

## MINUTES

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE December 4, 2020**

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, December 4, 2020, at 1:30 pm, by videoconference. The Regional Transportation Council Bylaws establish that the Technical Committee approved membership in attendance at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for action to be taken, therefore individual attendance was not taken for committee members or other attendees.

1. **Approval of October 23, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the October 23, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Jim O'Connor (M); Bryan Beck (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
  - 2.1. **Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was requested. Action included a recommendation to also direct staff to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. February 2021 revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 2.1 (revised). The revised listings were transmitted to members and posted on the North Central Texas Council of Governments website.
  - 2.2. **Endorsement of Regional Transportation Council Ratification of Emergency Funding Authorization for McKinney Avenue Transit Authority for Rail Liability Insurance:** Endorsement of Regional Transportation Council ratification of emergency funding authorization to the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority (MATA) utilizing existing Regional Toll Revenue funds previously authorized by the Regional Transportation Council for transit projects in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 was requested. Funding will ensure continuation of transit services and enhanced connectivity between Uptown and Downtown Dallas. A copy of correspondence to MATA was provided in Electronic Item 2.2.1 and additional details were provided in Electronic Item 2.2.2.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Bryan Beck (M); Clarence Daugherty (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Federal Highway Administration – Pavement/Bridge Condition Target Reaffirmation or Revisions:** Jeff Neal presented a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to reaffirm support for adjusted statewide pavement and bridge condition (PM2) targets on National Highway System (NHS) facilities. The status of the various federally required performance measures was highlighted, and it was noted that 2020 marks the mid-point of the performance period for PM2 with reports from state Departments of Transportation (DOT) due October 1, 2020. When submitting its report, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) changed five out of six of its targets reopening the review period for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Mr. Neal highlighted NHS pavement good condition targets noting an increasing trend reflects improvement. TxDOT has updated the statewide targets for good pavement condition on both interstate and non-interstate NHS facilities from 66.4 percent to 66.5 percent, and 52.3 percent to 54.1 percent, respectively. Mr. Neal also highlighted NHS pavement poor

condition targets noting a decreasing trend reflects improvement. TxDOT has updated the statewide targets for poor pavement condition on both interstate and non-interstate NHS facilities from 0.3 percent to 0.2 percent, and 14.3 percent to 14.2 percent, respectively. While NCTCOG staff's evaluation of regional NHS pavement data and linear trend projections suggest conditions contradictory to statewide performance, Mr. Neal did note the continued high percentage of off-system NHS pavements in poor condition. Mr. Neal also highlighted NHS bridge good and poor condition targets. For good condition targets, an increase is considered improvement and in poor condition targets, a decrease is the desired trend. TxDOT did not revise its statewide good bridge condition target for 2020, which means reevaluation by the Metropolitan Planning Organization for this target was not opened. However, TxDOT did change its statewide poor bridge condition target from 0.8 percent to 1.5 percent. In the region, 34 bridges have been identified as in poor condition. After review of projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Statewide TIP, and Unified Transportation Program, approximately 25 bridges will be addressed through a maintenance or construction project within the next 10 years, leaving 9 bridges remaining in poor condition in the region. Considering received public/agency feedback, analysis of observed regional and statewide performance trends, trends, and potential effects on project development and implementation, staff recommended reaffirmation of support for TxDOT's adjusted statewide PM2 targets, as well as consensus for ongoing collaborative activities with partners that would further contribute toward accomplishment of NHS pavement and bridge performance goals. Electronic Item 3 included additional details on PM2 information, and the recommendation proposed by staff. The schedule for this effort was reviewed. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval reaffirming North Central Texas Council of Governments support for adjusted Texas Department of Transportation statewide 2022 good condition National Highway System pavement and bridge targets, as well as adjusted statewide 2022 poor condition NHS pavement and bridge targets. North Central Texas Council of Governments staff will work with local governments to expedite improvements for NHS off-system arterials in poor condition and with TxDOT/local governments to expedite improvements to NHS bridges in poor condition. Mark Nelson (M); Mike Galizio (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **2020 Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy Implementation (Round 2):** Brian Dell presented next steps for implementing the second round of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy. The MPO Milestone Policy was adopted by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in 2015 to ensure that funded projects are being implemented in a timely manner and funding is available for other projects in the region. Round 1 of the policy reviewed projects selected from 1992 to 2005 that had not yet gone to construction and was successful in getting 51 out of 57 projects to construction. Mr. Dell provided an update on the one remaining project from the first round, which was granted a deadline extension by the RTC in November 2019. The project's funding was obligated in October and letting scheduled for December 2020. All projects from Round 1 have either advanced to construction or were canceled at the request of the project sponsor. A second round of the Milestone Policy was initiated in October 2019 to review projects currently over ten years old that have not been implemented. The initiative is intended to provide a realistic assessment of project status, balance project construction schedule capacity within the current financial constraints, increase the amount of available funds for ready-to-go projects, and get older projects to construction/implementation. Round 2 affects projects that were funded between 2006 and 2010 and had not let or obligated as of December 2019; funded prior to 2006 that have let but have had implementation issues (e.g., re-bid, utility delays); funded with RTC-selected sources; are locally funded and were added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be tracked prior to 2010; and funded with Congressional Earmarks that are subject to rescission for a total of 41 projects that need to be reconfirmed

