impact the county’s AAA bond rating**. This is summarized as follows:

<u>City/Town</u>	<u>Recommended Funding (mil)</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Allen	\$14.25	7.3%
Dallas	\$ 0.96	0.5%
Frisco	\$46.80	23.9%
McKinney	\$32.75	16.8%
Melissa	\$10.35	5.3%
Plano	\$40.78	20.9%
Richardson	\$ 0.95	0.5%

Wylie	\$13.62	7.0%
<u>Other cities/towns</u>	<u>\$35.06</u>	<u>17.8%</u>
Subtotal cities	\$195.52	100.0%
<u>County</u>	<u>\$40.09</u>	--
Total proposal	\$235.61	--

Details of the bond program proposal may be seen on : (these are not automatic links)

- For project list: co.collin.tx.us/engineering/tier1_appendix_h.pdf
 - For map of projects: co.collin.tx.us/engineering/final_report_7_11_07.pdf
(Scroll to page 44)
- It is evident from this chart that:
 - Frisco has the greatest need for improved major thoroughfares at this time, followed by Plano, McKinney, Allen, and then Wylie and Melissa.
 - Of particular significance, the **funding for smaller cities/towns has increased from \$1 million in the prior bond program to \$35 million** in the 2007 proposal reflecting substantial growth outside the major cities. This also reflects the fairness and objectivity of the bond program.
 - Funding of \$2 million for Dallas and Richardson road improvements within Collin County reflects their maturity.
 - Not so evident from the chart, are funds for encouraging and expediting federal and state funding for improving freeways and major regional highways including the new Outer Loop, discretionary funds for the Commissioners Court for unanticipated needs, and some funds for major rehabilitation of a few aging, badly deteriorated thoroughfares.
 - The proposed bond program also includes funds for right of way, reconstruction, and drainage **improvements to a number of rural county roads.**
 - Funding is also included for the study of a new east-west bridge crossing Lake Lavon.
 - The proposed transportation improvements were approved by 100% of the committee and also approved for voter consideration by the Commissioners Court in a 4 to 1 vote.
 - The four Commissioners, including one who is a traffic engineer, approving the bond package were those who were most experienced with county affairs. The newly elected county judge was the only person to vote against this beneficial package.
 - The county's portion of this transportation bond package is 17.8% over the original guidance from the Court of \$200 million. The additional projects were approved by the committee and by the Commissioners Court as traffic congestion is the county's most critical issue. And is growing.
 - The county staff has assured the committee and the Commissioners that the amount of the bond program will not result in a tax rate increase or put the AAA bond rating at risk.

- Collin County is one of the few counties in Texas to have the AAA bond rating reflecting its strong management. The Commissioners Court would not put that in jeopardy.
- The next bond program will probably be in 5 years continuing the county's 5 year bond cycle.
- Projects eligible for sharing of NTTA revenues (CDA funding) and state reimbursement funds (pass through funding) were not considered by the committee in accordance with guidance provided by the Commissioners Court and clearly reiterated by the County Judge.
- **Any delay in approving the bond program will result in an increase in cost of nearly \$1 million a month due to escalation in construction costs.**
- **The proposed bond program includes funds for some major regional roads such as the new Outer Loop project to encourage critical funding by state and federal governments.** This continues a successful practice by city/town governments and the county resulting in realistic, targeted contributions of right of way, utility relocations, and access road development to state and federal projects. The results of this carefully planned process has, in part, resulted in numerous successful state and federal projects within the county (of the 17 listed below, 7 (*) have funds in the current bond program):

- SH121
- Extension of US 75 through McKinney
- HOV lanes on US75
- *Improvements to Parker and US75
- Improvements to intersection at US75 near George Bush
- *George Bush and Preston Rd intersection improvements
- Extension of Preston to US380
- Extension of Preston from US380 to Celina
- N Dallas Tollway extension thru Frisco to US380
- Construction on Tollway and Chapel Hill
- Outer Loop initiatives
- US 380 and Preston improvements
- *US75 Ridgeview interchange
- *Widen Preston near Frankfurt
- * widening NDT in Frisco, Warren to El Dorado
- * SH5 in McKinney
- * George Bush at Renner

This has been achieved while continuing to emphasize improvements to the 6 lane divided thoroughfares we all use daily through the county's very successful 50-50% cost share with the cities.

