

## MINUTES

### Regional Transportation Council PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### *Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects*

#### *Draft Project Recommendations: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunity*

#### *Innovative Resource Agency Partnerships*

#### Meeting Dates and Locations

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held public meetings as follows:

1. Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011 – 6:45 p.m. – North Central Texas Council of Governments; attendance: 14; moderated by Tom Shelton, Senior Program Manager, NCTCOG Transportation Department
2. Thursday, Sept. 15, 2011 – 2:30 p.m. – North Central Texas Council of Governments; attendance: 20; moderated by Dan Kessler, Assistant Director, NCTCOG Transportation Department

The meetings were scheduled to allow anyone wanting to ride transit to attend. NCTCOG offered a free roundtrip ride between the meeting and Trinity Railway Express CentrePort/DFW Airport Station upon request on a first-come, first-serve basis.

#### Public Meeting Purpose and Topics

The public meetings were held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Process, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and amended on March 11, 2010. Staff presented information about:

1. Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects – presented by Robert Pacleb (Sept. 13) and Marcos Narvaez (Sept. 15)
2. Draft Project Recommendations: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunity – presented by Jeff Neal
3. Innovative Resource Agency Partnerships – presented by Elizabeth Beck-Johnson (Sept. 13) and Tamara Cook (Sept. 15)

The NCTCOG public meetings were held to educate, inform and seek comments from the public. Comments were solicited from those present who wished to speak for the record. The 30-day comment period remained open through Oct. 13, 2011. The presentations made at the meetings are available at: [www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings).

Each person who attended the public meeting received a packet with a meeting agenda, a sheet on which to submit written comments, and a copy of the presentation. The names of RTC members were listed on the back of the agenda so attendees could see who represented them. A list of RTC members is online: [www.nctcog.org/trans/committees/rtc/roster.rtc090811.pdf](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/committees/rtc/roster.rtc090811.pdf).

Moderators at each meeting summarized the grant funds available for clean construction equipment:

Public and private entities may apply for funding for non-road construction equipment replacements, repowers or verified retrofits/engine upgrade projects. Funding may cover up to 25, 75 or 100 percent of eligible costs, respectively. Funds will be awarded as available on a monthly basis until all funds are exhausted. Applications are due the last Friday of each month. More information is available at [www.nctcog.org/construction](http://www.nctcog.org/construction).

## **Summary of Presentations**

### ***A. Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects – presented by Robert Pacleb (Sept. 13) and Marcos Narvaez (Sept. 15)***

- **The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an inventory of roadway, transit and locally funded transportation improvements funded for implementation.**
  - Federal- and state-mandated inventory of transportation projects.
  - Contains projects funded with local, state and federal funding sources.
  - Covers four years of available funding.
  - Updated on a quarterly basis but completely re-developed every two to three years.
  - The current TIP document was approved by the RTC in June 2010.
- **The TIP is a collaborative effort involving local city and county governments, Dallas, Fort Worth and Paris districts of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), transportation agencies, and transit agencies.**
- **The TIP is a dynamic document. It is updated quarterly to reflect changes in project work scope or funding, the addition or deletion of projects, or refinement of transit agency program of projects.** The RTC-authorized TIP Modification Policy allows for changes to be processed in one of two ways:
  - Administrative amendments – Following certain guidelines, NCTCOG Director of Transportation Michael Morris has the authority to approve amendments administratively; 29 administrative amendments were finalized in August 2011.
  - Administrative amendments to the Federal Functional Classification System were also needed to ensure associated roadway facilities are eligible for federal funding.
  - Proposed revisions – NCTCOG staff will request the RTC approve revisions October 13, 2011; about 51 modifications are being processed through the quarterly cycle. Modifications will be finalized during the November 2011 TIP cycle.
- **TIP modification types:**
  - Adding projects to the TIP/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
  - Scope of work refinements.
  - Cost increases/cost decreases.
  - Change funding source or funding shares.
  - Refinements to transit program of projects.
- **Specific topics and issues presented for public involvement:**
  - Present administrative amendments and proposed modifications to the TIP.
  - Distribute detailed listings of the TIP November 2011 Modifications in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. For more information please visit: [www.nctcog.org/trans/tip](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/tip).

