

AGENDA

**Regional Transportation Council
Thursday, December 14, 2017
North Central Texas Council of Governments**

- 1:00 pm Full RTC Business Agenda
(NCTCOG Guest Secured Wireless Connection Password: rangers!)**
- 1:00 – 1:05** 1. **Approval of November 9, 2017, Minutes**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5
Presenter: Rob Franke, RTC Chair
Item Summary: Approval of the November 9, 2017, minutes contained in [Reference Item 1](#) will be requested.
Background: N/A
- 1:05 – 1:05** 2. **Consent Agenda (There are no items on the Consent Agenda)**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 0
- 1:05 – 1:20** 3. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 15
Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG
1. Holiday Letter ([Electronic Item 3.1](#))
 2. Loop 9 Environmentally Cleared from IH 35E to IH 45
 3. SH 360 Toll Rates and Opening Day
 4. 2018 Regional Transportation Council Meeting Schedule ([Electronic Item 3.2](#))
 5. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles ([Electronic Item 3.3](#))
 6. DFW Clean Cities Event: Idle Reduction Webinar, January 30 ([Electronic Item 3.4](#))
 7. Volkswagen Settlement Update: Designation of Statewide Lead Agency ([Electronic Item 3.5.1](#)) and Correspondence ([Electronic Item 3.5.2](#))
 8. November Public Meeting Minutes ([Electronic Item 3.6](#))
 9. December Input Opportunity Notice ([Electronic Item 3.7](#))
 10. Traffic Count Fact Sheet ([Electronic Item 3.8](#))
 11. Public Comments Report ([Electronic Item 3.9](#))
 12. Recent Correspondence ([Electronic Item 3.10](#))
 13. Recent News Articles ([Electronic Item 3.11](#))
 14. Recent Press Releases ([Electronic Item 3.12](#))
 15. Transportation Partners Progress Reports
- 1:20 – 1:30** 4. **Performance Measures: Roadway Safety and Transit Asset Management**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10
Presenter: Natalie Bettger, NCTCOG
Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of proposed regional targets for measuring and evaluating the performance of two aspects of the transportation system. Roadway safety targets are focused on reducing serious injuries and fatalities for motorized and non-motorized travelers. Transit asset management targets are focused on

ensuring that public transportation vehicles, rail lines, and other capital assets are in a state of good repair. In addition, the RTC will establish an aspirational goal regarding the safety of the users of the ground transportation system.

Background: Federal surface transportation legislation and associated federal rulemakings have laid out quantitative performance measure requirements for aspects of the transportation system. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the North Central Texas region, the RTC is required to set targets for system roadway safety and transit asset management. These targets will be used to track and report on the region's performance through existing documents such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the State of the Region report. The proposed regional targets for roadway safety and transit asset management are provided in [Reference Item 4.1](#). On November 9, 2017, the RTC requested additional information on the North Central Texas Council of Governments' programs and projects that address Texas Department of Transportation Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis areas, and this information is available in [Electronic Item 4.2](#).

1:30 – 1:40

5. **US 75 Technology Lanes Next Steps**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has approved funding for technology lanes on US 75 north of IH 635 to McKinney. Support is requested to continue a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration Division Office and explore policy, operational, and legislative relief to advance these improvements in the corridor.

Background: The RTC has funded improvements to US 75 that will modernize early interim, temporary high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) improvements on US 75. These improvements are modeled after similar improvements on SH 161 in Irving. Focus is on additional capacity during the peak periods. The US 75 improvements will include the use of shoulder lanes in the off-peak period, as well, to mitigate non-recurring, incident-related congestion. Legislative relief has been used elsewhere in the United States to modernize early implemented HOV lanes that used Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds. [Reference Item 5](#) contains a copy of previous legislation and proposed correspondence for approval.

1:40 – 1:50

6. **"Big Projects": IH 635 East Update and Communication Program with the Texas Legislature**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will communicate the latest correspondence to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and from the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) on IH 635 East and "Big Projects." In addition, Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

approval to initiate a legislative program with the Texas legislature will be requested.

Background: Funding for IH 635 East and implementing "Big Projects" in the region and the State of Texas has been discussed over the last several months. The IH 635 East Phase 3 project is escalating in cost by \$5 million per month. An RTC position will be outlined that includes: 1) comments for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Unified Transportation Program (Handout), 2) advancing the IH 635/Skillman/Audelia project into the TxDOT procurement process ([Electronic Item 6.1](#)), and 3) reminding policy officials that RTC responsibilities are not synonymous with State legislative officials under Title 23 and 49 of the United States Code ([Electronic Item 6.2](#)). This will include proposed communication between the RTC and the North Texas Legislative Delegation on many transportation revenue items that have received little or negative support in reducing the need for tolled managed lanes. [Electronic Item 6.3](#) contains a copy of the NTTA correspondence regarding the primacy waiver on IH 635.

1:50 – 2:00

7. **Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Floor Amendment: Rescission of Contract Authority (Carryover from October RTC Meeting)**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Amanda Wilson, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will discuss recent actions for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 and FY2018 appropriations.

Background: The United States House of Representatives recently approved a FY2018 omnibus appropriations bill (HR 3354), including Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) funding. The House included an amendment offered by Representative Rob Woodall (R-GA) in the bill. The amendment allows states more flexibility in implementing the \$800 million rescission of unobligated highway contract authority balances that are mandated, but it also strikes the language that currently prevents the highway rescission from applying to safety programs and to sub-allocated Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds. This bill goes to the Senate next for consideration. In addition, Congress passed a continuing resolution extending FY2017 funding levels through December 8, and continues to negotiate another extension. This will provide additional time to finalize FY2018 funding levels and avoid a government shutdown. Additional information is provided in [Electronic Item 7](#).

2:00 – 2:10

8. **Air Quality Update**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide a summary of the 2017 ozone season activity for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region, information on the status of the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Ozone, and other air quality updates.

Background: The end of November concluded another ozone season for the DFW region. Staff has been tracking the exceedance days at each monitor and will provide a summary of the 2017 ozone season data for the revised 2015 ozone standard of 70 parts per billion (ppb). The DFW region is classified as “moderate” nonattainment under the current standard, and has a 2018 attainment deadline. On November 16, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated counties under the 2015 NAAQS for ozone as attainment/unclassifiable or unclassifiable. No counties in North Central Texas were listed. However, additional counties may be added under a separate rule. More information is provided in [Electronic Item 8](#).

2:10 – 2:20

9. **Mobility 2045 Update**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenters: Kevin Feldt and Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will present a brief overview of the progress to date as work continues on the region's next long-range transportation plan, Mobility 2045, including special initiatives. In addition, staff will present the following items:

- Mobility 2045 draft list of projects
- Schedule for Mobility 2045 completion
- Technology driven transportation (high-speed rail, next generation magnetic levitation, General Motors, people movers, and rideshare) ([Electronic Item 9](#))

Background: The last comprehensive update of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) occurred in 2016 with the adoption of Mobility 2040. Staff has continued MTP development with a variety of efforts that will continue over the next six months. The Regional Transportation Council is expected to take action on Mobility 2045 in June 2018. Mobility 2045 will reassess existing recommendations and include new demographics, financial forecasts, planning initiatives, and technology driven transportation.

2:20 – 2:30

10. **Rise of Fraudulent Temporary Vehicle Registration Tags**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Item Summary: There has been a sharp increase in fraudulent and improper temporary vehicle registrations, or temporary tags, since Texas linked vehicle inspections with registration. Staff will discuss efforts to combat this growing problem and the potential impacts on air quality, safety, and local and State revenue.

Background: Nonattainment areas in the state once had a high incidence of counterfeit emissions inspections/certificates, which led to the passage of House Bill (HB) 2305 during the 83rd Texas Legislature. This eliminated the inspection certificate, requiring motorists to obtain an inspection within 90 days of registration expiration. While HB 2305 was successful in eliminating counterfeit inspection certificates, an unintended consequence was an increase in fraudulent temporary vehicle registrations, or

temporary tags. Unscrupulous auto dealers improperly issue temporary tags when vehicles cannot otherwise pass the emissions inspection to obtain a valid registration. A lack of security features, numerous tag types with similar designs, and different requirements for placement on the vehicle complicate enforcement efforts. More details can be found in [Electronic Item 10](#).

- 2:30 – 2:35**
11. **Transportation Funding Categories Summary**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5
Presenter: Christie Gotti, NCTCOG
Item Summary: A summary of transportation funding categories will be provided.
Background: At the November 9, 2017, Regional Transportation Council meeting, Chair Rob Franke requested that staff provide a summary of transportation funding categories to members. The summary is provided as [Electronic Item 11](#).
12. **Progress Reports**
 Action Possible Action Information
Item Summary: Progress Reports are provided in the items below.
- RTC Attendance ([Reference Item 12.1](#))
 - Local Motion ([Electronic Item 12.2](#))
13. **Other Business (Old or New)**: This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.
14. **Future Agenda Items**: This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of future interest before the Council.
15. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for ***1:00 pm, Thursday, January 11, 2018, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.***

MINUTES**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
November 9, 2017**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, November 9, 2017, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following members or representatives were present: Douglas Athas, Sara Bagheri, Sue S. Bauman, Carol Bush, Loyl C. Bussell, Jim Wilson (representing David L. Cook), Rudy Durham, Andy Eads, Charles Emery, Kevin Falconer, Gary Fickes, Robert Franke, Sandy Greyson, Roger Harmon, Ron Jensen, Jungus Jordan, Lee M. Kleinman, Harry LaRosiliere, Scott Mahaffey, B. Adam McGough, William Meadows, Steve Mitchell, Cary Moon, Mark Riley, Kelly Selman, Ray Smith (representing Will Sowell), Mike Taylor, Stephen Terrell, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Oscar Ward, Duncan Webb, Andy Nguyen (representing B. Glen Whitley), Kathryn Wilemon, Sheri Capehart (representing W. Jeff Williams), and Ann Zadeh.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Majed Al-Ghafry, David S. Arbuckle, Katelyn Atwood, John Baker, Arturo Ballesteros, Tom Bamonte, Berrien Barks, Jay Barksdale, Carli Baylor, Adam Beckom, Brandi Bird, Jon Blackman, Chris Bosco, David Boski, Tanya Brooks, Bob Brown, Ron Brown, John Brunk, Mo Bur, Marrk Callier, Jack Carr, Angie Carson, Sarah Chadderdon, Ceason Clemens, Michael Copeland, John Cordary, Hal Cranor, Brian Crooks, Clarence Daugherty, Shelley Davis, Inga Dedow, Brian Dell, Pritam Deshmukh, Kim Diederich, Chad Edwards, Traci Enna, Kevin Feldt, Brian Flood, Rhiannon Friedman, Mike Galizio, Tony Hartzel, Victor Henderson, Rebekah Hernandez, Axel Herrmann, Mark Hilderbrand, Robert Hinkle, Matthew Holzapfel, Ivan Hughes, Dale Jackson, Greg Janes, Tomy Kimmey, Ken Kirkpatrick, Paul Knippel, Wayne Kurfees, Dan Lamers, Sonya Landrum, April Leger, Eron Linn, Ramiro Lopez, Stanford Lynch, Kate Marshall, Steve McCullough, Michelle McKenzie, Bill Meadows, Michael Miles, Cliff Miller, Mindy Mize, Amy Moore, Erin Moore, Michael Morris, Elizabeth Mow, Bailey Muller, Ron Natinsky, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, John Nguyen, Mickey Nowell, Michael Peters, Johan Petterson, John Polster, James Powell, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Chris Reed, Bill Riley, Tito Rodriguez, Mike Rogers, John Ryan, Moosa Saghian, Steve Salin, Trey Salinas, Devin Sanders, Russell Schaffner, Lori Shelton, Walter Shumac, Randy Skinner, David L. Smith, Tom Stallings, Gerald Sturdivant, Don Szczesny, Steve Templer, Gary Thomas, Steve Tilton, Dan Vedral, Sam Werschey, Sandy Wesch, Jason Williams, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, Alicia Winkelblech, Erik With, Ed Wueste, and Jing Xu.

1. **Approval of October 12, 2017, Minutes:** The minutes of the October 12, 2017, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 1. Andy Eads (M); Jungus Jordan (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** There were no items on the Consent Agenda.
3. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Mindy Mize presented the Air North Texas 2016-2017 Partner Awards. Hood County received the Outstanding Advertising award, the University of North Texas Health Science Center received the Outstanding Initiative award, City of Plano received the Outstanding Partner Involvement award, City of Dallas received the Outstanding Outreach and Arlo Ambassador awards, and City of Grand Prairie received the Air North Texas Partner of the Year award.

Michael Morris highlighted his Director's message that the next 60 days is a season of giving. He showed a photo of the IH 35E license plate he received as part of a team recognition for those who brought innovation to the IH 35E project. He noted a recent ribbon

cutting event for the first phase of IH 35E and congratulated Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Secretary Andy Eads, Denton County Commissioner; Denton County Judge Mary Horn; and Kelly Selman on the project. He also thanked Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Bruce Bugg for his attendance at the event. He thanked RTC members who accompanied him to the Texas Transportation Commission October 25 Workshop: RTC Chair Rob Franke, RTC Vice Chair Gary Fickes, and Douglas Athas at which the importance of the IH 635 East project was presented. He also thanked Kelly Selman for his attendance at a recent Town Hall meeting held by State Representative Victoria Neave on IH 635 East. In addition, he noted that the presentation on the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development floor amendment to rescinded contract authority would be presented at the December RTC meeting. An ozone season update was provided in Electronic Item 3.1, and information on current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles was provided in Electronic Item 3.2. Electronic Item 3.3 contained information on a Clean Vehicle webinar scheduled for November 30. The Federal Highway Administration response to the RTC's Buy America letter was provided in Electronic Item 3.4. October public meeting minutes were provided in Electronic Item 3.5, a November public meeting notice was provided in Electronic Item 3.6, and a recap of National Drive Electric Week was provided in Electronic Item 3.7. An Aviation Education fact sheet was provided in Electronic Item 3.8. The public comments report was provided in Electronic Item 3.9, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 3.10, recent news articles in Electronic Item 3.11, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 3.12. Transportation partner progress reports were distributed at the meeting.

4. **2017 Clean Diesel Subaward and Call for Projects:** Lori Clark presented a request for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of items related to clean diesel initiatives. The items presented address the air quality emphasis areas of high-emitting vehicles/equipment and energy/fuel use. In July 2017, staff submitted a grant proposal to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through its National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. The EPA has recommended the proposal for full funding which will provide the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) with approximately \$2.1 million in federal funding to subaward. Approximately \$1 million is set aside for administration of the program. As staff continues to negotiate the award with EPA, initial efforts to move forward with the program were proposed in order to move quickly to project implementation. Eligible entities include local governments and private companies who contract with local governments. Eligible activities include replacement of heavy-duty diesel trucks and non-road diesel equipment. Funding ranges from 25-45 percent depending on the type engine purchased. In preparation for submitting the proposal, staff solicited interest from local governments for projects to include in the proposal. Many expressed interest, but the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) was the only organization with a project that met the EPA's criteria. Staff proposed to proceed with a subaward to DCTA for approximately \$471,000 for the replacement of four transit buses. DCTA has committed a 75 percent local match and the EPA funding will cover 25 percent. This leaves a balance of approximately \$1.5 million. Staff proposed to make this funding available through an open, competitive call for projects on a modified first-come, first-served basis. Deadlines will be the last Friday of each month. Applications received during each month will be evaluated competitively primarily on the cost per ton of nitrogen oxide emissions reduced. The timeline for this effort was reviewed. If approved, the Call for Projects would open in December 2017 with interim deadlines beginning in January 2018. In addition, Ms. Clark discussed the North Texas Airport Emissions Reduction Call for Project in which funds were awarded by EPA in 2015. Project eligibility is for diesel powered ground support equipment at airport in the nonattainment area. To date, no applications have been received. Recently, there seems to be increased momentum for the effort, and NCTCOG staff proposed to extend the final

deadline from December 29, 2017, to September 2018. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4. A motion was made to approve the subaward to Denton County Transportation Authority of up to approximately \$471,000 for four transit bus replacements; to open the 2017 Clean Diesel Call for Projects on a modified, first-come first served basis; the selection criteria, and the schedule for the subawarding the remaining \$1.5 million, and to extend the North Texas Airport Emissions Reduction Call for Projects through September 2018. Kathryn Wilemon (M); Sara Bagheri (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Transit Grant Funding Cleanup**: Sarah Chadderdon presented the proposed reprogramming of transit funds to support several projects in the region. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) programs funds under Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. Through regular monitoring, staff confirms that projects are proceeding as programmed. When projects do not advance for two years, the FTA may act to take back funds. Staff recently conducted a review of older grants and identified canceled projects or projects that were otherwise not proceeding in a timely manner. Some of these funds were originally programmed to Texoma Area Paratransit System. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) have requested funding for a variety of projects. Approximately \$7.2 million from four transit programs is proposed to be reprogrammed. Staff has worked with the transit authorities to identify projects of similar purpose and geography compared to the original use of funds. DART has requested funding to support four projects: 1) fare equipment partnership with small and non-traditional providers, 2) software integration with non-traditional and private provider payment platforms, 3) taxi vouchers in nine service gap locations, and 4) seven low floor, smaller alternative-fuel vehicles and five 40 foot transit buses. DCTA and FWTA submitted a joint request that includes operating assistance and additional new buses to support a transit connection between Fort Worth and Denton. DCTA also requested funds to integrate trip scheduling software with small and nontraditional providers. Lastly, the FWTA requested operating assistance to support bus service upgrades to be implemented in FWTA's North Quadrant area. This project also includes an enhanced connection to the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth. Proposed distribution of the available funds was summarized in Reference Item 5.1. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 5.2. The proposed funding accounts for the full \$7.2 million identified as at risk. She noted the Surface Transportation Technical Committee recommended RTC approval at its October 2017 meeting. Duncan Webb asked for details of the service gap locations. Ms. Chadderdon noted that the nine service gap locations are within DART's service area. Staff noted that additional details regarding the locations would be provided to members. A motion was made to approve the reprogramming of transit funding for projects as shown in Reference Item 5.1. Action also included direction for staff to administratively amend the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate the changes. Oscar Ward (M); Ann Zadeh (S). The motion passed unanimously.
6. **Endorsement of Reprogramming of Funds on IH 635 East Phase 3**: Michael Morris discussed necessary action for the reprogramming of funds on IH 635 East. In the previous week, the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) indicated its desire to place more of its discretionary funds on the IH 635 East project. Staff received communication that adjustments were needed immediately to the funding categories for the IH 635 East project in order that the updated information be included in the public outreach effort for the project. Correspondence, provided in Reference Item 6.1, was necessary to program the funds in the Unified Transportation Program for consideration by the TTC in December 2017. Funding changes needed for this revised approach to funding IH 635 East were provided in

Electronic Item 6.2. As a result of outreach meetings, Mr. Morris reminded members of the differences between toll roads and tolled managed lanes. In addition, he discussed the evolution of managed lanes, which is critical for the IH 635 project. Managed lanes began as an option to manage occupancy, then became tolled managed lanes that were dynamically priced. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has already approved the testing of guaranteed transit in the facilities, as well as early deployment of driverless vehicle technology and driverless tandem trucks as new management options for these lanes. Mr. Morris highlighted the action requested at the meeting: 1) endorse the reprogramming of funds necessary for IH 635 East to remain on schedule as outlined in Reference Item 6.1, 2) permit the Director to take other actions requested by the Texas Transportation Commission on the project in order to secure funding, 3) support the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Dallas District in advancing IH 635 East funding with the TTC by the end of 2017, and 4) approve a letter from the RTC Chair supporting the TxDOT funding approach now or in the future. There is no change to the RTC policy position P17-01 for IH 635 East. Andy Eads noted the original desire not to mix Category 12 funds on tolled facilities. He asked if staff believed the RTC should request the need for flexibility in writing. He noted he believed it is important that the RTC understands the rules for future projects, as well. Mr. Morris noted that currently the TTC is interested in being an advocate for tolled managed lanes and have indicated a desire to place Category 12 funds on the project. As a result, staff provided a letter supporting the position. If the TTC were to move forward differently, staff would like to support the TTC so that the project is not delayed. The flexibility to move funds between funding sources will help ensure IH 635 proceeds to construction. Mr. Morris added the Commission is trying to implement tolled managed lanes across the State in a similar manner and is interested in a consistent policy. Mr. Eads asked if the Commission will take action to formally adopt a policy. Mr. Morris noted he believed the Commission would likely move forward with a formal policy. The Finance Division understands federal funds must be placed on tolled portions and non-federal funds on non-tolled portions of projects. Kelly Selman noted that originally, TxDOT was not going to place Category 12 Clear Lanes funds on projects with a tolled element. Currently, the funds can be allocated to a project with a tolled element, but must be used on the general purpose lane portion of the project. The State must ensure that there are enough federal funds allocated to a project to cover the tolled managed lane portion. B. Adam McGough asked if this change negatively impacts the Skillman Interchange at IH 635. Mr. Morris clarified that there are no impacts to that project, simply a change in funding category. Rob Franke suggested that staff later provide members with a reference sheet to understand funding categories. A motion was made to endorse correspondence in Reference Item 6.1 regarding the revised funding categories for IH 635 East, approve other action of the Director requested by the Texas Transportation Commission on this project, support the Texas Department of Transportation Dallas District in advancing IH 635 East with the Texas Transportation Commission by the end of 2017, and approve a future letter by the RTC Chair supporting TxDOT's funding approach. This action does not change RTC policy position P17-01. Douglas Athas (M); Mike Taylor (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Alternative Fuel Corridor Submittal:** Lori Clark presented a request for approval to submit a letter to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) supporting its proposed alternative fuel corridor nomination and seeing inclusion of selected "US" designated highways in addition to the interstate network. This effort addresses the air quality emphasis areas for high-emitting vehicles/equipment and energy/fuel use. In addition, this initiative is part of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) role as the Dallas-Fort worth Clean Cities Coalition which is focused on reducing petroleum consumption. As background, the existing federal transportation bill requires the Secretary of Transportation to designate corridors across the country for the use of alternative fuels in an effort to

improvement mobility of vehicles using alternative fuels such as electric, hydrogen, propane, and natural gas. In 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued the first request for corridor nominations. NCTCOG submitted an application, as did the Houston-Galveston Area Council and TxDOT. The initial nomination was provided in Electronic Item 7.1. The first designations were announced in December 2016 and included much of the NCTCOG submittal. A map illustrating the corridors submitted was highlighted. Federal highways that were actually designated were also shown and included predominately interstates. Of bordering states, only Oklahoma has designations since other bordering states did not submit. FHWA has released a second request for nominations to add to the national corridor network. TxDOT is coordinating a submittal on behalf of the State and intends to include interstates that are not yet designated, as well as highway loops that provide interstate connectivity. In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, this would incorporate Loop 820 and IH 635. In addition, TxDOT has indicated that additional highways could be included if a letter of support is provided by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. NCTCOG staff believes the following "US" highways warrant designation: US 67, US 75, and US 287. These roadways would provide additional connectivity going outside the Metropolitan Planning Area boundary. A map showing the proposed corridors for submission and how this would provide connectivity with the rest of the state and with Oklahoma was highlighted. Part of the submittal to FHWA requires that fuel types believed to be used in each corridor should be designated. For US 75 staff proposed electric vehicles only (consumer vehicles), for US 67 staff proposed natural gas (primarily freight vehicles), and for US 287 both natural gas and electric vehicles were proposed. Michael Morris clarified that several years ago when working with local governments on US 75 to Plano, clear direction was given that US 75 south of the regional loop was to be primarily a commuter corridor and not necessarily encouraged for truck traffic. For this reason, staff is recommending electric vehicles only for the corridor designation. Duncan Webb asked if toll roads could be designated as alternative fuel corridors. He also noted that US 380 and SH 78 were recommended but not shown on later maps. Mr. Morris noted that toll roads can be designated. Regarding US 380 and SH 78, those corridors were recommended but not include in the final designations from FHWA. A motion was made to support the Texas Department of Transportation approach of submitting remaining interstate highways for alternative fuel corridor designations and to recommend that TxDOT include non-interstate segments providing regional connectivity: US 75 from Dallas to the Texas/Oklahoma border, US 67 from Cleburne to IH 20, and US 287 from Ennis to Amarillo. Harry LaRosiliere (M); Sheri Capehart (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **"Big Projects" in Texas:** Michael Morris presented the latest information on "Big Projects" in Texas. He discussed a recent conference call with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Headquarters, local TxDOT districts, and other divisions within TxDOT. He noted the importance of increased communication with all divisions of TxDOT and efforts by North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff to be more comprehensive and inclusive. TxDOT Austin, local districts, and NCTCOG staff will review all other projects to determine candidate projects to be funded with Category 12 funds, freeing up other categories of funds for other commitments. Mr. Morris discussed fair share allocation to the region and his recent presentation at the Texas Transportation Commission Workshop on the importance and history of fair share allocation. He noted it is not known when new funds will be available, but it is expected in the Winter 2017 or Summer 2018 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). It is hoped that IH 635 East will proceed in December 2017 if additional revenues for "Big Projects" is approved by the Texas Transportation Commission. Mr. Morris also discussed a statewide funding partnership and project delivery meeting scheduled in January 2018. Discussions will include the best delivery method for projects, as well as options to partner with other regions to effectively

and efficiently implement projects. He credited Commissioner Victor Vandergriff, Texas Transportation Commission, for increasing conversations regarding how to implement "Big Projects" in the State of Texas.

9. **Performance Measures: Roadway Safety and Transit Asset Management:** Dan Lamers introduced performance measure requirements for two aspects of the transportation system: Roadway Safety and Transit Asset Management. The Metropolitan Planning Organization has always utilized a performance-based planning process to determine which projects to include in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and to select for funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Federal legislation has specified certain quantitative performance measures that must be tracked and reported annually, which are incorporated into the planning process. Specifically, there are four categories of performance measures the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is required to incorporate. The two performance measures presented at the meeting were the Highway Safety Improvement Program and Transit Asset Management. These performance measures are coordinated with State and regional transportation partners. NCTCOG uses a four step process when monitoring transportation system performance: 1) identify Regional Transportation Council (RTC) emphasis areas, 2) set metrics and targets focused on RTC policy emphasis areas, 3) track and report performance compared to targets, and 4) track federal, State, and partner agency implementation over time. Staff incorporates these into required documents such as the MTP, TIP, Unified Planning Work Program, and Progress North Texas.

Sonya Landrum presented information on Roadway Safety performance targets for the 2018 target year. Required roadway safety performance targets include the number of fatalities, the rate of fatalities based on 100 million vehicle miles traveled, the number of serious injuries, the rate of serious injuries based on 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities plus serious injuries. For 2018, staff has chosen to support the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) safety targets that were developed as part of a two-year statewide collaborative effort. Through this data-driven effort, TxDOT has determined that a 2 percent reduction in each target area could be achieved by 2022, which is also the target year for TxDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Based on the specified target reductions for 2018, staff's proposed the following: decrease the expected rise in traffic fatalities to no more than 665 fatalities, limit the expected rise in fatalities to just under one death per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, decrease the rise in serious injuries to no more than 3,612 incidents, decrease the rate of serious injuries to no more than 5.18 serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and limit the expected rise of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries to no more than 560 incidents combined. Ms. Landrum highlighted NCTCOG's safety-related projects and programs and how those address the emphasis areas in TxDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Staff will work to determine future safety-related projects and programs based on these emphasis areas.

Sarah Chadderdon presented information on Transit Asset Management performance targets. Through the same process, four main categories of transit assets are to be tracked. These include rolling stock (transit vehicles), infrastructure (rail track), equipment (transit support vehicles), and facilities (buildings, stations, etc.). Policy emphasis areas were highlighted and include rolling stock and infrastructure. Rolling stock includes buses and train cars. Assets total over 700 buses, over 300 small buses, and over 200 rail vehicles. Infrastructure includes rail track in the region, of which there is over 200 miles of rail infrastructure for commuter rail, light rail, and streetcar. In addition, the proposed targets for the associated assets were highlighted. The proposed target is that zero percent of transit

vehicles have met or exceeded the industry standard service year. Similarly, the proposed target is that zero percent of infrastructure have slow zones. The third and fourth asset categories are not policy emphasis areas, but a similar approach is used to ensure that support vehicles and facilities are replaced or upgraded before they exceed industry standard guidelines for reasonable condition. To reach the proposed targets, staff coordinated with the transit agencies in the region. Each agency in the region sets its own targets, and this approach has yielded some variation across different agencies. Ms. Chadderdon noted that the RTC would be asked in December for direction to coordinate further in the future with transit agencies to establish a consistent approach for the region.

Mr. Lamers discussed next steps for both performance measurement areas presented. Once targets are adopted, staff will measure existing conditions and set baselines for performance. Progress towards the targets will be tracked and reported to regional, State, and federal partners. Metrics and targets for RTC emphasis areas will be brought back annually. The timeline for this effort was reviewed. Action on the proposed targets will be requested at the December Surface Transportation Technical Committee and RTC meetings. Kelly Selman discussed crash fatality data and the importance of messaging to target audiences to help try to influence driver behavior. Andy Nguyen noted the safety metrics are directly related to outcomes in the number of fatalities and serious injuries, but that transit metrics are related to the conditions that produce the outcomes. He asked why the focus is not on the cause that produces the fatalities and serious injuries. In addition, he noted the 2 percent goal and his opinion that 2 percent did not seem like a significant reduction. Ms. Landrum noted that one of the requirements from the federal government is that targets must be data driven as opposed to aspirational. In addition, the target must be realistically achievable over the five-year time period. She added many crashes are based on user behavior that must be changed by the drivers themselves. Related to Transit Asset Management, Mr. Lamers noted that staff routinely works with transit agencies on many performance measures. Those presented are the performance measures required by the federal government in the related rulemaking. Mike Taylor asked if the increase in fatalities may be directly related to the increase in population and that perhaps efforts are being successful but counteracted by the increased growth in the region. Mr. Selman noted there may be a direct correlation between population and fatality increases, but that he did not know the statistics. However, the current rate of fatalities and serious injuries is unacceptable. Jim Wilson noted he understood the requirements, but that he would like to see an aspirational goal also included in the performance measures targets

10. **Texas Mobility Summit/Texas Innovation Alliance Update:** Tom Bamonte briefed the Council on Texas Innovation Alliance activities, including the Texas Mobility Summit. The Texas Innovation Alliance is a group of cities, universities, and transportation agencies that came together at the first Texas Mobility Summit to advance short-term transportation innovation. Teams from across the state made presentations at the Texas Mobility Summit for where the Texas Department of Transportation and the region should invest funding. Two teams from the region participated: Team Tarrant County and Team Arlington. Team Tarrant County focused on how to improve transportation to and from healthcare facilities and developed a three-year plan. Team Arlington used its experience in low-speed automated vehicles to scale a statewide low-speed automated vehicle deployment. Two follow-up events have been scheduled in the region. On December 7, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and City of Arlington will co-host an automated vehicle open house for transit agencies. On December 8 NCTCOG will host a workshop on using Waze data for emergency response, 911, and transportation operations. A copy of the

Texas Mobility Summit agenda was provided in Electronic item 10.1. Additional information regarding Team Arlington and Team Tarrant County items was provided in Electronic Item 10.2.

11. **Coordinated Low-Speed Automated Vehicle Procurement:** Tom Bamonte briefed the Council on a coordinated, statewide procurement process for low-speed automated vehicles, another outcome of the Texas Mobility Summit. He summarized recent developments in the automated vehicle area. Waymo, a Google spinoff, is now deploying automated vehicles and giving access to members of the public in an Arizona town. This is the first deployment of a truly automated vehicle for citizens. He discussed efforts by mainstream companies to join the automated vehicle deployment arena and highlighted various automated vehicle acquisitions by companies such as Ford, General Motors, Delphi, Intel, and others. In addition, the advertising community has also ventured into the automated vehicle technology field. An example ad was shown for members. He highlighted a recent study showing over 60 percent of people under the age of 45 expect to be in the market for an automated vehicle in the next decade. Arlington has been a leader in the deployment and testing of low-speed automated vehicles with the Milo shuttle. There is now a well-developed market for low-speed automated vehicles. At the recent Texas Mobility Summit, other cities and transit agencies in Texas expressed interest in scaling the procurement statewide. The process will establish a pool of prequalified vendors for local communities interested in purchasing automated vehicles. Sandy Greyson asked what is considered low speed. Mr. Bamonte indicated that low-speed vehicles typically can travel up to 25 miles per hour. He added that the Waymo vehicle shown in the presentation can travel at regular operating speeds. Jungus Jordan expressed interest in a future agenda item. He noted a recent meeting he attended where Arlington presented a rideshare program. If the region eventually moves to driverless vehicles, the region must also become conditioned to using technology to request a ride. He added he believed it would be interesting for the Regional Transportation Council to follow the one-year experiment.
12. **Mobility 2045 Update:** Kevin Feldt provided an overview of progress to date as work continues on the development of Mobility 2045. The importance of staying on schedule was discussed and members were encouraged to work with staff on potential projects to be included. Mr. Feldt highlighted major roadway projects funded since 2000 which represents approximately \$27.8 billion of construction projects in the region. Mobility 2045 will focus on connecting people, places, and products to, from, and within the region. One example is a high-speed rail line connecting Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas, as well as the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region to Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. Connections for regional passenger rail and non-motorized connections were also highlighted. Primary projects proposed for Mobility 2045 include a Frisco rail line from Irving to Frisco and the Cotton Belt project connecting TEXRail to the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and northwestern Dallas, Plano, and Richardson. He also discussed a proposed tolled managed lanes system with SH 121 connecting to the DFW Connector, LJB East connecting the current LBJ system to IH 30, connectivity through Downtown Dallas, and efforts to connect goods and services to markets. Mobility 2045 is anticipated to include approximately \$131 billion over the life of the Plan. Potential policies to be included in the Plan were highlighted. These include technology polices to support open data best practices, encourage cooperation on wireless communications infrastructure, encourage multi-occupant ride sharing, and support automated vehicle deployment. Another proposed policy emphasis area is a tolled managed lane area. The policy would support creation of a toll "island" that would allow tolled managed lanes in the area as a congestion management tool. A specific geography would be defined for the greatest benefits and to maximize system efficiency using tolls, occupancy, and other corridor management strategies. Potential sample area selection

criteria may include high corridor traffic volumes, corridor congestion levels, system connectivity, system reliability, trip length, environmental justice sensitivity, employment access, and high reliability access to regionally significant trip generators. This criteria would be applied through a step-down process. As development of Mobility 2045 continues, staff will continue partner coordination, finalize partner projects, and continue the financial forecast analysis. Monthly updates to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and Surface Transportation Technical Committee will continue and a draft project list will be presented at the December RTC meeting and draft financial forecast will be presented at the January RTC meeting. Members were reminded of the importance of staying on schedule and contacting staff with comments early in the process. Jungus Jordan discussed automated vehicles, bicycles, and other modes of transportation and his concern regarding the impact on the gas tax, severance tax, and sales tax used to pay for roadways. Mr. Morris noted a presentation by staff at the recent Mobility 2045 workshop on the fatal future of funding for transportation. He discussed the financial forecasting process used in development of the Plan. A major transportation funding initiative is needed between now and the next legislative session. Staff will make a proposal based on the failure of the current system and the RTC will decide a path forward regarding efforts to advance innovative funding options with either the Legislature or Congress. Kathryn Wilemon discussed vehicle miles traveled fees and resistance by many for this funding option. Mr. Morris noted this discussion will be included in staff's efforts.

13. **2017-2018 CMAQ/STBG Funding Program: Federal/Local Funding Exchanges:** Adam Beckom briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on the proposed projects to be funded under the Federal/Local Funding Exchanges Program in the 2017-2018 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Funding Program. The goal of the Federal/Local Funding Exchanges Program is to increase the pool of regional funds through the exchange of federal and local funds. This effort will also establish the third phase of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC)/Local fund. The new RTC/Local funds will be used for projects being built to local design standards, air quality projects, and regional programs. The intent is to expedite/implement projects not eligible for federal funds or that would be best implemented without federal funds. Requests over the past year include the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Transit Related Improvement Program (TRIP) that was completed in March 2017, the Glade Road/Dallas Fort Worth International Airport project, the continuation of Trinity Railway Express (TRE) local swaps, and a Kaufman County/City of Terrell partnership. Additional detail was provided regarding the TRE local swaps project. Since 2002, the RTC has partnered with cities along the Trinity Railway Express corridor, DART, and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority to raise funds for operational improvement along the TRE. Historically, a regional pool was created from the funds received from local entities. In exchange, the RTC programmed federal funds for improvements along the TRE corridor at a ratio of approximately 2 to 1. Each city's contribution is based upon the amount of vehicles that were counted during a recent vehicle license plate survey, as well as through transit onboard surveys. Mr. Beckom provided a summary of the proposed funding exchanges. The first proposed project is the reconstruction of Glade Road in partnership with the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. Approximately \$5.08 million in federal funds is proposed. Staff also proposed Transportation Development Credits in lieu of a local cash match in order to maximize the amount of local funds that the RTC would receive over time. Staff is working with the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to finalize the funding payback in terms of number of years. The second project is TRE local swaps. Staff proposed approximately \$2.4 million in federal funds, with \$1.68 million local funds received at the rate of \$560,000 over the next three years. The last proposed project is FM 148 in partnership with the City of Terrell. Approximately \$8.6 million in federal funds is proposed, with a

repayment of \$6.67 million in local funds over the next 15 years. Total federal funds requested is approximately \$17 million with approximately \$13.4 million in local funds back to the RTC. A detailed listing of the projects was provided in Electronic Item 13.1, and additional information was provided in Electronic Item 13.2. Mr. Beckom noted staff is also working with Haltom City on a potential partnership. As the partnership is finalized, staff will bring additional information back to the RTC in January. The schedule for the effort was reviewed.

14. **Status Report on NTTA/TxDOT Toll Equity Loan Agreement (TELA) and Associated RTC/NTTA Agreement Concerning Return of TELA Fees:** Ken Kirkpatrick provided an update on the Mutual Termination of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC)/North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) agreement concerning the return of Toll Equity Loan Agreement (TELA) fees to NTTA. In 2010, NTTA and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) executed a Toll Equity Loan Agreement for the purpose of the State Highway Fund serving as a financial backstop to NTTA for the President George Bush Turnpike-Western Extension (SH 161) and the Chisholm Trail Parkway (CTP). The purpose was to enhance the credit rating for SH 161 and the CTP, lowering NTTA's financing costs and saving nearly \$400 million. Near the end of the process, TxDOT imposed a requirement of NTTA to pay TELA fees beginning after ten years and totaling approximately \$8 million annually. As a result, the RTC adopted policy position P10-05, provided in Electronic Item 14.1, that requested NTTA release the TELA commitment for TxDOT as soon as financially feasible and also in support of waiving or returning the TELA fees to NTTA. The RTC and NTTA executed a TELA Fee Return Agreement that if any TELA fees were paid by NTTA the RTC would echo those fees back to NTTA projects. NTTA chose SH 161. The resulting agreement was provided in Electronic Item 4.2. Over the last three years, NTTA has conducted a series of bond refinancings for the NTTA system to take advantage of lower interest rates. Most recently, a Special Projects System bond refinancing related to SH 161 and the Chisholm Trail Parkway saved approximately \$400 million over the life of the bonds. This refinancing combines the two projects into the NTTA system from an administration standpoint. In addition, it eliminated the need for TxDOT TELA support and fees, thereby eliminating the need for RTC's obligation to return any TELA fees to NTTA. NTTA has released TxDOT of the TELA commitment, as shown in Electronic Item 14.3. On November 1, 2017, a mutual Notice of Termination was executed between NTTA and RTC and provided in Electronic Item 14.4. This formally releases the RTC of any further obligation to NTTA concerning the TELA. Correspondence from NTTA regarding the bond refinancing for SH 161 and the Chisholm Trail Parkway was distributed at the meeting in Reference Item 14.5. Mr. Kirkpatrick noted this item closes out an RTC obligation and underscores the good working relationship among RTC, TxDOT, and NTTA to implement major projects in the region.
15. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Reference Item 15.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and meeting minutes in Electronic Item 15.2, and the current Local Motion in Electronic Item 15.3.
16. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
17. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
18. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2017, 1:00 pm, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Morris: How about a new pair of glasses for Thanksgiving?

By Michael Morris
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Nov. 24, 2017

Epiphany is defined as “a grasp of reality through one event usually simple and striking.” The occasion for me was the Fort Worth ISD 2017 Academic Chairs For Teaching Excellence (#FWISDTeachingChairs) held Nov. 15.

This program created an interest and a volunteer opportunity for me to assist the Fort Worth school district. The assignment was to serve on one of 16 committees to review teacher applications and letters of support and conduct interviews. Pretty routine, yet rewarding.

I was flattered as a committee member to be invited to the recognition event but was unprepared. After hearing from sponsors highlighting their commitment to teaching excellence and hearing the real-world life experiences of the most gifted teachers and the impact on students, I was challenged.

In the same one-hour presentation when I felt everything I was doing and had done in transportation seemed so miniscule, I also felt that my worst day does not compare to the challenges and home situations in which some of our children live and to which the school district willingly responds without conditions.

This opportunity created a new lens for me, and I felt blessed by a very small contribution of volunteering.

This lens taught me that a school district does not make changes in big lifts like one of our transportation cranes but through an environment that creates thousands of life-changing opportunities for parents, students and teachers: one encounter at a time, every hour, every school, every day.

This new perspective has taught me that what I may know to be correct may not be. It may be too broad, too general and not precise.

How often have we all said we know what the answer to urban school needs are, and be honest, we really didn't have a clue?

As a community we have a lot to be thankful for. The collective group is doing well, but families in our own neighborhoods are hurting.

We need to change our lens and perspective and see. This experience with the FWISD has taught me to get less of my news from others in the confines of my home and more information from life efforts of volunteering, becoming a sponsor, participating in life and listening.

We need to get our eyes examined, lenses updated, focus and see from our life experiences, not opinions fed to us by our laziness. Make this Thanksgiving and holiday season more meaningful, more active, more real, one encounter at a time, every hour, every day.

Michael Morris, P.E., is the transportation director at the North Central Texas Council of Governments. He is a volunteer committee member for the Lockheed Martin Academic Chair for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Congratulations to Kenyal Carr, Meadowbrook Middle School.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
2018 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS
(Second Thursday, 1:00 pm)**

January 11, 2018

February 8, 2018

March 8, 2018

April 12, 2018

May 10, 2018

June 14, 2018

July 12, 2018

August 9, 2018¹

September 13, 2018

October 11, 2018

November 8, 2018²

December 13, 2018

Dates are subject to change.

¹ This meeting date may be rescheduled for a different date in August to coincide with the annual Irving Transportation Summit.

² The 2018 National League of Cities City Summit is scheduled for November 7-10, 2018.

- [Air Quality Home](#)
- [Air Quality Programs](#)
- [Air Quality Committees](#)
- [Air Quality Policy and Regulations](#)
- [Car Care Clinics](#)
- [Clean Vehicle Information](#)
- [Major Air Pollutants](#)
- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Ozone Information](#)
- [State Implementation Plan \(SIP\)](#)
- [Transportation Conformity](#)
- [Transportation Home](#)

Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles

Funding programs that address air quality, such as clean vehicle projects, are available from a number of Federal, State, local, and non-profit entities. This site provides links to various current and recurring grant opportunities and incentives for clean technology and infrastructure. It also provides information that is helpful once you have received grant funding through NCTCOG.