- Cities and towns must fund at least 50% of all these projects. Hence the funds represented by this bond are a maximum 50% of project cost.
- County participation and leadership in this process assures the funding is spent for major arterials/thoroughfares (generally 6 lane divided) carrying traffic through and between cities and towns. It permits concentrating funds on the highest priorities in the county.

- County participation and leadership also assures coordination between cities and towns for continuity of the overall road system and to prevent bottlenecks/discontinuities at city/town boundaries in a cost effective manner. An example in this bond program is the extension of Park Boulevard in Plano through Parker, Murphy, and Wylie providing a much needed east-west connection.
- \$7.5 million has been provided for the removal and total reconstruction (not routine maintenance) of several badly deteriorated older thoroughfares. Such significant deterioration adds significantly to congestion. As the replacement is in effect a new road having been totally rebuilt, long term bond funding is justified.
- \$15 million in discretionary funds has been provided to the Commissioners Court for unanticipated needs which will certainly develop over the next 5 years.
- \$40 million has been included for the above mentioned discretionary funds, for rural county roads and for seeding federal and state funding of several major regional state and federal highways within the county like the new Outer Loop project.
- **All projects in the bond program are required to be started within the next five years to help mitigate congestion as rapidly as possible.**
- **Without the county funding 50% of the cost, many smaller towns and cities could not afford badly needed projects.** The city/town tax base is just not adequate. Even larger cities would probably have to increase their tax rate or significantly curtail projects exasperating congestion.
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) advised the committee that employment (jobs) will increase by 93% by 2030 and the population will increase by 68% in this time period. According to NCTCOG, this greater job growth will increase congestion on major arterials/thoroughfares within the county more than the freeways/major regionals such as US75 and US380.

<u>Congestion</u>	<u>Freeways Major Regionals</u>	<u>Major County Arterials/Thoroughfares</u> (6 lane divided)
Vehicle miles Traveled	63%	247%
Hours of delay	120%	327%

It is exactly these most effected arterials/thoroughfares (Preston, McDermott, Betsy, Coit, El Dorado, Midway, Stacy, Custer, Alma, etc) which carry county-wide traffic between and through cities that are the primary improvements recommended in the bond program.

- NCTCOG further advised the committee not spend money on these freeways/major regionals as they were not the county's mission and were prohibitively expensive for local funding. It was NCTCOG's responsibility to obtain state and federal funding for these roads. County and city funding was most effectively spent on the major arterials/thoroughfares within the county---in and between the cities and towns. This is exactly what the committee has proposed to the voters.

- A few cities did not receive any funding under this bond program. This is because they did not submit a project.
- This position is strongly supported by two articles in the Sept 19th edition of the DMN. One specifically talks about Collin County. Quote “A higher percentage of Collin County residents are working in their own county instead of driving outside.” “McKinney is just far enough away from Dallas and other areas in the metroplex that people who choose to live here will not usually commute to Dallas.” This means they are driving on the 6 lane divided arterials/thoroughfares—exactly what is emphasized in the bond program.
- The 113 projects included within the \$235.6 million were placed on the Tier 1 list which is the list submitted to the voters. Projects having a lower priority than the Tier 1 projects were placed on a Tier 2 list for consideration if additional funds become available in the next 5 years.
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The proposed projects for the transportation portion of the 2007 Collin County Bond Program address the projected major congestion areas within the county as assessed by the citizens committee, an independent consultant, and the city/town and county staffs. Moreover, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) advised the committee that as employment (jobs) would grow faster on a percentage basis than population within the county by the year 2030, the biggest traffic/congestion impact would be on the major arterials/thoroughfares (generally 6 lane divided) within the county. It is improvements to these types of roads that are the priority within the 2007 Transportation Bond proposals. In turn, these recommendations were approved by 100% of the Transportation Bond Committee which represented numerous cities and towns throughout the county, and were approved by the Collin County Commissioners Court for the November 6, 2007 ballot.

In summary, the proposed 2007 transportation bond program is a fair, balanced and effective proposal to minimize current and future congestion throughout the county. Your vote for these traffic improvement funds, which will be matched by the appropriated cities and towns, is strongly urged. The proposal capitalizes on the power of combining county and city/town funding to coordinate and expedite critical projects.

There is no county tax rate increase associated with this proposal and no adverse impact on the county’s AAA rating..

The above information has been reviewed by the three co-chairs of the committee.

Vote FOR the Collin County Bond Proposal
 Election day November 6th
 Early voting starts October 22nd.