**B. Draft Project Recommendations: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunity – presented by Jeff Neal**

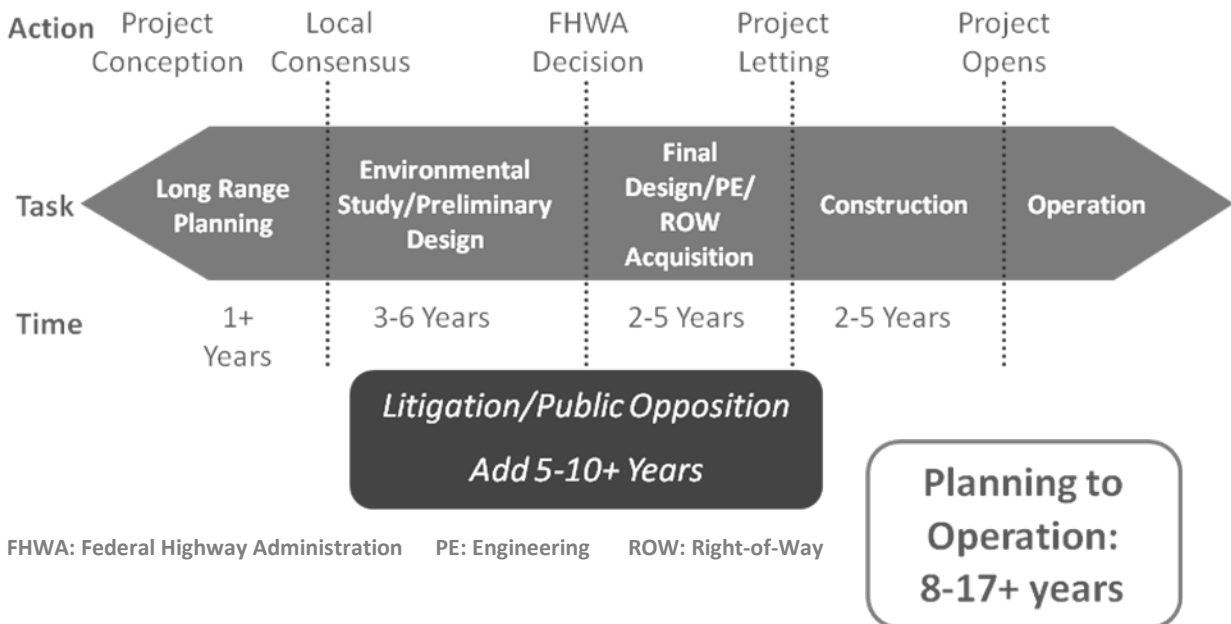
- **Nationally, \$527 million is available through the TIGER multimodal, merit-based discretionary grant program.**
  - \$140 million is set aside for rural areas. Rural area requests must be for \$1 million or more. There are no local match requirements.
  - Up to \$150 million is available for Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) payments.
  - Geographic diversity is a requirement.
  - Each sponsor can submit up to three applications.
  - Only surface transportation capital projects are eligible.
  - Funding requests for non-rural areas must be at least \$10 million, and a 20 percent local match is required.
- **The US Department of Transportation (US DOT) will award funds to projects that meet requirements above and address selection criteria:**
  - Safety
  - Economic competitiveness
  - Livability
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Job creation/near-term economic activity
  - Innovation
  - Partnerships
  - State of good repair
- **Staff worked with regional partners to develop a strategic list of projects to submit for funding consideration as well as corresponding qualitative and quantitative measures for the selection criteria.**

| Project  | TIGER selection criteria met  | Funding requested |
|--|---|-------------------|
| US 67 Cleburne Bypass from SH 174 to Bus 67M/Spur 102 in Johnson County        | - State of good repair<br>- Safety<br>- Economic competitiveness                                  | \$20 million      |
| IH 35E from IH 635 to US 380 in Dallas and Denton counties; TIFIA loan (TxDOT) | - State of good repair<br>- Safety<br>- Economic competitiveness<br>- Innovation<br>- Partnership | \$20 million      |

- **Both projects submitted include a one percent increase in construction costs for the Clean Construction Demonstration Program.**
- **The Texas Legislature identified the IH 35E project as a public-private partnership project. When the \$4.5 billion project is complete, there will be new main, managed and frontage lanes.**
- **A map showing the project locations was included in the presentation available at [www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings).**

- Pre-applications must be submitted by Oct. 3, 2011 to the US DOT, and final applications are due to the US DOT Oct. 31, 2011.
- C. *Innovative Resource Agency Partnerships – presented by Elizabeth Beck-Johnson (Sept. 13) and Tamara Cook (Sept. 15)*
- NCTCOG staff are committed to expeditiously and effectively enhancing the region’s transportation system while taking into consideration environmental, community and economic goals early in the planning process as well as through the project development, design and construction phases.