[Air Quality Funding Home](#)

[Other Air Quality Funding Opportunities](#)

[Sign-Up for Email Updates](#)

Current Vehicle Grant Funding Opportunities

[Select Language](#) [?] ?

| | Eligible Focus Areas | | | | | | | | | Eligible Applicant Type |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Heavy-Duty Vehicles | | | | | | Light-Duty Vehicles | | | |
| | Buses | Oil and Gas Vehicles/Equipment | Long Haul Trucks | Dump Trucks | Idle-Reduction Technology | Other | Passenger Vehicles | Taxis | Idle-Reduction Technology | |
| AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine Program | | | | | | | X | | | General Public |
| Federal and State Incentives and Laws (Including Tax Credits) | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | Private Sector |
| Fleets for the Future | X | | | | | X | X | | | Public Sector |
| New! IC Bus Grant Program | X | | | | | | | | | Public Sector |
| Updated Incentives! Propane Vehicle Incentives for Texas | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | | Public Sector, Private Sector |
| Opens December 1! Rebate Grants | X | X | X | X | | | | | | Public Sector, Private Sector |

[NCTCOG Funding Opportunity Archive](#)

If you have any questions on upcoming funding opportunities, please e-mail AQgrants@nctcog.org.

11/28/2017 9/21/2017 BM/MG

Upcoming DFW Clean Cities Events

Webinar: Idle Reduction Strategies for Public Fleets

1:30 pm, Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Details and Registration Link Available at
www.dfwcleancities.org/webinars



**Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES**

For More Events, Visit www.dfwcleancities.org/events

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Volkswagen Settlement Information

Background:

In 2016, courts determined that Volkswagen had violated the Clean Air Act by deliberately selling diesel vehicles equipped with technologies that tricked emissions testing. These vehicles violated federal emissions requirements, polluting up to 40 times as much as regulations allowed.

This ruling resulted in a settlement totaling \$14.7 billion, which included the following major components:

- \$10 billion set aside for consumer and dealer compensation
- \$4.7 billion to implement new projects that reduce Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) emissions.
 - This will be done through two initiatives
 - Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Investment Program, which will be managed through [Electrify America](#).
 - An Environmental Mitigation Trust, which will be used for projects that primarily clean up emissions from old heavy-duty diesel engines. Funds will be distributed through the states and is proportional to the number of polluting vehicles sold in each area.





The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

December 7, 2017

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Air Quality Division
Implementation Grants Section, MC-204
PO Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087

ATTN: Volkswagen Settlement

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, attached are recommendations outlining how funds associated with the Environmental Mitigation Trust established by the Volkswagen Partial Consent Decrees should be allocated to maximize emission reductions in focused areas and administration options to expand resources. This information was previously transmitted to the Office of the Governor on March 9, 2017.

In summary, the RTC recommends that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) distribute 90 percent of the funding to Council of Government (COG) regions that are most directly impacted by the collective installation of illegal emissions defeat devices in light-duty vehicles with diesel engines by Volkswagen, Audi, and Porsche. The remaining 10 percent funding balance be used as a set aside for other interested COG regions.

Also, the Environmental Mitigation Trust Agreement outlines that beneficiaries may use Trust Funds for actual administrative expenditures associated with implementing such eligible mitigation action. This 15 percent cap includes eligible administrative expenditures incurred by any third-party contractors. The RTC recommends that the TCEQ utilize regional COG's as third-party administrators, and allow the 15 percent to be used for administrative expenditures incurred by each region. Regional distribution of funds is optimal due to existing relationships, close proximity to emission sources, and varying degrees of pollution sources and technology implementation within each region.

We look forward to collaborating with the TCEQ to expand the opportunities that these funds bring to the State of Texas and welcome the opportunity to be a third-party administrator.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (817) 695-9286 or cklaus@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Klaus", is written over a white background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Klaus" clearly distinguishable.

Chris Klaus

AP:ch
Attachment

cc: David Brymer, Director, Air Quality Division, TCEQ



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

March 9, 2017

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

The Honorable Ken Paxton
Attorney General of the State of Texas
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711-2548

Dear Governor Abbott and Attorney General Paxton:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), a roster is included as Attachment 1, which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for North Central Texas, is responsible for meeting federal transportation conformity requirements resulting from our ozone nonattainment status. In addition, the RTC is very involved and committed in implementing a diverse array of emission reduction projects and programs that lessen mobile source impacts. To this end, the RTC sent correspondence to Assistant Attorney General Cruden and Attorney General Paxton on March 10, 2016, requesting a portion of any financial settlement which results from the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Action and the Texas Attorney General's (AG) lawsuit filed in 2015 (Volkswagen Group of America, Inc. and Audi America, LLC), be distributed equitably to all nonattainment areas, see [Attachment 2](#). Since that time, Volkswagen has agreed to a Partial Consent Decree with the United States, which includes the creation of a Mitigation Trust to fund eligible mitigation actions. At this time, the sum from Partial Consent Decrees suggest funding for the State of Texas of approximately \$209 million.

The RTC encourages the State of Texas to pursue funding available to the state as part of the Mitigation Trust established by the Volkswagen Partial Consent Decrees. Accompanying this letter are recommendations on allocating the \$209 million allotment to the State of Texas, as well as suggestions for the dispersal process of the funds, see Attachment 3. Texas can use this funding to not only improve the air quality throughout the state, but can also allow Texas to invest in infrastructure and create jobs. The RTC has a strong collaborative history with the state and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to improve the nonattainment situation in our region. These funds will have a significant impact in improving the quality of life in the region as well have a positive impact on the private and public sectors in a variety of ways. The RTC appreciates your attention to this matter, and looks forward to working with you.

March 9, 2017

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Jensen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ron Jensen
Chair, Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Grand Prairie

CK:ch
Attachments

cc: Bethany Engel, Trial Attorney, US Department of Justice
Barbara L. McQuade, US Attorney, US Department of Justice
Anthony W. Benedict, Assistant Attorney General, State of Texas
Pedro Perez Jr, Assistant Attorney General, State of Texas
Richard Hyde, P.E., Executive Director, TCEQ
David Brymer, Director, Air Quality Division, TCEQ
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of transportation, NCTCOG
Ken Kirkpatrick, Counsel for Transportation, NCTCOG
Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager for Air Quality Planning and Operations, NCTCOG

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Texas Department of
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Sandy Greyson
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Mojoy Haddad
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North Texas Tollway Authority

Roger Harmon
County Judge
Johnson County

Clay Lewis Jenkins
County Judge
Dallas County

Jungus Jordan
Councilmember
City of Fort Worth

Lee M. Kleinman
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T. Oscar Trevino Jr., P.E.
Mayor
City of North Richland Hills

William Tsao, P.E.
Citizen Representative
City of Dallas

Oscar Ward
Councilmember
City of Irving

Duncan Webb
Commissioner
Collin County

B. Glen Whitley
County Judge
Tarrant County

Kathryn Wilemon
Councilmember
City of Arlington

W. Jeff Williams
Mayor
City of Arlington

Erik Wilson
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
City of Dallas

W. B. "Zim" Zimmerman
Councilmember
City of Fort Worth



ATTACHMENT 2

The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

March 10, 2016

The Honorable John C. Cruden
Assistant Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Environment & Natural Resources Division
Law and Policy Section
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530-0001

The Honorable Ken Paxton
Attorney General of the State of Texas
Office of the Attorney General
PO Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711-2548

Dear Assistant Attorney General Cruden and Attorney General Paxton:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for North Central Texas and responsible for meeting federal transportation conformity requirements, is requesting a portion of any financial settlement which results from the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Action filed on January 4, 2016, (Volkswagen AG, Audi AG, Volkswagen Group of America, Inc., Volkswagen Group of America Chattanooga Operations, LLC, Dr. Ing. H.c. F. Porsche AG, and Porsche Cars North America, Inc.) and the Texas Attorney General's (AG) lawsuit filed on October 8, 2015, (Volkswagen Group of America, Inc. and Audi America, LLC), be distributed equitably to all nonattainment counties.

The actions by both the DOJ and Texas AG were a result of findings that Volkswagen AG installed illegal emissions defeat devices in light-duty vehicles with diesel engines. These defeat devices allow tailpipe emissions up to 40 times the legal level of Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x).

These settlement funds would be earmarked to implement air quality projects and/or programs to off-set the increased emissions from the diesel vehicles equipped with the emission test defeat devices. This is important because the Dallas-Fort Worth region is NO_x-limited, which means decreases or increases in NO_x emissions, such as the increases resulting from the emissions test-cheat devices, have a more profound effect on the overall ozone levels.

It is a federal requirement that regions designated nonattainment for ozone must demonstrate transportation conformity for the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). As the region develops or amends the MTP, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), as staff to the RTC, must ensure it complies with these federal requirements and the associated motor vehicle emissions budgets for NO_x and volatile organic compounds set by the State Implementation Plan. To develop the on-road emissions inventories for the region, NCTCOG uses the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Motor Vehicle Emissions

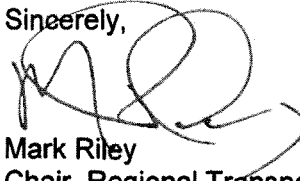
March 10, 2016

Simulator, which includes local inputs and built-in federal vehicle emission standards. The overall emissions for the region are based on many factors, including the assumption vehicle's emission systems design and function are in compliance with State and federal emissions standards. As a result of the recent findings, certain Volkswagen, Audi, and Porsche diesel vehicles are operating above the federally allowed NO_x emissions limits, air quality planning has underestimated these emissions and additional emission reduction control strategies are necessary. Financial assistance through any level of settlement funds would allow nonattainment areas such as the Dallas-Fort Worth region to implement said emission reduction control strategies to offset unhealthy emission impacts.

NCTCOG will continue to partner with the EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality through developing emissions inventories and providing assistance with on-road vehicle emissions data for our region. Although restitution for the individual owners of vehicles equipped with emissions test-cheat devices is prudent, providing a portion of any financial settlement resulting from violations of the Clear Air Act to the nonattainment regions will benefit all citizens through the continued improvement for air quality.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Riley
Chair, Regional Transportation Council
County Judge, Parker County

JPL:ch

cc: Bethany Engel, Trial Attorney, US Department of Justice
Barbara L. McQuade, US Attorney, US Department of Justice
Anthony W. Benedict, Assistant Attorney General, State of Texas
Pedro Perez, Jr., Assistant Attorney General, State of Texas
Richard Hyde, P.E., Executive Director, TCEQ
David Brymer, Director, Air Quality Division, TCEQ
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG
Ken Kirkpatrick, Counsel for Transportation, NCTCOG
Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager for Air Quality Planning and Operations, NCTCOG

Elements of Proposed Technical Plan

Upon the State of Texas pursuit of available funding to the state as part of the Mitigation Trust established by the Volkswagen Partial Consent Decrees, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) requests that the State of Texas, by and through the Office of the Governor, designate the Texas Commission on Environment Quality (TCEQ) as the Lead Agency for the purposes of Texas' participation in the Mitigation Trust. The RTC believes that the TCEQ has shown reliable capabilities in the dispersal of their Texas Emission Reduction Program grants, and has the administrative and technical capacity to serve as the Lead Agency for Texas. The RTC also requests to allow input from regions and other interested parties throughout Texas on the development of the Mitigation Plan.

As stated in the 2.0 L Partial Consent Decree, acceptable projects are identified that allow regions flexibility to maximize investments, with emphasis on high nitrogen oxides reduction programs. The North Central Texas Region can benefit from this Mitigation Trust by implementing said emission reduction strategies to offset unhealthy emissions impacts. As projects vary in benefits across different regions, the RTC suggests that use of funds be determined by each regional Council of Governments (COG) and administration functions be streamlined and flexible to allow for quick project implementation. If a COG is unwilling or unable to participate in the spending of funds, the RTC requests the TCEQ, as the Lead Agency, retain and disperse remaining funds to regions that demonstrate adequate need and interest.

To ensure the appropriate allocation of funds, the RTC requests 90 percent of funds be suballocated to each COG region by total number of registered Volkswagen, Audi, and Porsche vehicles subject to the Partial Consent Decrees in that area. The selected regions are recommended to be based on Transportation Management Areas that were recently recommended nonattainment for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Ozone or have an existing vehicle inspection/maintenance program. As an added benefit, this recommendation falls in line to similar regions identified in Texas Clear Lanes.

Utilizing data supplied by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the following table highlights potential suballocated funding results for each COG after distributing impacted Volkswagen, Audi, and Porsche vehicles. The RTC suggests the remaining 10 percent balance be used as a set aside for other interested COG regions.

| Texas Regional Councils | Vehicles Affected | | | | Potential Settlement Per Texas Regional Councils |
|--|-------------------|-----------|--------|--------|--|
| | 2.0 Liter | 3.0 Liter | Total | | |
| Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) ^{1, 2, 3} | 4,014 | 482 | 4,496 | 11.12% | \$27,438,116 |
| Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) ^{1, 2, 3} | 4,657 | 729 | 5,386 | 13.32% | \$32,869,593 |
| Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) ^{1, 2, 3} | 8,056 | 1,599 | 9,655 | 23.87% | \$58,922,377 |
| North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) ^{1, 2, 3} | 8,789 | 1,537 | 10,326 | 25.53% | \$63,017,345 |
| Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG) ^{1, 2} | 870 | 89 | 959 | 2.37% | \$5,852,570 |
| Remaining Regions with 10% Set Aside | 8,813 | 809 | 9,622 | 10.00% | \$20,900,000 |
| Total Vehicles Affected in State of Texas | | | | | 40,444 |
| VW Settlement to the State of Texas | | | | | \$209,000,000 |
| Fair Share Funding Recommendation Total (VW Settlement – 10% Set Aside) | | | | | \$188,100,000 |
| Total Vehicles in Fair Share Funding Recommendation | | | | | 30,822 |
| Potential Settlement Per Vehicle with Fair Share Funding Recommendation | | | | | \$6,103 |

Fair Share Funding Recommendation: Regional counties within Transportation Management Areas: are proposed for nonattainment under 2015 NAAQS for Ozone or have existing vehicle inspection/maintenance programs; and/or are a part of Texas Clear Lanes

1. Transportation Management Area
2. Proposed Ozone Nonattainment Area (2015 Ozone NAAQS) and/or has Existing Vehicle Inspection/Maintenance Program
3. Texas Clear Lanes

Registration Source: NREL (Polk Vehicle Registration Database)

VW Settlement to the State of Texas Source: Partial Consent Decree 2.0L (9/30/16) and 3.0L (12/20/16)

MINUTES

Regional Transportation Council PUBLIC MEETINGS

Funding Program: Federal/Local Exchanges

Regional Performance Targets for Transit Assets and Roadway Safety

Meeting Dates and Locations

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

1. Monday, Nov. 13, 2017 – 2:30 pm – North Central Texas Council of Governments (Arlington); attendance: 6; moderated by Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager
2. Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017 – 6:00 pm – North Central Texas Council of Governments (North Richland Hills); attendance: 5; moderated by Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager
3. Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017 – 6:00 pm – Richardson Civic Center (Richardson); attendance: 12; moderated by Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager

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 February 12, 2015. Staff presented information about:

1. Funding Program: Federal/Local Exchanges – presented by Adam Beckom (Arlington and North Richland Hills); Brian Dell (Richardson)
2. Regional Performance Targets for Transit Assets and Roadway Safety – presented by Kevin Kroll and Jing Xu (Arlington); Dan Lamers (North Richland Hills and Richardson)

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 presentations made at the meetings are available at www.nctcog.org/input, and a video recording of the Arlington public meeting was posted at www.nctcog.org/video.

Each person who attended one of the public meetings received a packet with a meeting agenda, a sheet on which to submit written comments and copies of the presentations.

Summary of Presentations

Summary of Funding Program: Federal/Local Exchanges presentation:

<http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings/2017/11/FedLocExchanges.pdf>

In April 2017, a process to select projects via several funding programs was presented to the Regional Transportation Council. Projects were categorized into 11 programs, and project selection is proposed to occur in stages throughout 2017 and into early 2018.

The purpose of the Federal/Local Funding Exchanges Program is to increase regional revenues through the exchange of federal funds and local funding. This establishes Phase 3 of the RTC/Local program. The intent is to expedite projects and implement ones not eligible for federal funds or projects that would be best implemented without federal funds.

The DART TRIP Program, Glade Road/DFW Airport, TRE Local Swap and Kaufman County/City of Terrell have submitted requests to participate in the program. The DART TRIP Partnership received approval from the RTC in March 2017, and an agreement between DART and NCTCOG/RTC will soon be executed. Additionally, NCTCOG is working on a potential partnership with Haltom City that may be added to the program for either Broadway Ave or Haltom Road.

All partnership details will be finalized before the RTC takes action on the Federal/Local Funding Exchanges Program in January 2018.

Summary of Regional Performance Targets for Transit Assets and Roadway Safety presentation:

<http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings/2017/11/SafetyTAM.pdf>

When monitoring the performance of the regional transportation system, policy emphasis areas must be identified and metrics and targets must be set for them. Additionally, state and partner agency implementation must be tracked and reported over time and transportation performance must be compared to the aforementioned targets.

MPOs are required by federal law to monitor five safety performance targets: number of fatalities, rate of fatalities, number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries and number of non-motorized fatalities plus serious injuries. MPOs may choose to establish their own targets or adopt the State's targets. NCTCOG is recommending a two percent reduction rate by the end of the reporting period in 2022. It is important to note targets are based on anticipated crashes, not the actual number of crashes that occur. They are also based on a five-year average and will be revisited annually.

DART, FWTA and DCTA are also required to ensure their transit assets are in a state of good repair. These assets include over 700 buses, 300 small buses, 150 light rail vehicles, 150 miles of track, service vehicles, police cars, park and rides and maintenance facilities. Transit asset management practices include regular maintenance, inspections, tracking condition over time, planning for maintenance and replacement costs, and replacing each asset at the appropriate time. Proposed 2018 targets require transit agencies to possess vehicles no longer than 14 years. Vehicles also cannot exceed industry standard service years and agencies should not have any rail track performance restrictions. Additionally, agencies set their own targets that exceed the proposed regional targets.

The RTC must approve the proposed regional targets. Once the targets are approved, a baseline for performance will be developed, progress towards the targets will be tracked, progress will be reported to regional, state and federal partners, metrics will be updated, and targets will be refocused as needed.

**ORAL COMMENTS RECEIVED AT MEETING
(Meeting location in parenthesis)**

Funding Program: Federal/Local Exchanges

Don Ingram, Citizen (Richardson)

A. Air quality funding

Comment: I thought Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds were dedicated to improving air quality. I'm hearing a lot of statistics but none related to air quality.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: You will have a chance to comment on CMAQ funds when we bring them to the public early next year. We take the air quality aspect of transportation planning very seriously. We are constantly reviewing CMAQ projects with the RTC in order to implement projects that have the best chance at reducing emissions. We have done a very good job of improving air quality in the region, and we will continue to do so.

B. Federal funding

Question: How much is the federal government contributing to transportation projects?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: About 50 percent of transportation spending in the region is local. The other 50 percent of funding is split roughly between federal and state. Amounts also vary depending on the funding program.

Regional Performance Targets for Transit Assets and Roadway Safety

James Rivers, Citizen (Arlington)

A. Factors considered when developing performance targets

Question: Are geographical locations and growth taken into account when developing performance targets?

Summary of response by Kevin Kroll: When we develop performance targets, we evaluate the region rather than focus on one specific project or location. Additionally, we look at vehicle volume on roadways when examining crash rates.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: I'll also note our targets are based on expected number of crashes. We're using population to forecast what the number of crashes might be in 2018 and trying to reduce the trend over time.

Howard Maher, Bike Friendly Richardson (Richardson)

A. Age of transit assets

Question: How do you determine the age of a bus? Why would you want a bus to be younger than 14 years old?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We know when the bus was purchased. The transit authorities also know the history of each vehicle. When you have so many people riding these vehicles, wear and tear accumulates quickly. The transit authorities are very judicious about when they replace the vehicles. It is also cheaper to buy a new vehicle than replace all the parts.

B. Narrow roadways

Comment: I traveled to a NCTCOG Bike Rodeo last weekend in Denton, and I didn't feel safe at all traveling on IH 35. It is a very narrow roadway. In conjunction with safety, what are we doing to alleviate this issue?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Studies are telling us everything we're building is safe. However, we expect to conduct additional improvements in that corridor. We'll take a look at it.

Linda Burt, Citizen (North Richland Hills)

A. Safety on the TRE

Question: Is there a safety plan in place for the TRE expansion?

Summary of response by Phil Duplar, Fort Worth Transportation Authority: Our new trains will have cameras. DART is also working on adding additional security to their trains.

Paul Van Zandt, Citizen (North Richland Hills)

A. Concrete barriers on highways

Comment: I see new concrete barriers being built right up against the highway, and I wonder how safe that is.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Everything is a trade off when it comes to planning projects. I was told by TxDOT staff the barriers have been studied, and they help prevent high speed crashes.

Comment: I would love to see the study.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: You can contact the TxDOT District Office in Fort Worth, and I'm sure they would be able to help you.

Victoria Vivero, Citizen (Richardson)

A. Traffic incident management

Comment: Accidents on roadways affect congestion and flow of traffic.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We have a program where we work with law enforcement and the Department of Public Safety to help emergency responders understand what the laws are and how to best handle roadway incidents. It is a voluntary course.

Other

Don Ingram, Citizen (Richardson)

- A. Partnership with NTTA

Question: How is your relationship with NTTA?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We have a very good working relationship with NTTA. TxDOT and NTTA also have a very strong financial partnership with one another.

Shirley Hughes, Citizen (Richardson)

- A. Cross street congestion

Comment: When they shut down LBJ, people started using cross streets to travel from one place to another. We have a lot more trucks coming through here too.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Highway projects take a long time to be built. It is always hard to measure growth and reasons behind it. With 100,000 people moving to this region a year, it's becoming more and more difficult to manage traffic flow, and Collin County is one of fastest growing counties in the country.

- B. Stop light retiming

Comment: Our stop lights need to be retimed. A lot of air pollution comes from cars sitting for long periods of time at the lights.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: You are right. Excessive idling is one of the biggest contributors to air pollution. Throughout the last decade, at least 50 percent of our CMAQ funds have been used to fix those kinds of issues. If you have a specific area in mind you think should be studied, please let us know.

Jean Schobert, North Dallas Neighborhood Association

- A. Mobility gaps in transit systems

Comment: We have a lot of people in Dallas who can't use public transportation because of issues with connectivity. It affects our quality of life. What are you all doing to help fix this?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We are working on studies to determine where the mobility gaps are so we can fix them. We're also working with UTA since they're doing a study on mobility gaps. DART is looking to coordinate with Uber and Lyft to hopefully assist as well.

Terri Estes, Citizen (North Richland Hills)

- A. Increase in mass transit

Comment: I am against toll roads and would like to see an increase in mass transit.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: We are growing so fast. Transportation funding hasn't increased fast enough to keep up with the demand, which is why certain toll roads have been recommended.

Paul Van Zandt, Citizen (North Richland Hills)

A. Opposition to toll roads

Comment: Tolls are not effective. The amount of land and additional construction is outrageous, and we can use those resources to expand already existing roads.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Let me provide you with some background information. We have freeways, traditional tollways operated by NTTA and toll managed lanes, which are owned by TxDOT. The toll managed lanes were built through public/private partnerships. Money allocated by the legislature comes from gas taxes and vehicle registration fees.

B. Toll road signage

Question: Why aren't the signs identifying toll roads larger?

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Because toll managed lanes are a new concept, there isn't currently a law related to sign requirements. However, TxDOT agrees the size of the signs is an issue, and they will be replacing the current signs with newer ones.

WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS

| Name and Title | Agency, City Represented | Topics Addressed | Comments |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Linda Burt | Citizen | Safety on transit and roadways | Attachment 1 |
| Agatha Benjamin | EPA | Outreach for federally funded activities; start time of Arlington public meeting | Attachment 2 |



Public Meeting Comment Form

Instructions:

1. Please mark the box indicating whether you would like to make an oral comment, a written comment, or both oral and written comments.
2. Please fill in your name and affiliation as well as the date and location of meeting.
3. If you are submitting a written comment, please write your comment on this form.
4. Please return this form to an NCTCOG employee at the registration desk.

- I wish to make an oral comment at the public meeting
 I wish to submit a written comment at the public meeting
 I wish to make both oral and written comments at the public meeting

Name Linda Burt

Organization _____

Date 11-14-17

Meeting Location NRH Library

Please provide written comments below:

- What has been planned to keep crime levels low in cities the new TRF is going through? NRH, Mid Cities, Grapevine

- Better enforcement of low speed in the left lane - a safety issue as it is becoming more + more common to come up on drivers going 55-60 in left lane. Especially 183/121



Public Meeting Comment Form

Instructions:

1. Please mark the box indicating whether you would like to make an oral comment, a written comment, or both oral and written comments.
2. Please fill in your name and affiliation as well as the date and location of meeting.
3. If you are submitting a written comment, please write your comment on this form.
4. Please return this form to an NCTCOG employee at the registration desk.

- I wish to make an oral comment at the public meeting
 I wish to submit a written comment at the public meeting
 I wish to make both oral and written comments at the public meeting

Name Agatha Benjamin, P.E. (TA)
 Organization ISEPA
 Date 11/13/2017
 Meeting Location NCTCOG - 616 Six Flags Dr., Arlington, TX 76011

Please provide written comments below:

Recommends that outreach consideration be given for all federal funded activities ~~that~~ to encompass all individuals that will be impacted through the action proposed and allow them an opportunity to participate in the decision making process thru public mty.

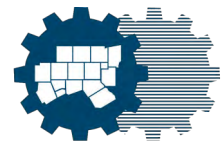
Recommends the Arlington, TX mty be held at a time whereby those living in the local area or nearby take an opportunity to participate. At 2:30 pm citizens / most impacted are at work, school or picking up students, which prevents the opportunity to participate.

Recommends that approx a meeting of general be held at a time ~~that~~ the Arlington public mty will be productive or more useful for the public participation.

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or e-mail, please send to:
 North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
 P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
 E-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org Website: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans>

WHAT DO YOU THINK? TELL US.

Regional Transportation Public Input Opportunity



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Learn about transportation in the region and help set future priorities. The Regional Transportation Council and North Central Texas Council of Governments, together serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974, are seeking public input.

ONLINE REVIEW & COMMENT

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects

A comprehensive list of funded transportation projects through 2020 is maintained in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects with committed funds from federal, state and local sources are included in the TIP. To maintain an accurate project listing, this document is updated on a regular basis. To view the current set of project modifications, visit www.nctcog.org/trans/tip/.

Information will be posted online at www.nctcog.org/input for public review and comment Dec. 11, 2017 - Jan. 10, 2018. To request printed copies of the information, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org.

Submit comments and questions to NCTCOG:

Email: transinfo@nctcog.org

Website: www.nctcog.org/input

Fax: 817-640-3028

Phone: 817-695-9240

Mail: P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, Texas 76005

www.nctcog.org/input

For special accommodations due to a disability or language translation, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org. Reasonable accommodations will be made. *Para ajustes especiales por discapacidad o para interpretación de idiomas, llame al 817-608-2365 o por email: cbaylor@nctcog.org. Se harán las adaptaciones razonables.*

Quick Take

What:

Traffic Counts: Information provided by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Texas Department of Transportation, municipalities and private companies. This data is used for a variety of purposes intended to improve the quality of life of residents of the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Significance:

Traffic counts provide valuable data used in the transportation planning process and in economic development and assessment studies. In a growing region such as Dallas-Fort Worth, the counts provide information to help residents, employers and governments make decisions that improve mobility.

By the Numbers:

180 million

The combined number of miles traveled on the average workday by the 6 million vehicles registered in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. NCTCOG maintains a website offering historical traffic counts throughout the region.

Traffic Counts Play Integral Role in Planning

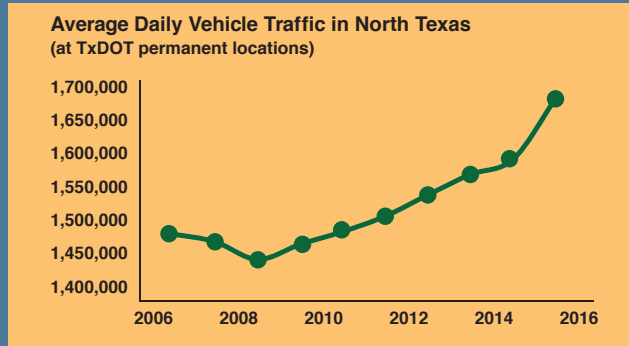
Roadways are the part of the North Texas transportation system affecting virtually everyone who calls the region home or visits for business or pleasure. They connect employees to work, shoppers to stores and transit users to stations. How do we ensure that as the region grows, the roads will continue to take people where they need to go?

Traffic counts are collected regularly to provide planners, traffic engineers and developers with information that helps with decision-making. The goals are to improve the existing transportation infrastructure and assess the economic activity and potential of a road or an intersection to a city or the region.

One element involved in the allocation of funds is the existing or forecast vehicular demand on the roads. If a road becomes congested, one way to improve reliability is to add lanes. If an intersection becomes too busy, its operation can be improved through the retiming of traffic signals. The demand on these roads and intersections can be assessed by counting the number of vehicles that travel on them at a specific time interval, often a 24-hour period.

Average daily traffic at permanent counting stations has increased each year since 2009, when it fell slightly due to the effects of the recession. It is important to understand where traffic is heaviest so transportation resources can be used most effectively. Several companies collect information on travel times and rank the congestion of different regions. This information supplements the data collected by NCTCOG and the Texas Department of Transportation.

Developers and employers use detailed information about traffic counts to help determine where to locate their operations. For example, there is a strong correlation between potential patrons of a restaurant and the number of vehicles that traverse the road where the restaurant is located. Similarly, traffic impacts real estate decisions. When planning housing, it is important to measure the current number of vehicles using the existing roads and estimate how many vehicles will be added after the housing units are built.



Source: TxDOT

Average daily traffic in North Texas has climbed consistently since the end of the recession.

FACTSheet

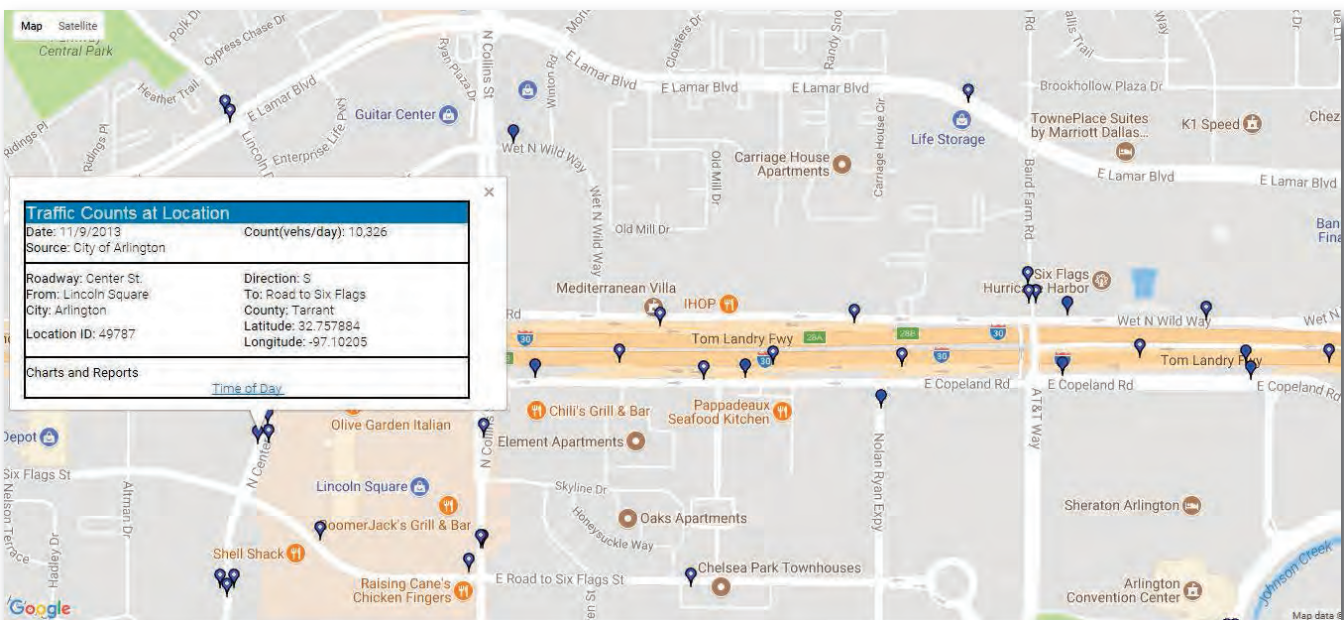
For transportation planning agencies such as NCTCOG, collecting traffic counts is crucial for the calibration and validation of the travel demand model, which is used to forecast traffic volumes on the main roads for up to 30 years. The travel demand model forecasts the future vehicular demand on the transportation network by means of sophisticated algorithms that are estimated based on the current demographics and the characteristics of the existing roadways. The most recent traffic counts are then compared with estimates from the travel model to produce reliable forecasts.

Computer simulations produced by the travel demand model allow planners, engineers and decision-makers to identify the roads that need to be improved or built. This helps keep congestion below critical levels and assure reasonable travel times for the majority of the population.

NCTCOG has integrated a database of historical traffic counts for 50,000 locations in 16 counties. These traffic counts have been assembled from data collected by NCTCOG, cities and TxDOT. The traffic counts database is available at www.nctcog.org/trafficcounts and features a user-friendly website interface that can display data counts by vehicle, time of day and at permanent counting stations. Turning movements can also be reported.

North Texas will spend billions of dollars over the next two-plus decades to improve its multimodal transportation system. But there are more needs than resources. Traffic counts are a crucial piece of the puzzle that planners and policymakers can consider when determining where to allocate the limited transportation resources. This data is useful in making the system work efficiently today and can also assist planners as they project the needs for decades to come.

Counting Cars to Improve Reliability



A variety of information is available to motorists and decision-makers through NCTCOG's historical traffic count website. This map provides an example of traffic in the Arlington Entertainment District.



North Central Texas Council of Governments

Phone: 817-695-9240 Fax: 817-640-3028

Email: transinfo@nctcog.org

NCTCOG.org/trans

Facebook.com/nctcogtrans

Twitter.com/nctcogtrans

YouTube.com/nctcogtrans

Instagram.com/nctcogtrans

Vimeo.com/nctcogtrans

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The public comments report is 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 February 12, 2015.

This report is a compilation of general public comments submitted by members of the public from Friday, October 20, 2017, through Sunday, November 19, 2017. Comments and questions are submitted for the record and can be submitted via Facebook, Twitter, fax, email and online.

Air Quality

Twitter

1. Proud to receive outstanding outreach awards from Air North Texas for our work at OEQ over the last year on behalf of @CityOfDallas . More innovative projects and outreach efforts are on the way! #greendallas #airnorthtexas @NCTCOGtrans – James McGuire (@JamesBMcGuire)



2. Last week we received the Air North Texas Outstanding Partner Involvement Award from @NCTCOGtrans! Thanks to all of our residents and staff who make clean air choices every day. <http://bit.ly/2jnLKV2> - City of Plano (@cityofplanotx)



3. Last week @LiveGreenPlano received the Air North Texas Outstanding Partner Involvement Award from @NCTCOGtrans Department! Thanks to all of our residents and staff who make clean air choices every day. <http://bit.ly/2yyFIE1> – Live Green in Plano (@LiveGreenPlano)

Congrats! ❤️🇺🇸 – The Texas Pool (@texaspoolplano)

Facebook

1. Hey,

That's our guys!!!!

Congrats to all those involved in this endeavor.

Hood County Clean Air Coalition – Kevin Myers for County Judge



2. We're the Air North Texas Partner of the Year for the second year in a row! We couldn't do it without all our amazing citizens and employees help in keeping Grand Prairie a clean place to live. Thank you! #AirNTX – City of Grand Prairie – Municipal Government

Bicycle & Pedestrian

Twitter

1. Sign On!

#bike @NCDOT @NCTCOGtrans @NUSDTransDept @OakDOT @PadresTraffic
@StreetSmarts_NH @bikenewhaven @elmcitycycling @NHVBikeShare #cycle – Michael Charney (@DutchReach)



2. TEXAS Pedestrians BEWARE!!

#TxDOT SHSP emphasizes more death in 2022.

#PedestrianSafetyAwarenessMonth #TxLege #TTI

<http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/library/pubs/gov/shsp.pdf> ... – FakeTxDOT Hwy Safety (@FeauxTxDOT)



3. @jeremyhiggins7 – Joshua Higgins (@JoshuaHiggins13)



4. Now we just need one of those on each of the bazillion other six-lane thoroughfares in Dallas.
– John Lynch (@benitolynchiago)



5. Finally!!! – Chandra Weaver (@OUTSPOKEN_DIVA)



6. #BikeShare Expanding in @CityOfDallas <http://www.fox4news.com/news/bike-share-options-continue-to-grow-in-dallas> Call @311Dallas with concerns. Tracking usage.

@DallasParkRec @NCTCOGtrans – Lee M. Kleinman (@LeeforDallas)



Bike share options continue to grow in Dallas

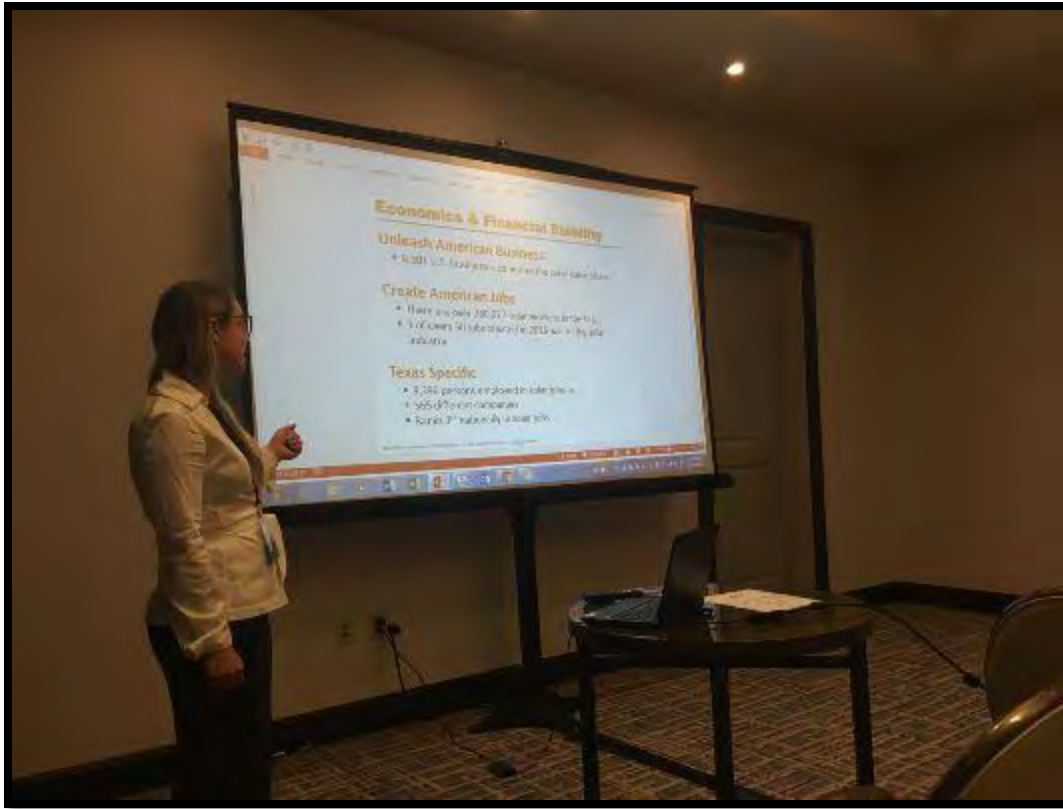
The number of bike share options continues to increase in Dallas and shows no sign of slowing down.

fox4news.com

Innovative Vehicles & Technology

Twitter

1. Kristina Ronneberg from @NCTCOGtrans talks SolSmart at @TexasRenewables #GridNext – Cyrus Reed (@cyrustx)



2. .@NCTCOGtrans yes 635!

driverless trucks, yes but don't pay them to drive, they'll drive when it's efficient on their own – Steven Werner (@StevenWernerCS)

Facebook

1. Looking for charging at work? Send your facilities manager to this workshop! – Tesla Owners Club of North Texas



Lake Corridor Comments

Email

1. Dennis Bernardi

1) Please breakdown the positive impact of 22% reduction in the East/West Option #3 of the NCTCOG Collin Co Magnitude of Volume Change WITH THE LAVON CORRIDOR FREEWAY 2) Please breakdown the NCTCOG Congestion & Delay 2017 report and the Congestion & Delay 2040 report and how this impacts southeast Collin County without the Lake Corridor/Freeway or alternate routes.

2. Becky Bernardi

1) Question for Collin County-Clarence Daugherty- Please comment on the 2035 Collin County Mobility Plan without Lake Corridor/Freeway which states there will be an estimated 900,000 in east Collin County. 50,000 - 75,000 Sachse to Nevada St Paul to Wylie 30,000-50,000, Murphy to Wylie 30,000-50,000. West of 78 Skyview to St Paul and Wylie 10,000-20,000. Nevada Hwy 6 to Hwy 78 10,000-20,000. Lavon 30,000-50,000. Copeville to Farmersville 10,000-30,000 Thank you #2 below 2) NCTCOG Please breakdown the Congestion & Delay Mobility 2017 & 2040 numbers and how this effects Hwy 78 and east Collin County Thank you

3. Julie Kilgore

Please know that the Lake Corridor, the favored route currently recommended by the NCTCOG, is the MOST CONTESTED and the MOST EXPENSIVE in the newest iteration

of the mobility plan. Please do NOT agree to further study on this route as you will be ultimately paying for a highway a mere 2 - 3 MILES from another thoroughfare (hwy 78 - which needs to be converted to a true highway - not waste money paying to plow through neighborhoods - the redundancy, waste, and massive destruction is unnecessary). If you haven't seen a recent aerial view of this area (I recommend nearmap.com) you are vastly underestimating how long ago this ship has sailed, not to mention the fact that we just spent 1.9 million to dredge Lake Lavon (read: its a lot deeper and will need a taller bridge: an additional cost of 100 million dollars or more) (1). This route is a vastly more costly alternative as it necessitates a bridge across lake lavon - the lake that provides 30% of the nearly 2 million residents of the North Texas Municipal water district - the water that comes out of your faucet. A lake that will require additional dredging to keep up with the water demands of a growing community which will be difficult to do with giant bridge in the way, not to mention the potential contamination and pollution of a major water source you risk with a huge bridge traversing it. And, it's not like the cost of the bridge is magically taken care of once it is finally paid for. The tax burden for the upkeep of a highway pales in comparison to a bridge, and you will continue to fit the bill for this bridge you may or may not use (2) Please improve the roads we have, time the lights appropriately, and utilize smart streets. We do not want this highway and encourage you to seek out better less damaging alternatives. We are not interested in creating further induced demand. A more innovative alternative to shuffling the trucks from the intermodal must be entertained. Please do not rubber stamp this computer generated path and waste taxpayer money studying a hotly contested, environmentally irresponsible, and community killing highway. Please also know that the ANNUAL direct cost of corrosion for highway bridges in the US is 13.6 BILLION dollars. And currently, the federal government's annual investment is less than two thirds what is actually needed to maintain roads and bridges and this does NOT factor in improvements (2). Translation: eventually we are going to run out of other people's money. We can't just plan for growth and how to get cars from point A to point B. We must do it in the smartest fiscal manner possible. And as a reminder the 2016 Master plan for Lake Lavon does not include ANY bridge. In fact, they already conducted a study in 2007, and Collin County voters approved funding for a preliminary route study to find an optimum alignment for a bridge across Lavon Lake. After conducting public meetings on the topic, the Collin County Commissioners Court voted on October 11, 2010, to REJECT the Lavon Lake bridge study and update the county Thoroughfare Plan by removing any proposed new bridges that would directly affect USACE-managed lands and water surface. I ask that you similarly REJECT the Lake Corridor. It's dead in the water.

- <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/plano/2015/11/19/water-district-finishes-lavon-dredging-project>
- <https://www.nace.org/Corrosion-Central/Industries/Highways-and-Bridges/>
- Lake Lavon final master plan 9/30/2016 <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/>

Sincerely,
Julie Kilgore, MD

4. Sandra Ritzmann

Members of Regional Transportation Council of North Texas:

I ask that you VOTE AGAINST or alternatively take an active stand AGAINST any further development of any part of this plan, especially the Lake Corridor. There are enough

existing roads that can be enlarged, widened or improved without disruption of existing land, communities or disturbance of the lake environment.

