

## MINUTES

### **PUBLIC MEETINGS ON AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY**

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

1. Thursday, January 20, 2005, 10:30 a.m., Cleburne Civic Center, Cleburne, TX with 11 attendees
2. Friday, January 21, 2005, 10:30 a.m., Terrell City Hall - Council Chambers, Terrell, TX, with 10 attendees

The public meetings were held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Public Involvement Procedures that became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council, the transportation policy board for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and amended on April 11, 2002. The topic covered at the meetings was air quality conformity.

The two meetings were held to educate, inform, and seek comments from the public on this transportation issue. Comments were solicited from those present who wished to speak for the record. The presentation made at the meetings is available to view on the NCTCOG website at [http://www.nctcog.org/trans/public\\_meetings/](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/public_meetings/).

Chris Klaus welcomed the attendees, recognized elected officials in attendance, introduced NCTCOG staff members and presenters and presented an overview of the agenda items to be discussed. Chris Klaus provided a background of the processes in place required to reach air quality conformity goals. Areas that do not meet the air quality standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are classified as non-attainment areas. Under the 1-hour ozone standard, Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton counties were designated as non-attainment. In June 2005, the 1-hour standard will be revoked by EPA and will be replaced by the new 8-hour standard for ozone.

Chad Edwards and David Jodray presented preliminary results of Air Quality Conformity Determination. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is required to develop a plan on how and when an area is to reach attainment. TCEQ proposed a set of emission budgets that we are to use for conducting conformity analyses. It is a federal requirement that transportation projects and programs planned in the region do not cause the region to exceed emission levels in the air quality plan. Staff presented a map of the region that highlights the nine counties in North Central Texas that the EPA designated on April 15, 2004, as non-attainment for ozone under the new 8-hour standard. They presented the nine-county preliminary results under the new 8-hour standard for volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions and nitrogen oxide emissions, both from motor vehicles, emphasizing that the region isn't tested for ozone but rather the two pollutants (VOCs and NOx) that produce ozone. This included views of 2002, 2007, and 2010 results. The results for 2015 and 2025 will be available at the March public meetings. They emphasized that the Regional Transportation Council has implemented several initiatives that have significantly helped the region remain within the emissions budget. They provided a list of RTC initiatives that are in place today to help reach attainment and provided contact information. They requested that local governments provide an inventory of projects so they can be added to the planning list to be considered for transportation funding.

Public comments and were solicited for the topics presented, as well as other transportation-related issues.

**Oral Comments Received at Cleburne Civic Center  
Cleburne, Texas  
January 20, 2005, 10:30 a.m.**

**David Wynne**

**City of Burleson**

**Q:** Is there a map available that shows what projects you modeled in your conformity analysis?

**A:** Chris Klaus responded yes, our map shows what we've modeled outside the MPA (Metropolitan Planning Area). On the inside of the MPA boundary, the list would be within the Transportation Improvement Plan.

**Ron Harmon**

**Harmon Consulting**

**Q:** Did I understand you to say that no credit has been allowed for rail?

**A:** Chris Klaus stated that there is credit, but those projects are actually assumed in a particular analysis year, depending on when those projects are being built. If rail is coming in 2025, then that's the first analysis year that the project could be added, and credit will be taken in that analysis year.

**Clyde Melick**

**Ellis County**

**Q:** On Page 5 of the presentation, you have a reduction of over 150 tons in NOx emissions, and there is just a small percentage of that is a result of RTC initiatives. What accounts for the other 149 tons?

**A:** Chris Klaus stated that a lot of the reduction is due to vehicle fleet turnover. Since 2002, there has been a tremendous rise in vehicle technology and specifically in 2004 there were Tier II fuel requirements, new vehicle emission standards, and in 2007 there is going to be heavy-duty diesel emission standards. Those are all being accounted for. There is an inspection and maintenance program located throughout the nine-county area that has been helping out with that reduction. The majority of it is due to government vehicle turnover and the advancements in technology.

**Q:** Does that keep up with projected populations?

**A:** Chris Klaus stated that the region is rapidly growing and some opponents are saying that air quality is not getting any better. Chris Klaus said he disagrees; air quality is getting better, given the significant growth in population in North Central Texas. Now, this is only in transportation. There are three other components--point source, area sources, non-road sources, that conformity doesn't deal with.