### Typical Roadway Project Development Process



- **Partnerships with environmental regulatory/resource agencies are important throughout project development as shown above, and examples of efforts to be discussed further include:**
  - Regional Ecosystem Framework Development
  - US Army Corps of Engineers Program
- **Partnerships with local governments, US Navy and NCTCOG support compatible land use around Naval Air Station Fort Worth, Joint Reserve Base (NAS Fort Worth, JRB)**
- **Transportation legislation – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users – supports expediting transportation environmental review in several ways:**
  - Federal Highway Administration funding for dedicated positions at resource agencies like the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency and US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Increased coordination between transportation and resource agencies early in the planning process through data sharing and integrated planning

- **In October 2008, NCTCOG entered into an agreement with the USACE to fund a full-time position to expedite federally required Section 404 permits** for regionally significant transportation projects. The agreement has been extended to 2016 due to the success of the program.
  - A map of projects benefitting from the agreement is in the presentation available at [www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings).
- **With funding from a Federal Highway Administration ecological grant and resource agency support, the Regional Ecosystem Framework was developed** to identify the most rare, diverse and sustainable areas. The result is a comprehensive inventory of environmental data that provides a framework for assessing potential impacts of infrastructure projects and multiple benefits to planners and the region.
- **Similarly, agency coordination is important to protecting regional aviation assets like the Naval Air Station Fort Worth, Joint Reserve Base (NAS Fort Worth, JRB).**
- **Encroachment is a threat to the viability of aviation facilities. Factors contributing to encroachment:**
  - Rapid population growth
  - Urban encroachment
  - Lack of land-use controls
  - Obstructions (gas wells, wind turbines, cell phone towers, etc.)
- **The seven cities surround NAS Fort Worth, JRB and Tarrant County are voting members of the voluntarily formed Regional Coordination Committee.** The committee oversees implementation of recommendations developed from a Joint Land Use Study completed in 2008.
  - The study recommendations emphasize compatible land use in noise contours and safety zones to protect public health and support the long-term mission of the base.
  - The RCC is focused on communication, coordination and encouragement of compatible development near NAS Fort Worth, JRB.
- **Strategic transportation and planning studies and updates will further the efforts of the RCC. Examples include:**
  - Surface transportation study of mobility into, out of and around the base.
  - Comprehensive livable military communities planning.
  - Revised city ordinances and zoning.
- **NCTCOG applied for and was awarded a Housing and Urban Development Community Challenge grant on behalf of partner communities** to initiate local government planning updates that support sustainable development strategies while considering land uses and development options that are compatible with military options. Major work activities:
  - Housing and retail feasibility siting study
  - Sustainable transportation operations
  - Ordinance compatibility with Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) and Energy Efficiency
  - Comprehensive plan updates

**ORAL COMMENTS RECEIVED AT MEETINGS**  
(Meeting date in parentheses)

**Draft Project Recommendations: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunity**

**Citizen (Sept. 13)**

A. Project Selection

*Question:* How did you narrow potential projects for TIGER applications? Is TIGER funding available annually?

*Summary of response by Jeff Neal and Tom Shelton:* At the beginning of every fiscal year Congress approves an appropriations bill. Within the bill the last two years, the TIGER competitive grant process and funding has been included. The TIGER program has proven to be competitive and successful.

With this particular funding opportunity, projects must be environmentally cleared and funds must be obligated by 2013. The North Central Texas region has a history of success with similar funding opportunities because planners and officials strategically align projects to selection criteria and follow funding guidelines.

**Citizen (Sept. 13)**

A. US 67

*Question:* Is the US 67 project environmentally cleared and ready for construction?

*Summary of response Tom Shelton:* Yes, US 67 is designed and environmentally cleared. One of the objectives of the TIGER funding is to create and retain jobs; therefore, projects must be ready for construction upon receipt of funds to be eligible.

**Jon Bunner (Sept. 13)**

A. Availability of Funding

*Question:* May agencies apply for funding in successive years for the same project?

*Summary of response by Jeff Neal:* Generally, it depends on the funding opportunity and regional needs. Overall, planners and officials strategically match available funds to projects and try to be as innovative as possible. Funding for projects often comes from a variety of sources. According to Texas Department of Transportation policy, all funding must be in place before construction begins; although, some projects can be built in phases. The DFW Connector is an example of a phased-construction project.

**Innovative Resource Agency Partnerships**

**Citizen (Sept. 15)**

A. Regional Ecosystem Framework

*Question:* Will the Regional Ecosystem Framework be available on the website?

*Summary of response by Tamara Cook:* Yes, the information is expected to be online for the public within the next few months.