5. Erin Larew

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in hopes that my words and worries do not fall on deaf ears. I am wholeheartedly against the Lake Corridor. I don't want it to come over Lake Lavon and carve its way to the George Bush Tollway. I have a future home that is being built on Troy Road. This is going to be my forever home and the city of Wylie is my forever town. My husband and I love it here. However, a limited access highway dividing Wylie in two and bringing with it noise, air, and light pollution will forever harm Wylie as well as ruin my family's dreams. The last thing I want is my property to be taken from me through condemnation for a value that will most likely not be truly a fair market value.

I understand that something needs to be done. But that something is not The Lake Corridor. I am all for upgrading current large roadways. They don't have homes and neighborhoods that would be decimated. If Collin County wanted this freeway running through the small cities so badly, they should have bought the land many years ago before it was built up. Since then, homes, dreams, families, and lives have flourished. This proposed freeway is a reactive plan and not proactive. Now is the time to be proactive somewhere else. The boat was missed on this one.

Please also think about the cost. It would cost more to build a bridge than to build on land. Think about our drinking water - millions of cars and trucks with contaminants will be driving over it. Think about air quality, which will only get worse in the area where this road is proposed by bringing traffic to this area. Lastly, please think about the lives you will impact.

Again, please evaluate current large roads. There is another way. With many hearts, brains, and hands something better can be created. Sometimes it is not as black as white as a computer program and a grid system.

6. Lisa Strimpel

Dear Council Member,

I am writing you to ask that you consider another option for the NCTCOG transportation over Lake Lavon. Wylie east and the surrounding communities are homes to families that like lake living and being in the country. We like the calm and peaceful atmosphere of our land, lakes and wildlife. We do not want the pollution that mass transit would bring. Pollution to the waters, our neighborhoods and the 24 hour noise of vehicles on 8 lanes of traffic. I make an offer to update existing roads that are in need of repair instead of tearing down our homes. I bought this home 10 years ago at the age of 35. I was newly widowed and had two daughters ages 13 and 15 to raise by myself. I picked this home for the peace and tranquility. We have many family gatherings with children who play in the yard flying kites and chasing butterflies. The chickens we have as pets give us one egg every day. Our neighbors have sheep, goats and horses. Doves, Cardinals, Owls and Hawks fly overhead. Wild rabbits, foxes, squirrels, raccoons and coyotes run in the fields. I made the decision to move to a small community that is quiet at night and the stars shine bright in the sky. I can sit on my front porch and enjoy a cup of coffee and watch the sun rise across the lake. I

invite you to come spend a day with me and walk the property, have a BBQ, spend time and enjoying what nature has given me and my family.

7. G. Dan Mingea

The proposed Lake Corridor, across Lake Lavon and through East Wylie, negatively impacts hundreds of homeowners, including me! This plan is a social and ecological disaster.

I am strongly opposed to this hostile takeover.

Spend the money improving existing roadways.

Public Forums & Meetings

Twitter

1. TONIGHT! Tired of sitting in traffic on I-635? Join @garlandtxgov @TxDOTDallasPIO @NCTCOGtrans & our office for a #Transportation Forum! – Victoria Neave (@Victoria4Texas)

VICTORIA NEAVE
TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

TIRED OF SITTING IN TRAFFIC ON I-635?

STATE REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIA NEAVE INVITES YOU TO A TRANSPORTATION FORUM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2017 6:00 PM TO 8:30 PM

VICTORIA NEAVE, STATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR HD 107

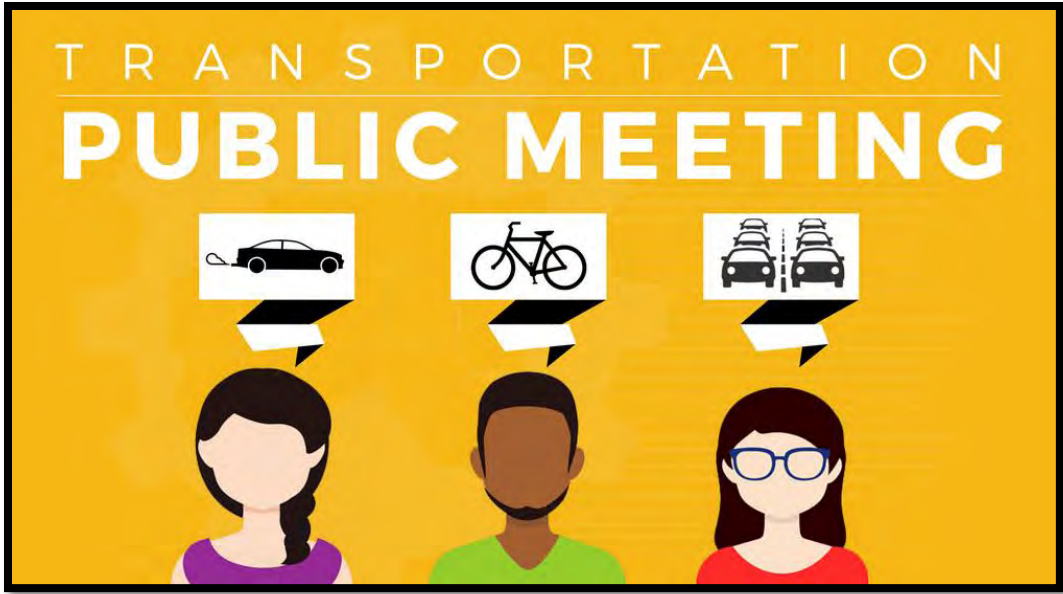
BJ WILLIAMS, GARLAND CITY COUNCILMAN

RICH AUBIN, GARLAND CITY COUNCILMAN

MICHAEL MORRIS, DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION, NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

KELLY SELMAN, DALLAS DISTRICT ENGINEER, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2. It's that time again! We're hosting a public meeting at 2:30 pm today at NCTCOG headquarters. Can't make it? Watch it here: <http://nctcog.org/video>. – NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)

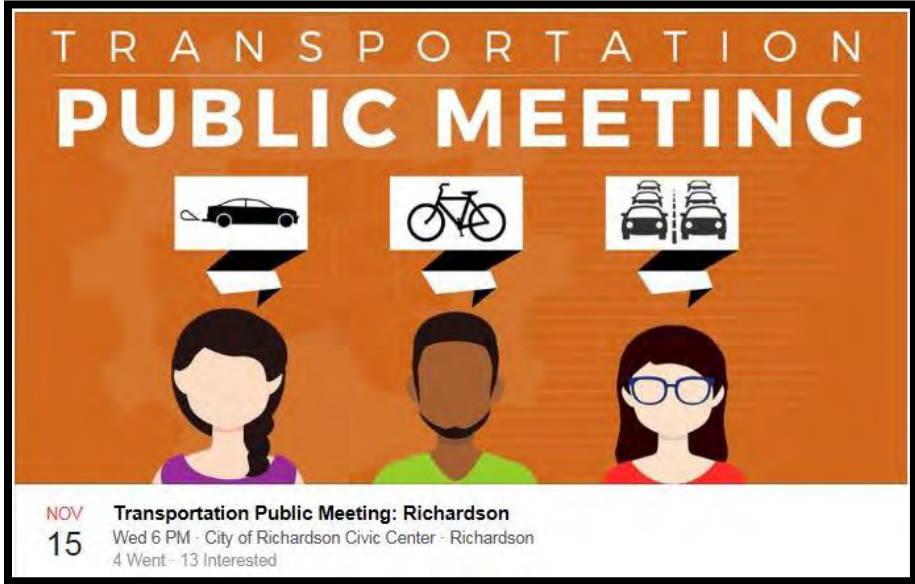


How do I see the meeting today – river oaks emc (@riveroaksemc)

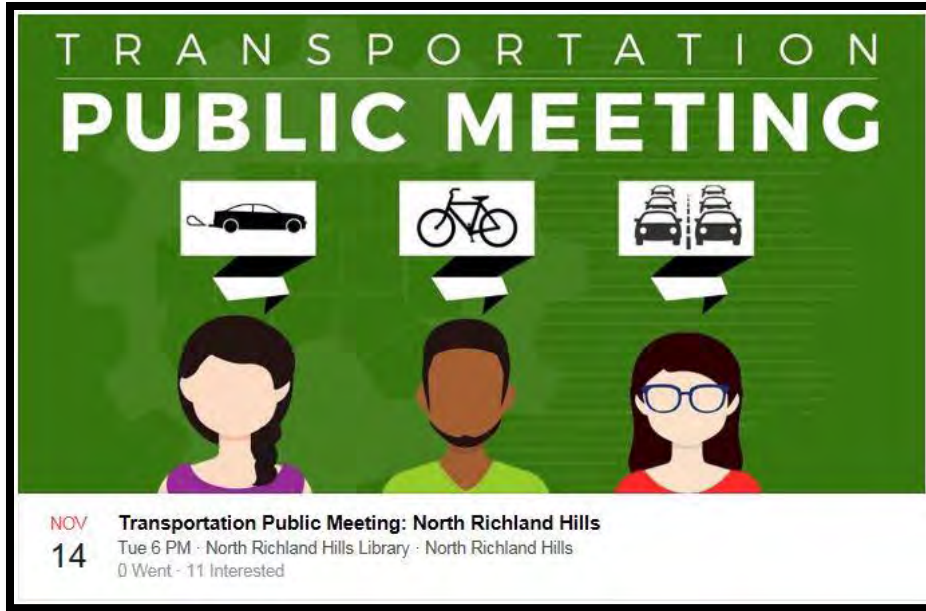
Hi! If you'd like to watch today's public meeting, visit <http://nctcog.org/video> , and click "Public Meetings." Today's meeting will be the first option. – NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)

Facebook

1. Get involved in your community transportation policies and plans! – Greater Dallas Bicyclists



2. North Central Texas Council of Governments will hold a transportation public meeting in NRH next week. Find all the details below. – North Richland Hills City Hall



Email

1. **Christie Holland**

Good morning Carli,

I had a quick question regarding the public meeting you sent me. Is the group that hosted the meeting a governmental body according to the Texas Meetings Act? I thought that they were but my professor is not sure.

Thank you for your help!

Response by Carli Baylor, NCTCOG

Hi, Christie

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the NCTCOG Transportation Department and Regional Transportation Council (RTC) are together responsible for developing, coordinating and allocating funding to transportation plans and related air quality projects.

Transportation public meetings are held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Process, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the RTC and amended on February 12, 2015.

The full Public Participation Plan can be viewed here:
http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/involve/FINAL_PPP_031110.pdf

Please let me know if you need further clarification.

Thanks,

Carli

Rideshare

Twitter

1. Designed to lose money from Day 1....glad it's Arlington... – FairParkRising (@FairParkRising)



2. @ljbexpress, @AgProfJB1 of @TAMU, @TomBamonte of @NCTCOGtrans & @JonnyWalkerbot of @lyft will talk ride sharing, connectivity & future of infrastructure on 11/17

<http://bit.ly/transportation-xroads> ...

#Transportation – North Dallas Chamber (@NDCC)



Roadway

Email

1. Elaine Laisure

Thousands of homes from, Fort Worth, TX to Weatherford, TX, are being built using I20 West from Fort Worth to Weatherford causing congestion. There are no Short term Future lanes or roads to handle the daily traffic on I20. Weatherford, Willow Park Brock and other urban cities in and around weatherford have a population explosion. WHEN are you going to expand I20 or add toll roads? If need be put in a toll roads. We need roads NOW not 5 or 10 years from now. Do something about it now!

2. Charlotte Bagh

Relative to the HOV Technology Update presented in October. I regret that I was unable to attend the hearings where this was presented. Nevertheless, I would like to give input, if I may. (Although I know that at this point it may be pretty much a "done deal"). I am inclined not to support this change for several reasons. 1) I do not support a system that does not allow individuals to state their own case. Technology is fallible and sometimes unusual situations arise (such as when someone may have to enter an HOV lane to avoid an accident, etc). 2) Technology is expensive and obviously that cost must be balanced somewhere. Have discussions been held to consider what the financial impact may be long-term? (Of course, the likelihood is that once a new technology is implemented, there will be no going back). 3) In these days of Identity Theft, I regret to see yet another situation where personal information will be handed over to a "third party". (I realize I'm probably showing my age there. :) 4) I have lived in North Texas for many years and have seen numerous changes in the transportation system attributable to changes in technology. In my opinion some of these changes have been for the worse rather than the better. One example is the red light cameras. I won't begin to relay all the issues involved with them - I'm sure your team is very much aware. Another that I have found to be confusing rather than helpful is the new flashing yellow light. (The primary problem with that, as I see it, is the fact that it obscures the change to a solid yellow light, which has always served a very useful purpose. But I digress...) 5) I know there is in this society a tendency to distrust law enforcement and local government in general. I think that a "gotcha" type system, where no human interaction is involved, only serves to foster this mistrust. (This is similar to my first point above). So those are my comments. I hope they are helpful. I know that you folks deal with some pretty tough issues and I appreciate your efforts. I especially appreciate your commitment to holding hearings throughout the region to increase citizen awareness and input. Best of luck to you, Charlotte Bagh City of Dallas resident

Response by Amanda Wilson, NCTCOG

Ms. Bagh,

Thank you very much for your comments and questions related to the HOV Technology Update presented at public meetings in October. Your questions are very good and ones NCTCOG staff, and ultimately the policymakers on the Regional Transportation Council, are working to address. Hopefully this information can answer some of your questions. All of your questions and comments will be provided to the RTC.

First, in relation to your comment about drivers being able to “state their own case,” should the pilot program be successful, this technology would not be implemented and then left to operate on its own. We understand that technology can be fallible. NCTCOG will be working over the coming months with transportation partner agencies to develop a fraud detection system, as well as a system for customers to dispute inaccurate charges that does have some level of human interaction and will allow customers to provide evidence and state their case. This is not finalized, but is part of the pilot program underway now.

Second, you ask about costs. This is another element of the pilot program, to look at the business case for this technology. Looking at the current system, there are costs associated – the development and maintenance of the DriveOn TEXpress app, the frustration of the public at registering for carpool discounts each day a driver will be carpooling, the cost of police enforcement and of the legal system for prosecuting violators. The new system would shift from a “catch-me-if-you-can” system where it is easy to violate and difficult to enforce occupancy to an occupancy detection system where the focus is simply on making sure drivers receive the proper rate without having to go through daily measures.

Your third comment addresses identity theft. NCTCOG’s focus is ensuring that any data that is collected is secured. In addition, the information that is expected to be collected includes name, license plate number and toll tag number. If for some reason the system is jeopardized, these data items should not put individuals’ identities at risk.

You also address red-light cameras and the flashing yellow turn signal. NCTCOG works closely with cities, counties and TxDOT on the most current technology that can enhance safety. There have been local and national studies demonstrating positive safety benefits of red light cameras at high crash intersections. However, elected officials at all levels must attempt to balance the safety benefits against privacy and other social issues. Flashing yellow arrows are now part of the Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices as an alternative to the solid green light used as a permissive turn indicator which can be confused with the green lights for through movements. As with all new signals and signs, it will undoubtedly take time for all motorists to fully adapt to their usage. Another hidden cost that a new technology will eliminate is that of negative safety impacts to our law enforcement officers in the corridor as well as the stopped motorists that have been pulled over on the side of a busy, fast moving roadway. The proposed system would eliminate these dangerous situations as there would be no need to pull vehicles over for an occupancy violation.

Your last comment relates back to the lack of human interaction in this system. In fact, this is designed to be less “gotcha” than the current system. We feel many carpoolers are not taking advantage of the 50 percent peak period discount on the TEXpress Lanes because it is too complicated to register each trip in advance. The Carma technology is testing whether an in-car beacon working alongside either a smartphone app or occupant beacons will automatically detect the number of people in the car and apply the correct toll rate without work of the driver

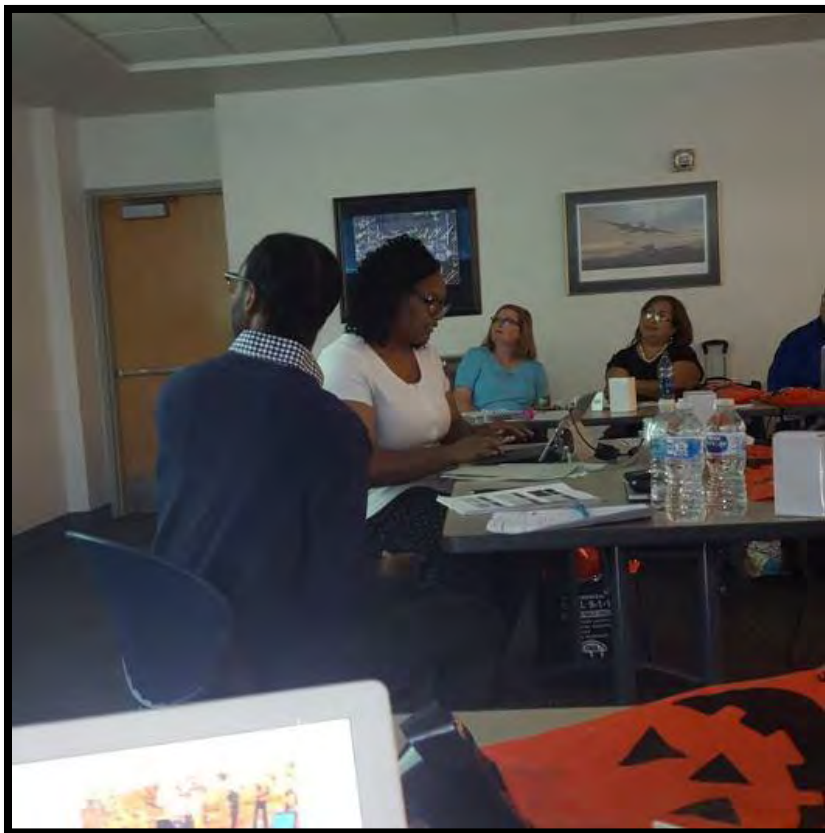
past registration in the system and ensuring occupants have either the app or the beacon. There will still be human interaction in the event that there is a toll dispute or if the system detects possible fraud by the user and the user can interact with a person to provide information on the trips. It should be noted that the use of the proposed automated occupancy detection and verification system would be completely voluntary. Only those motorists who wish to take advantage of the occupancy discount would be required to utilize it.

Again, you ask very insightful questions and provide good comments that will help us during this pilot program. Please feel free to ask additional questions or provide additional comments.

Other Comments

Twitter

1. Great presentation by @NCTCOGtrans on the Use of Social Media at today's Public Educators of TX meeting! – PotterRandall911ECD (@PR911ECD)



2. Hard at work preparing grant apps for @NCTCOGtrans Blue Green Grey. Great fun to dream up great projects for NTX. Ready to make them happen! – URBAN ECOPLAN (@URBAN_ECOPLAN)

3. Enjoying talking w/ great people at the DCCCD Sustainability Summit. Come see us at Cedar Valley College today & get some cool stuff, too. – NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)



Glad to see @NCTCOGtrans here at #ssummit17 – James McGuire (@JamesBMcGuire)

Glad to be here today! – NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)

4. Check out what's happening at NCTCOG

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1105493007542&ca=c2b5e9bb-ba53-43f9-99a7-174945b5ea79> ... @NCTCOG911 @NCTCOGenv @NCTCOGtrans #regionalism – TARC (@txregionalism)

5. Oh how the times have changed! It would have been something to see downtown like this back then. – Joey McReynolds (@joeymcreynolds)

NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

The Roaring Twenties in Downtown Fort Worth at Main and 10th Streets—a place where you could buy diamonds, clothing or see a one-cent movie! #tbt



6. And don't forget the streetcar tracks "front & center" making getting around a breeze! – Loren S. (@txbornviking)

NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

The Roaring Twenties in Downtown Fort Worth at Main and 10th Streets—a place where you could buy diamonds, clothing or see a one-cent movie! #tbt



7. Drive the NTE TEXpress Lanes TOMORROW and help support Tarrant Area Food Bank!! – NTE (@NTEExpress)

NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

Drive on TEXpress lanes 11/18 and help feed those in need!
Proceeds from each toll transaction, up to \$15,000, will be donated to Tarrant Area Food Bank and North Texas Food Bank.
bit.ly/2irXoLn



8. Drive LBJ TEXpress Lanes TOMORROW and a portion of your tolls with benefit @ntfb! – LBJ Express Project (@lbjexpress)

NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

Drive on TEXpress lanes 11/18 and help feed those in need!
Proceeds from each toll transaction, up to \$15,000, will be donated to Tarrant Area Food Bank and North Texas Food Bank.
bit.ly/2irXoLn



9. 714 Main, tall building on the left, was the tallest building in the state at the time of its completion. – Fort Worth Urban (@UrbanFortWorth)

NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

The Roaring Twenties in Downtown Fort Worth at Main and 10th Streets—a place where you could buy diamonds, clothing or see a one-cent movie! #tbt



10. When streetcars roamed our fair city! – Loren S. (@txbornviking)

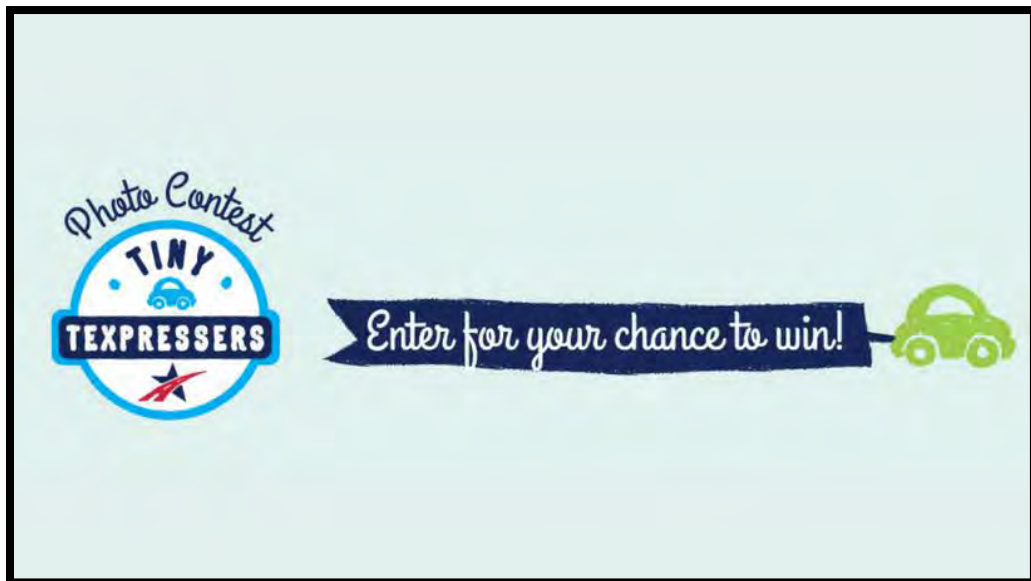
NCTCOGTransportation @NCTCOGtrans

The Roaring Twenties in Downtown Fort Worth at Main and 10th Streets—a place where you could buy diamonds, clothing or see a one-cent movie! #tbt



Facebook

1. It's the final week of the Tiny TEXpressers photo contest! Enter your kid and you could win \$2,000! 📷📱📧 <http://tinytexpressers.hscampaigns.com> – NCTCOG Transportation Department



I keep getting an error when logging in to the Facebook page. Says technical issues!? – Chad

Powell

Hey, North Tarrant Express LBJ Express, can you help Chad out? – NCTCOG Transportation Department

Hi Chad, we were experiencing technical issues on the contest page last night. We suspect it is due to the amount of entries we received during the final week of the contest. We apologize for the inconvenience and have extended the photo submission deadline to 11:59 AM! Please see that the page is now up and running. Please message me if you are still experiencing issues. – North Tarrant Express

North Tarrant Express still getting an error message – Chad Powell

This is what it says: We're sorry - it looks like the page you requested does not exist or we are having technical problems..

We have logged this event. – Chad Powell

Hi Chad, can you try using a different internet browser like Safari or Firefox? Facebook browser has been slow for some people and they found that trying a different browser worked. Please copy and paste tinytexpressers.hscampaigns.com into a different browser and let me know if this helps resolve the issue. – North Tarrant Express

Got it! Thank you. Safari was the trick – Chad Powell

2. Enjoying talking with great people at the DCCCD Sustainability Summit. Come see us at Cedar Valley College today and get some cool stuff, too! – NCTCOG Transportation Department



Odd, since the COG is king of archaic highway development. – Brad H Tuna

3. It's not too late to register for the Texas Energy Summit hosted by TEES' Energy Systems Laboratory! – Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station



4. Take NCTCOG's survey for a chance to win a \$50 gas gift card or one month of free trips on the LBJ TEXpress Lanes! – LBJ Express



5. Take NCTCOG's survey for a chance to win a \$50 gas gift card or one month of free trips on the NTE TEXpress Lanes! – North Tarrant Express



6. Drive LBJ TEXpress Lanes and benefit North Texas Food Bank tomorrow! – LBJ Express



7. Drive on the NTE TEXpress Lanes TOMORROW and help support Tarrant Area Food Bank!
– North Tarrant Express



Email

1. **VanDella Meniffee**

To Whom It May Concern: How many miles are in the North Texas 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth area? Thank you!



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

December 1, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
United States Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, I thank you for your leadership in transportation policy. The RTC requests your assistance in expediting a solution in Buy America waiver requests to alleviate significant delays in implementation of clean vehicle projects that are designed to reduce emissions and improve air quality as part of local efforts to attain the federal ozone standard in the DFW area.

Through the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), which serves as staff to the RTC, the RTC funds implementation of a variety of emissions-reducing activities using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds. Implementation of key emission-reducing projects in the ozone nonattainment area continues to be delayed due to a slowdown in the processing of Buy America waiver requests for clean vehicle projects, which NCTCOG understands is largely a result of the Executive Order on Buy American and Hire American, issued by President Trump on April 18, 2017. Additional details are outlined in the enclosed correspondence to US Department of Transportation (US DOT) staff. In follow-up to this letter, staff spoke with Mr. Okonkwo by phone and confirmed that the US DOT has received NCTCOG vehicle waiver requests, but could not provide a schedule for processing or approval.

Although the RTC applauds Buy America principles, the global nature of vehicle manufacturing is widely understood. The ongoing delays in receiving requested waivers has resulted in unintended consequences, including real-world air quality impacts due to prolonged use of high-emitting vehicles and delayed emissions reductions critical to attaining the ozone standard. In addition, projects were originally planned around typical annual vehicle procurement cycles to maximize opportunities for participation; the delays and lack of an estimated timeframe for resolution cause uncertainty that reduces the ability to leverage this schedule.

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Page Two

December 1, 2017

The RTC requests your help in expediting the processing of pending waiver requests for clean vehicle projects so that emissions-reducing projects can proceed. If there are any conditions that must be met for waivers to be issued, clear communication regarding such conditions would be appreciated so that staff can properly design projects at the outset. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Franke", written in a cursive style.

Rob Franke, P.E.
Chair, Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Cedar Hill

LPC:ch
Enclosure

cc: North Central Texas Congressional Delegation
Jose Campos, Federal Highway Administration Texas Division
Barbara Maley, Federal Highway Administration Texas Division
Edwin Okonkwo, U.S. Department of Transportation
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG



North Central Texas Council Of Governments

September 12, 2017

Mr. Edwin Okonkwo
Highway Engineer
United States Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Okonkwo:

On behalf of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), which serves as staff to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, I am writing to request your assistance in resolving an issue that has recently forced delays in implementation of clean vehicle projects that are designed to reduce emissions and improve air quality as part of local efforts to attain the federal ozone standard in the DFW area.

The RTC funds implementation of a variety of emissions-reducing activities using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds. These efforts include a range of clean vehicle projects that are particularly cost-effective in reducing emissions. In previous years, clean vehicle projects have routinely received waivers from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), providing relief from strict Buy America requirements as the rule has proved to be prohibitive for these types of assets. These requirements, as applied to CMAQ funds by FHWA, require 100 percent of iron and steel components to be domestically-sourced. Waivers have been granted based on the understanding that this requirement is infeasible for vehicle projects, and have been contingent upon final assembly in the United States, which was determined to meet the intent of the Buy America provisions. The explanation provided by FHWA on previously approved vehicle waivers states:

"In today's global vehicle manufacturing industry, vehicle components are typically obtained from suppliers all over the world. Given the number of components and small subcomponents in vehicles, it is not practical for manufacturers in the current market to certify that a vehicle meets FHWA's regulatory requirement of 100-percent domestic iron and steel content. In order to maintain jobs and obtain the benefits intended in the Federal-aid highway program, such as improved air quality and bridge inspections, FHWA recognizes that it is in the public's interest to waive the Buy America requirement for vehicles or equipment on the condition that they are assembled domestically."¹

¹ <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/contracts/waivers.cfm?id=131>

These waivers were approved on a routine basis through the second quarter of 2016. NCTCOG submitted a waiver request for the first quarter of 2017. Staff was notified by the FHWA Texas Division that the waiver process was "on hold" due to ongoing re-evaluation by the new Administration, and that waiver requests from the third and fourth quarters of 2016 were still pending. No estimated timeframe for resolving this issue was provided.

NCTCOG supports the emphasis on American-made products and understands the need to re-evaluate the waiver process from time to time. However, NCTCOG notes that the Executive Order issued by President Trump, enclosed for reference, does not prohibit additional waivers to be issued. It simply requires all agencies to evaluate processes and policies to ensure that waivers are minimized. With regard to clean vehicle projects, there has been no substantial change in the global nature of the vehicle manufacturing industry in the past year. No vehicle on the market today is able to meet the 100 percent Buy America requirement. Unless waivers continue to be authorized for projects involving acquisition of clean vehicles with CMAQ funds, the following categories of eligible CMAQ projects and programs would become ineligible:

- 1) Diesel Engine Retrofits and Other Advanced Truck Technologies
- 2) Alternative Fuels and Vehicles

Ineligibility of these categories would be in direct contradiction to the emphasis that the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act continues to place on prioritizing use of CMAQ funds to distributing funds for "diesel retrofit" projects, which are defined as including vehicle replacements, repowers, rebuilding, after-treatment, or other technologies.

NCTCOG is currently under contract to administer four CMAQ-funded projects, which are impacted by this issue. Contracts for the following projects have all been approved by both FHWA and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), but face delays due to this issue:

- 1) a project to replace old vehicles with newer, low-emission vehicles;
- 2) a project to provide incentives for zero-emission vehicle purchases by local governments;
- 3) a project to provide alternative fuel "loaner" vehicles to local governments to encourage future purchases of the lowest emission technologies available; and,
- 4) a project to facilitate advanced truck technologies and vehicle replacements or upgrades through a revolving loan.

All vehicle types involved in these projects have received Buy America waivers from FHWA in the past few years. At best, these projects are delayed until resolution is reached regarding the waiver process and FHWA is able to resume issuing waivers. At worst, these projects will not be able to move forward at all.

Mr. Okonkwo
Page Three

September 12, 2017

NCTCOG requests your help in expediting a positive resolution. Specifically, we appreciate your assistance in championing the ongoing need for waivers on domestic content for clean vehicle activities, contingent upon final assembly in the United States. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager at (817) 695-9286 or cklaus@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation

LPC:ch

cc: Pete Stephanos, Director, Office of Program Administration, FHWA
Michael Leary, Director, Planning & Program Development, FHWA Texas Division
Jose Campos, Intermodal Team Leader, FHWA Texas Division
Barbara Maley, Air Quality Specialist/Planning Coordinator, FHWA Texas Division
Peggy Thurin, P.E., Project Manager, Texas Planning & Programming Division, TxDOT
Nick Page, MPO Coordinator, Transportation Planning & Programming Division, TxDOT
Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager, NCTCOG



The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 18, 2017

Presidential Executive Order on Buy American and Hire American

EXECUTIVE ORDER

BUY AMERICAN AND HIRE AMERICAN

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to ensure the faithful execution of the laws, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. As used in this order:

(a) "Buy American Laws" means all statutes, regulations, rules, and Executive Orders relating to Federal procurement or Federal grants including those that refer to "Buy America" or "Buy American" that require, or provide a preference for, the purchase or acquisition of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States, including iron, steel, and manufactured goods.

(b) "Produced in the United States" means, for iron and steel products, that all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.

(c) "Petition beneficiaries" means aliens petitioned for by employers to become nonimmigrant visa holders with temporary work authorization under the H-1B visa program.

(d) "Waivers" means exemptions from or waivers of Buy American Laws, or the procedures and conditions used by an executive department or agency (agency) in granting exemptions from or waivers of Buy American Laws.

(e) "Workers in the United States" and "United States workers" shall both be defined as provided at section 212(n)(4)(E) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(n)(4)(E)).

Sec. 2. Policy. It shall be the policy of the executive branch to buy American and hire American.

(a) Buy American Laws. In order to promote economic and national security and to help stimulate economic growth, create good jobs at decent wages, strengthen our middle class, and support the American manufacturing and defense industrial bases, it shall be the policy of the executive branch to maximize, consistent with law, through terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards and Federal procurements, the use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States.

(b) Hire American. In order to create higher wages and employment rates for workers in the United States, and to protect their economic interests, it shall be the policy of the executive branch to rigorously enforce and administer the laws governing entry into the United States of workers from abroad, including section 212(a)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(5)).

Sec. 3. Immediate Enforcement and Assessment of Domestic Preferences According to Buy American Laws. (a) Every agency shall scrupulously monitor, enforce, and comply with Buy American Laws, to the extent they apply, and minimize the use of waivers, consistent with applicable law.

(b) Within 150 days of the date of this order, the heads of all agencies shall:

(i) assess the monitoring of, enforcement of, implementation of, and compliance with Buy American Laws within their agencies;

(ii) assess the use of waivers within their agencies by type and impact on domestic jobs and manufacturing; and

(iii) develop and propose policies for their agencies to ensure that, to the extent permitted by law, Federal financial assistance awards and Federal procurements maximize the use of materials produced in the United States, including manufactured products; components of manufactured products; and materials such as steel, iron, aluminum, and cement.

(c) Within 60 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Labor, the United States Trade Representative, and the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council, shall issue guidance to agencies about how to make the assessments and to develop the policies required by subsection (b) of this section.

(d) Within 150 days of the date of this order, the heads of all agencies shall submit findings made pursuant to the assessments required by subsection (b) of this section to the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(e) Within 150 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of Commerce and the United States Trade Representative shall assess the impacts of all United States free trade agreements and the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement on the operation of Buy American Laws, including their impacts on the implementation of domestic procurement preferences.

(f) The Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the United States Trade Representative, shall submit to the President a report on Buy American that includes findings from subsections (b), (d), and (e) of this section. This report shall be submitted within 220 days of the date of this order and shall include specific recommendations to strengthen implementation of Buy American Laws, including domestic procurement preference policies and programs. Subsequent reports on implementation of Buy American Laws shall be submitted by each agency head annually to the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, on November 15, 2018, 2019, and 2020, and in subsequent years as directed by the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The Secretary of Commerce shall submit to the President an annual report based on these submissions beginning January 15, 2019.

Sec. 4. Judicious Use of Waivers. (a) To the extent permitted by law, public interest

waivers from Buy American Laws should be construed to ensure the maximum utilization of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States.

(b) To the extent permitted by law, determination of public interest waivers shall be made by the head of the agency with the authority over the Federal financial assistance award or Federal procurement under consideration.

(c) To the extent permitted by law, before granting a public interest waiver, the relevant agency shall take appropriate account of whether a significant portion of the cost advantage of a foreign-sourced product is the result of the use of dumped steel, iron, or manufactured goods or the use of injuriously subsidized steel, iron, or manufactured goods, and it shall integrate any findings into its waiver determination as appropriate.

Sec. 5. Ensuring the Integrity of the Immigration System in Order to "Hire American." (a) In order to advance the policy outlined in section 2(b) of this order, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, as soon as practicable, and consistent with applicable law, propose new rules and issue new guidance, to supersede or revise previous rules and guidance if appropriate, to protect the interests of United States workers in the administration of our immigration system, including through the prevention of fraud or abuse.

(b) In order to promote the proper functioning of the H-1B visa program, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, as soon as practicable, suggest reforms to help ensure that H-1B visas are awarded to the most-skilled or highest-paid petition beneficiaries.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof;
- (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals; or
- (iii) existing rights or obligations under international agreements.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

DONALD J. TRUMP

THE WHITE HOUSE,
April 18, 2017.



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

December 1, 2017

Mr. James Bass
Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Bass:

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) would like to confirm that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) set a toll rate of zero for transit vehicles that travel on the managed lanes operated by TxDOT, within the Dallas-Fort Worth region. As the transportation policy body of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has established a policy that transit vehicles will not be charged a toll on the managed lanes within the region. This policy was established 2006. Please find a copy of the RTC Tolerated Managed Lane Policies enclosed for your reference. This letter is in reference to Policy Number 5.

NCTCOG staff has confirmed with Cintra that they are honoring this policy and it is documented within the contracts that TxDOT has with Cintra. NCTCOG staff would like to confirm with TxDOT that TxDOT is implementing this policy on the managed lane roadways that you are operating within the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Please confirm and please let us know if you need any additional information to identify transit vehicles to ensure they are not charged a toll on the regional managed lane system. Please have your staff coordinate with Natalie Bettger, Senior Program Manager, at nbettger@nctcog.org or (817) 695-9280. Thank you for your time and assistance.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Morris". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation

NB:lk
Enclosure

cc: Natalie Bettger, NCTCOG

TOLLED MANAGED LANE POLICIES

(Last Updated March 2016)

1. A fixed-fee schedule will be applied during the first six months of operation; dynamic pricing will be applied thereafter.
2. The toll rate will be set up to \$0.75 per mile during the fixed-schedule phase. The established rate will be evaluated and adjusted, if warranted, with Regional Transportation Council approval.
3. Toll rates will be updated at least monthly during the fixed-schedule phase.
4. Market-based tolls will be applied during the dynamic-pricing phase. During dynamic operation, a toll rate cap will be established. The cap will be considered “soft” during times of deteriorating performance when a controlled rate increase above the cap will be temporarily allowed.
5. Transit vehicles will not be charged a toll.
6. Single and two-occupant vehicles will pay the full rate.
7. Trucks will be allowed and will pay a higher rate.

TOLLED MANAGED LANE POLICIES

(continued)

8. High-occupancy vehicles of two or more occupants and vanpools will pay the full rate in the off-peak period.
9. High-occupancy vehicles with three or more occupants will receive a 50 percent discount during the peak period.* This discount will phase out after the air quality attainment maintenance period. Eligible HOVs must pre-register as part of the HOV pre-declaration process. RTC-sponsored public vanpools are permitted to add peak-period tolls as eligible expenses. Therefore, the Comprehensive Development Agreement firm will be responsible for the high-occupancy vehicle discount and the Regional Transportation Council will be responsible for the vanpool discount. Managed Lane occupancy requirements of 3+ may begin on or before June 1, 2018, resulting in the initial implementation of the existing HOV 2+ policy. HOV 3+ will be implemented when necessary due to operational constraints.
10. The toll rate will be established to maintain a minimum average corridor speed of 50 miles per hour.

*6 hours per weekday: 6:30 am - 9:00 am and 3:00 pm - 6:30 pm

TOLLED MANAGED LANE POLICIES

(continued)

11. During the dynamic-pricing phase, travelers will receive rebates if the average speed drops below 35 mph. Rebates will not apply if speed reduction is out of the control of the operator. This policy is suspended at this time. This policy could be phased in on or before June 1, 2016 after implementation of dynamic pricing. Quarterly reports regarding operator responsibility and customer communication needs will be presented to the RTC previous to implementation.
12. Motorcycles qualify as high-occupancy vehicles.
13. No discounts will be given for “green” vehicles.
14. No scheduled inflation adjustments will be applied over time.
15. Every managed lane corridor will operate under the same regional policy.
16. Adoption of this policy will have no impact on the Regional Transportation Council Excess Revenue Policy previously adopted.
17. The Regional Transportation Council requests that local governments and transportation authorities assign representatives to the Comprehensive Development Agreement procurement process.

TOLLED MANAGED LANE POLICIES

(continued)

18. In CDA-leased corridors, the duration of the Comprehensive Development Agreement should maximize potential revenue.
19. Tolls will remain on the managed lanes after the Comprehensive Development Agreement duration.
20. Initially, managed lanes will be enforced manually with technology support. Over time, more advanced technology verification equipment will be phased in.

RTC Approved: May 11, 2006
RTC Modified : September 14, 2006
RTC Modified: September 13, 2007
RTC Modified: December 13, 2012
RTC Modified: June 13, 2013
RTC Modified: March 10, 2016



November 30, 2017

Mr. Michael Morris
Director of Transportation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, TX 76005-5888

Re: Thank you for Supporting Mayhill Road Project

Dear Director Morris:

On behalf of the City of Denton, I would like to sincerely thank you for your support of the Mayhill Road widening and reconstruction project which will significantly improve mobility, safety, and air quality in the City of Denton and the rapidly growing metropolitan area.

The City is very grateful for your assistance to identify a funding solution to build the project as originally designed with the construction of the bridge providing grade separation of the A-train rail line. Without your help to identify an estimated \$14 million in funding, the Mayhill Road project would have been scaled back and moved ahead without the most effective and efficient solution to address the short and long-term mobility needs of the region. Making the investment for the optimal project design and construction will result in longstanding benefits to residents, businesses, commuters, and visitors in the City of Denton, Denton County, and the North Texas region.

We look forward to continuing a partnership with the NCTCOG on transportation planning and projects. Thank you for all that you do for Denton.

Sincerely,

Chris Watts
Mayor

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DEC 04 2017

TRANSPORTATION

OUR CORE VALUES

Integrity • Fiscal Responsibility • Transparency • Outstanding Customer Service

Controversial managed toll lanes now cover entire \$1.8 billion LBJ East expansion project

OCT. 30, 2017

Written by Ray Leszcynski, Communities
Dallas Morning News

GARLAND — Like tens of thousands of daily commuters on Interstate 635, Texas' toll road debate is stuck in a traffic jam.

The Regional Transportation Council plans to expand 10.8 miles of I-635 from Central Expressway to Interstate 30, using managed — or toll — lanes to fund half of the \$1.8 billion project.

Drivers would have the option to choose the managed lane and pay a toll to avoid congestion, as they can now on LBJ Freeway through North Dallas.

The tolling component, however, has to be approved by the legislature. Just like it did in 2013 and 2015, the legislature failed to provide such approval when it met earlier this year.

State transportation officials say they've been given no other way to pay for a mega project such as the one they call LBJ East. They move forward with plans to include tolled lanes, saying they have no other option.

'A billion dollars short'

Despite not knowing where the money will come from, representatives of the Texas Department of Transportation, the RTC and the North Texas Tollway Authority and local officials gave an update on the project Thursday at the South Garland Branch Library.

"There is \$832 million in funding identified for this project," Kelly Selman, district engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation told the crowd. "You're a billion dollars short."

The plans call for five free lanes and two managed lanes in each direction, plus continuous frontage roads. LBJ Freeway in those areas of Garland, Mesquite and Dallas currently has four free lanes and one express lane in each direction. Some areas have frontage roads, some don't.

That's a change from the plan going into the legislative session that called for the managed lanes to extend over only about a third of the project, between Central and Miller Road.

Officials now say managed lanes over the entire stretch of LBJ East are necessary. Garland and Mesquite officials were adamant about including a \$300 million reworked interchange at Interstate 30 in the plan. And the projected construction costs grow by \$5 million monthly just on inflation.

Michael Morris, transportation director for the North Central Texas Council of Governments stared into anti-toll signs from the crowd of about 100 Thursday and heard jeers at the prospect of a tolled component.

"Don't represent LBJ as a toll road," Morris said to those opposed to the tolls. "It has 10 free lanes and frontage roads."