**Ron Harmon**

**Harmon Consulting**

**Q:** Mr. Harmon commented that credit should be given to the five surrounding counties for doing their part in voluntary programs they've implemented

**A:** Chris Klaus responded that the four counties (Dallas, Tarrant, Denton and Collin) were going to stand up and fight the attainment status on behalf of the new 5 counties. Unfortunately, the EPA didn't recognize the voluntary efforts the new counties have made, even when the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) argued in their favor. The EPA designated the whole Metropolitan Statistical Area as a non-attainment area.

**Q:** You might want to mention that Johnson County supports efforts for regional rail.

**A:** Chris Klaus agreed and he applauded their efforts. Johnson County has partnered in the overall transportation process, whether it is for air quality or urban long-range vision of mobility and planning. The region's success is based on the cooperation received in North Central Texas.

**Oral Comments Received at the Terrell Council Chambers**  
**Terrell, Texas**  
**January 21, 2005, 10:30 a.m.**

**Gordon Pierce, City Manager**

**City of Terrell**

**Q:** Addressed the Ellis County cement plants, steel mills and the south winds that blow up to Kaufman County.

**A:** Chris Klaus responded that transportation is about 53% of the emission problem in North Central Texas and the emissions coming from the plants in Ellis County is a small percentage of the whole, but still very important. The North Texas Clean Air Steering Committee (NTCASC) is made up of environmentalists and elected officials. TCEQ, along with the NTCASC, is well underway with discussions of trying to understand how much emissions are coming from Ellis County, and how significant those problems are in effecting monitors downstream from the plants. The State has had difficulty in quantifying the amount of emissions. The first part, as the State is now under a new planning exercise, is to do a study to identify what specifically is the amount of emissions coming from those facilities, where they go, what parts of the area are they impacting, and then implementing control strategies. David Jodray added that even though the EPA designated the nine counties, the State is looking outside the nine-county area as well to implement programs.

**John Blain, STTC Member & Resident**

**Kaufman County**

**Q:** Commented that the monitor south of Kaufman has not had its siren go off since the 8-hour monitoring standards started. Mr. Blain wanted to know if there is anything more that Kaufman County should be doing to address air conformity issues.

**A:** Chris Klaus responded that the 8-hour standard is a much more difficult standard to pass than the 1-hour. Staff is focusing on high emitting vehicles, a vehicle assistance program for low-income individuals to get their cars inspected, retrofit or replacement diesel engines, and aggressive driving. Kaufman County should be appreciated for the voluntary programs they've implemented in order to stay out of the non-attainment status. David Jodray explained how the assistance program provides help to low income individuals who need to have their vehicles pass inspection or help in finding a replacement. Kaufman County is also now eligible for Congestion Mitigation, and Air Quality Improvement Program funds as soon as Congress passes the transportation re-authorization bill. This new set of funds will be available for clean vehicles, intersection improvements, and other types of programs designed to reduce emissions.

**Gordon Pierce, City Manager**

**City of Terrell**

**Q:** Asked about more information on funds and the process for dealing with older equipment.

**A:** Chris Klaus introduced Richard McComb of NCTCOG staff as one of the individuals who runs the Air Check Assistance Program. Chris offered to send literature and add those interested to the mailing list to receive regular updates. Richard added that he would be at the Terrell Recreation Center, February 10, 2 p.m. to educate the public on the Air Check Assistance Program.

**John Blain, STTC Member & Resident**

**Kaufman County**

**Q:** Mentioned that there are a lot of diesel trucks idling at Griffin's Truck Stop. Are there funds available to upgrade that truck stop even though it is in the private sector?

**A:** Chris Klaus stated there is an agency to identify and put technology in each truck stop. The funds under the Texas Emission Reduction Plan do recognize and can go towards diesel idling, electrification-type facilities or upgrades: NCTCOG is negotiating with companies that have been awarded funds to determine which locations in the non-attainment area should

receive funding. These companies will bring the new technology to the truck stops. There are reports that say that truck stops are a hazardous location because of the particulates and the diesel fumes from the truck idling, so there are strategies to try to curb that, federal funding to assist in that, and also a push by the companies to come in and get these things implemented. There is already a truck stop in Duncanville with that technology. The technology allows for air conditioning to be pumped into the window, which is cheaper, on an hourly basis, than the fuel necessary to idle the vehicle for an air conditioner to run. The device will have access to the internet, cable, and a phone, all through a nice kiosk they would plug into their window. The cool air comes in and allows to engines to be shut down.