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# San Marcos DAILY RECORD



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## Road rules draw fire

Conley get nod to deal with TxDOT, but move irks some

**By Brad Rollins**  
Staff Reporter

San Marcos — Outgoing and incoming county leaders are tussling over control of a package of state road improvements ahead of a new Democratic majority taking office at the end of the year.

County Judge-elect Elizabeth Sumter, whose term starts Jan. 1, has said she is opposed to a financing agreement with the state to pay for \$152.9 million in mobility projects, including adding lanes to Ranch Road 12, improving Texas 21 and starting an eastern loop around San Marcos. Incoming Commissioners Jeff Barton and Karen Ford have not said they oppose the roads, but neither are they as certain to support them as the Republican majority voters turned out of office on Nov. 7.

Ahead of the guard change, the lame-duck commissioner court recently voted 3-2 to name Commissioner Will Conley, soon to be the court's only Republican, as the county's official designee for dealing with TxDOT and engineering firms on the projects. County Judge Jim Powers was previously the official designee although Conley negotiated the agreement and has overseen its early stages.

"We're going through a pretty big turnover on the court and I felt it would be appropriate for the court to appoint me as the designee until the new court has time to be brought up to speed on the current projects and circumstances," Conley said. "It was the responsible thing to do to make sure someone is keeping an eye on progress during the transition."

The change was opposed by Democrat Pct. 1 Commissioner Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe but also by Pct. 2 Commissioner Susie Carter, who has often been at odds with her fellow Republicans on the court but was herself swept out of office in November along with Powers and Pct. 4 Commissioner Russ Molenaar.

Pointing out that the move can be reversed when the new court takes office, Sumter said she would likely assume oversight of the project.

The court is currently scheduled to decide in late January how to come up with their share of the money to pay for the projects. Under the agreement, the state will pay back \$133 million over twenty years based on how many cars use the roadways.

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