There has been enough money for projects like the Southern Gateway at the Interstate 35-U.S. Highway 67 split and the downtown Dallas Horseshoe, but those have come in at half the estimated cost. LBJ East is the region's top priority, Morris said, and can no longer wait.

'We'll be shovel-ready'

TxDOT's most recent traffic counts show between 202,000 and 220,000 Selman said there are 430,000 transactions a week from the six express lane checkpoints.

Though the plan doesn't have the necessary state approval, it will move forward for Texas Transportation approval by year's end, then bids and environmental clearance. If the funding happens, construction could start in early 2019.

"We're going to go out, procure the entire project and get a price," Selman said. "We'll be shovel-ready."

LBJ East is the third portion of the I-635 project. It will connect completed phases in Mesquite and North Dallas. The managed tolled lanes would flow with those between Central Expressway and Interstate 35.

But Morris said the model would be different than LBJ through North Dallas in that the freeway would be publicly owned and the tolling component could scale back once bonds were repaid. He did not say, however, that tolls would ever go away completely.

"This project is nowhere close to the project in the west," he said of the LBJ project in North Dallas. "The project to the west was built when the region had no money at all."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/garland/2017/10/30/controversial-managed-toll-lanes-now-cover-entire-18-billion-lbj-east-expansion-project>

HOW TO DESIGN STREETS FOR HUMANS—AND SELF-DRIVING CARS

OCT. 30, 2017
BY AARIAN MARSHALL
WIRED

URBAN PLANNERS TALK about two visions of the future city: heaven and hell. Hell, in case it's not clear, is bad—cities built for technologies, big companies, and vehicles instead of the humans who actually live in them. And hell, in some ways, is here. Today's US cities are dominated by highways there were built by razing residential neighborhoods. Few sidewalks and fewer bike lanes. It's all managed by public policies that incentivize commuting in your car. Alone. Trapped in traffic.

This special hell we've created for ourselves has tech companies and visionaries proposing heavenly ideals for our earthly woes. Uber and Alphabet want to unleash fleets of unmanned flying cars and drones upon the world. Elon Musk wants to tunnel beneath cities and build fast-moving hyperloops. And then there's the dizzying spiderweb of companies racing to build autonomous vehicles to unshackle our ankles from the gas pedal.

But if humans no longer have to spend time piloting vehicles through traffic, what happens to cities? And what if autonomous vehicles actually make things worse? Yes, traveling will be easier, but that means everyone—even those without drivers licenses—will be able to do it. Maybe Americans will live farther apart, extending their commutes—no harm done when you can catch up with your shows instead of drive, right? The result could be a lot more trips and a lot more traffic. It would seem the old adage is true: The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Which means cities need to start thinking now about how to incorporate AVs into future planning. To that end, on Monday, the National Association of City Transportation Officials, an international, 60-city organization of very serious transportation planners and engineers, published its own vision of the Promised Land, a 50-page blueprint outlining how to account for our autonomous future and build in flexible options that could result in less traffic for everyone, not just those riding on four wheels. “We don't just need new software running on our streets—we need to update the hardware of the streets themselves,” says Janette Sadik-Khan, a former transportation head in New York City during the Bloomberg administration who now serves on the board for NACTO. “That's why we need a new roadmap that puts humans first.”

In the bumptious and highly detail-oriented world of transportation planning, NACTO is known for its street design guides, research-backed resources that teach cities exactly how to structure road networks for faster, more efficient, more equitable transportation systems. If you're looking to route a new bus line, or design a one-way street that can accommodate a fast-moving tram, or create street signs that are legible and understandable, NACTO has recommendations for you. In other words: This is very nuanced, very specific transportation stuff.

This blueprint, however, is a little more fanciful, at least as far as engineering plans go. Autonomous vehicles are still in their snotty adolescence, and while professional prognosticators say you may start to see some experimental self-driving cars on a street near you in the next few years, the average American city won't be dominated by these robot things for at least another two decades.

But transportation planners say it's not too early to start thinking about building cities for autonomous vehicles. "It's not just about predicting what the future will be, but about shaping it into the future we want to be," Sadik-Khan says. That's why NACTO says it will be updating this digital blueprint constantly.

So what does transit heaven look like? In the future, the transportation planners suggest, vehicle lanes can be a lot thinner. Machines, after all, should be better at driving straight—and less distracted by Snapchat—than their human counterparts. That means more room in major boulevards for walking, biking, even loitering. Tiny parks might exist where parking meters once lived—no need to park self-driving taxis owned by companies, not individual drivers. In fact, vehicles might not even have their own dedicated spaces at all. "Flex zones" could be turned over to different services and vehicles for different times of day. During rush hour, there could be more lanes open to vehicles. During heavy delivery hours, there could be curb space dedicated to Amazon delivery vans (or landing delivery drones). At night, street space next to bars could be dedicated to picking up and dropping off carousers from driverless taxicabs.

"The blueprint is for building the safer future streets that cities need, where speeding is no longer an option, where cars are designed to yield and stop for pedestrians and bicyclists by default, and where people are free to cross the streets where it makes sense, rather than trek a mile to the nearest stoplight," says Mollie Pelon, who oversees NACTO's technology and city transportation program. Ignore the naysayers, these optimistic planners say. Autonomous vehicles don't have to destroy the American city—they're a shiny opportunity to rebuild it for the better. Cities just need to get to work. Right now.

<https://www.wired.com/story/nacto-streets-self-driving-cars/>

How much do you pay to ride on toll lanes? Probably more than you think

BY GORDON DICKSON
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
OCTOBER 31, 2017 1:10 PM

Brad Mills stuck a TollTag on his car just a little more than a year ago, but he now spends \$220 to \$300 a month cruising North Texas toll roads.

The attorney who lives in Aledo uses the TEXpress lanes on Loop 820 and Airport Freeway in Northeast Tarrant County to get to his law office in Southlake. But he has become so accustomed to the convenience of toll lanes that he finds himself also using them even for leisure trips, even when he's not in a hurry.

He usually doesn't think much about the cost — until he gets his monthly credit card bill in the mail. Then, he is often taken aback by how big a bite the toll roads take out of his household budget.

"Sometimes, you're just hard-wired to take the TEXpress lanes, even when you don't need to," Mills said.

Many North Texans are also finding that the TollTag bill has joined the electric bill, the water bill and even the mobile phone bill as a major monthly expense.

Today, there are about 4.6 million cars with TollTags affixed to their windshields on the roads, driveways and parking lots of Dallas-Fort Worth. The North Texas Tollway Authority, which owns the TollTag brand and electronically processes toll payments even on roads the agency doesn't own, expects to collect about \$720 million in revenue from TollTags during the 2018 fiscal year.

In Tarrant County, 650,296 vehicles now have a TollTag, more than a third of all registered automobiles.

The tollway authority, a state agency that issues bonds to build roads and collects tolls to repay the debt, makes no bones about its goal to eventually have "a TollTag on every windshield" — a marketing slogan that is written in multiple portions of its 2018 budget.

But there's nothing nefarious about that goal, spokesman Michael Rey said.

Triple-digit monthly bills for TollTags are actually more of an exception than a rule. The average monthly TollTag account holder in Tarrant County is paying \$27.84 so far this year, tollway authority officials say.

But even so, stories about people paying \$100, \$200 or even \$300 per month are common, not only in Tarrant County but also Collin, Dallas and Denton counties, Rey said. And TollTags are pitched as a convenient and cheaper alternative to paying cash for driving in the fast lane.

Since the region's expanding toll roads are all-electronic, motorists without TollTags have their license plates photographed and receive a bill in the mail. But that process, known as ZIP Cash, comes with a much higher per-mile toll rate than TollTags, plus mailing and administrative fees.

“We’re adamant about folks getting TollTags because it’s a 50 percent discount,” Rey said. “There’s no brain-hacking involved.”

New driving culture

Until a few years ago, Fort Worth didn’t really have a toll road of its own, unless you counted International Parkway that cuts through Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

(The Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, a toll road connecting Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth beginning in 1957, was converted to a free road in 1977 and is now part of Interstate 30.)

But a lot has changed in Tarrant and Johnson counties since 2014, when Chisholm Trail Parkway opened. The tollway authority built that 28-mile toll road connecting downtown Fort Worth to Cleburne.

Also, popular TEXpress lanes have opened on Loop 820 and Airport Freeway in Northeast Tarrant County, as well as on Texas 114/121 in Grapevine. Some of the TEXpress toll lanes added to public highways are privately managed by companies that raised money from investors to help the state build them. They then recoup their money by collecting tolls for up to 52 years.

The TEXpress lanes on Loop 820 and Airport Freeway are privately managed by a group of companies known as North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners. The same group is building TEXpress lanes on Interstate 35W in Fort Worth scheduled to open next year.

The TEXpress lanes on Texas 114/121 in Grapevine are owned by the Texas Department of Transportation.

And more toll lanes are on the way. The Texas 360 toll road south of Interstate 20 in Arlington and Mansfield — another tollway authority project — is scheduled to open next year.

Mind games

Some motorists can’t help but feel that they’re being psychologically tricked into using toll roads. They tend to have less congestion than non-toll roads, so driving on them is less stressful, they say.

Also since payments are made electronically, it doesn’t feel like real money is being spent.

TollTag accounts are typically opened with a credit card. An initial \$20 or \$40 is logged on a customer’s credit card account, and additional withdrawals, usually in \$40 increments, are made as the account needs to be replenished.

“I don’t even look at the bill anymore,” said Lynn Limon, who frequently drives on the Chisholm Trail Parkway to and from her job, racking up about \$11 per day in charges, or about \$200-250 a month. The Cleburne resident works 28 miles away in downtown Fort Worth as a “landman,” connecting property owners with energy companies for oil and gas drilling.

“I just have my Discover card tied to it,” Limon said. “I think it helps not looking at it.”

Pay as you go

Comparing toll charges to utility payments is useful, said Jeffrey Rous, associate economics professor at the University of North Texas in Denton.

“Would you use less water if you paid 10 cents per flush of the toilet or 20 cents per shower? Perhaps. Delinking the paying and the consumption probably does matter,” Rous said in an email. “I would liken this to credit card use. People get into more debt problems when they have a credit card than when they have to pay cash for everything. It is just too easy to make spending decisions without fully comprehending the impact on your budget if you are not paying with cash.”

Jenette Pipken and her husband spend about \$200 a month on their TollTags. She drives from Saginaw to Plano, where she works for a mortgage firm.

She pays to use the Sam Rayburn Tollway through Lewisville, Carrollton and The Colony, a journey that takes more than an hour. But if she didn't use the tollway, it would take nearly two hours.

Pipken has a son who plays select baseball, and in the evenings and on weekends she finds herself using toll lanes in Dallas-Fort Worth just to save a few extra minutes between destinations.

“If there's a toll road and we know it's going to save us extra time, yeah, we'll take it,” she said.

Chris Bellomy agrees. He lives in east Fort Worth's Meadowbrook area and works three times a week in Plano, where he is an information technology systems administrator for Verizon.

Bellomy figures he spends about \$180 to \$200 a month on tolls, but it reduces his weekly commute time from 20 hours to 15 hours.

For that five hours of freedom, he pays \$45 — about \$9 an hour. But since he's a single dad, it's a sacrifice he's willing to make.

“It's worth it to me because I have kids,” he said. “They like to see me and I like to see them.”

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/traffic/your-commute/article181898381.html>

Editorial: After decades of rail expansion, it's time for DART to think big, very big, on buses

NOV. 2, 2017
DALLAS MORNING NEWS

For months now, the chorus of criticism coming from the Dallas City Council aimed at Dallas Area Rapid Transit has been growing louder. The regional agency says it's listening, but we are skeptical.

If it *is* listening, DART president Gary Thomas and his cadre of well-paid executives don't seem to understand what they are hearing.

DART, a nearly \$800 million-a-year operation with more than 4,000 employees serving Dallas and 12 smaller cities, is failing the riders who need it most. And it has been for years.

Who are these riders? They are low-income workers and others who use transit because they can't afford to drive. For these workers, many of whom live here in Dallas, an available bus ride or train trip is the difference between earning a paycheck and not.

In Dallas, the poorest of these workers — full-time, year-round workers who are nevertheless in poverty — are twice as likely to use DART than other workers. When they do, they endure commutes that are 50 percent longer.

And yet these riders are the lucky ones. A study shared with the Dallas City Council last week showed that at least 96 percent of jobs in the region are out of reasonable reach for fully 65 percent of Dallas' transit-dependent population.

No wonder so many poor workers remain poor, shut out of potentially better jobs just because they can't get to them. And no wonder bus ridership at DART has fallen steadily for years.

What's needed at DART is a massive reorganization of its resources. Thomas has repeatedly promised that the agency will boost bus spending by \$14 million and is adding more than 40 new coaches by 2019.

Great, but that's a pittance. It's almost laughably out of scale with the scope of the problem.

Over the next 35 years, DART plans to spend several billion dollars on an east-west commuter rail line connecting Plano to Addison and onto the airport. Meanwhile, Dallas is determined to double the cost for a second downtown Dallas rail line by insisting it be buried underground, even though doing so won't add riders.

Every one of those sales tax dollars could be spent, instead, on creating a bus system that works not just for workers in Dallas but for suburban commuters, too.

We already have the longest light-rail network in America. Why not hit the pause button on rail long enough to at least study what a 10-figure investment in buses over the next 30 or 35 years might look like?

We have no idea, because no such study has ever been done. Not because no one has thought of it — but because there has never been the political will to prioritize buses. Given how great the need is, shouldn't that change?

Of course it should. But it won't happen if the Dallas City Council and other member cities can't get on board with the idea that DART must better serves the riders who need it most.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/editorials/2017/11/02/decades-rail-expansion-time-dart-think-big-big-buses>

More Amazon HQ2 analysis leaves out Dallas, but reasons are fixable

NOV. 3, 2017

Written by Maria Halkias, Retail Writer
Dallas Morning News

While cities wait to hear from Amazon about its HQ2 decisions, economists and analysts continue to ponder the prospects of who fits the bill.

Texas wasn't represented on a list of 25 cities ranked by New York commercial real estate research firm Reis Inc. It listed all the cities that are above average in data representing the criteria that Amazon listed. Seattle-based Amazon set off a race among cities to land its second headquarters that it expects to spend \$5 billion building for as many as 50,000 employees over the next 10 years.

Other lists based on data and subjective analysis that have been published since Amazon made its announcement in September have excluded Dallas as a top prospect too.

The reasons Big D fell below average in the Reis report and others are fixable. Dallas scored low on public transportation access, but new DART lines are being added, and Amazon can come in and influence how already extensive train systems gets updated. Dallas scored poorly in two out of eight variables in the Reis analysis. Its below-average score of a negative 0.1 falls far below New York City's top score of 4.8.

Barbara Byrne Denham, senior economist at Reis, said she picked one proxy measure for each of eight broad categories that Amazon listed in its HQ2 specifications. For public transportation access she used U.S. Census data for percent of population that uses public transportation to get to work.

"I've seen DART and ridden on DART. It's not like it's not there. It is, but it's just not serving people," Byrne Denham said. Dallas' low ridership pulled it down.

The proxy Byrne Denham used for "amenities and quality of life" was museum and cultural employment as a percent of total jobs in the area. Dallas was below average on that one too.

Dallas killed it on cost of doing business represented by office rents, on cost of living based on apartment rents, on concentration of technology employment and of professional employment, access to higher education and business taxes.

While Dallas scored below average, Byrne Denham said don't fret. "This doesn't rule Dallas out. It just shows each city's weaknesses."

Southern California cities did poorly also because of public transportation and a high costs of living and doing business. Fort Worth also had a below-average overall score because of public transportation and access to higher education, which is based on private and state college employment as a percent of total employment.

New Haven, Conn., for example, where Yale University is located, scored high enough on that measure to land the city in the No. 19 spot.

New York City's public transportation score was so high it more than compensated for the measures where it scored poorly: cost of doing business and cost of living.

The other big score for New York was its high quality of living amenities as measured by museum and cultural employment.

While it's valuable to line up cities by representative measures that Amazon listed, Byrne Denham said, the decision may not line up with her report.

"Amazon's decision may end up being about tax incentives, or someone wants to be in Denver to ski often, or Austin presents a great piece of property — something we can't measure," she said.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/business/retail/2017/11/03/amazon-hq2-analysis-leaves-dallas-reasons-fixable>

Column: Rick Perry's plans to revive coal would kill aspirations for a free market

NOV. 4, 2017

Written by Tom Giovanetti, Contributor
Dallas Morning News

From the very beginning of his presidency, Barack Obama pulled no punches about targeting fossil fuels. The Obama administration promised to eliminate coal, oil and natural gas to the degree possible and replace them with government-subsidized renewable energy sources, regardless of the cost of the economy.

But politicians are the last to know. Beneath the surface, the fracking revolution was already transforming the energy sector. With the abundance of cheap, clean natural gas, fracking ironically became the Obama administration's unappreciated partner in creating jobs, generating tax revenue and lowering emissions.

No such revolution was in the offing for coal, however, so the Obama administration's pressure on coal country so threatened to damage the economy in those areas that Donald Trump and his "clean, beautiful coal" rhetoric garnered significant political support in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania coal regions. Coal helped put Trump in the White House.

I have to assume that political payback for coal country is the reason behind Energy Secretary Rick Perry's oddly dissonant proposal to require that coal (and nuclear) generating plants be paid higher-than-market rates for electricity. It's beyond strange that Perry, an avowed believer in free markets and a skeptic of regulation, would make such a counterintuitive proposal.

Perry's proposal would not affect Texas, since Texas has its own electric power market, regulated by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. Electric power markets in the rest of the United States are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and would be affected. So perhaps the best possible spin is that Perry is trying to give Texas an advantage by burdening the rest of the country with harmful policies.

It is so common for politicians to say they believe in free markets while promoting government controls that it seems they have forgotten what free means. Free market economics asserts that there is greater cumulative accuracy in the real-time decisions made by millions of Americans through markets than in the decrees of a small handful of bureaucrats. It means bottom-up decision making is smarter than top-down dictates from those who assume themselves to be our betters. And it especially means government shouldn't determine favored outcomes by rigging the rules. Yet that is exactly what Perry's proposal would do to the rest of the country's electrical generation market.

By requiring that coal plants be paid higher than market rates and be insulated from competition, Perry proposes that consumers subsidize coal production. This is every bit as wrong as when the Obama administration required taxpayers to subsidize green energy projects such as Solyndra. Actually, it's worse, because taxpayers were only on the hook for temporary loan guarantees for Solyndra. With Perry's coal handout, consumers would be on the hook indefinitely.

Yes, it was also anti-market for the Obama administration to rig the rules against fossil fuels, and to favor renewables. But you fix that by moving back to neutral policy and market

competition, not by favoring coal. The best energy portfolio for America is whatever combination of gas, oil, coal, nuclear and renewables that is most efficient for a particular geographical area. Prices should be set by supply and demand, not by bureaucrats in Washington.

Perry dismisses such market rhetoric, saying at a congressional hearing, "I think the idea that there is a free market in electrical generation, it's not a bit of a fallacy, it is a fallacy." He's correct that generation markets under FERC are still highly regulated, but is perhaps unaware that his proposal would reverse 30 years of progress in moving away from top-down federal regulation and toward market-based pricing. This is also odd coming from Perry, since the Texas market deregulated under his watch as governor.

In a market economy, government should neither favor nor discriminate against any particular industry or technology. To do otherwise is crony capitalism, whether it's the Obama administration favoring certain renewables, or the Trump administration favoring coal.

Perry's proposal would put the government's thumb on the scale for coal. When the Trump administration decides it wants to help coal, or any other industry, it's already on the path to the same kinds of crony capitalism it criticized from the Obama administration.

Tom Giovanetti is president of the Institute for Policy Innovation in Irving. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News. Email: tomg@ipi.org

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2017/11/03/rick-perrys-plans-revive-coal-kill-aspirations-free-market>

New express lanes opening on State Highway 114 in Irving

NOV. 4, 2017

Written by Claire Ballor, Breaking news reporter
Dallas Morning News

Starting this weekend, drivers in Irving will be able to bypass traffic by using new express lanes along State Highway 114.

The Texas Department of Transportation said the new toll lanes, one eastbound and one westbound, will open Saturday and give drivers the option to circumvent the highway's general lanes.

The highway's general lanes will still be free, but drivers will have the option to pay to use the express lanes, which are designed to keep traffic at 50 mph or faster, according to TxDot.

Tolls for the express lanes will fluctuate based on time of day, traffic flow, miles travelled and whether or not drivers have toll tags.

The eastbound lane will extend 4 miles from the President George Bush Turnpike to the Rochelle Boulevard/Riverside Drive exit. The westbound lane will stretch 8 miles from the Rochelle Boulevard/Riverside Drive exit to State Highway 121.

The lanes run through Las Colinas, an area that has seen exponential growth and become one of the most sought-after areas for office leasing in North Texas due to its central location between Dallas and Fort Worth and proximity to the airports.

Drivers can expect to see express lanes also available from the Interstate 183 exchange to the Rochelle Boulevard/ Riverside Drive exit in 2018.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/news/2017/11/03/new-express-lanes-opening-state-highway-114-irving>

This small Texas town known for its speed trap is about to spawn 3,000 upscale homes

BY GORDON DICKSON
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
NOVEMBER 07, 2017 12:06 PM

Northlake only has about 2,397 residents and is perhaps best known for its speed trap on Interstate 35W between Fort Worth and Denton.

But the little town is about to get a lot bigger.

A \$1.5 billion project known as Pecan Square is underway. The residential community will eventually include 3,000 newly built homes, with prices expected to range from \$270,000 to \$500,000 or more.

“Pecan Square is one of the largest master-planned communities we have developed in our 25-plus-year history. It is in a perfect position to offer a wide variety of home prices in a high-quality master-planned community within a tremendous school district,” Brian Carlock, senior vice president of Hillwood Communities, said in an email.

Tuesday, Hillwood officials announced they had closed on the purchase and development of 1,157 acres near the southwest corner of I-35W and Farm Road 407, about six miles north of Texas Motor Speedway.

Initial construction is expected to begin in the spring, and homes should be on the market by summer 2019.

“Northlake has a wonderful quality of life,” Carlock said, “and happens to be in one of the highest growth areas in North Texas.”

The initial phase will include 609 single-family homes.

A mix of commercial retail, educational and residential uses will be featured in Pecan Square, which gets its name from the 200 pecan trees on the property that will be preserved. The trees will guide visitors to the area off of Farm Road 407.

A square within the project will incorporate an existing horse-training arena that will be repurposed into a multi-use facility open to area residents.

Eight builders will provide housing on lots ranging from 40 feet to an acre. They include: Ashton Woods, CalAtlantic Homes, DR Horton, David Weekley Homes, Highland Homes, Perry Homes, Plantation Homes and Pulte Homes.

Hillwood Communities also has agreed to donate 15 acres to the Northwest school district for an elementary school on the property.

Also, another 150 acres have been sold to Northwest for a new middle school, high school and football stadium.

“You will be able to go K-12 in Pecan Square,” Fred Balda, president of Hillwood Communities, said in a phone interview.

He added that full buildout of Pecan Square likely would take 10 to 12 years, depending upon factors such as the region’s and nation’s overall economic health.

The houses will be attractive to a range of prospective buyers, Carlock said, including first-time home owners, growing families and empty-nesters.

Hillwood is a Perot company, and it has overseen development of huge swaths of far north Fort Worth, including Park Glen, Alliance Airport, Heritage and Alliance Town Center.

“We all recognize growth is coming to the region. We are pleased Hillwood Communities embraces the town’s comprehensive land use plan as we successfully manage the inevitable growth,” Northlake Mayor Peter Dewing said.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/business/growth/article183217886.html>

Carpool crunch: Caltrans to consider requiring 3 people to drive in some Bay Area HOV lanes

November 7, 2017
By ERIN BALDASSARI
Bay Area News Group

SAN FRANCISCO — With Bay Area traffic bad and getting worse, transportation officials are considering a drastic remedy for some clogged highways: requiring vehicles to carry three people, not just two, to use the carpool lane.

Nothing is happening anytime soon, but the conversation is a sign of how many more people are on the roads commuting to jobs and homes.

“It’s insane,” said Oakland resident Kim Ganade. “It’s gotten much, much worse.”

The problem, says Caltrans, is that nearly two-thirds of the Bay Area’s carpool lanes are moving too slowly to meet the federal requirements. And Caltrans is legally obligated to create a plan for improvement or the run the risk of losing federal highway dollars.

Statewide, congestion in carpool lanes has been creeping up by roughly 3 percent year after year, according to an October Caltrans report. But in the Bay Area, the problem is particularly acute, said Ashley Nguyen, the assistant director of planning and operations for MTC. The number of “extremely” congested carpool lanes has risen more than 250 percent between 2013 and 2016, as already sluggish carpool lanes creep along at an even slower rate.

“This is not irregular or infrequent congestion,” she said at a recent MTC meeting. “This is more regularly occurring (congestion), so we know this is a problem we need to address.”

Drivers feel it, too. Oakland resident Derren Lyles said he stopped driving by himself when he found himself having to wake at 4 a.m. just to get to his job on time.

But requiring more people per car would make it difficult for him to use the lanes, he said. Lyles regularly uses casual carpool, an informal system that designates locations where drivers can pick up extra passengers heading from the East Bay into San Francisco and where carpool lanes approaching the Bay Bridge and on Interstate 80 already require three people. It works because commuters are all headed in the same direction.

That’s not the case for the carpool lanes Caltrans and the MTC are discussing: Interstate 880 in Alameda and Santa Clara counties, State Route 237 in Santa Clara County, and the segment of Highway 101 from the San Francisco County border through San Mateo County.

In each of those cases, state and local transportation officials are in various stages of converting the carpool lanes into toll lanes — with the exception of Highway 101, where Caltrans is considering adding a toll lane in one stretch of the highway and converting a carpool lane to a toll lane in another.

Toll lanes allow state officials a unique opportunity to increase carpool requirements, said Joe Rouse, the acting chief of Caltrans’ Office of Traffic Management. Not only do toll lanes give engineers more control over traffic, but they permit other types of vehicles to use the lanes —

for a fee. And the fear, he said, is that without enough cars carting three or more people, the carpool lanes will sit empty while traffic backs up in all the other lanes.

“What (the toll lanes) will do is eliminate that empty lane issue because you won’t have as low of a volume out there,” he said. “And it will also allow people the opportunity, should they wish, to buy back into the HOV lane and use it and not sit in congested traffic.”

At the same time, the MTC is tapping the local tech community for ideas about how to get more people to carpool. They’ll be inviting representatives from companies that encourage carpooling with user-friendly apps, such as Scoop, Waze Carpool, Carma and others, to a workshop early next year, along with other public officials and representatives from various community groups. That’ll be the beginning of a long conversation between state and local officials about if, when and how to increase the carpool requirement.

In the meantime, the MTC is experimenting with programs to crack down on carpool cheats, which the commission estimates makes up between 19 and 24 percent of vehicles in the carpool lane, depending on the time of day. In May, commissioners signed off on a \$730,000 pilot program for targeted enforcement at certain locations around the Bay Area, with \$575,000 going to pay overtime for cops and the rest dedicated to analyzing their effectiveness.

Those funds will likely be applied sometime in the spring along with the installation of cameras that can automatically detect the number of people in a given vehicle.

The cheapest solution to freeing up space in the carpool lanes, however, is also the least politically feasible, Rouse said. The state highway agency could consider eliminating the program that allows clean air vehicles to use carpool lanes. Those vehicles made up 6 percent to 8 percent of cars in the Bay Area’s lanes in 2015, according to the MTC.

“One of the quickest and easiest solutions ... is to boot out the (clean air) vehicles,” Rouse said. “But, that runs counter to the policies of Governor Brown’s administration.”

Either way, state traffic management officials, and their regional and local counterparts, say something has to give. Requiring a third person to drive in the carpool lane for free is a natural response to the Bay Area’s worsening traffic congestion crisis, said Liz Rutman, who oversees the Interstate 580 toll lanes in Alameda County.

“You just are going to have more people needing to travel,” she said. “And, more people means more vehicles, unless you can get them to consolidate.”

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/11/07/carpool-crunch-caltrans-to-consider-requiring-3-people-to-drive-in-some-bay-area-hov-lanes/>

Last day that no one died on Texas roads: Nov. 7, 2000

Nov. 9, 2017
BY GORDON DICKSON
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

The last day Texas went a day without a fatal car crash was the same day voters went to the polls to choose between presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore.

It's a Texas-size streak, but not one to be proud of.

The calendar has flipped 6,210 times since Texas had a day without a fatal car crash. The last day the state went a day without carnage on the road was Nov. 7, 2000.

In an effort to bring an end to this streak, the Texas Department of Transportation has launched a social media campaign with the hash-tag #EndTheStreakTX reminding drivers to take more responsibility behind the wheel.

"It's heartbreaking to know somebody has lost a spouse, child, friend or neighbor every day for the past 17 years on Texas roadways," TxDOT Executive Director James Bass said in an email. "According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 94 percent of these deadly crashes are due to driver error --things like distracted driving, speeding and drunk driving. We can stop this deadly streak if every driver makes it a priority to be safe, focused and responsible. Let's end the streak."

Officials at the agenda also are asking drivers to change their social media profile pictures to an #EndTheStreakTX image available for download.

Since Nov. 7, 2000, 59,388 people have died on Texas roads. That's nearly the equivalent of the entire student population in the Arlington school district.

Dispatchers can better track new train cars

Nov. 13, 2017
BY GORDON DICKSON gdickson@star-telegram.com
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

The new passenger train cars being built for the planned TEX Rail commuter line are modern and airy.

And although they appear to be much lighter than freight trains that normally run on the tracks, the manufacturer is redistributing the weight to address a problem that has nagged a previous model.

Train cars made by Stadler Rail of Bussnang, Switzerland, and operated on the Denton County A-train commuter line came under scrutiny in 2012 after some had trouble keeping a crucial electrical connection with the tracks.

The newer Stadler cars built for TEX Rail are designed to better ensure that an electrical connection is maintained to the rails at all times, so that dispatchers always know where the trains are and crossing gates are properly activated when a train is coming.

The TEX Rail line, which will run from downtown Fort Worth to Grapevine and DFW Airport, is scheduled to open in December 2018. Workers have begun laying new track on the route and construction of several stations is underway.

“These cars will have more axles and more weight,” said Dieter Hofacker, senior technical project manager for Stadler, during a preview of the first TEX Rail car this week in Grapevine. He added that the TEX Rail cars have 12 axles, whereas the cars in Denton have six, “and it is driven by axles in front.”

The Stadler cars are powered by diesel engines, but rely upon electrical signals to trigger crossing arms and flashing red lights. The lack of a connection — or “shunting” as it is called in the industry — can also allow a train to disappear from a railroad dispatcher’s computer screen, raising the possibility of a collision if two trains are cleared to travel on the same tracks.

In August 2012, a dispatcher lost track of a Denton A-train for about 10 seconds near Lewisville’s Hebron Station — an incident blamed on shunting that alarmed a Federal Railroad Administration inspector. It was determined that rust and other build-up had appeared on the tracks, and most likely interrupted the connection between the steel wheels and rails.

Officials from several transit agencies say the problem has since been fixed and is no longer a major concern.

Jim Cline, Denton County Transportation Authority president, said the agency intensified its efforts to keep the tracks clean, and spent about \$800,000 upgrading its signal system to ensure the location of the trains could be detected at all times.

DIFFERENCES AT TEX RAIL

Stadler is one of the world leaders in the manufacture of an emerging new style of rail car, particularly in the United States — passenger cars that are modern and comfortable like a streetcar, but also safe enough to operate on shared rail lines that also carry freight trains.

The TEX Rail line will feature a model known as a Stadler FLIRT. The trains will operate in sets of five rail cars — including four passenger cars with a special fifth car in the middle housing its diesel engines. TEX Rail will operate with eight five-car sets of Stadler vehicles.

The commuter rail service is being built by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, which recently took delivery of the first of eight sets of Stadler cars.

Stadler opened a facility in Salt Lake City to build the TEX Rail cars and to fill orders from a growing number of commuter rail lines across the U.S.

The cars are known as diesel multiple units. They are self-propelled, meaning no locomotive is required to push or pull them. They can be operated from the front or back, so the trains don't have to be turned around to switch directions between Fort Worth and DFW.

Of the 12 axles on each set of rail cars, the axles on the front and rear will serve as the drive axles, which will help distribute the weight to each end of the trains (rather than the middle) and maintain a good electrical connection with the tracks, Hofacker said.

Diesel multiple units also offer a smooth, quiet ride with panoramic windows and low floors that make it easier for seniors, parents with strollers and people with disabilities to climb aboard.

The TEX Rail car sets will weigh about 385,000 pounds, about double the weight of the A-train cars in Denton, which will also help keep the cars firmly connected to the tracks.

They will travel a maximum 79 mph.

Dallas and Fort Worth move toward high-speed rail connection ... slowly

NOV. 13, 2017

Written by Tristan Hallman, Dallas City Hall Reporter
Dallas Morning News

Dallas and Fort Worth officials are moving forward on plans to create a separate entity to manage a potential high-speed connection between the two cities.

The Dallas City Council's Mobility Solutions, Infrastructure & Sustainability Committee gave city officials the green light to draft an agreement to create a local government corporation, known as an LGC, for the possible project with Fort Worth.

The committee hopes to see a draft of an interlocal agreement by early next year.

But a major question remains: whether Arlington or Grand Prairie will be part of the LGC. First, the cities would have to hop aboard one of the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, better known as The T, or Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

Michael Morris, the North Central Texas Council of Governments' transportation director, said joining one of the existing agencies — creating a new authority won't cut it — or contracting with them "in a significant way" will be "a litmus test."

"You're either going to be in the big leagues or you're not going to be in the big leagues," Morris said. "And Arlington knows if they're not fully compliant with this notion, there will not be a station on this high-speed rail line."

Otherwise, he said, the train — or possibly a hyperloop — would hum along unimpeded between the two cities.

Committee members strongly backed the line in the sand. Committee Chairman Lee Kleinman even wondered whether planting a high-speed rail stop in the mid-cities was the right thing to do.

"It would seem to me that if we're doing high-speed rail, which is sort of the cream of the transit industry, that we should do it to benefit the communities that have paid for transit historically for 30 or 40 years, which both Fort Worth and Dallas have," Kleinman said.

The project is still years down the road. Officials still don't know where the money will come from — the federal government, state government or a private entity. Morris said the LGC is needed "in case we get a \$2 billion check from somebody and the state of Texas wishes not to cash it."

But regional officials envision a future where the line connects Texas Central Partners' planned Dallas-to-Houston high-speed rail line with a stop in Fort Worth along a potential Oklahoma City-to-Laredo high-speed rail.

Morris said the Dallas-to-Fort Worth connection is still undergoing an environmental review.

Texas Central Partners hopes to have its environmental impact statement published by mid-2018 and begin construction next year. The proposed Dallas station is set to be built in the Cedars neighborhood near Interstate 30.

Morris said a future connection to DFW International Airport is also an important piece of the project. It would be unfair to allow Arlington and Grand Prairie a rail connection to the airport without paying into a transit authority, Morris said.

Mark Duebner, Dallas' high-speed rail project manager, said Dallas council members will also have myriad issues to consider, such as governance, property acquisition rights and how much veto power the City Council would have if a third city joins the LGC.

But Morris didn't believe both cities would ultimately step up. He believes Arlington is more likely than Grand Prairie to join DART or the T.

Walter Shumac, Grand Prairie's transportation director, said the city wants to keep its options open and remain at the table in the discussion, but does not currently have any plans to join a transit authority.

But if both cities do end up joining, Arlington and Grand Prairie would share a high-speed rail stop.

"Under no circumstances would there be four [stations]," Morris said.

Laura Hanna, spokeswoman for The T, said the agency has had "numerous discussions" with about transportation issues with Arlington in recent years. DART spokesman Morgan Lyons said the agency has also had talks with Arlington, but didn't know what the next steps would be. Arlington does not have a full cent of its sales tax to contribute to DART, which the agency requires for membership.

An Arlington spokeswoman did not immediately return a request for comment Monday. Morris said an Arlington citizens committee has looked at transit options, and the city is having "great conversations" with both transit agencies.

Arlington currently contracts with the T and DART for one bus route between the University of Texas at Arlington campus and the Trinity Railway Express Centreport Station. But the city is going to discontinue that service next month "and do something else," Lyons said. But Lyons is not sure what that will be.

"Arlington has got to make some decisions about what they want," Lyons said.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/dallas-city-hall/2017/11/13/dallas-fort-worth-move-toward-high-speed-rail-connections/lowly>

Dallas named top contender for Amazon's new headquarters

By Bill Hethcock
Dallas Business Journal
Nov 14, 2017

The Dallas-Fort Worth area tops a list of prospective sites for Amazon's new headquarters and the 50,000 jobs that would come with the e-commerce giant's mega expansion, according to a Wall Street Journal analysis.

The Journal points to North Texas' big college population, large tech labor force, low cost of living and lack of a state income tax as reasons the region landed in the top spot.

The analysis was based on six factors: tech labor force, fiscal health, cost of living, college population, culture fit and state tax rank.

Dallas-Fort Worth ranked No. 1 out of the top 12 contenders, beating competitors such as Atlanta, Boston and Washington, D.C. DFW won the top spot based on an aggregate rank of the criteria.

The availability of mass transportation did not appear to factor into the Wall Street Journal analysis, even though Amazon (Nasdaq: AMZN) has specified that transit is a priority.

The city of Dallas has a comprehensive bus and light-rail system, but because of its size, the Dallas-Fort Worth region struggles to provide viable alternatives to the automobile.

The Journal's analysis named Austin, Minneapolis and Newark to be long shots to land Amazon's second headquarters, or HQ2. The company's current headquarters is and will continue to be in Seattle, but HQ2 will likely be as big or bigger than the original, Amazon has said.

Boston came in second on the overall rankings, followed by a tie for third between Atlanta and Washington D.C.

Chicago ranked fourth and Atlanta ranked fifth, followed by a tie between New York and Nashville for sixth.

In October, North Texas leaders submitted a joint proposal to Amazon identifying dozens of properties throughout the region as sites where a corporate headquarters could be built.

The DFW region's unified response to Amazon's request for proposals for the HQ2 fulfilled the company's request for a single submission from large metro areas.

The packet submitted to Amazon was not made public, but developers and city officials representing more than 35 sites in over a dozen North Texas cities have confirmed that their location is part of the packet.

The Dallas Regional Chamber, which coordinated the region's submission, called the Journal's analysis "flattering."

"While flattering, we know the only ranking that counts regarding HQ2 is Amazon's," said Darren Grubb, senior vice president of communications for the chamber. "We know the DFW Region

has the largest critical mass of technology, talent and transportation in the U.S., wrapped in a business and cost friendly package. We believe we check the box for those and other considerations Amazon specifies as important."

"We're excited to share with Amazon all that DFW has to offer both now and in the future," Grubb added.

Many in the corporate search arena believe Amazon will select a handful of finalist cities for a second round of bidding, although Amazon has not specified how

Whichever city Amazon chooses will get 50,000 jobs paying an average of \$100,000 at one of the world's fastest-growing companies. At full build-out, Amazon's \$5 billion second headquarters could total upwards of 8 million square feet.

The North Texas sites submitted include downtown Dallas skyscrapers, Victory Park near American Airlines Center, multiple locations in Collin County, one on the University of Texas at Dallas campus and another that could be at the station of the planned bullet train connecting Dallas and Houston.

In Tarrant County, potential sites include a future Trinity River development north of downtown Fort Worth and 800 acres in Grapevine on Dallas Fort Worth International Airport property.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/news/2017/11/14/dallas-named-top-contender-for-amazon-s-new.html>

Traveling between Fort Worth and Dallas by high-speed rail getting closer to reality

BY SANDRA BAKER
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
NOVEMBER 14, 2017 2:28 PM

FORT WORTH – High speed rail between Fort Worth and Dallas is getting closer, potentially making commuting between the two cities much faster.

Six months after the Fort Worth City Council gave the go-ahead to city officials to move forward establishing a local government corporation, or LGC, to work with Dallas on a high-speed rail line, the Dallas City Council's Mobility Solutions, Infrastructure & Sustainability Committee on Monday told city officials in that city to do the same.

Dallas could act on that agreement early next year, the Dallas Morning News reported.

In May, North Texas Council of Government officials revealed the possible project, a 30- to 40-mile rail line, to the Fort Worth City Council. A \$15 million environmental impact study of possible routes is expected to be completed in 2018.

Jay Chapa, a Fort Worth assistant city manager, said in May that a series of steps will need to be completed for the project to happen and setting up the LGC is among the first steps. He reiterated that on Tuesday, saying the LGC will serve as the governing body of high speed rail, from its creation to actual construction.

"The LGC will allow us to be prepared," Chapa said.

But as in May, discussion at Monday's meeting in Dallas addressed how the line would work because it would have to go through Arlington and Grand Prairie and whether those cities would be included in the LGC. If those cities want a stop, they will have to join the LGC, Chapa said.

Joining the LGC would mean those cities would first have to become members with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority or the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system, he said.

Officials with both transit agencies have said they've talked with Arlington over the years about joining their systems. Arlington does not have a full cent of its sales tax to contribute to DART, which the agency requires for membership, the Morning News reported.

According to the Morning News, Michael Morris, the North Texas Council of Governments' transportation director, said: "You're either going to be in the big leagues or you're not going to be in the big leagues. And Arlington knows if they're not fully compliant with this notion, there will not be a station on this high-speed rail line."

Fort Worth officials have said the earliest a train could travel between Fort Worth and Dallas is 2023 or 2024.

The rail line is being proposed to run either between downtown Fort Worth and downtown Dallas down Interstate 30, or along the Trinity Railway Express corridor. Project costs haven't been determined. The trains could travel between 70 and 125 mph, according to reports.

The proposed Dallas station is set to be built in the Cedars neighborhood near Interstate 30, the Morning News said.

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price has said the rail line is a “critical part” of Fort Worth’s future.

“We’re never going to be able to support enough concrete to accommodate all our traffic,” Price previously said. “This could be a major piece and a solution for us for transit in the future.”

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/fort-worth/article184578748.html>

Residents speak out against potential Lake Corridor project

November 15, 2015
By Joe Reavis
Wylie News

The takeaway from a Wylie city council and North Central Texas Council of Governments workshop that ran more than three hours before a packed house is that no freeway will be built through town if the city council is opposed.

“We will never build a project in a community that does not want it,” NCTCOG Director of Transportation Michael Morris declared.

Purpose of the workshop was to provide information on the Collin County Strategic Roadway Plan, and most specifically a north-south freeway that would run through Wylie.

The workshop generated such citizen interest that Fire Chief Brent Parker reported that the council chamber had reached its maximum capacity and had to move anyone standing in the chamber to the Municipal Complex lobby to watch on closed circuit television.

Representing the COG were Morris, Senior Transportation Planner Chris Reed and Program Manager Jeff Neal.

Laying the groundwork for the workshop, Mayor Eric Hogue said, “This is just a session. No decisions will be made tonight.”

Public comments were allowed at the start of the meeting and 30 people spoke, all but two in opposition to a proposed Lake Corridor that would run from Anna south to President George Bush Tollway, crossing Lake Lavon and splitting Wylie.

<http://wylie-news.com/2017/11/15/residents-speak-out-against-potential-lake-corridor-project/>

TxDOT eyeing accounting trick to get around toll road prohibition

A state lawmaker has asked the attorney general to weigh in on whether the state's transportation agency can use voter-approved funds to rebuild or expand highways that will also include toll lanes alongside them.

NOV. 16, 2017
BY BRANDON FORMBY
Texas Tribune

Toll lanes were supposed to stop popping up alongside Texas highways. At least, that's what voters who approved billions of dollars for new state transportation projects thought.

Yet the Texas Department of Transportation's latest plans to unclog congestion in the state's largest urban areas call for building a bevy of managed toll lanes as the agency rebuilds and adds new lanes to existing highways.

"It's a mess," said State Rep. Joe Pickett, who is seeking an attorney general's opinion on whether a controversial new TxDOT financing idea is constitutional.

At issue is billions of tax dollars that Texas voters in 2014 and 2015 overwhelmingly agreed to spend on highway projects. Those constitutional amendments steered existing sales taxes and oil and gas taxes to the transportation agency, which now stands to receive an additional \$7.2 billion in the next two years.

The landslide support of Propositions 1 and 7 came in part because the state touted the fact that the money would be constitutionally forbidden from being spent on toll lanes.

But transportation department employees are considering using accounting maneuvers to divvy up the mix of tax dollars and federal loans so that toll lanes could still be added when the agency rebuilds or expands existing Texas highways.

Highway corridors that could see managed lanes include U.S. Highway 183 and Interstate 35 in Austin, the eastern portion of LBJ Freeway in Dallas County and I-35 in San Antonio.

The idea is that Prop 1 and 7 funds would be spent on the non-tolled main lanes, while the new toll lanes next to them would be funded through gas tax revenue or federal loans that don't come with restrictions on using them for toll projects.

Transportation officials say funding the managed lanes with federal loans backed by toll revenues, while adding non-tolled main lanes with tax dollars, would help TxDOT build more capacity with limited funds.

"I don't see that as inconsistent with the constitutional mandate," said Bruce Bugg, who chairs the Texas Transportation Commission that oversees TxDOT.

But a litany of conservative Texas groups, including those who heavily influence Texas politics, disagree.

"There's always another bureaucratic plot afoot with perpetual whining that they don't have enough money," Grassroots America Executive Director JoAnn Fleming said in a prepared statement this month. "If they spent one-quarter of their time working to eliminate bone-headed,

wasteful processes that burn through cash, instead of devising ways to defy the Governor and the state constitution, we'd all be better off."

Gov. Greg Abbott vowed in his first state-of-the-state address to secure more money for TxDOT so highway capacity could be added without new toll lanes. Bugg, who like the commission's other members is appointed by the governor, said Abbott's staff is aware of the financing mechanism TxDOT is exploring. Abbott's office did not respond to requests for comment this week.

"Gov. Abbott needs to put his foot down to stop these rogue actions, which undermine his administration," Fleming said.

Extra capacity, extra cash

The transportation commission and TxDOT staffers are currently hammering out the state's Unified Transportation Program, which lays out the long-term plan for funding and prioritizing transportation projects. The commission plans to include in a 2018 update of that document a list of major highway projects that aim to achieve one of Abbott's chief priorities: unclogging congestion in the state's metropolitan areas.

TxDOT is currently considering whether to include in the long-term plan 17 urban highway rebuilds and expansions, many of which are facing funding shortfalls. Many projects on that list also include managed toll lanes under the plan.

Such lanes, sometimes called express lanes, run alongside non-tolled main lanes and generally charge drivers rates that vary based on usage. The tolls increase as the managed lanes become more clogged so that fewer people enter the lanes, with the goal of preventing them from becoming more congested.

"The end result will be that traffic in the main lanes will be better," said Victor Vandergriff, a state transportation commissioner.

Managed toll lanes were added to LBJ Freeway in Dallas when that infamously traffic-clogged corridor was rebuilt almost two years ago. John Brady, the strategy and revenue director for the project, said the addition of managed toll lanes has reduced overall congestion by 60 percent.

"The rush hour tended to average 35 to 40 miles per hour," Brady said. "Today across the system, they averaged 55 miles per hour."

But the managed lanes may not ease congestion for very long. Dave Ellis, a senior researcher at the Texas Transportation Institute, said a concept called induced demand — where drivers who had avoided a congested highway begin using it after it's improved — has erased the effects of widening other Texas highways.

"We've seen this before on Interstate 10 in Houston, where there was increased mobility when they added lanes and added toll lanes," Ellis said. "But then over time, the speeds began to slow down again."

In addition to adding capacity, the managed lanes are seen as revenue generators for future road projects. Once construction loans are paid off, the tolls could generate revenue to pay for maintenance of the main lanes and help build other new roads in a particular metro area.

"We've got to consider all balance sheet options and make a business decision," transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin said at a meeting last month. "Emotions get in the way a lot."

A legislative push looms

Michael Morris is the transportation director for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, which sets policy and steers federal funds to projects in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

That region has seen several new managed toll lanes, like those on LBJ Freeway, in recent years. Morris said he plans to continue building more. One reason: They could be reserved for autonomous vehicles as such technology becomes more mainstream.

"What's wrong with using managed lanes to implement next-generation technologies?" Morris said. "Why do we have to put our head in the sand, and not come up with innovative ways to deliver driverless vehicles?"

Vandergriff said the transportation commission has yet to formally weigh in on whether using Prop 1 and Prop 7 dollars on roads alongside managed toll lanes is constitutional — or even complies with the spirit of what voters were promised.

"We should discuss that in an open forum where we have input from the public and more detailed presentations from staff," he said. "I don't think we should make an assumption one way or another."

Pickett, the El Paso Democrat who is seeking an attorney general's opinion on TxDOT's financing idea, championed the legislation that helped create Prop 1 and Prop 7. He said legislators in 2019 will likely push bills that further limit how Prop 1 and Prop 7 money can be used — regardless of how the state's top attorney rules on his request for an opinion.

"The devil is in the details, as they say," he said.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2017/11/16/txdot-eyeing-accounting-trick-get-around-prohibition-toll-roads/>

Amid blowback over accounting maneuver, TxDOT drops financing idea for several toll projects

Late Thursday, transportation officials released a statement saying they were dropping several toll projects from long-term plans due to public response.

NOV. 16, 2017
BY BRANDON FORMBY
Texas Tribune

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick before hitting the gavel to begin a Senate session Aug. 15, 2017, the day before the end of a first called special session of the 85th Legislature.

Bob Daemmrich for the Texas Tribune

State transportation leaders said late Thursday they will drop plans for using an accounting maneuver to get around a constitutional prohibition on some toll projects.

That vow came after The Texas Tribune reported earlier in the day that the Texas Department of Transportation was eyeing tax dollars prohibited from funding toll lanes to cover other constructions of highway rebuilds and expansions that would also feature toll lanes.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick told state transportation leaders after the initial report that they should abandon those plans. Patrick said the idea has left lawmakers "very unhappy" with Texas Transportation Commission members, who appear "to be going in a direction that opposes the will" of legislators and Texas drivers.

Texas voters in 2014 and 2015 overwhelmingly agreed to send TxDOT billions of dollars' worth of new revenue streams. And ballot language said the money could not be used on toll roads or toll lanes.

TxDOT, though, was considering accounting maneuvers that would still allow toll lanes to be built. Their idea: Voter-approved funds would be spent on the non-tolled main lanes, while the new toll lanes next to them would be funded through gas tax revenue or federal loans that don't come with restrictions on using them for toll projects.

"It is surprising and disappointing to learn that TxDOT created a plan to add managed toll lanes to virtually every major roadway under consideration," Patrick told transportation officials in a letter Thursday.

Abbott appoints the five commissioners that oversee TxDOT and promised Texans that highway capacity would be added throughout the state without new toll lanes financing construction.

"The governor and his staff have been in constant communication with members of the Texas Transportation Commission and TxDOT staff to express their desire to not include new toll roads" in long-term state transportation plans, Abbott spokeswoman Ciara Matthews said Thursday.

Late Thursday, transportation officials released a statement saying they were dropping several toll projects from long-term plans due to public response.

"The Texas Transportation Commission fully understands and is committed to continue to use the funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 for non-tolled projects", commission chair Bruce Bugg said in a statement.

Meanwhile, State Rep. Joe Pickett, D-El Paso, has asked the state attorney general's office to weigh in on whether the accounting idea is legal.

Lawmakers in recent years have fiercely opposed toll roads and managed toll lanes as their constituents have complained about the increasing number of such projects, especially in North Texas. Collin County lawmakers successfully got regional planners there to drop plans for turning carpool lanes on Central Expressway into managed toll lanes. And the Texas House earlier this year killed a major transportation funding bill, largely because projects within it would have included toll lanes.

TxDOT officials' idea comes as they prepare to update the state's long-term transportation plan next year. Many of the projects being proposed for the plan include managed toll lanes, which run alongside non-tolled main lanes and generally charge drivers rates that vary based on usage. The tolls increase as more people use the managed lanes. Those increases are meant to prevent the lanes from becoming more congested.

Transportation officials say funding the managed lanes with federal loans backed by toll revenues, while adding non-tolled main lanes with tax dollars, would help the agency build more capacity with limited funds. In meetings, TxDOT documents and interviews, state officials have also indicated that regional planners from the state's major urban areas are pushing the idea of using managed toll lanes.

Once toll revenues pay off construction costs, the excess funds that drivers would still pay could then be used to maintain existing roads or pay for expanding or building roads in the same areas.

"These local communities are trying to identify solutions to manage and mitigate their traffic congestion throughout their respective areas," TxDOT project planning and development director Lauren Garduño told transportation commissioners last month.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2017/11/16/patrick-criticizes-txdot-over-toll-projects-abbott-remains-mum/>

Tesla Wants To Electrify Big Trucks, Adding To Its Ambitions

November 17, 2017
By Dee-Ann Durbin
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — After more than a decade of making cars and SUVs — and, more recently, solar panels — Tesla Inc. wants to electrify a new type of vehicle: big trucks.

The company unveiled its new electric semitractor-trailer Thursday night near its design center in Hawthorne, California.

CEO Elon Musk said the semi is capable of traveling 500 miles on an electric charge — even with a full 80,000-pound load — and will cost less than a diesel semi considering fuel savings, lower maintenance and other factors. Musk said customers can put down a \$5,000 deposit for the semi now and production will begin in 2019.

“We’re confident that this is a product that’s better in every way from a feature standpoint,” Musk told a crowd of Tesla fans gathered for the unveiling. Musk didn’t reveal the semi’s price.

The truck will have Tesla’s Autopilot system, which can maintain a set speed and slow down automatically in traffic. It also has a system that automatically keeps the vehicle in its lane. Musk said several Tesla semis will be able to travel in a convoy, autonomously following each other.

Musk said Tesla plans a worldwide network of solar-powered “megachargers” that could get the trucks back up to 400 miles of range after charging for only 30 minutes.

The move fits with Musk’s stated goal for the company of accelerating the shift to sustainable transportation. Trucks account for nearly a quarter of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., according to government statistics.

But the semi also piles on more chaos at the Palo Alto, California-based company. Tesla is way behind on production of the Model 3, a new lower-cost sedan, with some customers facing waits of 18 months or more. It’s also ramping up production of solar panels after buying Solar City Corp. last year. Tesla is working on a pickup truck and a lower-cost SUV and negotiating a new factory in China. Meanwhile, the company posted a record quarterly loss of \$619 million in its most recent quarter.

On Thursday night, Tesla surprised fans with another product: An updated version of its first sports car, the Roadster. Tesla says the new Roadster will have 620 miles of range and a top speed of 250 mph. The car, coming in 2020, will have a base price of \$200,000.

Musk, too, is being pulled in many directions. He leads rocket maker SpaceX and is dabbling in other projects, including high-speed transit, artificial intelligence research and a new company that’s digging tunnels beneath Los Angeles to alleviate traffic congestion.

“He’s got so much on his plate right now. This could present another distraction from really just making sure that the Model 3 is moved along effectively,” said Bruce Clark, a senior vice president and automotive analyst at Moody’s.

Tesla’s semi is venturing into an uncertain market. Demand for electric trucks is expected to grow over the next decade as the U.S., Europe and China all tighten their emissions

regulations. Electric truck sales totaled 4,100 in 2016, but are expected to grow to more than 70,000 in 2026, says Navigant Research.

But most of that growth is expected to be for smaller, medium-duty haulers like garbage trucks or delivery vans. Those trucks can have a more limited range of 100 miles or less, which requires fewer expensive batteries. They can also be fully charged overnight.

Long-haul semi trucks, on the other hand, would be expected to go greater distances, and that would be challenging. Right now, there's little charging infrastructure on global highways. Without Tesla's promised fast-charging, even a mid-sized truck would likely require a two-hour stop, cutting into companies' efficiency and profits, says Brian Irwin, managing director of the North American industrial group for the consulting firm Accenture.

Irwin says truck companies will have to watch the market carefully, because tougher regulations on diesels or an improvement in charging infrastructure could make electric trucks more viable very quickly. Falling battery costs also will help make electric trucks more appealing compared to diesels.

But even lower costs won't make trucking a sure bet for Tesla. It faces stiff competition from long-trusted brands like Daimler AG, which unveiled its own semi prototype last month.

"These are business people, not fans, and they will need convinced that this truck is better for their balance sheet than existing technology. It probably is, based on the specs provided, but this isn't necessarily a slam dunk," said Rebecca Lindland, an executive analyst at Kelley Blue Book.

Musk said Tesla will guarantee the semi's powertrain for one million miles to help alleviate customers' concerns.

A Bus-Shunning Texas Town's Big Leap to Microtransit

Arlington used to be the largest city in the U.S. without any buses at all. Now it's going all in on on-demand shuttles.

BY LAURA BLISS
CITYLAB
NOV 20, 2017

Sandwiched between Fort Worth and Dallas, the Texas city of Arlington would seem an obvious candidate for commuter rail or rapid buses. Yet voters have turned down transit bond measures three times since 1979, preferring to fund stadium revamps instead. Until a few years ago, Arlington was largest city in the country with no mass transit at all.

Now it will be the first to run solely on microtransit. Earlier this month, Arlington announced a partnership with Via, a New York-based startup that offers on-demand minibus rides. Its vehicles will soon replace the Max, the single, fixed-route bus line that has run between UT Arlington and a commuter rail station near Dallas-Fort Worth airport since 2013. Once the Max contract expires in December, passengers will be able to secure pick-ups in six-seater Mercedes shuttles from nearby corners, using the Via app or by dialing a call center for a \$3 fare.

The city's primary goal is to provide more coverage for less money. Because the Max's service area has been so constrained, and offers virtually no connections within the city, ridership has hovered between 250 and 300 trips per day—just five full buses, roughly speaking. Reviewing options for renewing service, the city's transportation advisory committee was intrigued by microtransit's offer of flexible, "right-sized" service.

"Not only will it cover the area we're already serving, Via will get people to places Max was too limited to get close to," said Alicia Winkelblech, the assistant director of strategic planning for the city of Arlington.

Apart from drawing travelers out of private cars, Via may help unlock answers to questions that are puzzling transit agencies around the country.

Via's coverage area will start in downtown and expand in phases to cover large swaths of Arlington, including entertainment districts, healthcare centers, and the commuter rail station near the airport. City officials say service hours will shift based on passenger demand over the course of the pilot program, which will be up for renewal after one year.

No ridership goals have been established yet, since Arlington's circumstances are without compare: No other city has tested microtransit-only service. The main criteria for judging success will be whether Via reduces single-occupancy vehicle trips, which the city plans to measure based on data collected and shared by Via. Winkelblech is particularly optimistic that it can carve into the market for private or even pooled Uber and Lyft trips. "A trip that might cost \$12 on a ride-hailing service will now cost \$3," she said. "We anticipate quite a lot of interest in this."

Via, which launched in 2013, operates its own vehicles in New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., providing 1.5 million rides per month, according to its website. The company has licensed software to other public agencies in search of alternatives to poor-performing bus

routes: Austin, Texas; Orange County, California; and the city of Kent in the UK all have Via technology working beneath their custom apps, apparently with relative success. Austin's pilot, called "Pickup," reached six-month ridership goals within the first two months.

Not all microtransit services have seen such positive returns. Private luxury shuttles like Loup and Leap failed to strike a viable balance between price-point and passenger volumes. Bridj, the now-shuttered microtransit startup that partnered with Kansas City's transit authority to much fanfare in 2015, provided just 600 rides in a 6-month pilot, a failure observers chalked up to questionable routing and poor marketing. Recently, Chariot, the Ford-backed private shuttle service running in San Francisco, was shut down temporarily for having the wrong permits.

Zachary Wasserman, Via's head of global business development, said that the company is taking care to avoid the marketing and regulatory slip-ups its predecessors and competitors have fallen into. He also noted a fundamental difference: Whereas other variants have followed more or less fixed routes, "Via is fully dynamic and on-demand," he said. "You can literally go from anywhere to anywhere, within the zone the city wants us to cover." And in the case of Arlington, Via will be subsidized by public tax dollars, including one of the first federal grants to fund microtransit in the country. Without such subsidies, many have argued that microtransit cannot succeed at all.

Not everyone in Arlington is thrilled about Via's arrival. There are UT students who've become dependent on the Max, and some have voiced concern that not enough people share the same schedules to make an on-demand service truly convenient. From an equity standpoint, tech-based transportation "solutions" deserve the public's skepticism: Some cities that have had transit much longer than Arlington have jumped to eliminate entire bus routes in favor of partnerships with ride-hailing companies, alienating lower-income passengers with barriers to access, and more or less throwing in the towel on waning ridership numbers.

No on-demand taxi (nor helicopter, nor boat) will replace the capacity and cost-efficiency of a full subway or fixed-route bus. Replenishing ridership on those modes requires investment, not forfeiture, say experts. Just last week, L.A. county announced that it will partner with Via to provide "first and last mile" connections to transit stations. Keeping these on-demand shuttles a complement to buses and trains, rather than a competitor, will take careful planning and monitoring.

But for a city like Arlington, where so little transit has been historically available, the question is more about what riders stand to gain than lose. A successful expansion of microtransit may very well build demand for fixed-route services in the future. And apart from drawing travelers out of private cars, Via may help unlock answers to questions that are puzzling transit agencies around the country. According to Jon McBride, a transportation consultant who formerly worked for Bridj, an advantage of on-demand mobility apps that is often overlooked is all the data on where passengers want to go—even when that trip isn't served yet.

"There isn't a transit agency in the U.S. that has any valuable data on the demand they don't/can't serve," McBride said via email. "They have no real idea what service people are looking for—perhaps this contributes to the declining ridership most of them are seeing."

In more ways than one, maybe microtransit can help turn that around.

<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2017/11/a-bus-shunning-texas-towns-big-leap-to-microtransit/546134/>

Fort Worth's GE locomotive plant faces an uncertain future

Nov. 20, 2017
BY GORDON DICKSON
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FORT WORTH – When General Electric announced in 2011 it wanted to build a railroad locomotive plant in far north Fort Worth, government and business leaders rolled out the proverbial red carpet — and a plethora of financial incentives — to lure about 700 jobs to the region.

But last week, all that optimism was tamped down a bit after Boston-based GE's chief executive officer, John Flannery confirmed rumors that the company would sell or spin off its locomotive division, GE Transportation, as part of a broader plan to rid itself of \$20 billion in assets.

The locomotive business includes the relatively new Fort Worth plant that opened in 2013 near Texas Motor Speedway as well as the company's 125-year-old plant in Erie, Pa.

North Texas officials now say they are somewhat concerned the Fort Worth plant could be downsized, or eventually even shut down by whoever its new owner is — although generally, they remain cautiously optimistic that won't happen. Instead, they hope the plant will remain open at roughly its current level.

They say the factory has some of the most modern equipment and efficient manufacturing methods in the world.

Some options for GE include spinning off the Fort Worth plant, known as GE Manufacturing Solutions, into a new company, selling it to one of just a handful of U.S. competitors or perhaps selling it to a foreign manufacturer, observers say.

"I have every hope they will be here for 100 years," said Michael Morris, Transportation director for the North Central Texas Council of Governments. His organization, and its subdivision the Regional Transportation Council, agreed in 2012 to contribute about \$15 million to GE's construction costs to help build a 3-mile-long test track for locomotives coming off the assembly line.

"That plant is part of a very heavy industry, and it makes locomotives that are low-emission and among the best in the world," Morris said. "It's a very sophisticated facility. They bring in steel plates in one end of the building and they drive a locomotive out the other end."

For GE, the move is necessary as the company seeks to simplify its operations and become more profitable, an official said.

"The company is in the early stages of this process and exploring a multitude of possibilities that may include, among several options, creative approaches used to transition GE's Consumer Finance business into Synchrony Financial or models like the Baker Hughes and GE Oil & Gas merger," GE Transportation spokesman Tim Bader said in an email.

INCENTIVES

Getting GE to build in North Texas took a cooperative effort among state and local government. In addition to the RTC's \$15 million contribution, the Texas governor's office kicked in \$4.2 million from the Texas Enterprise Fund, which was created in 2003 to lure jobs to the state.

In Fort Worth, city officials approved an 85 percent abatement of city taxes to the property, which was expected to be worth \$5.4 million over 10 years.

A \$744,845 grant from the Texas Workforce Commission was awarded to cover training costs for new GE hires, who attended courses at North Central Texas College in Gainesville and the Tarrant County College South Campus in Fort Worth.

Not all of those incentives would have to be honored, if the plant failed to meet certain hiring and construction requirements, or failed to keep the plant operating at certain levels through a minimum number of years, according to terms of the various agreements.

Overall, the cost of building the plant — which was fashioned from an existing speculative property — was about \$100 million, not including the test track.

Robert Sturns, Fort Worth economic development director, said he recently spoke with GE counterparts and was told it's too early to determine the plant's fate. Sturns said that if the plant was under new ownership but continued to meet the hiring and other requirements in the incentive agreements, it's possible the new owner could continue to receive the incentives.

"If not, we would have to go back and look at the impact," he said.

By early 2013 the plant near Texas Motor Speedway was up and running, and within about a year it was cranking out world-class, low-emissions railroad locomotives at a rate of nearly one per day for customers such as Fort Worth-based BNSF Railway and Omaha, Neb.-based Union Pacific Railroad.

The facility housed in two enormous but otherwise nondescript buildings near Texas 114 and Farm Road 156 was heralded as a harbinger of a new wave of manufacturing jobs coming to the region.

COSTLY MOVE

The fate of the Fort Worth plant depends upon who acquires it, said Morgan Swink, a business professor at Texas Christian University who closely follows supply chain management.

"If another U.S. based manufacturer is the buyer, then they will likely seek synergies and consolidation with their existing operations, which might mean that the GE facility could be moved and/or integrated with the buyer's other operations," he said.

"If the buyer is a non-U.S. manufacturer, they may want the GE plant as a foothold/entry to the U.S. market. Finally, if the buyer is private equity or a holding company that is looking to get into the business, then again I think the GE facility is probably going to stay where it is, at least for a few years.

"GE has made big investments in this operation and it will be very costly to move."

Jake Rouch, vice president of economic development for the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, said he would like to see a company such as Japan's Komatsu, which has a long history of building heavy machinery, buy and operate both the Erie and Fort Worth plants, as well as GE's diesel engine plant in Grove City, Pa.

"Such a company would have the supply chains and cultural knowledge to run a global company like GE Transportation. Such a company would be able to recognize the design and engineering talent already in place in Erie, as well as the unique manufacturing talents and roles in Erie, Grove City (Penn.) and Fort Worth," Rouch said.

But Rouch added that he would be less optimistic if private investors without such experience bought the operation.

"Should private equity acquire GE Transportation, the company — and all of the engineering and manufacturing locations — would face a dramatically different future," he said in an email.

The Fort Worth plant employed about 700 people at its peak in 2015-16. However, earlier this year about 250 employees were laid off and other employees saw their work week reduced to two hours as GE struggled with reduced orders from the major freight railroads.

In addition to building locomotives in Fort Worth, GE also makes mining equipment.

New Texas transportation group vows to fight tea party on how to ease traffic jams

Nov. 20, 2017

Written by Robert T. Garrett, Austin Bureau reporter
Dallas Morning News

AUSTIN — Business groups, local elected officials and highway industry interests are launching a new group targeting commuters to raise awareness about the lack of funds needed to ease traffic congestion in Texas' four biggest metro areas, including Dallas-Fort Worth.

Frustrated by tea party activists' vehement opposition to toll roads, such as the proposed "managed lanes" for Interstate 635 East in Dallas County, the transportation funding boosters have formed Texans for Traffic Relief.

As motorists hit the road for the Thanksgiving holidays, the nonprofit will launch a website and begin educational efforts, said spokesman David White.

Although voters in two recent statewide elections approved shifting general-purpose state revenues to roads, Texas' highway budget remains inadequate, he said.

"Common-sense solutions" that add to available road money and embrace innovation are crucial to easing congestion, he said.

White, a GOP lobbyist and public relations adviser with roots as a conservative activist, said Texans for Traffic Relief would engage commuters in North Texas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin. It will inform them about how the Texas Department of Transportation's finances aren't rosy and ask their views on what should be done, he said.

Opening shot

"The Legislature has made historic investments in transportation, but with our exploding population growth it is not enough," White said. "Raising taxes is off the table, so if we aren't going to take advantage of innovative opportunities to fund our roads, then I guess we can just ask Santa Claus to pick up the tab."

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Edgewood GOP Sen. Bob Hall, though, have vehemently denounced tentative plans by the five-member Texas Transportation Commission to add "managed lanes" to 15 major projects in the state's 10-year highway plan. Tolls would vary, depending on traffic.

White's group embraces managed lanes where the new lanes are built with government money. It says Texas also should consider expanding capacity with private investors' money. Companies once again would be allowed to lease portions of existing right of way and build and operate toll lanes.

Ordinary Texans need the facts "about the challenges facing Texas' strained transportation system," which are dire, he said.

But Terri Hall of San Antonio, founder of the anti-toll road group Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom or TURF, waved off the new group. It's just one of many she's fought since 2005, when she started organizing against toll roads, she said.

Same old, same old

"We've had Texas Good Roads, the Association of General Contractors, every chamber of commerce, every mobility coalition around the state and the association of all the engineering firms," she said. "They've been coming at us for a long time. They're on the wrong side, and that's why they keep losing."

Patrick and Bob Hall have depicted the commission as flouting the will of the Legislature.

"The Texas Legislature and voters have made additional revenues available," Patrick recently wrote Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr., an appointee of Gov. Greg Abbott. "In fact, Texas is spending record amounts on transportation."

In written statements, Bob Hall has accused Bugg and the other commissioners, all of whom were picked by Abbott or former Gov. Rick Perry, of "defiantly refusing to acknowledge or follow [Abbott's] very clear instructions."

Abbott's vow

Last year, Abbott tweeted, "I promised to build more roads WITHOUT raising taxes, tolls, fees, or debt. We're doing that now."

According to the commission's October briefing materials, though, TxDOT can identify only 14 percent of the federal, state and local money it would take to embark on six major projects for relieving Dallas-Fort Worth. That includes the \$1.8 billion "LBJ East" project on I-635 and a \$3.2 billion improvement to I-35E between I-635 in Dallas and Denton.

Commission member Victor Vandergriff of Arlington, a Perry appointee, said he sympathizes with people who believed TxDOT finally has received ample state funds and are upset to be told that's not totally accurate.

"I understand there's an angst about toll roads and public-private partnerships," in which private companies put up money for construction, said Vandergriff, former chairman of the North Texas Tollway Authority.

When Perry was governor, Texas filled in gaps by borrowing on the state's credit — issuing bonds — and resorting to toll projects. The projects relied on private companies or government toll agencies to put up capital or take on debt for up-front construction costs. Over time, drivers' tolls are then used to repay those costs.

The tea party, among others, has led a backlash against both tolls and what it claimed is excessive state debt. So those "financing tools" have fallen out of favor, Vandergriff noted.

Deal had 'asterisk'

Nearly five years ago, state leaders and TxDOT began telling voters that the agency needed \$5 billion more per year of state money just to maintain current congestion levels. But the transportation professionals didn't do a good job of explaining one key detail, Vandergriff said.

"There was an asterisk associated with it and that is it assumes the use of all these financing tools" from the Perry years, he said. "We don't have those anymore, so it has an impact."

So voters in 2014 and 2015 approved state constitutional amendments that shifted existing tax money from savings and the general budget to the State Highway Fund. Road spending also got a boost from lawmakers, who stopped diverting nearly \$700 million a year from the highway account to pay for state troopers and transportation functions by other departments.

Instead of a net increase of \$5 billion a year in new money, though, "it's probably closer to \$4 billion," Vandergriff said.

"We're in a better position than we were but it remains to be seen how far we can go" in easing congestion, he said. "Hard choices have to be made."

Earlier this month, though, Hall's TURF and dozens of other tea party, libertarian and social conservative groups sent a letter to state leaders and key lawmakers scolding TxDOT for "squandering the new funding on lower-priority projects."

She said "unelected boards," such as the commission and NTTA, "are imposing virtually a runaway tax system" of expensive tolls.

White, the new group's spokesman, said selective tolling can make sense. Tea party adherents who criticize TxDOT's attempt to update the 10-year highway plan are misstating or ignoring big funding shortfalls, he said.

'The money boys'

While Texans for Traffic Relief opposes higher taxes, it also is against doing nothing, White said. He predicted inaction would force an eventual tax hike. State and federal gasoline taxes haven't been increased in more than two decades. Inflation has sapped their purchasing power, road planners and highway industry leaders complain.

Hall said the new group "will be representing the money boys."

White said that while some engineering firms, road contractors, equipment rental companies and haulers are likely to join, the group has no financial commitments yet.

White, no stranger to GOP politics, is a former state chairman of the Young Conservatives of Texas who's worked for staunchly conservative Republican politicians such as Railroad Commissioner Wayne Christian.

He said his group's members will travel to political meetings around the state to rebut the anti-toll road activists' criticisms of the proposed 10-year road plan, known as the Unified Transportation Program.

The commission is scheduled to consider the 2018 version of the plan Dec. 14.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/texas-politics/2017/11/20/new-texas-transportation-group-vows-fight-tea-party-ease-traffic-jams>

TEXpress Lanes: Checking the rear view mirror while looking toward the future

Nov. 20, 2017
By Nicholas Sakelaris
Crain's Dallas

The managed toll lanes that have become a fixture on many North Texas highways could pave the way for autonomous vehicles and other smart technology that taps the fast-growing Internet of Things.

Officially, they're called TEXpress Lanes but critics jokingly call them Lexus Lanes because they give people the means to pay their way out of congestion. The lanes guarantee a minimum speed of 50 mph and operators adjust the toll based on traffic levels.

There are about 70 miles of TEXpress Lanes in North Texas right now, with the majority of them collecting tolls, according to the TEXpress website. Some are partially open while others are under construction, expected to open in the next year.

And more of the so-called TEXpress Lanes will be built in the next several years, transportation planners say.

Highway corridors that get the TEXpress Lane makeover are built faster because the design, bidding and construction are done simultaneously. The LBJ Express, North Tarrant Express and DFW Connector have been operating for years, giving transportation planners a mountain of data on driving habits.

The goal is to build a seamless network of managed toll lanes that give drivers a choice whether they want to pay a toll to avoid congestion, said Michael Morris, director of transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The average user is paying about \$10 a month in tolls.

Truckers and delivery companies use the TEXpress Lanes to get to their destination quicker. By nature, they're meant for through traffic because they have fewer entrances and exits, said Robert Hinkle, a spokesman for NTE Mobility Partners and LBJ Infrastructure Group, the companies that operate and manage both projects.

"Those managed lanes are capturing a whole lot of people who are just trying to get through the corridor," Hinkle said. "They don't have any reason to stop. They factor in the cost of the toll and how much time they save by having a minimum speed of 50 mph."

LBJ Infrastructure Partners and NTE Mobility Partners are owned by Cintra North America, based in Austin. The parent company is Ferrovial, based in Madrid, Spain.

Only about 15 percent of the vehicles using the TEXpress Lanes on the LBJ Express and the NT Express are luxury brands, the most common are Toyota, Ford and Honda, according to the operators of those highway systems.

Data also shows more than 4 million different vehicles have used the lanes and that 36 percent of the users each month have never used it before.

Where are they going next?

Right now, the biggest highway overhaul is occurring on the Midtown Express on Highway 183, Highway 114 and Loop 12 in Euless, Irving and Dallas.

The project includes a new junction near the former Texas Stadium site that will offer direct connections to the three highways.

TEXpress Lanes are scheduled to open this fall on Highway 114 from Highway 121 to Rochelle Road/Riverside Drive. The toll lanes will open on the rest of the project by the end of 2018. When completed, drivers could potentially drive from Southlake to Dallas or from Dallas to Fort Worth entirely on the TEXpress Lanes.

And more toll lanes are planned in the future.

Construction could start by mid-2019 to make improvements to I-635 from U.S. Highway 75 to Interstate 30 in Mesquite. The Regional Transportation Council has approved adding TEXpress Lanes from U.S. Highway 75 to Miller Road. Morris said the RTC will consider extending the managed lanes all the way to I-30.

This will require additional public input, environmental review and an update to the regional mobility plan.

The next generation of technology

The days of waiting in lines and digging for change at the toll booth are long gone. The advent of new toll tag sensors and license-plate reading technology has made the TEXpress Lanes seamless for everyone, even vehicles that don't have North Texas Tollway Authority tags.

There's also a TEXpress app where users can sign up for high-occupancy vehicle discounts before their trip. But that's just a harbinger of things to come.

Next year, new sensing technology could make it possible for TEXpress Lanes to automatically know whether there's more than one occupant in a vehicle.

"You automatically get charged the HOV rate instead of the full rate," said Dan Lamers, senior program manager for the NCTCOG.

Other technology that's in the works will tie into Google Maps and the Waze Traffic app to give drivers real-time information on whether to take the TEXpress Lanes or just stay in the free lanes. Currently, the toll prices aren't available in real time anywhere except the digital message boards on the highway.

The goal is to give drivers the cost and the time it would potentially save on the traffic apps.

Autonomous vehicle lanes

Someday, the TEXpress Lanes could be the test track for convoys of autonomous vehicles all communicating with each other, Morris said.

He envisions autonomous big rigs traveling in unison in the middle of the night so they aren't traveling through the Metroplex during peak hours.

Right now, a stretch of highway can handle about 2,300 vehicles per lane, per hour. Autonomous vehicles could potentially travel at faster speeds much closer together, increasing the capacity to 4,000 vehicles per lane per hour.

“Autonomous vehicles want to talk to each other, that’s the key” Morris said. “We would create incentives for them to be on managed lanes.”

It could take decades for the entire vehicle fleet to become autonomous. Not to mention government policy and regulations have to catch up. But having isolated TEXpress Lanes where the vehicles can drive puts North Texas ahead of other regions in the country, Morris said.

The TEXpress Lanes could also offer incentives for express buses to use those lanes with a guarantee that passengers arrive on time.

“We’ll pay their fare if they don’t make it on time,” Morris said. “Who else is doing that in the U.S. besides us?”

<http://dallas.crains.com/article/news/texpress-lanes-checking-rear-view-mirror-while-looking-toward-future>

Huge Success Leads to New Challenges for Dallas Inland Port

Public transit is not available for Inland Port jobs

Nov. 21, 2017
By Ken Kalthoff
NBC5

Sudden success after years of struggle for the Dallas Inland Port has produced new transportation and utility challenges for Dallas County officials to tackle.

The Inland Port area includes portions of five cities in southern Dallas County, three interstate highways and major railroad connections where goods from around the world are received and distributed.

A Tuesday briefing to Dallas County Commissioners showed surging employment and tax roll improvement for the port area. Since 2003, new warehouses have added 2,410 Inland Port area jobs.

Instead of just building for confirmed tenants, developers are building huge structures with confidence the tenants will come.

"Now you're seeing spec development where people are spending millions of dollars, expecting that these buildings are going to be occupied in the very new future," said Dallas County Development Director Rick Loessberg.

The city of Hutchins has added 2,300 residents since 2009 and nearly doubled its tax base after seeing zero population growth from 1980 to 2000.

A new 300-unit apartment complex has just opened in Hutchins, that city's first large multi-family housing development.

"This is a monumental step forward in the evolution of this area," Loessberg said.

The Inland Port cities of Wilmer and Lancaster have also seen big population and tax base increases.

But, there are utility and transportation deficiencies that block development on the vast parcels of vacant land that still remain in the area.

"People who want to want to locate manufacturing really are not going to wait until we build the infrastructure," Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price said.

The city of Dallas is the only Dallas Area Rapid Transit member in the Inland Port area, and DART service in Dallas does not extend south of Interstate 20 to the major Inland Port employers.

A big new Amazon fulfillment center on Interstate 20 at J.J. Lemon Road is a mile from the nearest DART bus stop. DART plans route changes in March to move the stop closer.

DART is also working with Inland Port cities and employers on car pool options. A \$400,000 grant from Regional Transportation Council in October will fund studies of additional transit options.

"We've got to be more swift in moving to where the jobs are," Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said.

Many Inland Port jobs were among the thousands available at employment fairs sponsored by Jenkins last month.

"This is about not only getting people who don't have jobs, jobs. It's about moving people up from these poverty wages to a living wage," Jenkins said.

Dallas County Commissioners agreed Tuesday to spend \$500,000 on road improvements for Sunrise Road between Beltline Road and Pleasant Run Road in Wilmer to support a planned development.

The planned Loop 9 will also cross vacant land in the southern portion of the Inland Port area to open other areas for new construction in the future.

"This has the ability to transform the southern part, just as 50, 60 years ago the Richardson area became the Telecom Corridor," Loessberg said.

But transit and utility improvements are still a work in progress.

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/Huge-Success-Leads-to-New-Challenges-for-Dallas-Inland-Port-459176843.html>

Editorial: TXDOT: Keep our promise about toll road spending

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
NOVEMBER 21, 2017 05:18 PM

There's a good reason voters don't trust some public officials. They bend the rules to do things they said they wouldn't do.

We don't know if Texas Department of Transportation staffers realized the perception they were creating when they proposed a sly way of using restricted money to pay for tolled lanes.

We're glad transportation commissioners have put the idea on hold, because the whole ordeal felt like a sleight of hand.

At issue is how state transportation staff proposed using highway funding approved by Texas voters in 2014 and 2015.

The passage of Propositions 1 and 7 shifted some tax money into a fund for road building, but those dollars are constitutionally prohibited from being used for toll lanes.

That promise, not to finance toll roads with the new funding, is one of the reasons voters said yes.

In this case it appeared transportation staffers were circumventing that promise because they planned to use the restricted money for projects that include managed toll lanes.

They would get around the constitutional limitations by saying a different pot of money was paying for the toll lanes, even though they would sit next to non-tolled lanes paid for with the voter-approved money.

The governor, lieutenant governor, legislators and some citizen groups cried foul.

Rep. Joe Pickett, D-El Paso, has asked Attorney General Ken Paxton whether the funding plan is legal.

Texas Transportation Commissioner Victor Vandergriff from Arlington says he's concerned the commingling of dollars on these projects isn't what voters had envisioned so applying the brakes was the right thing to do.

"We need to do a 'better job talking with the public and making sure they're on board.' "

Vandergriff says the financing option will be off the table when commissioners support new road projects in December. That could eventually affect plans for managed lanes to relieve congestion along Interstate 30 from downtown Fort Worth to Arlington near North Cooper Street.

But he says this type of financing will be considered again next year, because transportation needs in our growing state have outstripped available dollars. Tolls can be attractive because they generate revenue.

We do not oppose toll roads. North Texas drivers vote every day with their pocketbooks when they drive through toll gates across our region.

What we do oppose is not coming clean with taxpayers about how their money will be spent.

Vandergriff says taxpayers will support tolled lanes if they believe the state has “maximized” the use of available dollars.

We’re asking TxDOT to have an open conversation with taxpayers and show us how that’s being done. Explain how you want to pay for tolled lanes and why.

Trying to push through creative financing that appears to break a promise is a violation of the public’s trust.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/opinion/editorials/article185920413.html>

Driverless Cars Won't Save Us

In fact, they'll do the opposite of what techno-optimists hope, and worsen—not ease—inequality.

RICHARD FLORIDA
CITYLAB
NOV 21, 2017

For a growing chorus of techno-optimists and even urbanists, driverless cars are the solution to everything from traffic congestion to high housing prices. By providing an easy, flexible, hands-free commute, during which people can watch videos, talk, or get work done, they will stretch the current boundaries of our crowded metro areas, and enable more and more people, especially the affluent and the advantaged, to live in far-off suburbs and exurbs.

To this way of thinking, driverless cars are the most recent in a long line of technologies—from the horse-drawn carriage and the streetcar to subways, trains, and the automobile itself—that have allowed us to escape the clutches of geography and the constraints of distance.

But the reality of driverless cars is likely to be rather different.

The vision of millions of workers logging hours from their comfortable offices on wheels can be intoxicating. And, yes, it is true that the desire to avoid long commutes is one of the things that has sent affluent Americans streaming back to cities over the past decade and a half. But a driverless car is still a car. A growing number of metro regions, including the Bay Area, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Miami, Atlanta, and Toronto, have now reached the physical point where the car is no longer an effective technology for moving people long distances. This is a limit that the new technology will not overcome.

The basic law of traffic congestion is that as more new roads get built, they quickly fill up with more cars, and congestion remains. Although you won't be driving them yourself, driverless cars won't be able to overcome the reality of congested roads, occasional accidents, and unpredictable commutes. Higher-income people who want to avoid such commutes will continue to use their money to avoid them by living closer to the urban center.

We've seen endless predictions about how new transportation technology would lead to the death of distance. Every one of them has been wrong.

While cutting down on long commutes has mattered to the back-to-the-city movement, this is not the only factor—and not the most important one—that has shaped the return of advantaged people to the urban center. Two other factors have mattered as much, or more.

For one, knowledge workers have flocked back to cities because that is where the best, highest-paying professional, tech, and creative jobs are, and where their dense professional networks occur. On top of this, people have been drawn to the unique amenities—museums, art galleries, restaurants, theaters, nightlife, and much, much more—that cities offer. In fact, according to several econometric studies, dense concentrations of these amenities are a motivating factor in the back-to-the-city movement of the affluent and the educated. Driverless cars will do little to change either of these factors.

Trulia's chief economist Ralph McLaughlin rightly argues that driverless cars will accentuate geographic inequality. But he sees this happening as both affluent people and businesses are

able to locate farther and farther out in the green exurban fringe, while urban centers lose their current value and allure, and once again become home to less advantaged groups.

I fully agree that driverless cars will exacerbate spatial inequality. But I see it occurring in almost exactly the opposite way.

Driverless cars will do little to alter the basic factors and forces that have brought affluent people back to cities. What they will do instead is free up space on the urban periphery to house less advantaged groups and classes there. Driverless cars will open up cheap outer-edge land for low-cost development and make today's "drive 'til you qualify" commutes look like a breeze. Rather than being used by a re-suburbanizing rich headed to far-flung luxury developments, driverless cars—or more likely, driverless busses—will extend the commuting range of blue-collar workers, service workers, and the poor. America's metropolitan geography will come to look more like that of Europe or the developing world, with the rich clustered on the increasingly valuable land in and around the city center, and the low-income warehoused in the much cheaper land at the suburban and exurban fringe.

Over the past several decades, we've seen endless predictions about how new transportation, information, or communications technology would lead to the death of distance—the end of geography and the flattening of the world. And every one of them has been wrong. The world has become spikier. Superstar cities have become more prosperous. And the affluent have used their resources to colonize the most economically functional and amenity-rich areas near the urban center.

Driverless cars will do nothing to change that. In fact, they are only likely to make our current geographic divides even worse.

<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/11/driverless-cars-wont-save-us/546344/>

TO SEE THE FUTURE OF CITIES, WATCH THE CURB. YES, THE CURB

NOV. 22, 2017
BY AARIAN MARSHALL
WIRED MAGAZINE

WHEN GREG ROGERS left his gig as a Washington, DC, lobbyist in 2015, he did what any savvy, mid-20s kid with a car and a light wallet might: He signed up to drive for a couple of ridehailing services. “Living the millennial dream means quitting your job, driving for Uber and Lyft, and trying to figure it out,” he says.

He was a menace. “It was always the same dance,” says Rogers, now a policy analyst with the Eno Center for Transportation, a think tank. “I wouldn’t be able to see the passengers, and couldn’t find a place to park safely. So I did what a lot of Uber drivers did: I threw on the hazard lights and blocked a lane.” He and his fellow drivers stopped traffic, risking tickets and sparking jams along the way.

Rogers and his compatriots were just foot soldiers in an unending war of conquest that rages in nearly every city in the country, even the world. The battleground is ubiquitous but rarely merits a second look. In some places, it occupies mere inches of space. But the territory is now fertile soil, its coveters many. We are talking, of course, about the curb.

The curbside has always been a place for walking and loitering. But in just the past decade, smartphone technology has enabled new transportation services, all of them looking for their own bit of the terrain. The curb is home to bike share programs and the cycling lanes that help their users get around safely. It’s a spot to pick up and drop off passengers (Uber, Lyft, Chariot, Via, public buses and streetcars, paratransit) and things (UPS, FedEx, Instacart, Postmates). Some cities have set aside space for carshare services (Zipcar, Maven), or scooter-shares (Scoot). Others have found new and creative ways to charge for parking spots, experimenting with tech that adjusts prices based on demand.

“Cities have started to rethink how their streets are designed from curb to curb,” says Matthew Roe, who directs street design initiatives for the National Association of City Transportation Officials and authored a new curbside management white paper released this week. “They’ve started to realize they need more tools to manage that valuable curbside space. It’s the most valuable space that a city owns and one of the most underutilized.”

What you do with the curb sets the tone for your whole city. And through this grey chunk of concrete, local governments are starting to communicate how they’ll handle their entire transportation systems. Favor a system that asks citizens to share resources, by making room for, say a bikeshare program, and you say one thing. Favor private parking for residents, and you declare war: “When I think about curb, the first thing that comes to mind is how people react when you take away parking,” said Sarah Jones, the planning director for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. She was speaking at a surprisingly lively event about curbs, hosted by the San Francisco Bay Area research and advocacy organization SPUR this month. Residents complain, Jones said, of private interests taking over the space, but they don’t seem to get that this is exactly what’s been happening all along. “I’m not sure what is privatizing public space more than storing your vehicle in it,” she said.

Good thing American cities are getting a little loosey-goosey with curb control, experimenting with policies that just might make the places more livable, for everyone.

Space Wars

Rogers, the driver-turned analyst, was inspired by his struggles to come up with a new curbside management concept, one that Washington and other cities are beginning to take very seriously. He calls it “shared use mobility zones,” and you can think of it as flex-space: At certain times of day, the city reserves the curb for specific functions. During rush hour, maybe, it’s a pick up stop for a microtransit service. In the afternoon, it’s a spot where trucks can pull over and drag in deliveries without double parking. At night, it’s a designated point where a for-hire car can meet passengers pouring out of the bar on the corner. “The best part is that cities can adjust based on what their goals are,” says Rogers.

And even though Rogers hasn’t actually approached any local governments about his personal zoning idea, cities are acting on similar notions: In October, Washington rolled out a year-long pilot program modeled on the concept of flex-space. Monday through Thursday, a stretch of Connecticut Avenue in the busy Dupont Circle neighborhood is a great place to shop or grab lunch. Thursday through Sunday, 10 pm to 7 pm, it’s one of the most zoo-like nightlife spots in the District.

That’s why the city reserves four blocks on those evenings for ridehailing pick-up and drop-off zones. “Folks were spilling out into the travel lane,” says Evian Patterson, the DC Department of Transportation’s director of parking and ground transportation. Now, just a few months on, he says the city has seen safety improvements. The traffic has gotten better, too. San Francisco and Fort Lauderdale have similar pilots in the works.

Everybody wants something different, of course, and this is just the beginning of a vision of what a city could be. “If every personal car space were converted to a pick-up or drop-off, or every personal car trip were converted to a shared ride, you would need a lot less space overall because you’re not storing cars—you’re dynamically moving people in and out,” says Andrew Salzberg, who heads up transportation policy at Uber. “You have the opportunity to do a lot of interesting things: sidewalks cafes, parks, space for bike share, wider sidewalks.”

Or, faster transportation overall. In 2015, Chicago’s government reserved curbside lanes on a major downtown thoroughfare for buses only, painting them a bright red. In the following year, moving and stopping violations on the road fell. Standing and parking violations almost disappeared. Bus riders were getting to where they needed to go, closer to on time—and so was everyone else.

Of course, there is always a catch. This time, it’s funding. Cities like Washington make big bucks off charging for personal car-related expenses, through parking meters, parking permits, and traffic violations. The magazine *Governing* found America’s 25 biggest cities collected almost \$5 billion in car-related revenue in 2016, about \$129 per resident. If that money goes away, what happens to city services? One option is to charge the new curbside users extra, a tax for the companies delivering people and stuff every day.

Figure it out, cities, because the future beckons. The curb is only going to get more important, as even newer tech like self-driving vehicles start driving themselves over the horizon. Prognosticators say shared, autonomous vehicles will never have to park at all, pausing their

ferry of people and goods only when they need to re-fuel. That means saying adieu to all auto-based revenue.

"We're really preparing the ground for repurposing the parking lane in preparation for autonomous vehicles," says Patterson, the DC transportation official. "We know that it's coming." In the meantime, though, his city is focused on collecting data and information on how residents are getting around, right now—and using the curb to make that easier. "We don't have a war on cars, but we want residents to know that that's not the only option," he says. The battle for that contested slice of territory edges toward a peace treaty.

https://www.wired.com/story/city-planning-curbs/?utm_campaign=digest&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nuzzle

Three things must happen before North Texans can get TEX Rail commuter trains

BY GORDON DICKSON
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Nov. 26, 2017

If all goes according to plan, a year from now the long-awaited TEX Rail commuter train service will make its maiden voyage from downtown Fort Worth to Grapevine and Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

But that's a big if.

Much work remains on the commuter line, which is expected to cost more than \$1 billion.

Although officials at the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, the agency responsible for building the train line, insist they are still on track to open the service by December 2018, many observers believe the construction likely will take several months longer.

But either way, here are three of the biggest challenges in the project that must be overcome before the trains can roll.

1. THE 'HOLE IN THE WALL'

Just east of downtown Fort Worth, the TEX Rail line must squeeze through an extraordinarily tight railroad/highway intersection that project designers have taken to calling the "hole in the wall." It's really more of a virtual wall, a place where railroad tracks used by Fort Worth-based BNSF Railway, Omaha, Neb.-based Union Pacific Railroad, national passenger rail service Amtrak and the local Trinity Railway Express all share space.

And, directly above is an overpass for Spur 280, which leads thousands of motorists per day from nearby Interstate 30 and U.S. 287 in and out of downtown.

"Unfortunately, we don't have enough horizontal space to put the tracks in without doing some demolition and rearranging," Paul Ballard, transportation authority president, said during a recent tour of the area.

The remaining work includes building new vertical support columns for Spur 280 (the existing columns are in the way), then building a new railroad overpass for the freight trains to use. The passenger trains will use the ground-level tracks.

2. NEW 'SHOP' FOR THE TRAINS

When you operate trains practically around the clock, you have to have a place to wash them and conduct routine maintenance and repairs. For TEX Rail, an Equipment Maintenance Facility is under construction near Long and Sylvania avenues in north Fort Worth.

The maintenance facility is being built on 17 acres and will include about 159,000 square feet of indoor space (think of a building roughly the size of a Walmart Supercenter, with three sets of railroad tracks running through it.)

Eight sets of Stadler Flirt rail cars — each set with four passenger cars and an diesel engine car — will have their wheels periodically smoothed at the facility, said David Campbell, vice president of Huitt-Zollars, the firm overseeing the construction. The process of smoothing the wheels, which tend to develop little flat spots caused by train braking, is called “true-ing.”

3. NEW TRACKS AND STATIONS

In all, TEX Rail is scheduled to serve nine stations. Only two of the stations already exist — downtown Fort Worth’s T&P and Intermodal Transportation Center — both of which are used by the Trinity Railway Express.

The other stations will have to be built from scratch. DFW Airport is already working on its station at Terminal B, and Grapevine city officials are hard at work developing their ambitious downtown station, which will include a boutique hotel.

In North Richland Hills, several intersections have been improved to make room for TEX Rail, and city officials are hard at work developing two stations — Iron Horse and Smithfield.

“Twenty or 30 years from now, people aren’t going to remember the battles and the work that was required to get this done,” North Richland Hills Mayor Oscar Trevino said during a recent tour of the TEX Rail line. “But with the city of Fort Worth and Grapevine and the T (Fort Worth Transportation Authority), we are able to get this done.”

In addition to building new train platforms and parking areas at the stations, the transportation authority also is replacing and double-tracking much of the line.

DFW Airport prepares to rebuild one of its main runways in 2018

NOV. 28, 2017

Written by Conor Shine, Aviation Writer
Dallas Morning News

After 43 years and millions of aircraft landings, DFW International Airport's main arrival runway is getting a facelift.

Officials announced Monday that the airport is receiving \$52 million in federal grants, with most of the money earmarked for the roughly \$160 million runway rehabilitation that's scheduled to take place next year.

The runway work kicks off a new round of infrastructure work following a multiyear, \$2 billion upgrade of the terminal facilities. The new phase of investment will focus on the airport's airfield infrastructure, including its runways, taxiways, bridges and access roads, with a cost that could top \$2 billion over the next decade.

First up is runway 17C and its associated taxiways, which see the majority of airport arrivals.

While the runway is still in good condition and safe for use, it's nearing the end of its expected life span and airport officials want to start work before any serious issues arise, CEO Sean Donohue said.

"The runway is in fine shape right now," he said. "We're attacking the issue before it becomes an issue."

The work on runway 17C will go beyond regular maintenance and see the center portion of the 13,400-foot-long runway, which sees the most wear during operations, replaced. The portion under construction stretches 6,000 feet long by 50 feet wide, with a depth of more than three feet, according to the airport.

The runway is made up of a foot of lime-treated sub-base, 8 inches of cement-treated base and 18 inches of concrete. After that work is completed, the entire runway will be resurfaced with a composite of concrete and high-performance asphalt, the airport said.

Work is expected to begin by next summer and will close the runway for about four months. Officials do not expect the work to affect flight operations, which will be routed to one of the airport's six other runways. The airport typically sees about 1,800 flights per day.

The grant money announced Monday comes from the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program. About \$49.5 million of the funding will be used for the runway refurbishing, with the remaining \$2.5 million being used to upgrade lighting in the terminal ramp areas.

Donohue said further work on the airfield is likely to be funded through airport bonds and federal grants.

The airport recently completed the bulk of its terminal modernization program, which saw terminals A, B and E undergo significant renovations.

Airports Council International has estimated that U.S. airports have nearly \$100 billion in infrastructure needs over the next five years. Airports have been lobbying Congress to increase the cap on the passenger facility charge, which currently stands at \$4.50 per flight segment and is capped at \$18 per round trip, to generate more funds for infrastructure investments.

But the increase has been opposed by airlines, who don't want added costs placed on travelers, and so far has remain stalled in Congress.

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Dallas, who attended Monday's announcement, said the runway work will help maintain a major economic engine for the region.

"It's a magnet," she said. "We know that companies are moving here from around the country and around the world because they'll have access to easy travel ... to move people and goods."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/business/dfw-airport/2017/11/27/dfw-airport-prepares-rebuild-one-main-runways-2018>

Column: This City Hall, brought to you by Amazon

A review of some of the bids to woo Amazon's HQ2 to other cities and states shows it's not all about the money. In some cases democracy itself is a bargaining chip.

By Danny Westneat, Staff columnist
Seattle Times
November 24, 2017

There's rising worry that corporations are taking over America. But after reviewing a slew of the bids by cities and states wooing Amazon's massive second headquarters, I don't think "takeover" quite captures what's going on.

More like "surrender."

Last month Amazon announced it got 238 offers for its new, proposed 50,000-employee HQ2. I set out to see what's in them, but only about 30 have been released so far under public-record acts.

Those 30, though, amply demonstrate our capitulation to corporate influence in politics. There's a new wave, in which some City Halls seem willing to go beyond just throwing money at Amazon. They're turning over the keys to the democracy.

Coming from the home of the largest corporate tax-break package in U.S. history, which our state gave to Boeing, I figured I was well acquainted with the dark arts of economic-incentive deals.

But still I was surprised to see the lengths to which some cities and states will go to get a piece of that high-tech glory.

Example: Chicago has offered to let Amazon pocket \$1.32 billion in income taxes paid by its own workers. This is truly perverse. Called a personal income-tax diversion, the workers must still pay the full taxes, but instead of the state getting the money to use for schools, roads or whatever, Amazon would get to keep it all instead.

"The result is that workers are, in effect, paying taxes to their boss," says a report on the practice from Good Jobs First, a think tank critical of many corporate subsidies.

Most of the HQ2 bids had more traditional sweeteners. Such as Chula Vista, California, which offered to give Amazon 85 acres of land for free (value: \$100 million) and to excuse any property taxes on HQ2 for 30 years (\$300 million). New Jersey remains the dollar king of the subsidy sweepstakes, having offered Amazon \$7 billion to build in Newark.

But more of a bellwether to me are proposals that effectively would put Amazon inside the government.

Some are small. Boston has offered to set up an "Amazon Task Force" of city employees working on the company's behalf. These would include a workforce coordinator, to help with Amazon's employment needs, as well as a community-relations official to smooth over Amazon conflicts throughout Boston. (Surely Amazon can handle these things itself?)

But the most far-reaching offer is from Fresno, California. That city of half a million isn't offering any tax breaks. Instead it has a novel plan to give Amazon special authority over how the company's taxes are spent.

Fresno promises to funnel 85 percent of all taxes and fees generated by Amazon into a special fund. That money would be overseen by a board, half made up of Amazon officers, half from the city. They're supposed to spend the money on housing, roads and parks in and around Amazon.

The proposal shows a park with a sign: "This park brought to you by Amazon," with the company's smiling arrow corporate logo.

"The community fund projects would give Amazon credit for the funding of each project," the proposal says. "The potential negative impacts from a project would be turned into positives, giving Amazon credit for mitigating it."

Is it even legal to give a company direct sway over civic spending like that?

When asked about it, Fresno's economic-development director threw the public interest under the bus.

"Rather than the money disappearing into a civic black hole, Amazon would have a say on where it will go," he told the Los Angeles Times. "Not for the fire department on the fringe of town, but to enhance their own investment in Fresno."

You poor fools out on the fringe of town. All this time you've been paying your taxes, thinking it was for the broader public good. Suckers.

Seriously, we've got Congress slashing corporate taxes, business cash overwhelming elections and the Federal Communications Commission poised to turn control of the internet over to a few private companies. Now a single company is viewed as such a shiny prize that some seem ready to wave the white flag on the whole "for the people, by the people" experiment.

It feels like a dicey moment for the "civic black hole." Also known as democracy.

Danny Westneat's column appears Wednesday and Sunday. Reach him at 206-464-2086 or dwestneat@seattletimes.com

<https://www.seattletimes.com/business/amazon/this-city-hall-brought-to-you-by-amazon/>

Far North Dallas poised to lose at least one Cotton Belt rail station as DART weighs options

NOV. 28, 2017

Written by Tristan Hallman, Dallas City Hall Reporter
Dallas Morning News

Dallas Area Rapid Transit appears on track to scrap at least one proposed Dallas rail station from its planned Cotton Belt commuter line.

During a briefing Tuesday, Chad Edwards, DART's assistant vice president for capital planning, didn't have many positive things to say about the possible station near Preston and Keller Springs roads in Far North Dallas. And the DART board, hoping to speed up the line between Plano and DFW International Airport, didn't offer much support either.

"We have too many [stations]. We need to find a way to get people to where they need to go," said Paul Wageman, who represents Plano. "People aren't going to go to the airport if it takes an hour to get there. They're just not going to use it. You can drive there in half the time.

"Ultimately, we've got to pick a system that works best for everybody."

The exact details of the \$1.1 billion commuter line — the merits of which have been hotly debated within Dallas City Hall — remain fluid. Some major planning issues, such as where the train operates on a single track, still need to be worked out.

But the briefing Tuesday did illustrate the complex nature of managing a regional transit system that has to blend political interests — and boundaries — with its operational needs. Traditionally, commuter rail has a longer distance between stations than many of those proposed along the Cotton Belt line.

Board members, staring at fairly low ridership projections, wanted to make sure those who hopped aboard the commuter line could at least get around quickly. If that meant killing off lines that cities have wanted, so be it, they said.

"I really need to have some strong reasons to support these low ridership stations," said Dallas representative Michele Wong Krause.

DART officials also presented the change to projected ridership numbers if they eliminated all three proposed Far North Dallas stations — Coit Road, Preston Road and Knoll Trail. (Dallas' station at Cypress Waters — a fast-growing development around North Lake, disconnected from the rest of the city — did not receive opposition Tuesday).

The three Far North Dallas stations got the Dallas City Council's backing in 2006. But the Coit site is a mile away from a proposed University of Texas at Dallas station in Richardson, and the Knoll Trail station would only be only a half mile from the Addison Transit Center — although it is across the toll road.

But, Edwards said afterward, "I don't think that's going to happen." The board seemed supportive of keeping the Knoll Trail and Coit stations for now, with some caveats. And the city's new transportation director, Michael Rogers, expressed some concerns afterward, saying it's "way too early to lose stations."

City Council member Lee Kleinman, who chairs the transportation committee, said he wants to protect the Knoll Trail station, which will be close to the Midtown development and believes the Coit Road station is needed too.

But Kleinman wasn't as supportive of the Preston Road station, which has met neighborhood opposition.

"Probably if a station has to go, that's the one," he said.

Kleinman hopes the Cotton Belt moves forward. But council colleague Sandy Greyson, who represents Far North Dallas, believes the whole project has been rushed.

Greyson said her district is merely a pass-through point and won't get much bang for the buck. All three stations in Far North Dallas are projected to have daily ridership of fewer than 800 people.

"I didn't think Dallas would ever get much benefit from the Cotton Belt," she said. "That is coming to pass as I get more details."

Greyson said the ridership projections should call into question the entire Cotton Belt project. If DART moves forward as officials expect, Greyson said she's focused on making sure safety, noise and other issues are handled.

"That's what the folks up here want," she said. "They're saying, 'If you're going to run a rail line through Far North Dallas right behind our houses and next to our schools, we want safety measures.'"

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/dart/2017/11/28/far-north-dallas-poised-lose-least-one-cotton-belt-rail-station-dart-weighs-options>

From vast prairie to ‘city in itself,’ Walsh development surges in west Fort Worth

BY GORDON DICKSON
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
NOVEMBER 28, 2017 10:47 AM

FORT WORTH – Caroline Revard has the kind of privacy that can only be found in a vast, open prairie when she visits her new home under construction at Walsh.

She is among the first residents of the residential development, formerly known as Walsh Ranch, that developers say will eventually be home to 50,000 people. Today the area features more than 7,000 acres of mostly undeveloped land along the western edge of Fort Worth.

“I really like the drive coming out here,” said Revard, who plans to move into her home with her husband and three young daughters in February. “It just quiets my soul.”

Her isolation won’t last long.

“In 10 years this will be a city in itself,” she said.

Construction on the initial phase of homes began in April. Eight families have already moved into their homes, and more than 60 other properties are under contract. Dozens of other lots have been cleared, and up to 120 families are expected to call Walsh home by spring, said Bexie Nobles, Walsh spokeswoman.

The neighborhood won’t reach 50,000 residents overnight. Full build-out of the area likely will take at least a couple of decades, Nobles said.

But, as Fort Worth prepares for an influx of new residents — with today’s population of about 850,000 expected to swell to nearly 1.5 million by 2040 — Walsh is expected to be a bell cow for neighborhoods wishing to lure upper-middle income and wealthy residents.

The initial construction includes 587 single-family lots, on hilly streets that were designed to preserve the rolling hill feel of the area, which is just northeast of the Interstate 20/Interstate 30 merge, about a 15-minute drive west of downtown Fort Worth.

“We did everything we could to keep the topography,” Nobles said. “We didn’t want to denigrate the land.”

The project includes at least nine builders, each of whom can only build a few houses per block in an effort to ensure each street has a diverse architectural look. Price vary dramatically, from the upper \$200,000s to nearly \$800,000. And then there are the \$1 million-plus custom homes that are planned in a separate phase for a hillside nearby.

Revard’s two-story home is being built in American Craftsman style, with overhangs and a covered porch. David Weekley Homes is the builder, and offers that model starting at \$387,990.

Intentionality

Revard is a residential real estate agent, although she has no involvement in the Walsh project other than being a buyer. She works at League Real Estate in Fort Worth’s West 7th area.

She said she was struck by the “intentionality” of Walsh — the attention to detail incorporated in the sprawling development to give it a sense of place.

The land was originally part of the Walsh Ranch that has been in the area for decades.

Roughly one-third of the 1,700-plus acres in the initial development is reserved for green space. Every home is within a five-minute walk of a park, and each park has restrooms.

Although the first phase of Walsh is almost all residential — commercial development south of I-30 is planned for a future phase — the developers opened a convenience store on Walsh Avenue to serve the spur-of-the-moment needs of the residents who move into the area.

The store, Walsh Village Market, has gas, grab-and-go meals, a variety of organic groceries, containers of fresh hummus and even Figgy Pops organic energy snacks.

The nearest full-size supermarket, a Brookshire’s in Aledo, is about five miles west. Fort Worth’s Central Market near I-30 and Hulen Street is about 12 miles to the east.

Gigabits and other amenities

Although Walsh isn’t a gated community, it will feature several offerings typically found in neighborhoods with a closed perimeter. Among them are a fitness center, swimming pool and “lagoon” for fishing and paddle-boating that are scheduled to open next year.

Next to the fitness center, a “makerspace” will offer activities such as Legos for young children and robotics for older youths and adults.

The entire area is being wired for 2 gigabit Internet speed — faster than surrounding areas — and residents and businesses will have an option to tap into 10 gigabit service, Nobles said. A company known as Frog (no relation to TCU’s mascot) is installing the fiber optics.

The area, which is in the Aledo school district, will eventually have its own middle and high schools. Walsh Elementary School opened in August, and it houses a handful children whose parents have bought property in the area as well as students from other nearby parts of the district.

Walsh is being built in a cooperative effort that involves the Walsh Family, which still lives in the area and owns ranch land, and Republic Property Group.

Republic also developed Frisco’s Phillips Creek Ranch and Celina’s Light Farms and is currently working on Plano’s Villas at Legacy West.

The partners formed Quail Valley Land Co. for the Walsh project.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/business/growth/article186848053.html>

Wear: Explaining TxDOT's sudden retreat on toll roads

By Ben Wear
Austin American-Statesman Staff
Posted: November 26, 2017

Highlights

- Politicians have been promising since 2014 to address Texas road needs without new tolls or taxes.
- But that ignores that TxDOT officials said that they would need not only added cash but also license to toll.
- Some big highway projects, including I-35 and U.S. 183 North in Austin, could fall off TxDOT's to-do list.

People forgot the asterisk.

Or maybe they never noticed it in the first place.

The consequences of that oversight took full form about a week ago, and the result is that the prospects for several major highway projects in Central Texas and the state's other urban centers are now uncertain.

Back during the 2013 legislative session, when Texas Department of Transportation officials and their lawmaker allies began pushing for more money through a constitutional amendment, they said that TxDOT needed an extra \$5 billion a year to fight traffic congestion. Just give us that much money and all will be well, they said.

Except, they added — sotto voce, at least in political terms — a caveat, that asterisk. They said, \$5 billion more annually will do it, but only if you let us keep the “tools” we have now. Meaning, the ability to borrow money for some big urban projects and to charge tolls to pay it back.

But the \$5 billion is what everybody heard, and that became the political message when what had become Proposition 1 was before voters in November 2014. Prop 1 passed, giving TxDOT a significant piece of that funding boost.

The Legislature, and voters, did the rest in 2015. Lawmakers ended the “diversion” to other state departments of about \$600 million a year in gas taxes, returning it to TxDOT. And then voters in 2015 passed yet another constitutional amendment under Proposition 7, giving TxDOT a minimum of an additional \$2.5 billion a year for roads.

In the middle of all that, Greg Abbott had run for governor promising to address the state's highway needs with no new taxes, fees, tolls or debt. In other words, he dropped the caveat. And the legislative language for both constitutional amendments and the diversion cessation stipulated that none of that money could be used on toll projects.

When the dust settled late in November 2015, TxDOT had its added \$5 billion a year, or at least close to it. The oil and gas taxes diverted to TxDOT under Prop 1 have proven highly sensitive to the oil business' zigzag fortunes, varying from about \$1.7 billion to \$1 billion or less each year since.

But, undeniably, TxDOT is getting a lot of new cash. And the Texas Transportation Commission last year trumpeted the \$70 billion it would have over the next decade to spend on maintaining and expanding the state highway system. Problem solved, right?

But the reality is that, counting all the toll projects that were built from 2006 to 2016, Texas had spent about \$70 billion on highways in the previous 10 years as well. Some of that, though, had not appeared on TxDOT's books because the highway builder, operator and funder in some of those cases were regional toll authorities or even private companies.

And that construction had gone disproportionately to urban areas, where tolls were feasible. You can't charge tolls to expand a road from, say, Midland to Lubbock, where the existing free highways are not congested.

But in a rapidly growing state, with most of that population (and driver) expansion occurring in five urban areas, projects with huge costs remain at the top of the list. That includes as much as \$8 billion for Interstate 35 through Austin, and another couple of billion dollars for U.S. 183 in Northwest Austin, South MoPac Boulevard, U.S. 290 in Oak Hill and RM 620 through the Lake Travis area.

There are similarly huge projects lingering in the Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth areas as well. And that \$70 billion over the next 10 years, it turns out, couldn't come close to covering all that.

Over the past six months or so the Transportation Commission, three of the commissioners appointed to their posts by Abbott, worked with TxDOT's staff to close that multibillion-dollar gap. The solution: 15 "managed lane" projects in large Texas cities. In other words, varying tolls on added lanes like the ones now open on North MoPac. The commission and TxDOT staff made all this explicit at a late October briefing about a new version of TxDOT's 10-year project construction plan, to be voted on by the commission in December.

That lit the fuse. On Nov. 6, a letter from something calling itself the Texas Conservative Grassroots Coalition went to Bruce Bugg, chairman of the Transportation Commission. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, House Speaker Joe Straus and key lawmakers were sent copies.

The stern three-page letter, signed by almost 230 Republican groups and individuals (including about 30 identified as having ties to the tea party), said that those toll projects "subvert the promises made by Gov. Abbott. ... We urgently ask the Commission to advance the expansion of these vital corridors as non-toll."

Collectively, the people who signed the letter control or at least strongly influence a good chunk of Republican primary voters, so their urgent sentiments were not the sort of thing that GOP elected officials can ignore. Then, on Nov. 9, state Rep. Joe Pickett from El Paso — a Democrat, no less — sent a letter to Attorney General Ken Paxton seeking an opinion on whether it is legal to combine Prop 1 and Prop 7 revenue with unrestricted money (such as bond proceeds, federal loans or gas tax proceeds) on toll projects.

Finally, on Nov. 16, Patrick likewise sent Bugg a missive making the same complaints about the toll projects. The pressure got too intense at that point, and TxDOT later that day put out a statement saying it would remove the toll projects from the nascent 10-year plan.

As I said above, lost in all this was that message from TxDOT to those many years ago (well, four years) that it would still need some toll projects to get it all done. Or maybe there simply is a

growing, and now controlling, part of the state power structure (reacting to constituents) that thinks there are simply too many toll roads.

Even with TxDOT's pull back, the Austin area already has eight toll roads, with two more under construction. Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston have even more.

And \$5 billion a year of new money (or whatever that fluctuating figure is from year to year going forward) is an awful lot of money for TxDOT to go get some things done.

But it is not enough to get it all done. If what happened a few days ago holds, some key highway projects will fall off TxDOT's list. Perhaps the Legislature in 2019 will have to go looking for other existing taxes to redirect (as with Props 1 and 7). Perhaps it'll even increase an existing tax, such as sales taxes or the gas tax, although that falls into the when-wild-boars-fly-over-Texas-130 category.

Or maybe, upon reflection, during the next session the Legislature and Abbott (assuming he still has his current job) will allow some selected toll projects to be built.

Governing is about making choices. This one won't be easy.

<http://www.mystatesman.com/news/wear-explaining-txdot-sudden-retreat-toll-roads/hMxbiZ3uOIZvPBGBfv0Q6K/>

Texas weighs options on VW windfall

Settlement money must be used to cut smog-creating emissions

Dec. 5, 2017

By JEFF MOSIER Energy and Environment Writer jmosier@dallasnews.com

Dallas Morning News

Texas is owed \$209 million as its share of the multibillion-dollar settlement with carmaker Volkswagen, which harmed public health by lying about how much their cars pollute.

Now, state environmental officials must decide how to spend that windfall.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said Monday that officials would come up with a plan and let the public weigh in. Gov. Greg Abbott previously designated the TCEQ as the state agency managing Texas' portion of the settlement.

The money must be used to reduce smog-creating nitrogen oxide emissions. That pollutant was released in higher-than-reported levels by Volkswagen vehicles that were programmed to trick emissions testing equipment.

“Governor Greg Abbott has a chance for a trifecta here: create jobs, reduce pollution, and lower operating costs for local governments,” said Adrian Shelley, director of Public Citizen’s Texas office, in a written statement. “Because Volkswagen polluted Texas with illegal emissions from diesel vehicles, the top priority for using settlement funds is to remove old, dirty diesel vehicles from the road.”

Volkswagen's civil and criminal settlement — an engineer was sentenced to 40 months in prison — includes \$2.7 billion for U.S. states and territories that had air quality worsened by the vehicles.

Texas is expected to be accepted as a part of the settlement by February. The \$209 million must be spent in a three-to 10-year window. Texas officials haven't indicated how they plan to spend the funds and have not announced a timeline for releasing a draft plan.

The money could be used to replace polluting trucks, buses, ferries, tugboats, cargo handling equipment, airport ground support vehicles and other equipment. While environment groups are advocating for a transition to electric vehicles, the settlement includes a broader set of options.

Much of the money could be used to replace or refit vehicles or equipment with new diesel engines, electric or electric hybrid engines or engines running on alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas.

The money could be used for private or government vehicles.

Details of that application process haven't been determined.

Up to 15 percent of the money could be used for “light duty” projects, which include fast charging stations for passenger electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell fueling equipment.

Volkswagen has agreed to a \$14.7 billion settlement with about \$10 billion of that used to buy back the cheating vehicles.

Similar software was also used by Audi and Porsche, which are owned by Volkswagen.

The agreement also included a \$2 billion into zero-emission vehicle investment. The company announced in September that it would introduce electric versions of all 300 of its brands' models by 2030.

The electric charging stations option has drawn the attention of California-based ChargePoint, which operates 2,000 charging ports in Texas.

Anne Smart, ChargePoint's vice president of public policy for North America, said her firm plans to submit its ideas to the TCEQ. She said she'd like to see a network of fastcharging stations at least every 70 miles along major Texas highway routes.

ChargePoint, which has the world's largest electric vehicle charging network, also plans to advocate for more charging stations along hurricane evacuation routes.

Although there is no state plan in place, the TCEQ is now accepting the public's suggestions. Andrea Morrow, an agency spokeswoman, said proposals for spending the settlement money have been rolling into the TCEQ since the scandal broke.

Public comments can be submitted via email at VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov.

For standard mail, commenters can send their proposals to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Air Quality Division, Implementation Grants Section, MC-204, P.O.

Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087. ATTN VW Settlement.

The express mail address is Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Air Quality Division, Implementation Grants Section, MC-204, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, TX 78753, ATTN VW Settlement.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Brian Wilson
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NCTCOG Requests Input on Funding Initiatives

Safety performance measures to also be discussed at November public meetings

Nov. 7, 2017 (Arlington, Texas) – The North Central Texas Council of Governments will present transportation funding initiatives and roadway safety and transit performance measures during public meetings in November.

Residents can provide input on these topics at public meetings Nov. 13 (Arlington), Nov. 14 (North Richland Hills) and Nov. 15 (Richardson).

NCTCOG staff has been working with local agencies that have expressed interest in entering into federal/local exchange funding partnerships with the Regional Transportation Council to fund transportation projects in their jurisdictions.

The goal of these partnerships is to implement transportation projects while acquiring local funds for regional programs by exchanging federal air quality and mobility funds for funds from partner agencies. NCTCOG will provide details of the partnerships and the proposed projects to be implemented with federal transportation funds.

Staff will also present regional performance targets for both roadway safety and transit assets. NCTCOG uses data as part of a performance-based planning process for the region's transportation system. Federal legislation specifies certain quantitative performance measures must be tracked and reported annually.

Roadway safety targets focus on reducing serious injuries and fatalities while transit asset management targets ensure public transportation vehicles, rail lines and other capital assets are in good condition.

Finally, funding opportunities for vehicle and fueling infrastructure will also be highlighted at the meetings.

Watch the Arlington meeting in real time by clicking the "live" tab at www.nctcog.org/video. A recording of the presentations will also be posted at www.nctcog.org/input.

Public Meeting Details

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Monday, Nov. 13, 2017 2:30 p.m. North Central Texas Council of Governments 616 Six Flags Drive Arlington, TX 76011</p> | <p>Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017 6 p.m. North Richland Hills Library 9015 Grand Ave. North Richland Hills, TX 76180</p> | <p>Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017 6 p.m. Richardson Civic Center 411 W. Arapaho Road Richardson, TX 75080</p> |
|---|--|---|

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 238 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 22 school districts and 31 special districts. For more information on the NCTCOG Transportation Department, visit www.nctcog.org/trans.

About the Regional Transportation Council:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for regional transportation planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974. The MPO works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. The RTC's 44 members include local elected or appointed officials from the metropolitan area and representatives from each of the area's transportation providers. More information can be found at www.nctcog.org.

###

Performance Measures: Roadway Safety and Transit Asset Management

Regional Transportation Council

Action Item

December 14, 2017

Background

Federal legislation specifies quantitative performance measures that must be tracked and reported annually

Today's presentation requests action for two performance areas:
Highway Safety Improvement Program (PM1)
Transit Asset Management

Two additional performance areas will be presented in Spring 2018:
Infrastructure Condition (PM2)
System Performance/Freight/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (PM3)

Proposed targets were prepared in coordination with the State and regional partners

NCTCOG Safety Target Recommendations

| Safety Performance Targets | TxDOT 2018 Targets | NCTCOG 2018 Targets |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| No. of Fatalities | 3,704 | 665 |
| Fatality Rate | 1.432 | 0.96 |
| No. of Serious Injuries | 17,565 | 3,612 |
| Serious Injury Rate | 6.74 | 5.18 |
| No. of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries | 2,151 | 560 |

Targets are based on five-year averages and will be revisited annually.

Two percent reduction achieved by the year 2022.

Regional Safety Position: Even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable. Staff will work with our partners to develop projects, programs, and policies that assist in eliminating serious injuries and fatalities across all modes of travel.

NCTCOG Safety Projects and SHSP Emphasis Areas

| NCTCOG Programs and Projects | TxDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan Emphasis Areas | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------|
| | Distracted Driving | Impaired Driving | Inter. Safety | Older Road Users | Bike/Ped Safety | Rdwy. & Lane Depart. | Speeding |
| Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | | X | X | | X |
| Inter. Safety Imp. Plan (ISIP) | | | X | X | X | | |
| Traffic Signal Retiming Prog. | | | X | | | | |
| Traffic Signal/Intersection Improvement Prog. | | | X | | | | |
| WWD Mitigation Prog. | | X | X | X | | X | |
| Traffic Signal Cloud Data | X | X | X | X | | | |
| Look Out Texans | | | | | X | | |
| Reg. Pedestrian Safety Plan | | | | | X | | |
| Technical Training/Workshops | X | | X | | X | X | |
| Safety Spot Improvement Prog. | | | | | X | | |
| Trans. Alternative Funding | | | | | X | | |
| Emerging Technology Investment Prog. | X | | X | | | X | |
| Freeway Management and HOV Enforcement Prog. | X | X | | | | X | X |

Transit Asset Management



Images: DART, DCTA, FWTA, and NCTCOG

Proposed Regional Targets for 2018



| Asset Category | Target | Metric |
|---|--------|---|
| Rolling Stock (transit vehicles) | 0% | Vehicles that meet or exceed the industry standard, defined as the Federal Transit Administration's Default Useful Life Benchmark |
| Infrastructure (rail track) | 0% | Rail track segments with performance restrictions |
| Equipment (transit support vehicles) | 0% | Vehicles that meet or exceed the industry standard, defined as the Federal Transit Administration's Default Useful Life Benchmark |
| Facilities (buildings, stations, park and rides) | 0% | Transit facilities rated below "Adequate" (3.0) on the industry standard Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) scale. |

Timeline

| Action | Date |
|---|-------------------|
| STTC Information | October 27, 2017 |
| RTC Information | November 9, 2017 |
| Public Meetings | November 2017 |
| STTC Action | December 8, 2017 |
| RTC Action | December 14, 2017 |
| Target-Setting Deadline: Transit Asset Management | December 27, 2017 |
| Target-Setting Deadline: Roadway Safety | February 27, 2018 |

Requested Action

Approval of regional targets for roadway safety and transit asset management as shown.

Direction to continue coordination with transit providers to standardize regional transit asset management approach.

Approval of aspirational goals for roadway safety.

“Even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable. Staff will work with our partners to develop projects, programs, and policies that assist in eliminating serious injuries and fatalities across all modes of travel.”

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| TxDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Emphasis Areas | NCTCOG Programs/Projects | TxDOT Safety Performance Targets | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Total Number of Traffic Fatalities | Total Number of Incapacitating Injuries | Fatality Rate (Per 100M VMT) | Serious Injury Rate (Per 100M VMT) | Total Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries |
| 1 Distracted Driving | Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | X | X | |
| 2 Impaired Driving | Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | X | X | |
| 3 Intersection Safety | Intersection Safety Implementation Plan | X | X | X | X | |
| | Regional Traffic Signal Retiming Program | X | X | X | X | |
| | Traffic Signal/Intersection Improvement Program | X | X | X | X | |
| | WWD Mitigation Pilot Project | X | X | X | X | |
| | Traffic Signal Cloud Data | X | X | X | X | |
| 4 Older Road Users | WWD Mitigation Pilot Project | X | X | X | X | |
| | Intersection Safety Implementation Plan | X | X | X | X | |
| | Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | X | X | |
| 5 Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety | Education and Outreach - Look Out Texans | | | | | X |
| | Development of a Regional Pedestrian Safety Plan | | | | | X |
| | Technical Training/Workshops | | | | | X |
| | Safety Spot Improvement Program | | | | | X |
| | Intersection Safety Implementation Plan | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Transportation Alternative Funding CFPs | | | | | X |
| | Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | X | X | X |
| 6 Roadway and Lane Departures | WWD Mitigation Pilot Project | X | X | X | X | |
| | Emerging Technology Investment Programs | | | | | |
| 7 Speeding | Driver Behavior Social Marketing Campaign | X | X | X | X | |
| | Freeway Management and HOV Enforcement Programs | X | X | X | X | |

SHSP Emphasis Area Notes:

1. Distracted Driving includes crashes where distraction in vehicle, driver inattention, or cell phone/mobile device was cited as a contributing factor.
2. Impaired driving includes crashes where at least one driver was identified as having been drinking, taken medication, been under the influence of alcohol or drugs, a BAC greater than zero, or a positive drug test.
3. Intersection Safety includes crashes at or related to an intersection (occurs within the boundaries of an intersection or the first harmful event occurred on an approach to or an exit from an intersection and is related to movement through the intersection).
4. Older Road User focuses on drivers and pedestrians who are ages 65 years and older.
5. Pedestrian Safety includes crashes that involve at least one pedestrian and one motor vehicle.
6. Roadway and Lane Departures include single motor vehicles that run off the road (SVROR) and head on collisions. SVROR describes crashes where a one vehicle crash occurred on/beyond the shoulder or in the median.
7. Speeding includes crashes where unsafe speed under the limit or speeding over the limit are cited as a contributing factor.

DRAFT

The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

December 14, 2017

The Honorable Sam Johnson
United States House of Representatives
2304 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Sessions
United States House of Representatives
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Johnson and Congressman Sessions:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, I would like to thank you for your service in the US Congress. The RTC would like to inform you of some transportation changes that are developing in your district and seek your direction on needed legislation.

Currently, an early interim, temporary high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane exists on US Highway 75 in Dallas County and Collin County. This project was previously approved by the RTC in 1992 with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds and, due to constraints associated with CMAQ funding, legislation is now needed to advance and modernize the project. These modernization improvements, known as technology lanes, are modeled after similar improvements on SH 161 in Irving. The US 75 improvements will include the use of shoulder lanes in the peak period. In addition, shoulder lanes in the off-peak period are proposed to mitigate non-recurring, incident-related congestion. A graphic of technology lanes on SH 161 is included as Attachment 1 for your reference.

Legislation was previously approved for a project in the State of New Jersey and there is a need for similar legislation for the US 75 project to move forward. The enacted New Jersey legislation, along with the draft language needed to advance the HOV lane improvements on US 75, are provided as Attachments 2 and 3 for your review.

December 14, 2017

The RTC stands ready to work with members of the North Texas Congressional Delegation to advance this important project. If needed, feel free to contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241 or mmoris@nctcog.org.

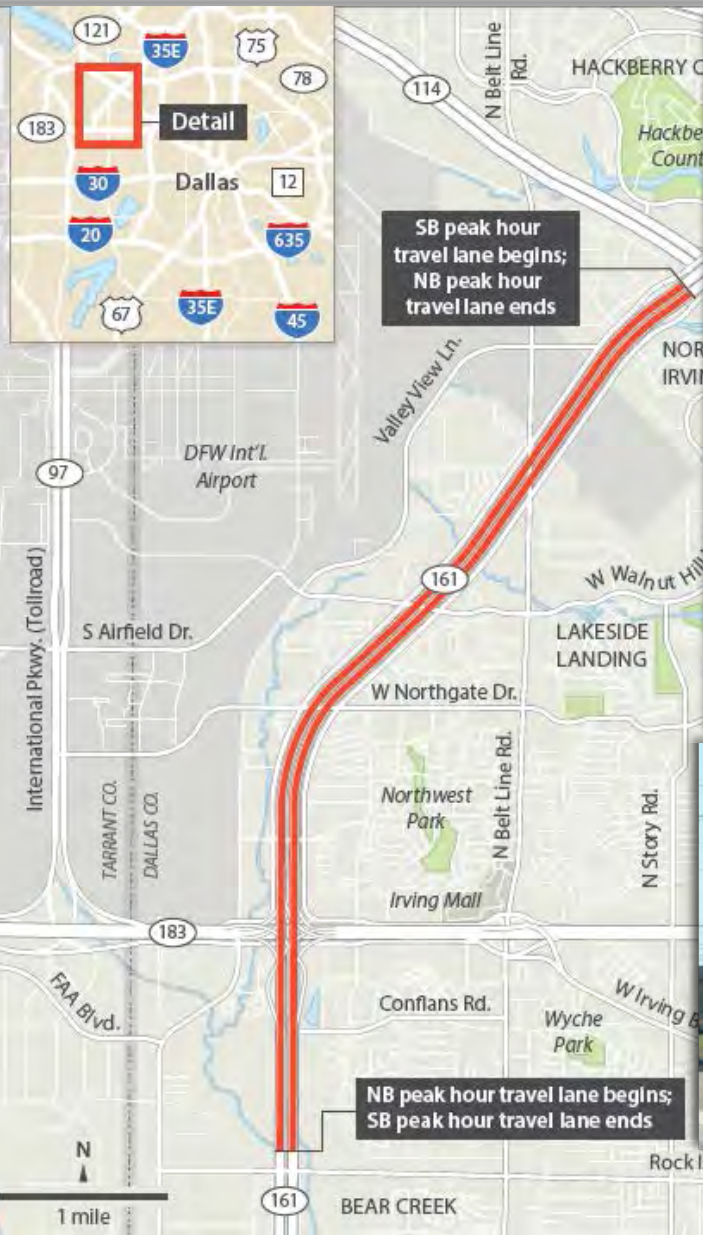
Sincerely,

Rob Franke, P.E., Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Cedar Hill

RH:ch
Attachments

cc: The Honorable Victor Vandergriff, Commissioner, Texas Transportation Commission
The Honorable Mike Cantrell, County Commissioner, Dallas County
The Honorable Theresa Daniel, County Commissioner, Dallas County
The Honorable Duncan Webb, County Commissioner, Collin County
The Honorable George Fuller, Mayor, City of McKinney
The Honorable Lee M. Kleinman, Councilmember, City of Dallas
The Honorable Harry LaRosiliere, Mayor, City of Plano
The Honorable Steve Mitchell, Councilmember, City of Richardson
The Honorable Stephen Terrell, Mayor, City of Allen
The Honorable Paul Voelker, Mayor, City of Richardson
Kelly Selman, P.E., District Engineer, TxDOT, Dallas District
Andrea Lofye, Director, Federal Affairs, TxDOT
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG

SH 161 SHOULDER LANE



SB peak hour travel lane begins; NB peak hour travel lane ends

NB peak hour travel lane begins; SB peak hour travel lane ends

PEAK HOUR

12' General Purpose Lanes (2)



11' Peak Hour Travel Lanes (2)



12' General Purpose Lanes (2)



OFF-PEAK HOUR

12' General Purpose Lanes (2)



11' Shoulder Lanes (2)



12' General Purpose Lanes (2)



PUBLIC LAW 105-277—OCT. 21, 1998 112 STAT. 2681-472

SEC. 335. Rebates, refunds, incentive payments, minor fees and other funds received by the Department from travel management centers, charge card programs, the subleasing of building space, and miscellaneous sources are to be credited to appropriations of the Department and allocated to elements of the Department using fair and equitable criteria and such funds shall be available until December 31, 1999.

SEC. 336. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation, the Secretary of Transportation is authorized to allow the issuer of any preferred stock heretofore sold to the Department to redeem or repurchase such stock upon the payment to the Department of an amount determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 337. The unobligated balances of the funds made available in previous appropriations Acts for the National Civil Aviation Review Commission and for Urban Discretionary Grants are rescinded.

SEC. 338. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) the land and improvements thereto comprising the Coast Guard Reserve Training Facility in Jacksonville, Florida, is deemed to be surplus property; and

(2) the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall dispose of all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to that property, by sale, at fair market value.

(b) RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL.—Before a sale is made under subsection (a) to any other person, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall give to the City of Jacksonville, Florida, the right of first refusal to purchase all or any part of the property required to be sold under that subsection.

SEC. 339. Of the funds provided under Federal Aviation Administration "Operations", \$250,000 is only for activities and operations of the Centennial of Flight Commission.

SEC. 340. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Transportation shall waive repayment of any Federal-aid highway funds expended on the construction of those high occupancy lanes or auxiliary lanes constructed on I-287 in the State of New Jersey, pursuant to section 338 of the fiscal year 1993 Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 102-388), if the State of New Jersey presents the Secretary with its determination that such high occupancy vehicle lanes or auxiliary lanes are not in the public interest.

SEC. 341. (a) AUTHORITY TO CONVEY.—The Secretary of Transportation may convey, without consideration, to the State of North Carolina (in this section referred to as the "State"), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of real property, together with any improvements thereon, in Ocracoke, North Carolina, consisting of such portion of the Coast Guard Station Ocracoke, North Carolina, as the Secretary considers appropriate for purposes of the conveyance.

(b) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to the following conditions:

(1) That the State accept the property to be conveyed under that subsection subject to such easements or rights of way in favor of the United States as the Secretary considers to be appropriate for—

(A) utilities;

(B) access to and from the property;

Potential Draft Language for Advancement of US 75 HOV Lane Improvements

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, the Secretary of Transportation shall waive repayment of any Federal-aid highway funds expended on the construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes constructed on US 75 in Dallas County and Collin County in the State of Texas.



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

December 6, 2017

The Honorable J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Laura Ryan
Member
Texas Transportation Commission
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Jeff Austin, III
Member
Texas Transportation Commission
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Victor Vandergriff
Member
Texas Transportation Commission
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Tryon Lewis
Member
Texas Transportation Commission
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg and Commissioners Austin, Lewis, Ryan and Vandergriff:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, we urge the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) to expedite the Interstate Highway (IH) 635 Phase 3 procurement process. This project begins at US 75 and goes to and including the IH 30 interchange.

The IH 635 Phase 3 project is already included in our approved long-range transportation plan, has already received environmental clearance, meets air quality conformity and is ready to proceed. Sensitive negotiations that include the Skillman/Audelia Bridge within the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposed contract are at risk with the delay of the IH 635 mainlanes. The project has been planned for 20 years and is the top priority in the DFW area's eastern sub-region. Funding for a majority of the staged constructed project is currently in hand with multiple funding options available. Project costs are increasing at \$5 million per month.

It is crucial that TxDOT begins the procurement process as soon as possible to avoid additional cost increases. The RTC looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the TTC and TxDOT and stands ready to assist on the IH 635 Phase 3 project to improve mobility and air quality in the DFW area.

Again, the RTC is eager to get IH 635 Phase 3 to procurement and requests action. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed updates to the 2018 Unified Transportation Program. If needed, feel free to contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Franke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "F".

Rob Franke, P.E., Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Cedar Hill

RH:ch

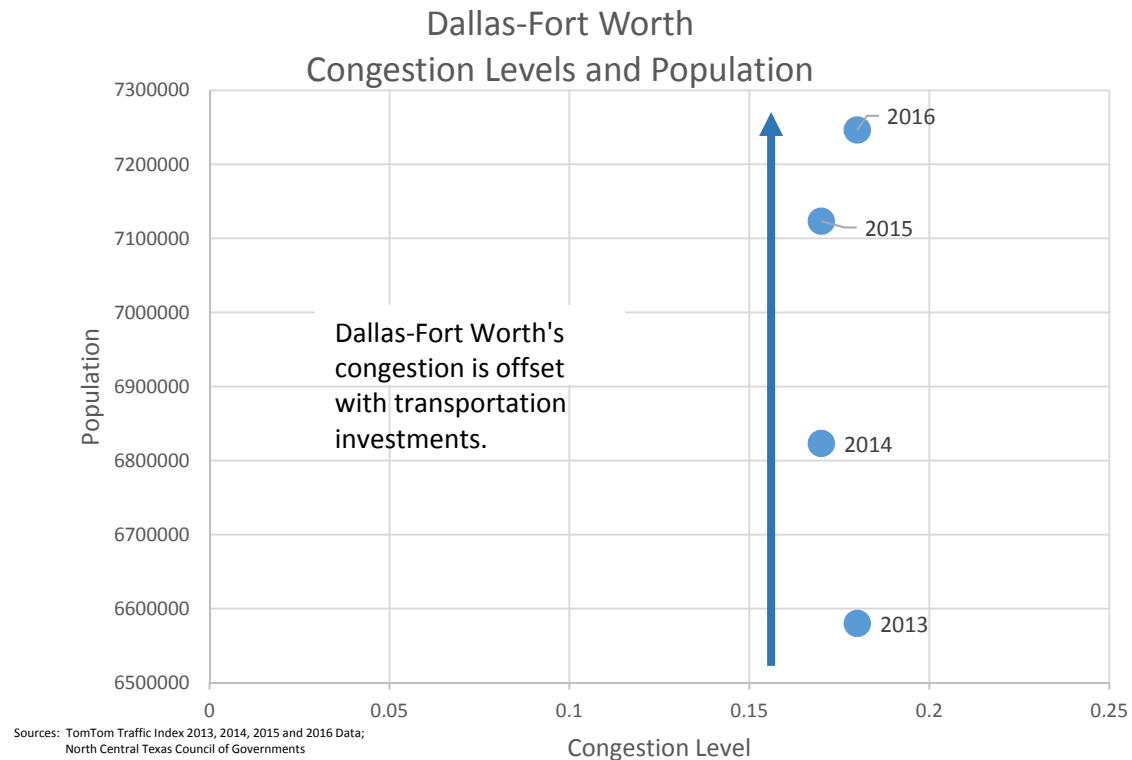
cc: James Bass, Executive Director, Texas Department of Transportation
Kelly Selman, P.E., District Engineer, TxDOT - Dallas District
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG

RTC SUCCESS

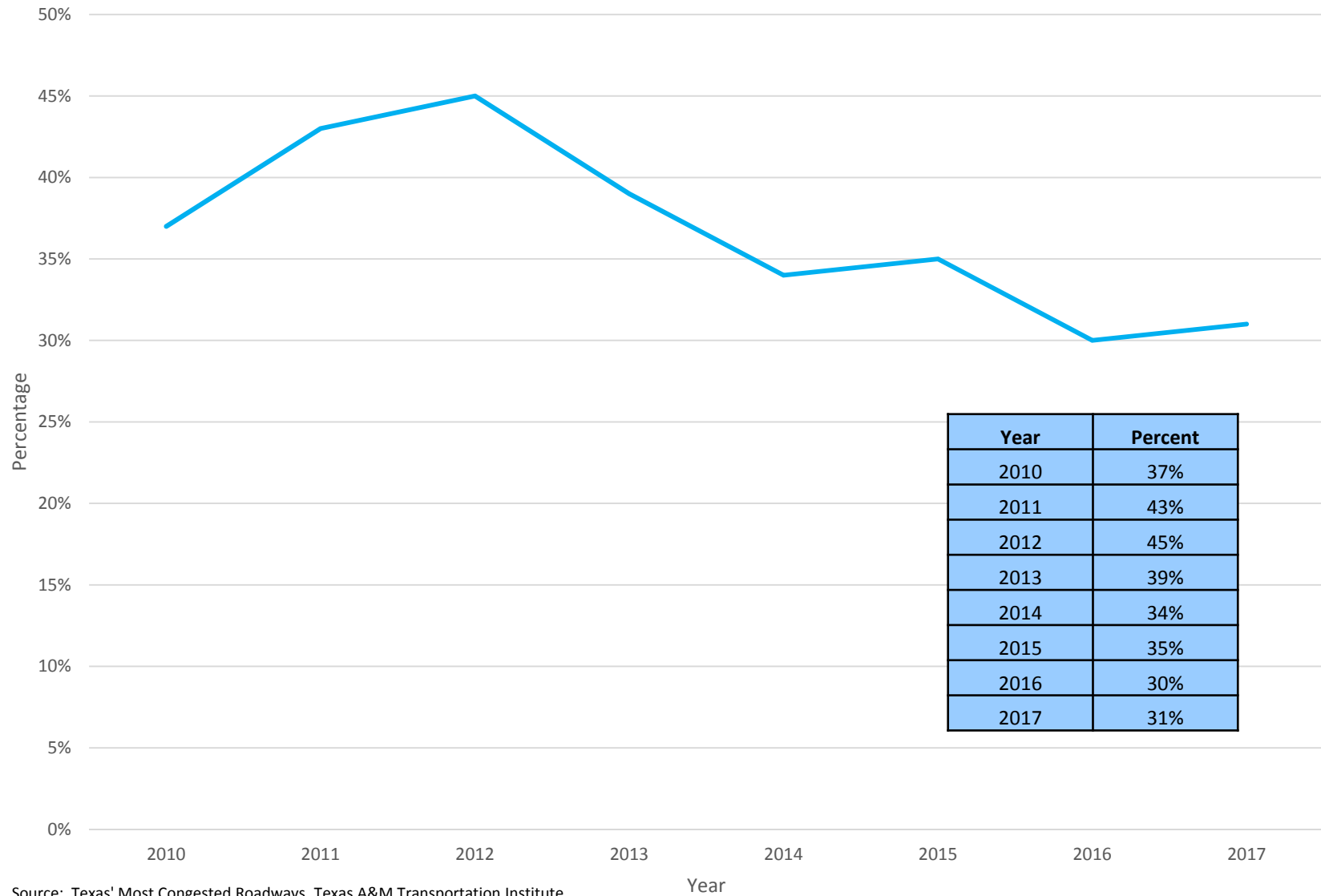
\$28 Billion in Construction Since the Year 2000

Leading State in Transportation Delivery in Partnership with TxDOT and NTTA

Successful Mobility Outcomes (Air Quality, Reliability and Safety)

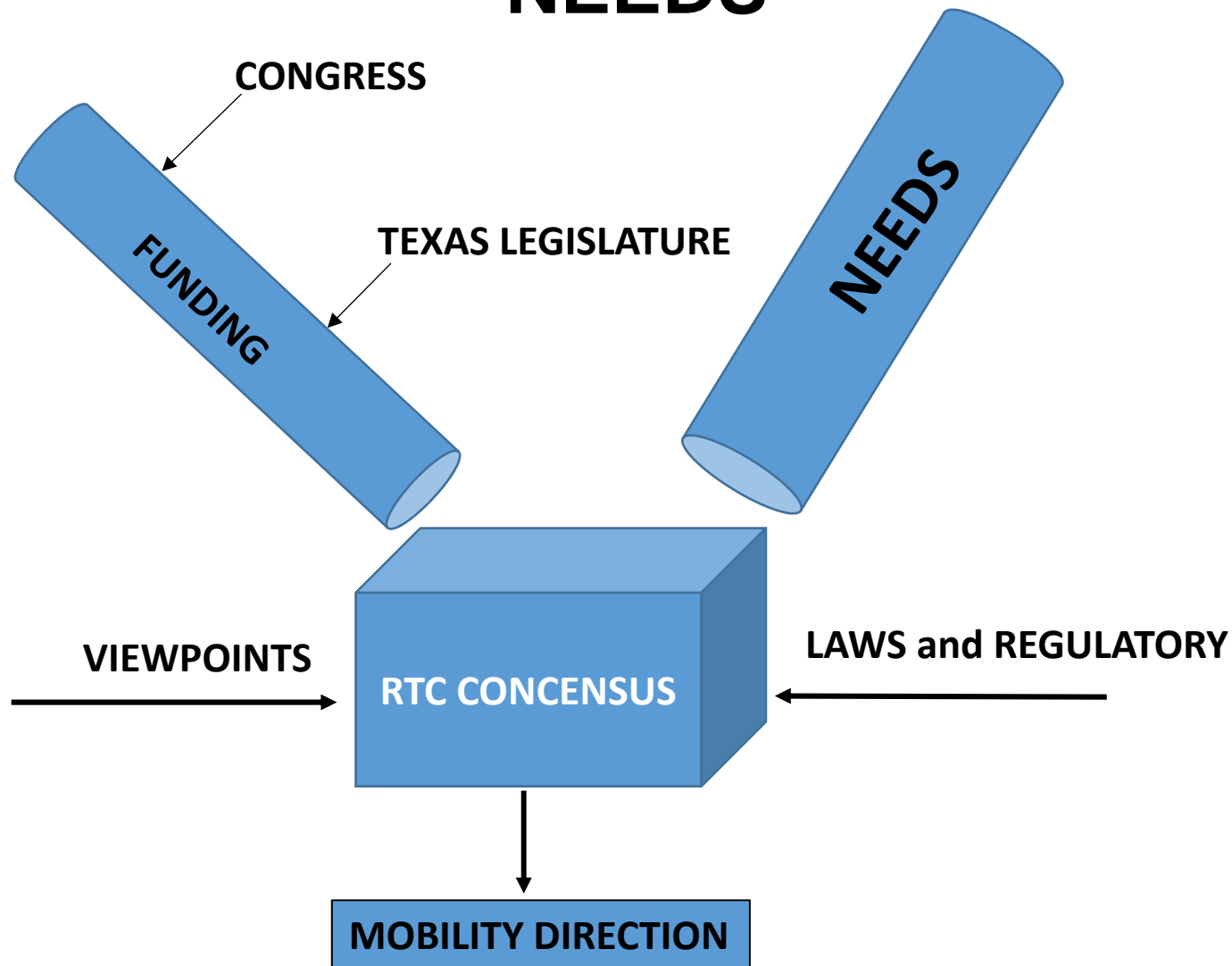


Percentage of 100 Most Congested Corridors in DFW Region



Source: Texas' Most Congested Roadways, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

SUPPLY/DEMAND RELATIONSHIP OF TRANSPORTATION REVENUES AND NEEDS



RE-ENGAGE STATE LEGISLATURE

WORK WITH CONGRESS

1. Why don't we collect revenue smarter?
2. Why is Texas sending money to other states?
3. Why is Texas being short changed using old formulas?
4. Why isn't everyone paying taxes?
5. Why can't we pilot test the new federal program, especially since we are one of a few donor states?

RE-ENGAGE STATE LEGISLATURE

WORK WITHIN TEXAS

6. Why don't we collect revenues smarter?
7. Why isn't everyone paying taxes?
8. Why can't TxDOT borrow funds when cost of construction is greater than the cost of money?
9. Why can't TxDOT use the credit rating of Texas and pay lower interest?
10. Why did the legislature reduce TxDOT's construction revenues by changing TxDOT interest payments?

RE-ENGAGE STATE LEGISLATURE

WORK WITHIN TEXAS (Cont.)

11. Why can't the legislature give TxDOT more reliable authority on new revenue sources?
12. Why does the legislature restrict transit choices that lower the need for freeway capacity, toll managed lanes and toll road lanes?
13. Why does Texas let tax dollars leak to neighboring states for entertainment choices?
14. Why does Texas resist local option revenue generation?
15. Why can't the legislature support new institutional structures to deliver next generation technology, rail, people mover and transportation reward programs?

ACTION

Approve Legislative Program Advancing 15 or
so Revenue Ideas



NORTH TEXAS TOLLWAY AUTHORITY

November 8, 2017

Kenneth Barr
Chairman
Tarrant County

Bill Moore
Vice Chairman
Collin County

William D. Elliott
Director
Governor's Appointee

Carl O. Sherman
Director
Dallas County

Mojo Haddad
Director
Tarrant County

John Mahalik
Director
Denton County

Michael R. Nowels
Director
Denton County

George (Tex) Quesada
Director
Dallas County

Jane Willard
Director
Collin County

Gerald E. Carrigan
Executive Director

P.O. Box 260729
Plano, TX 75026

5900 W. Plano Parkway
Plano, TX 75093

(214) 461-2000
Fax (214) 528-4826
www.ntta.org

Hon. Rob Franke, Chairman
Regional Transportation Council
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, Texas 76011

Dear Chairman Franke,

Thank you for your letter dated October 12, 2017 regarding the next "Big Projects" in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. NTTA supports the priorities of the Regional Transportation Council and will continue to work with our partners across the region to provide transportation options in North Texas.

The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) Board of Directors will consider a primacy waiver this month for the IH 635 Phase 3 (US 75 to IH 30) tolled managed lanes project referenced in your letter. In addition, once the Texas Department of Transportation has advanced plans for the downtown Dallas interstate highway capacity improvements including IH 45, IH 30 and IH 35E, the NTTA will evaluate and consider a primacy waiver if tolled managed lanes are proposed as part of the project's capacity improvements.

The NTTA appreciates the spirit of partnership that exists between our agencies and we will continue to work with our regional partners to provide safe and reliable mobility options for North Texans.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Barr
Chairman

cc: Mr. Gerry Carrigan
Ms. Elizabeth Mow, P.E.
Mr. Kelly Selman, P.E., District Engineer TxDOT Dallas
Mr. Loyl Bussell, P.E., Acting District Engineer TxDOT Fort Worth

RECEIVED

NOV 13 2017

TRANSPORTATION



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

September 6, 2017

North Central Texas Congressional Delegation
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the US House of Representatives:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, I would like to express concern for an amendment submitted by Representative Woodall that would remove language protecting Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) sub-allocated funds from highway program rescissions.

In the DFW area, the RTC implements programs with Congress through federal STBGP funds. Without these vital funds, local governments would lose the ability to implement innovative transportation projects, which would harm mobility throughout the region. The RTC opposes the Woodall amendment (No. 28) and asks that you vote no.

In light of Hurricane Harvey, Texas needs this flexibility as it faces a long recovery process that affects transportation infrastructure in large portions of our State.

Thank you for your service and leadership on transportation issues in the United States Congress. If needed, feel free to contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG at (817) 695-9241 or mmoris@nctcog.org.

Sincerely,

Rob Franke, P.E., Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Cedar Hill

RH:tw

cc: Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG



Rescission of Contract Authority

FY 2018 Update

Robin Ayers, Federal Affairs

Rescission of Contract Authority

A federal rescission of funds reduces the amount of federal funds provided through previous legislation. Rescissions are not unique to Texas. All 50 states have been directed to return federal transportation funds to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Since 2006 there have been 11 rescissions to transportation contract authority. During that time Texas had \$1.59 billion rescinded, which was 8.28 percent of the total amount rescinded from all states.

There have been three recent legislative actions which create new rescission requirements. The first was included in the FY 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Bill in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations (THUD) section of the bill. This legislation became law on May 5, 2017. This language rescinded \$857million nationwide. Secondly, the FY 2018 House THUD bill also contains a rescission in the amount of \$800million.

Finally, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) contains a significant rescission. Section 1438 of the FAST Act would rescind \$7.569 billion of unobligated contract authority on July 1, 2020.

Together, these pieces of legislation would result in a total contract authority rescission of \$9.2billion. For Texas, the FY 2017 THUD bill took \$85 million and it is estimated that the State would lose \$80 million under the FY 2018 THUD bill and \$757 million under the FAST Act. This is calculated by applying the same percentage of total funding Texas receives annually to the amount of the rescission. In Texas' case the percentage is approximately 10 percent.

All the bills protect certain categories of funds from rescission, including sub-allocated Surface Transportation Program Block Grant funds used by localities, safety funds, and allocated programs such as earmarks, Federal Lands Highways, and TIFIA funds. The Appropriations bills go further than the FAST Act by also excluding funds exempt from obligation limitation, as well as Appalachian or equity bonus funds that had special no-year obligation limitation from rescission.

Further, both the FAST Act and Appropriations bills require States to rescind contract authority in a proportional manner across all applicable program categories, regardless of the relative balance contained within each program category. In the past States have had the ability to decide which categories from which to draw the rescinded funds. In 2007 TxDOT worked with Metropolitan Planning Organizations to create a Standing Working Group on Rescissions. This group met multiple times over the next two years to decide how best to distribute rescissions.

OUR VALUES: *People • Accountability • Trust • Honesty*

OUR MISSION: *Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system that enables the movement of people and goods.*

An Equal Opportunity Employer

AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Regional Transportation Council

December 14, 2017

**Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager**

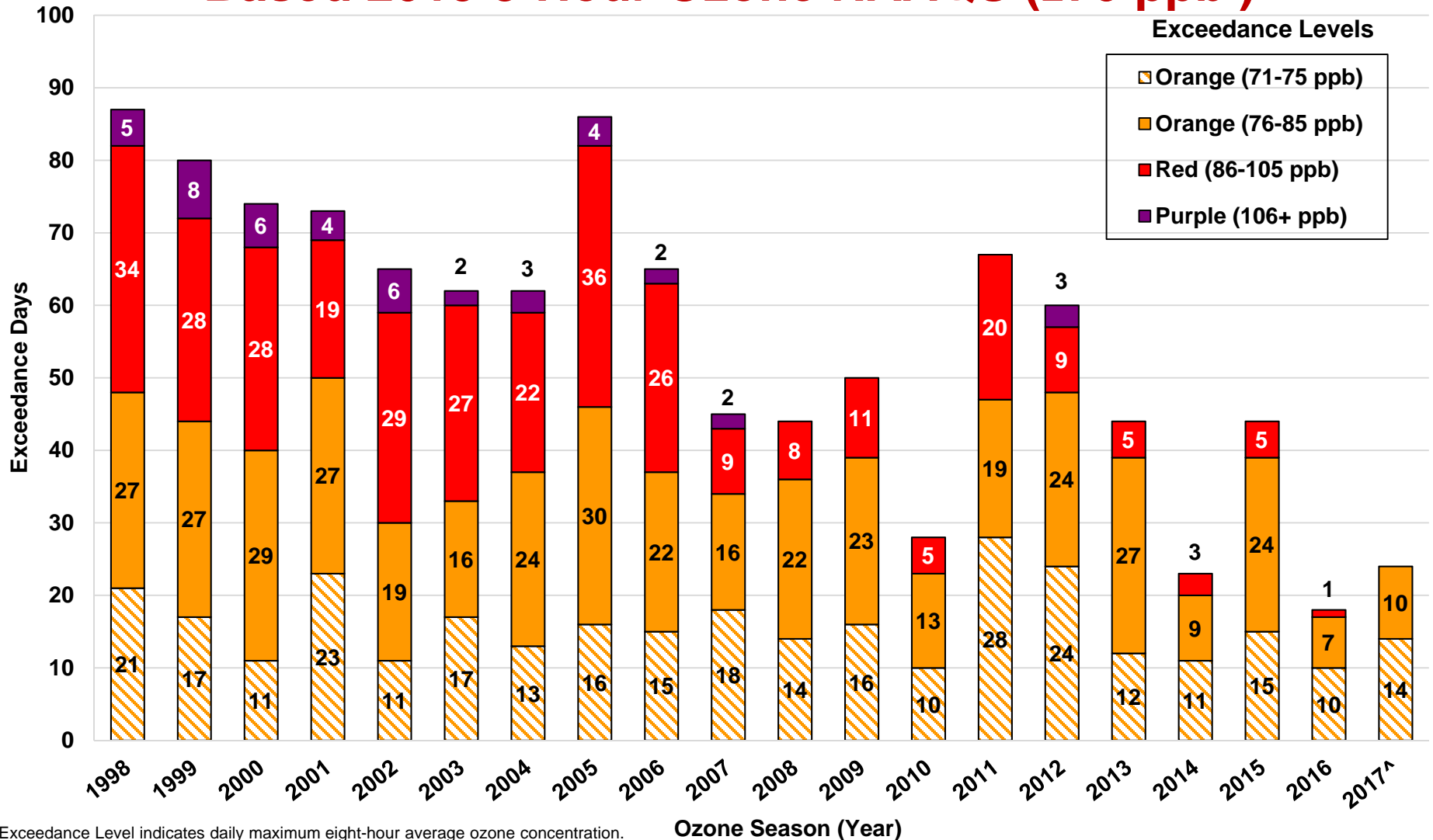


**North Central Texas
Council of Governments**




8-HOUR OZONE NAAQS HISTORICAL TRENDS

Based 2015 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS (≤ 70 ppb)



Exceedance Level indicates daily maximum eight-hour average ozone concentration. Exceedance Levels are based on Air Quality Index (AQI) thresholds established by the EPA for the revised ozone standard of 70 ppb.

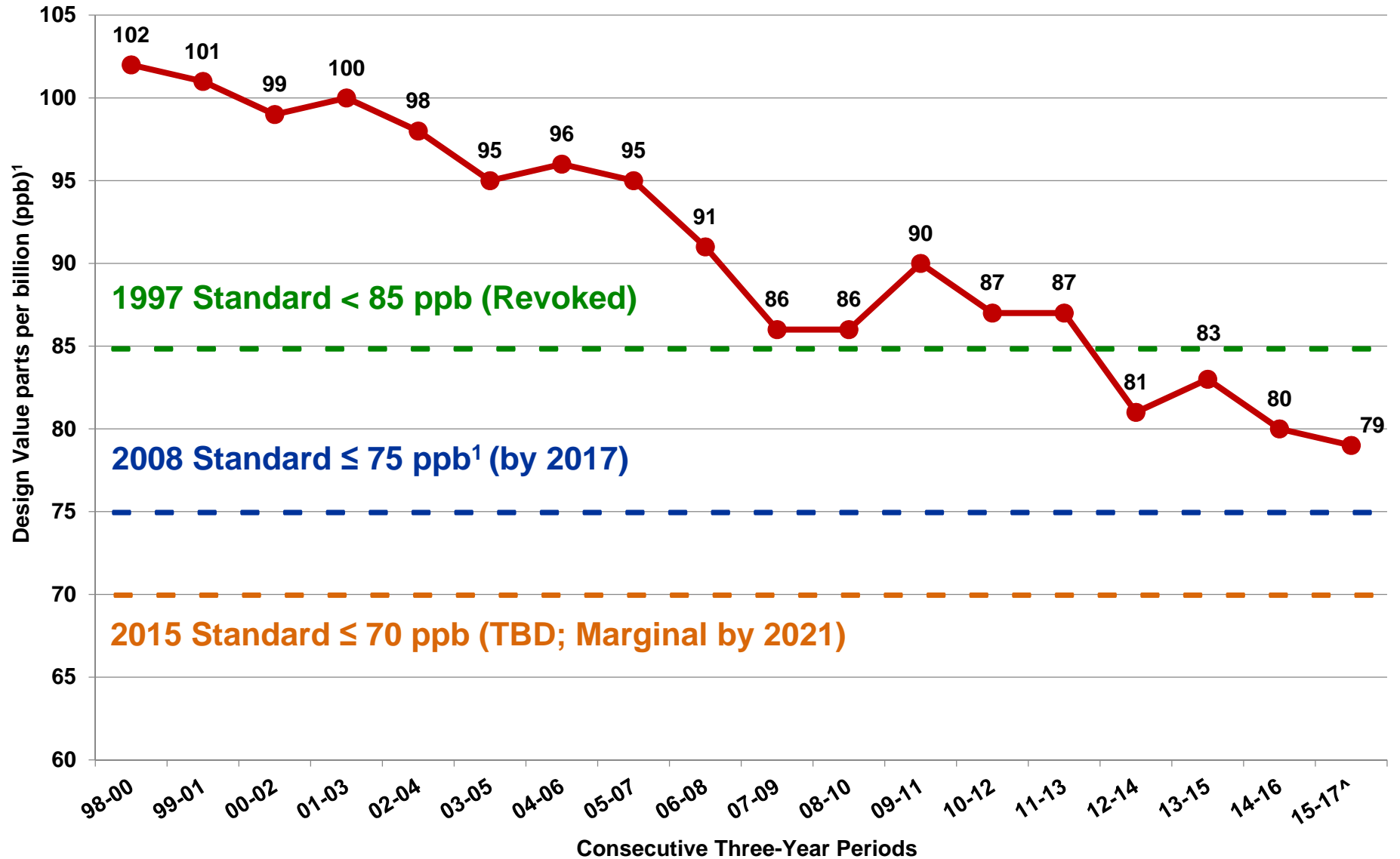
 = Additional level orange exceedance days under the revised standard that were not exceedances under the previous 75 ppb standard. (AQI level orange = 71-75 ppb)

Ozone Season (Year)

^AData not certified by TCEQ

Source: TCEQ, http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/compliance/monops/8hr_monthly.pl
ppb = parts per billion

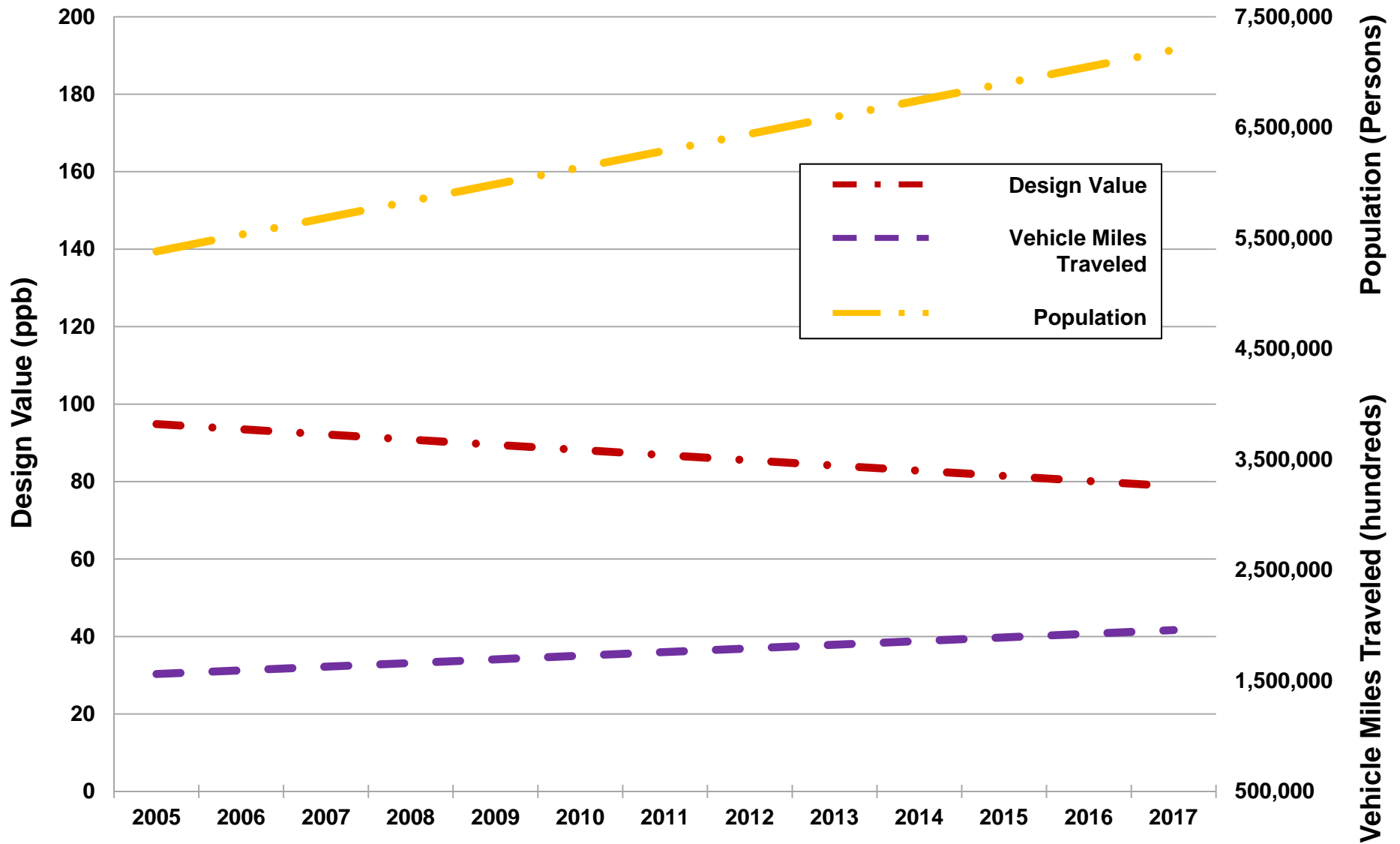
8-HOUR OZONE NAAQS HISTORICAL TRENDS



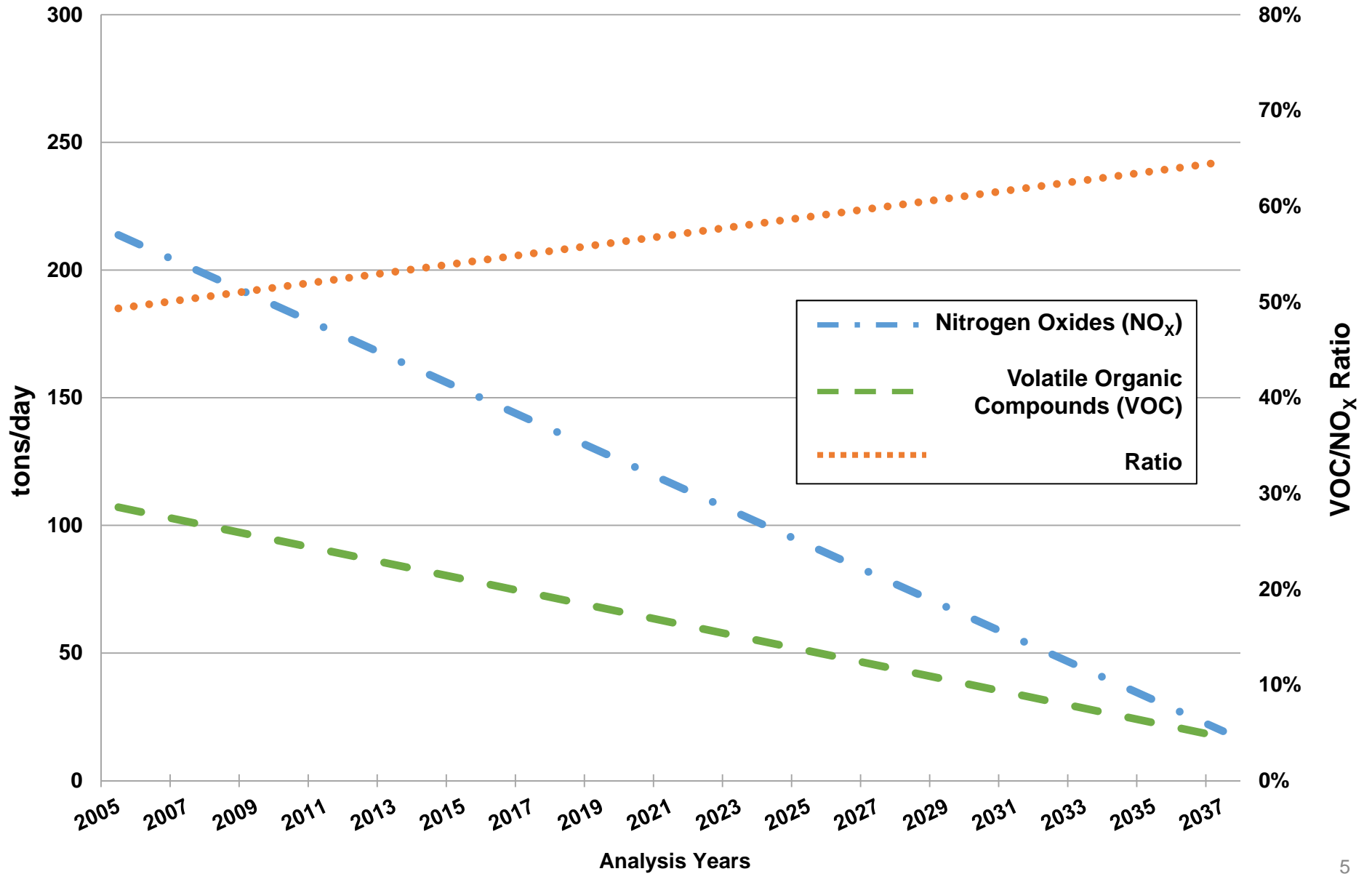
¹Attainment Goal - According to the US EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards, attainment is reached when, at each monitor, the *Design Value* (three-year average of the annual fourth-highest daily maximum eight-hour average ozone concentration) is equal to or less than 70 parts per billion (ppb).

[^]Data not certified by TCEQ

DEMOGRAPHIC AND DESIGN VALUE HISTORICAL TRENDS

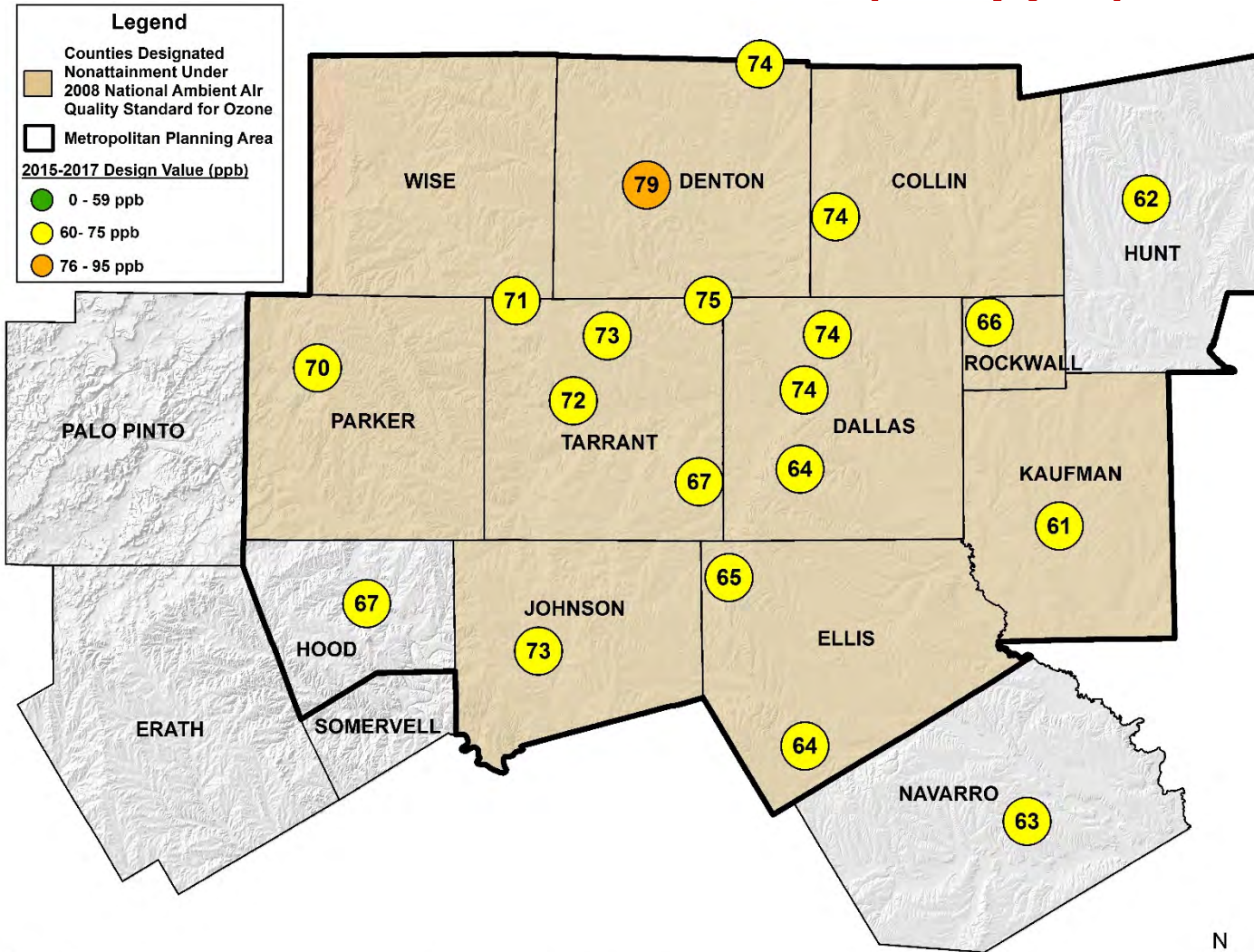


NO_x AND VOC ON-ROAD MOBILE TRENDS

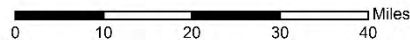


MONITOR EXCEEDANCES

2008 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS (≤ 75 ppb)



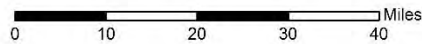
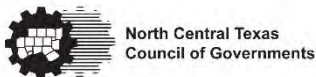
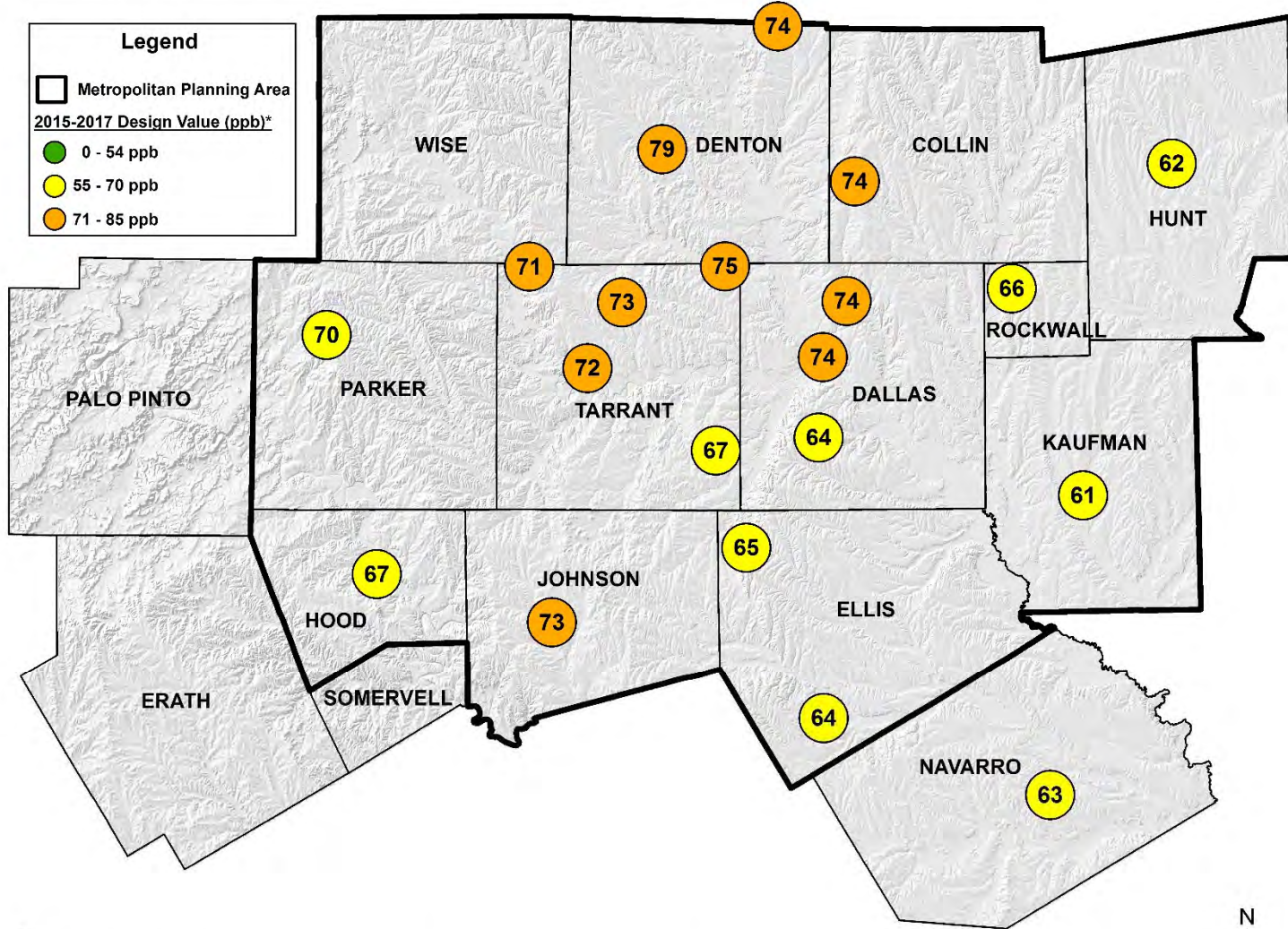
North Central Texas
Council of Governments



Not a full year of data. Current as of 11/27/2018

MONITOR EXCEEDANCES

2015 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS (≤ 70 ppb)



Not a full year of data. Current as of 11/27/2018

2015 8-HOUR OZONE NAAQS

Air Quality Designations for the 2015 NAAQS for Ozone

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| November 16, 2017: | EPA designated 2,646 counties as Attainment/Unclassifiable and three counties as Unclassifiable. <i>(Note: Hood and Hunt Counties were not included in this list)</i>¹ |
| January 16, 2018: | Final Rule Effective Date |
| TBD: | Final Rule Designating Nonattainment Counties |

¹<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-11-16/html/2017-24640.htm>

LOOKING FORWARD

Monitoring Next Steps Associated to the Region's Design Value being Higher than the 75 ppb Standard

Monitoring EPA's Final Designations and Associated Rules to the 70 ppb Standard

Conducting a Transportation Conformity Analysis on Mobility 2045

Enhancing the Regional Communications Plan

Continuing to Develop and Implement Mobile Source Emission Reduction Programs

Composing Letter to TCEQ on NO_x and VOC Ratios

REFERENCES

Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager
(817) 695-9286
Cklaus@nctcog.org

Jenny Narvaez
Principal Air Quality Planner
(817) 608-2342
JNarvaez@nctcog.org

Jody Loza
Senior Air Quality Planner
(817) 704-5609
JLoza@nctcog.org


www.nctcog.org/trans/air






Conceptual Drawing

Pedestrian / Bicycle Bridge
Over SH 360 for Access to
TRE Centreport Station
(View is Looking North)




Conceptual Drawing

General Motors
Freight Mover System
Bridge Over SH 360
(View is Looking North)



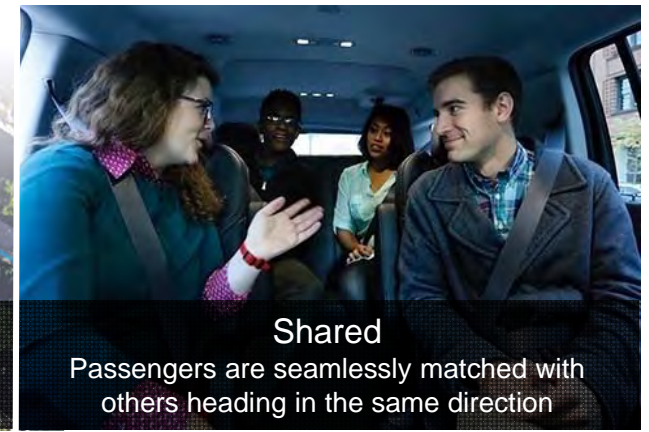
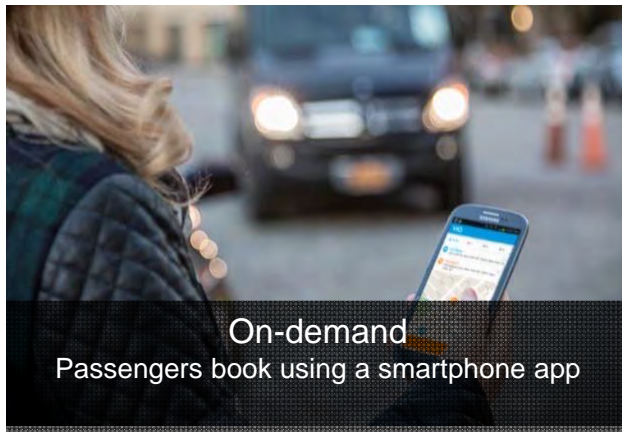
Demand Response RIDESHARE

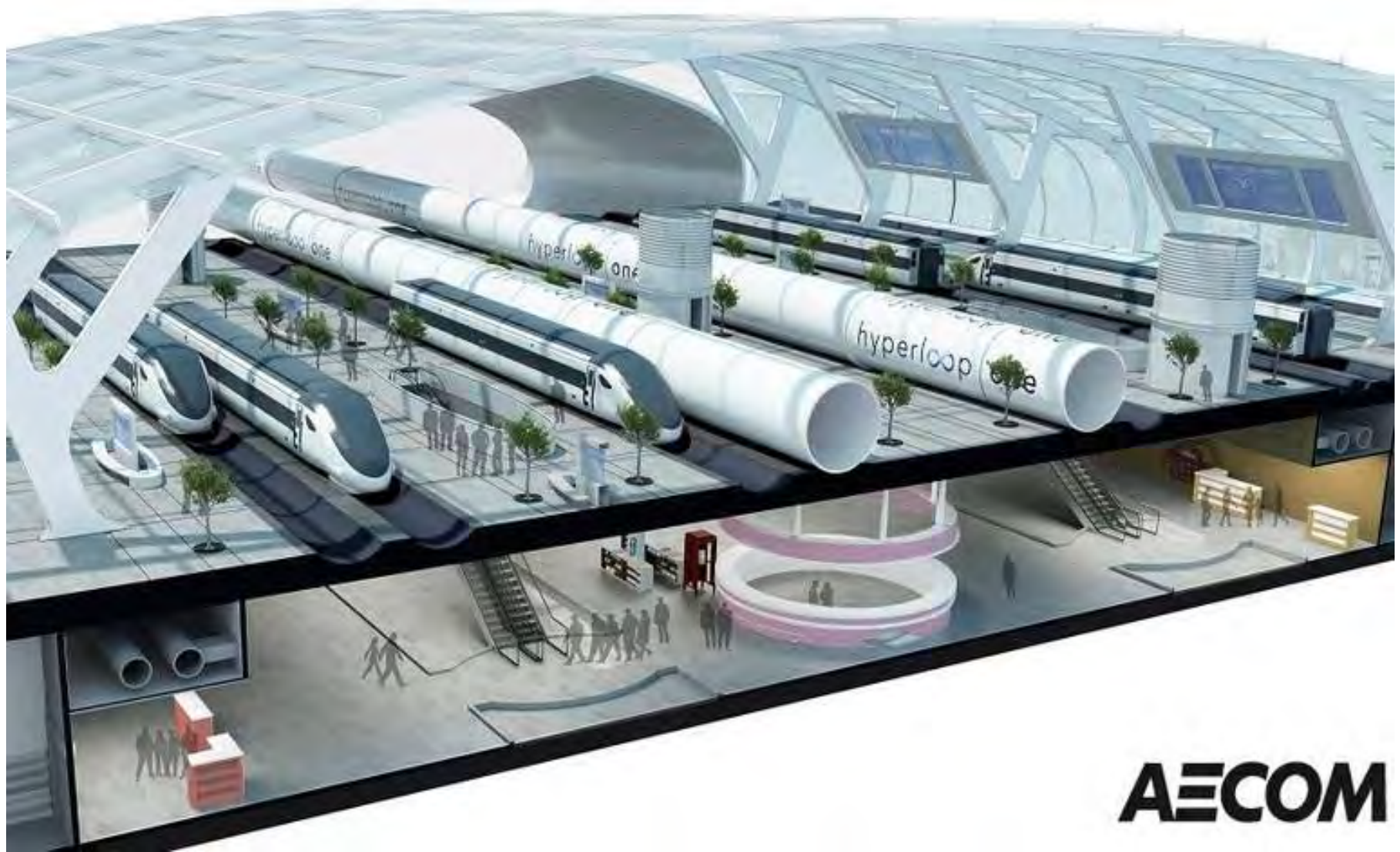
Addresses mobility needs through the use of a dynamic micro-transportation system with no fixed schedules, no fixed routes and an infinite number of on-demand stops.



City of Arlington

How Does It Work?





AECOM

RISE IN FRAUDULENT TEMPORARY VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAGS

**Regional Transportation Council
December 14, 2017**

**Chris Klaus
Sr. Program Manager**



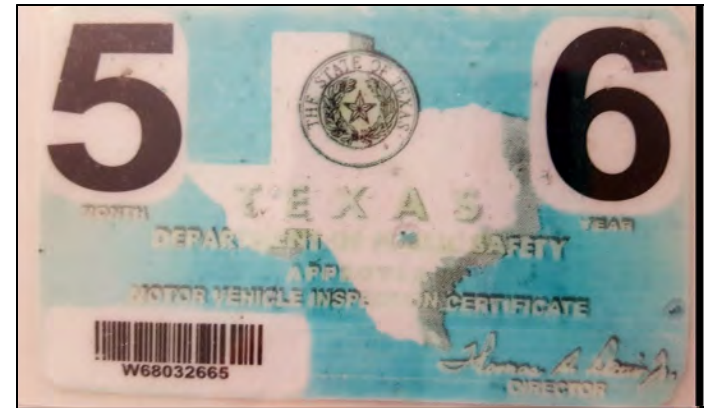
North Central Texas
Council of Governments

SINGLE STICKER HISTORY

Inspection Certificate

Separate windshield inspection certificate used prior to March 2015

Counterfeit certificates and fraudulent inspections proliferated

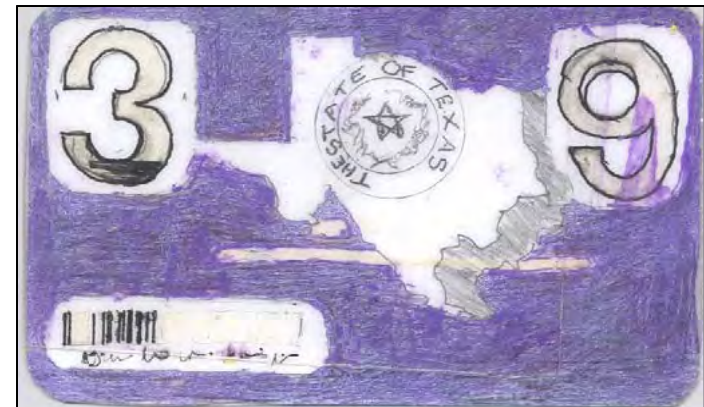


House Bill 2305

Fully implemented March 2016

Eliminated inspection certificate

Tied inspection to registration



Source: Dallas County

Effects

Enhanced motorist convenience

Elimination of counterfeit inspection certificate fraud

Surge in counterfeit and improper temp tags

TEMPORARY TAG EXAMPLES

TEXAS BUYER
THE VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REGISTERED WITH STATE UNDER TAG #

42F8851
EXPIRES 07-18-2008
1999 DODGE
VIN 1B7MC3362XJ633176
SELLER: Garza Used Cars

TEXAS DEALER
VEHICLE OWNED BY GARZA USED CARS
THE VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REGISTERED WITH STATE UNDER TAG #

14L9590
EXPIRES 07-02-2008
1999 FORD
VIN 1FAPP42X8XF207434
For Transit

TEXAS BUYER - INTERNET
THE VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REGISTERED WITH STATE UNDER TAG #

80H7277
EXPIRES - -
VIN
SELLER: Garza Used Cars

TEXAS DEALER
VEHICLE OWNED BY GARZA USED CARS
THE VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REGISTERED WITH STATE UNDER TAG #

12M9737
EXPIRES 07-12-2008
Authorized Agent Tag
Demonstration

TEXAS 30 DAY PERMIT
THE VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REGISTERED WITH STATE UNDER TAG #

80H7277
Date: 03-31-2016 08:36:00 AM
EXPIRES: 04-30-2016 11:59:00PM
2008 HONDA
VIN: 1JDLC49CN489237 ISSUED BY: TARRANT COUNTY

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement Challenges

Large volume of temporary tags

Many types of tags with different layouts/content

Criminal Enterprises Profit from Fraudulent Temp Tags

Organized crime involvement

Sold online, at flea markets and other locations

Leads from on-road enforcement praised by federal law enforcement in pursuit of serious crimes

Funding Issues

Local Initiatives Projects (LIP) allows funding for on-road enforcement of temp tag crimes

Veto of LIP funding for FY 2018-2019 has led to cease in on-road enforcement efforts



Source:
NCTCOG

IMPACTS

Air Quality

Vehicles circumventing emissions inspection requirements impede region's ozone attainment efforts

Safety

Vehicles that cannot pass annual safety inspection pose a danger to all



Financial

Tolling authority unable to collect for use of facilities

Vehicle inspection and repair facilities experience loss of revenue

State and local jurisdictions lose revenue from lack of registration and inspection fees

Source: NCTCOG

REVENUE LOSS PER REGISTRATION

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| State Highway Fund..... | \$50.75 |
| Other State Fees..... | \$8.25 |
| County Fees..... | \$16 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Loss..... | \$75 |

MOVING FORWARD

Analysis

Quantify problem

Investigate other states

Law Enforcement Training

Academy training

Individual agency training

Visual training aids for law enforcement

Restore Funding

Legislative Action

Explore types of tags needed

Standardize tag appearance

Add security features

Enhance penalties



Source: NCTCOG

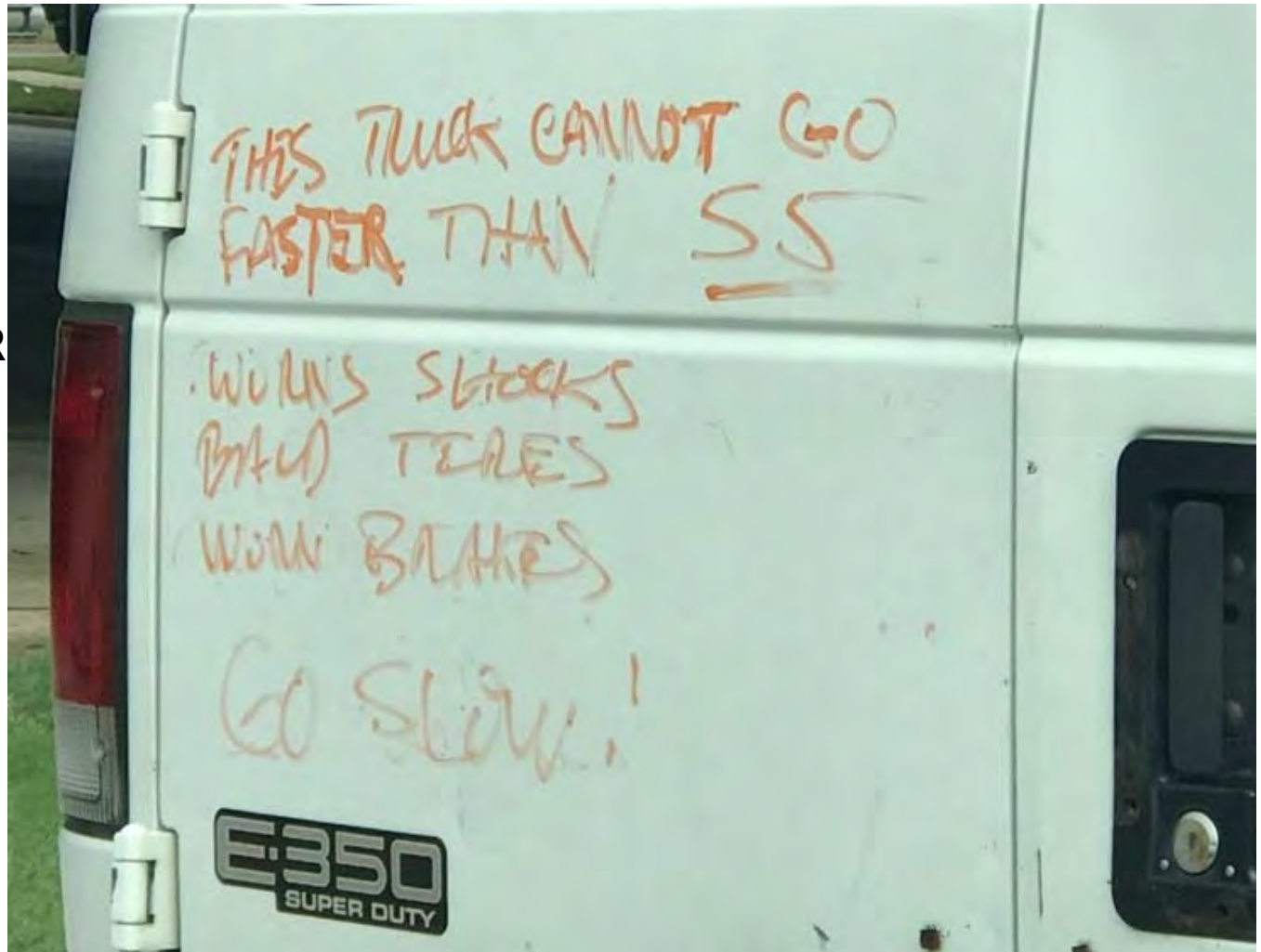


COLD, HARD TRUTH

**“THIS TRUCK
CANNOT GO FASTER
THAN 55”**

**WORN SHOCKS
BALD TIRES
WORN BRAKES**

GO SLOW!”



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PROGRAMS

The following summaries provide brief descriptions of transportation funding program categories, including the category number (as defined by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)), category name, description, and the entity or entities that make project selection decisions for each category. The first table includes funding categories associated with “roadway” type funding and the second table inventories “transit” type funding, though some roadway funds can be used for transit projects.

State and Federal Roadway Funding Categories

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|--|---|-------------|
| 1 | Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation | Preventive maintenance and rehabilitation on the existing state highway system, including: (A) Preventive maintenance - minor roadway modifications to improve operations and safety; and (B) Rehabilitation - installation, rehabilitation, replacement, and maintenance of pavement, bridges, traffic control devices, traffic management systems, and ancillary traffic devices. Funds are formula allocated. | TxDOT |
| 1P1 | Proposition 1- Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation | The Proposition 1 (Prop 1) amendment authorized a portion oil and gas tax revenues that typically go into the Economic Stabilization Fund to be deposited to the State Highway Fund. Funds may be spent to engineer, acquire right-of-way, move utilities, construct, and maintain public highways (transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and toll roads are ineligible). Projects must be on the Interstate Highway System or on the State Highway System. This category includes Prop 1 projects selected using the Category 1 maintenance formula and criteria. Selected by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in consultation with TxDOT. | TxDOT |
| 2M/2U | Metropolitan and Urban Corridor Projects | Mobility and added capacity projects along a corridor that decrease travel time and the level/duration of traffic congestion, and increase the safe and efficient movement of people and freight in metropolitan and urbanized areas. This category is split into two types of funding: 1) Metropolitan Corridor (2M) projects are within the boundaries of a Transportation Management Area (TMA), like Dallas-Fort Worth, and 2) Urban Corridor Projects (2U) are in areas without a TMA, like Sherman-Denison. Funds are formula allocated. These funds are generally approved through the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) or 10 Year Planning process. Selected by the MPO in consultation with TxDOT. | TxDOT/MPO |

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| 2MP1 | Proposition 1- Metropolitan Corridor Projects | <p>The Prop 1 amendment authorized a portion oil and gas tax revenues that typically go into the Economic Stabilization Fund to be deposited to the State Highway Fund. Funds may be spent to engineer, acquire right-of-way, move utilities, construct, and maintain public highways (transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and toll roads are ineligible). Projects must be on the Interstate Highway System or on the State Highway System. This category includes Prop 1 projects selected using the Category 2 metropolitan corridor formula and criteria. Funds are formula allocated.</p> | TxDOT/MPO |
| 3 | Non-Traditionally Funded Transportation Projects | <p>Transportation related projects that qualify for funding from sources not traditionally part of the state highway fund, including state bond financing under programs such as Proposition 12 (General Obligation Bonds), Proposition 14, pass-through toll financing, unique federal funding (like TIGER discretionary funds), regional toll revenue, Regional Transportation Council/Local funds (RTC/Local), and local participation funding above the required 20 percent match.</p> <p>Below is additional information about several of these sub-categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds include toll proceeds from toll project agreements. RTR funds may include up-front payments by tolling entity, excess revenue payment by tolling entity, or interest accrued on these funds. RTR funds can be spent on state highway system, public transit, or air quality projects. They are selected by the RTC with strong participation levels from local agencies (cities, counties, etc.). The Texas Transportation Commission has final approval via minute order. • RTC/Local funds are local funds created by and available to the RTC. The funds are general created through federal/local funding swaps. Projects are selected by the RTC, and primarily consist of for air quality, sustainable development, and study-type projects. • Proposition 14 funds are revenue bonds backed by future dollars in the State Highway Fund (Fund 6). The funds may be spent to acquire right-of-way, build, maintain and police public roadways, and to enforce traffic and safety laws. • Proposition 12 are revenue bonds backed by the State's general fund. The funds may be spent to acquire right-of-way, build, maintain and police public roadways, and to enforce traffic and safety laws. | Local Government/ Transportation Agencies/ TxDOT/ MPO/US DOT |

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|---|---|-------------|
| 3TDC (MPO) | Transportation Development Credits (Metropolitan Planning Organization) | A financial accounting tool approved by the Federal Highway Administration that allows states to use federal funding to offset a local match. These credits are non-cash credits allocated to states (and later to regions) as a representative value to account for toll road and tolled managed lanes that benefit the federal system. This category of Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) are selected by the MPO. | MPO |
| 3TDC (TTC) | Transportation Development Credits (Texas Transportation Commission) | A financial accounting tool approved by the Federal Highway Administration that allows states to use federal funding to offset a local match. These credits are non-cash credits allocated to states as a representative value to account for toll road and tolled managed lanes that benefit the federal system. This category of TDCs are selected by the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC). | TTC/TxDOT |
| 4 | Statewide Connectivity Corridor Projects | Mobility and added capacity projects on major state highway system corridors, which provide statewide connectivity between urban areas and corridors to create a highway connectivity network composed of the Texas Highway Trunk System, National Highway System, and connections from those two systems to major ports of entry on international borders and Texas water ports. Generally used in rural (non-urban) areas. | TTC |
| 4P1 | Proposition 1- Statewide Connectivity Corridor Projects | The Prop 1 amendment authorized a portion oil and gas tax revenues that typically go into the Economic Stabilization Fund to be deposited to the State Highway Fund. These funds may be spent to engineer, acquire right-of-way, move utilities, construct, and maintain public highways (transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and toll roads are ineligible). Projects must be on the Interstate Highway System or on the State Highway System. This category includes Prop 1 projects selected using the Category 4 statewide connectivity corridor formula and criteria. | TxDOT |
| 4-3C | Category 4 Congestion, Connectivity, Corridor (3C) projects | The Congestion Connectivity Corridor (3C) program is designed to provide connectivity for interstates and major freight/trade corridors, and enables the use of Category 4 funds in urban areas. Projects should be prioritized and selected based on criteria consistent with House Bill 20. Funds are formula allocated using the Category 2 formula. Projects are selected by the TxDOT District in consultation with the MPO. | TxDOT |
| 5 | Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) | Designed for air quality or transit projects that address attainment of national ambient air quality standard in the nonattainment areas (currently Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and El Paso). Funds cannot be used to add capacity for single-occupancy vehicles. Projects selected by MPOs. Funds are formula allocated. Selected by the MPO in consultation with TxDOT. | MPO |

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| 5 (FLEX) | Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program – Flex Funds | Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) legislation enabled up to 50 percent of CMAQ funds to be converted to a more flexible funding source. Fund eligibility is similar to Category 7 funds (see below). Projects selected cooperatively with TxDOT and MPOs. This funding category is not utilized regularly. | TxDOT/MPO |
| 6 | Bridges | Replacement or rehabilitation of eligible bridges on and off the State Highway System (functionally obsolete or structurally deficient). Replacement of existing highway-railroad grade crossings, and the rehabilitation or replacement of deficient railroad underpasses on the State Highway System. Specific locations evaluated by a cost-benefit derived index. | TxDOT Bridge Division |
| 7 | Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program | Designed for mobility (roadway or transit) and air quality projects that address transportation needs within Metropolitan Area boundaries with populations of 200,000 or greater. Projects are selected by the MPO in consultation with TxDOT. This program was previously called Surface Transportation Program- Metropolitan Mobility (STP-MM). Funds are formula allocated. | MPO |
| 8 | Safety | Safety related projects both on and off the state highway system including the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program, Railway-Highway Crossing Program, Safety Bond Program, and High Risk Rural Roads Program. Safe Routes To School projects previously authorized remain in Category 8, but new Safe Routes to School projects are managed under Category 9 (see below). | TxDOT |
| 9 (TE) | Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program | Previous federal aid program for the construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This program has been renamed as the Transportation Alternatives-Set Aside Program (TA-Set Aside), but several projects are currently under construction with older TE funds. | TxDOT/MPO |

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| 9 (TAP) | Transportation Alternatives – Set Aside Program [Formerly called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)] | Federal aid program for the construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This program also includes the Safe Routes to Schools Program. Projects are selected through competitive calls for projects at the regional and state levels. Funds are formula allocated. Under the recently enacted, FAST Act, the State/MPO 50/50 Allocation continues. The RTC selects a portion of TAP funds and TxDOT selects another portion. | TxDOT/MPO |
| 10 | Supplemental Transportation Projects | Transportation related projects that do not qualify for funding in other categories, including landscape and aesthetic improvement, erosion control and environmental mitigation, construction and rehabilitation of roadways within or adjacent to state parks, fish hatcheries, and similar facilities, replacement of railroad crossing surfaces, maintenance of railroad signals, construction or replacement of curb ramps for accessibility to pedestrians with disabilities, and miscellaneous federal programs. Previous federal earmarks often appear in this funding category. Green Ribbon funds would also appear under Category 10. | TxDOT/ Congress/ Other Agencies (e.g., Texas Parks and Wildlife) |
| 11 | District Discretionary | Projects on the State Highway System selected at the TxDOT district's discretion. | TxDOT District |
| 11P1 | Proposition 1- District Discretionary | The Prop 1 amendment authorized a portion oil and gas tax revenues that typically go into the Economic Stabilization Fund to be deposited to the State Highway Fund. These funds may be spent to engineer, acquire right-of-way, move utilities, construct, and maintain public highways (transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and toll roads are ineligible). Projects must be on the Interstate Highway System or on the State Highway System. This category includes Prop 1 projects selected using the Category 11 district discretionary formula and criteria. | TxDOT District |
| 12 | Strategic Priority | Projects with specific importance to the State including those that generally promote economic opportunity, increase efficiency on military deployment routes or retain military assets in response to the federal military base realignment and closure reports, maintain the ability to respond to both manmade and natural emergencies, and provide pass-through toll financing for local communities. | TTC |

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|--|--|-------------|
| 12 Clear Lanes | Strategic Priority – Clear Lanes | Clear Lanes provides funding for congestion relief projects in metropolitan areas with over 1 million in population, which includes Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. Projects in this category should be listed on the Top 100 Most Congested Roadways list. These funds are formula allocated. | TTC |
| 12 (425) | Strategic Priority – 425 Plan | Additional funds awarded to the region from TxDOT to advance “ready to let” projects. No additional funds are available in this category, but projects are still under construction using these funds. | TxDOT/MPO |
| 12 (C) | Strategic Priority – Category 5 Reconciliation | Funding from a previous reconciliation of CMAQ funds with TxDOT. The funds are intended for air quality projects within the non-attainment area. No additional funds are available in this category, but existing projects are still under construction using these funds. Selected by the MPO in consultation with TxDOT. | MPO |
| 12 (S) | Strategic Priority – Category 7 Reconciliation | Funding from a previous reconciliation of STP-MM/STBG funds with TxDOT. The funds can be used on mobility (roadway or transit) and air quality projects that address transportation needs within Metropolitan Planning Area boundary. No additional funds are available in this category, but existing projects are under construction or letting soon with these funds. Selected by the MPO in consultation with TxDOT. | MPO |
| SBPE | TxDOT PE Funds | Funds TxDOT uses for engineering/design services for projects on the state highway system. | TxDOT |
| S102 | TxDOT ROW Funds | Funds TxDOT uses for right-of-way acquisition or utility relocation for projects on the state highway system. | TxDOT |

Federal Transit Section Funding Categories

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY NAME | DESCRIPTION | SELECTED BY |
|-----------------|--|---|------------------------|
| Section 5307 | Urbanized Area Formula Program | Provides for the distribution of capital assistance and operating assistance (under specific guidelines) to transit operators in Urbanized Areas. | MPO/TxDOT |
| Section 5309 | Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grant Program | Provides Congressional discretionary funds for new transit start-ups, rail modernization, bus fleet, and other major transit projects (including Small Starts and New Starts Program). | Congress |
| Section 5310 | Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program | Provides transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities that increases mobility options through capital and limited operating assistance funds. | MPO/TxDOT Districts |
| Section 5311 | Nonurbanized Area Formula Program | Provides for the distribution of capital assistance and operating assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation services outside the Urbanized Areas of the State. | TxDOT |
| Section 5337 | State of Good Repair Program | Provides funding for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of capital assets used for rail transit and high intensity motor bus systems to ensure that public transit operates safely, efficiently, reliably, and sustainably. | MPO |
| Section 5339 | Bus and Bus Facilities Program | Provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. | MPO/TxDOT/ Congress |

**Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
December 2016-November 2017**

| RTC MEMBER | Entity | 12/8/16 | 1/12/17 | 2/9/17 | 3/9/17 | 4/13/17 | 5/11/17 | 6/8/17 | 7/13/17 | 8/10/17 | 9/14/17 | 10/12/17 | 11/9/17 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| Douglas Athas (06/13) | Garland | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Tennell Atkins (09/17) | Dallas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | A | P | A |
| Sara Bagheri (12/16) | Denton | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P |
| Sue S. Bauman (10/17) | DART | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P |
| Carol Bush (01/15) | Ellis Cnty | E | P | A | P | E | P | A | P | P | E | P | P |
| Loyl Bussell (05/17) | TxDOT, FW | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P |
| Rickey D. Callahan (09/17) | Dallas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | A | P | E |
| Mike Cantrell (1/07) | Dallas Cnty | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | A | E |
| David L. Cook (05/16) | Mansfield | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | E | P | P | P | E(R) |
| Rudy Durham (7/07) | Lewisville | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Andy Eads (1/09) | Denton Cnty | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Charles Emery (4/04) | DCTA | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Kevin Falconer (07/17) | Carrollton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | P | P | P |
| Gary Fickes (12/10) | Tarrant Cnty | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Robert Franke (1/08) | Cedar Hill | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| George Fuller (07/17) | McKinney | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | A | P | A |
| Sandy Greyson (11/11) | Dallas | E | P | P | A | P | P | P | A | P | P | P | P |
| Mojoy Haddad (10/14) | NTTA | E | A | A | P | A | P | A | P | P | P | P | A |
| Roger Harmon (1/02) | Johnson Cnty | P | P | E(R) | P | P | E | E | P | P | P | P | P |
| Clay Lewis Jenkins (04/11) | Dallas Cnty | P | P | E | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | E |
| Ron Jensen (06/13) | Grand Prairie | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | A(R) | E(R) | P | P |
| Jungus Jordan (4/07) | Fort Worth | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P |
| Lee M. Kleinman (09/13) | Dallas | E | P | P | E | P | E | P | A | P | P | P | P |
| Harry LaRosiliere (06/17) | Plano | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | E(R) | P | E(R) | P |
| David Magness (06/13) | Rockwall Cnty | E | P | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | E |
| Scott Mahaffey (03/13) | FWTA | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P |
| B. Adam McGough (07/16) | Dallas | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P |
| William Meadows (02/17) | DFW Airport | -- | -- | E | P | P | P | P | E | A | P | A | P |
| Steve Mitchell (07/17) | Richardson | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | P | P | P |
| Cary Moon (06/15) | Fort Worth | P | E(R) | P | E(R) | P | P | P | A | P | P | E(R) | P |
| Stan Pickett (06/15) | Mesquite | P | P | P | E | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | E |
| Mark Riley (1/09) | Parker Cnty | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | E | P | P | P |
| Kelly Selman (02/15) | TxDOT, Dallas | E(R) | E(R) | P | P | E(R) | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P |
| Will Sowell (10/17) | Frisco | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | E(R) |
| Mike Taylor (7/14) | Colleyville | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Stephen Terrell (6/14) | Allen | P | P | P | P | P | E | E(R) | P | A | P | P | P |
| T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (6/02) | Nrth Rch Hills | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | E(R) | E(R) | P |

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

**Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
December 2016-November 2017**

| RTC MEMBER | Entity | 12/8/16 | 1/12/17 | 2/9/17 | 3/9/17 | 4/13/17 | 5/11/17 | 6/8/17 | 7/13/17 | 8/10/17 | 9/14/17 | 10/12/17 | 11/9/17 |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| William Tsao (3/17) | Dallas | -- | -- | -- | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P |
| Oscar Ward (6/14) | Irving | P | P | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | E | E | P |
| Duncan Webb (6/11) | Collin Cnty | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| B. Glen Whitley (2/97) | Tarrant Cnty | E | E | P | P | P | P | E(R) | P | P | A(R) | P | E(R) |
| Kathryn Wilemon (6/03) | Arlington | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| W. Jeff Williams (10/15) | Arlington | E | P | P | P | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | E(R) |
| Ann Zadeh (06/17) | Fort Worth | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | P | P | P | P | P | P |

Note: Date in parenthesis indicates when member was 1st eligible to attend RTC meetings

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)



A monthly update on activities of the Regional Transportation Council and the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department

December 2017

Calendar

December 1, 11 am
DRMC

North Texas Tollway Authority
5900 W. Plano Parkway
Plano, TX 75093

December 6, 8:30 am
TRTC

Fort Worth Intermodal
Transportation Center
1001 Jones St.
Fort Worth, TX 76102

December 7, 10 am
35W Coalition Quarterly Meeting

Courtyard Fort Worth
Alliance Town Center
3001 Amador Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76244

December 8, 1:30 pm
**Surface Transportation
Technical Committee**

Transportation Council Room
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

December 14, 1 pm
Regional Transportation Council

Transportation Council Room
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

The NCTCOG offices will be closed December 25 and 26 in observance of Christmas.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Grand Prairie repeats as air quality Partner of the Year

Grand Prairie was named Air North Texas Partner of the Year for the second straight year in November. The city developed a comprehensive campaign including website content, social media promotion, newsletter articles about air quality and promotion of Air North Texas. The City encouraged companies to compete against one another to determine who could commit to the most new clean air initiatives through the Clean Air Action Challenge. A total of 647 pledges were made by companies in the city, with Lockheed Martin leading the way.

Dallas was recognized for its Outstanding Effort in Outreach. Dallas used its website, social media platforms and advertising to promote Air North Texas, encouraging the public and its employees to make clean air commitments. Additionally, Dallas earned the Arlo Ambassador Award for incorporating Arlo the Airmadillo into a social media campaign encouraging participation in Air North Texas.

Plano was recognized for its Outstanding Effort in Partner Involvement. The Live Green in Plano air quality webpage included information about Air North Texas, while encouraging visitors to become partners.

For the third consecutive year, the Hood County Clean Air Coalition earned the award for Outstanding Effort in Advertising. The Coalition sponsored three public service announcements that discussed car commitments, home commitments and smoking vehicles. The award for Outstanding Effort in Initiative went to the University of North Texas Health Science Center, which created its own Clean Air Action Day pledge to increase campus involvement and award participation. A total of 116 people took the pledge. Air North Texas aims to help improve air quality as 10 North Texas counties strive to meet the Environmental Protection Agency regulation for ozone pollution.

For more information about Local Motion topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or bwilson@nctcog.org. Visit www.nctcog.org/trans for more information on the department

How about a new pair of glasses this holiday season?

Epiphany is defined as “a grasp of reality through one event usually simple and striking.” The occasion for me was the Fort Worth ISD 2017 Academic Chairs For Teaching Excellence, held on Wednesday, November 15, 2017. This program created an interest and a volunteer opportunity for me to assist the Fort Worth School District. The assignment was to serve on 1 of 16 committees to review teacher applications, letters of support and conduct interviews. Pretty routine, yet rewarding.

I was flattered as a committee member to be invited to the recognition event, but unprepared. After hearing from sponsors highlighting their commitment to teaching excellence and hearing the real world life experiences of the most gifted teachers and the impact on students, I was challenged. In the same one-hour presentation I felt everything I was doing and had done in transportation seemed so miniscule, I also felt that my worst day does not compare to the challenges and home situations in which some of our children live and to which the school district willingly responds without conditions.

This opportunity created a new lens for me and blessed by a very small contribution of volunteering. This lens taught me that a school district does not make changes in big lifts like one of our transportation cranes but through an environment that creates thousands of life changing opportunities for parents, students and the teachers. One encounter at a time, every hour, every school, every day. This new granular perspective has taught me that what I may know to be correct may not be. It may be too broad, too general, not precise. How often have we all said we know what the answer to urban school needs, and be honest, we really didn't have a clue.

As a community, we have a lot to be thankful for. The collective group is doing well but families in our own neighborhoods are hurting. We need to change our lens, perspective and see. This experience with the FWISD has taught me to get less of my news from others in the confines of my home and more information from life efforts of volunteering, becoming a sponsor, participating in life and listening. We need to get our eyes examined, lenses updated, focus and see from our life experiences not opinions fed to us by our laziness. Make this holiday season more meaningful, more active, more real, one encounter at a time, every hour, every day. — By Michael Morris, NCTCOG director of transportation (A version of this was published in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.)

Oklahoma-to-South Texas high-speed rail study advances to next phase

A federally funded study to determine the feasibility of passenger rail service between Oklahoma City and South Texas recently advanced to the next phase allowing for continued exploration of the proposed route. The \$7 million Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study covers an 850-mile corridor broken into three segments going from Oklahoma City to Dallas-Fort Worth, Dallas-Fort Worth to San Antonio and San Antonio to South Texas. The next step would be a project-level environmental study to determine actual routes and environmental impacts of the service before construction and start of service. At this point, a private developer could step forward to determine future project possibilities.

—TxDOT

Officials celebrate completion of 35Express

The first phase of the multibillion improvement of Interstate Highway 35E north of LBJ Freeway is substantially complete, meaning vehicles traveling to and from Denton on the eastern side of the region now have smoother commutes.

The project, known as 35 Express, involved expansion of approximately 30 miles of IH 35E between LBJ and US Highway 380 and has been a top priority of the Regional Transportation Council's for several years.

The Texas Department of Transportation and public officials along the corridor celebrated the milestone with a ribbon cutting in early November.

The project included reversible TEXpress Lanes, rebuilt general-purpose lanes and continuous frontage roads.

The TEXpress Lanes opened in May and run 18 miles, providing motorists an option to pay for smoother drives if the adjacent lanes are congested.

They can use the general-purpose lanes and frontage roads for no charge.

The \$1.4 billion project was funded from a mix of federal, state and local sources.

REGIONAL News

2017 Clean Diesel Call for Projects opening

Need to replace a vehicle? Funding may soon be available to help with the purchase, just in time for the holidays. During December, NCTCOG will open a 2017 Clean Diesel Call for Projects.

This opportunity will pay for up to 45 percent of the cost of replacing heavy-duty diesel vehicles or non-road equipment owned by public fleets or private entities contracted to local governments.

For more information on these and other funding opportunities visit www.nctcog.org/agfunding.

Deadlines for TERP grants approaching



Entities considering applying for two types of grants offered through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Texas Emissions Reduction Program should act fast. The deadlines for both are approaching early in the new year.

- The **Alternative Fueling Facilities Program** offers grants for construction or expansion of alternative fuel fueling stations within the Clean Transportation Zone, which includes the 12-county metropolitan planning area. The application deadline is January 16, 2018.
- A simplified first-come, first-served program is offering **rebate grants** for the repower or replacement of diesel heavy-duty vehicles and non-road equipment. The application deadline is February 13, 2018.

An opportunity through the Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grant Program, which offers grants for the repower or replacement of medium- or heavy-duty vehicles with natural gas or propane, is coming soon. Program details and application instructions for these programs can be found at www.terpgrants.org.

Transportation Resources

Facebook

Facebook.com/nctcogtrans

Twitter

Twitter.com/nctcogtrans

YouTube

YouTube.com/nctcogtrans

Instagram

Instagram.com/nctcogtrans

Publications

NCTCOG.org/trans/outreach/publications.asp

Partners

Dallas Area Rapid Transit
DART.org

**Denton County
Transportation Authority**
DCTA.net

North Texas Tollway Authority
NTTA.org

**The Fort Worth
Transportation Authority**
FWTA.org

**Texas Department
of Transportation**
TxDOT.gov

By the Numbers

\$1.4 billion

The cost of the first phase of the 35 Express project, a 30-mile expansion of Interstate Highway 35E from LBJ Freeway to US Highway 380. The project is now substantially complete.

PUBLIC *Involvement*

Traffic counts play integral role in planning

NCTCOG has published a new fact sheet focusing on traffic counts. Traffic counts are integral to economic development and the transportation planning process because they provide vital information about vehicular demand on roadways to engineers, real estate developers, planners and other decision-makers.

Traffic counts help people understand where improvements for economic activity and transportation infrastructure can be made. NCTCOG uses traffic counts to make models that project future demand on roadways and has a traffic count database at www.nctcog.org/trafficcounts.

This database encompasses 50,000 locations in 16 counties. Traffic counts help the system work more efficiently to accommodate drivers as the region expands. Already, more than 180 million miles are driven in North Texas on the average weekday.

As the population climbs toward 11 million, which is projected by 2045, this number will grow. NCTCOG will continue to track the totals as it seeks to improve mobility. More information is available at www.nctcog.org/factsheets.

AV shuttle demo set for Dec. 7 at Globe Life Park

A demonstration of the new Milo automated shuttle is scheduled for 9 am December 7 at the Globe Life Park Rav4 Parking Lot (on the corner of Randol Mill Road and Nolan Ryan Expressway). A group discussion on how public transit providers can adapt to the coming of AVs will follow at 11:30 am.

NCTCOG will host a workshop at 8 am December 8 at its Arlington offices about how data from the community-based mapping app Waze can be used to enhance transportation, 911 services and emergency preparedness. To register for either event and learn more, visit www.nctcog.org/trans/auto.

Prepared in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration or the Texas Department of Transportation.