or cancelled. Agencies with projects on the Milestone Policy Project List were notified via letter. Project information was also presented to members at Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) and RTC meetings in 2019. In order to prevent cancellation of projects, agencies are required to reconfirm projects as a priority by providing a realistic and achievable schedule, documentation of policy board support, and documentation of availability of local matching funds. If projects were advancing imminently or had policy board approval within the last six months, new action was not needed and documentation of that old action was acceptable. A summary of the number of projects and funding proposed for cancellation, as well as projects under construction/complete or letting in the future was provided. The draft list of proposed recommendations for these projects were provided in Electronic Item 4.1, and additional details of the Milestone Policy were included in Electronic Item 4.2. In the Round 1 effort, the action included a one-year grace period after the fiscal year in which each agency indicated their project would be ready. Now that the program is established and agencies understand the implications of setting their schedules, staff proposed the grace period is not continued. Also, when North Central Texas Council of Governments staff briefed STTC and RTC about the status of projects in Round 1, further extensions were offered to projects that had missed their deadlines. Now that the program is fully understood, staff proposed that failure to meet the schedules set forth will result in automatic removal of funding from a project. The schedule for this effort was highlighted, with action to cancel projects and establish deadlines for projects to go to construction proposed at the January 22, 2021, STTC meeting and February 11, 2021, RTC meeting.

5. **Executive Summary of Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery:** Michael Morris presented a summary of performance metrics to help understand the impacts of COVID-19 to the transportation system. Four performance metrics being tracked through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process include: 1) travel behavior response to COVID-19; 2) financial implications to traditional revenue sources; 3) benefits of travel behavior responses to areas of RTC responsibility; and 4) prioritization of infrastructure improvements that offset unemployment increases. Roadway trends, transit ridership impacts, and financial implications were highlighted. In addition, Mr. Morris discussed lower construction costs and efforts to advance projects during this time. Additional details were included in Electronic Item 5 and more comprehensive material is available at the newly launched online dashboard at [www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19](http://www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19).
6. **Regional Transportation Council Legislative Program, Legislative Update, and New Partnership Program with the Texas Transportation Commission:** Michael Morris presented an overview of a new Regional Transportation Council (RTC)/Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) partnership program. Candidate elements of the partnership include additional conversations about the benefits of formula allocation and how it produces more revenue that can offset the losses of Proposition 1. The second element is increased partnerships with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) districts in the region to program Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds for mobility, safety, and job creation benefits. The third element is to create a new integrated project delivery team in anticipation of a new federal infrastructure program with the new Administration. A fourth candidate element is to create an improved, more integrated communication with the Governor's Office or the TTC on a new economic development program for corporate relocations to the State. The next candidate element is to review the "no toll environment" policy which has opened as a result of the proposed addition to the 2021 Unified Transportation Program. The last proposed element is to advance a conversation with the State regarding the development of a new passenger rail/freight logistics program. The effort would build on recent successes between public-sector passenger rail and the private sector Class I freight providers. In addition, he also presented

information on the RTC 2021 Legislative Program for the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. RTC Legislative Program elements are to adequately fund transportation and utilize tools, expand transportation options in mega-metropolitan regions, pursue innovation, technology, and safety, and improve air quality. The RTC approved the Legislative Program during the November RTC meeting, including the proposed partnership with the TTC. A copy of the RTC Legislative Program was provided in Electronic Item 6. Prefiling for bills began on November 9, 2020, with the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature set to convene on January 12, 2021. Approximately 1,000 bills have been filed and bills of interest include transportation funding, safety, high-speed rail, and air quality. Staff will continue to monitor and analyze legislation related to the RTC Legislative Program. Mr. Morris also provided an update on federal legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Current Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations expire on December 11, 2020. To avert government shutdown, Congress must pass a FY2021 appropriations bill or continuing resolution to extend current funding. In addition, Congressional leaders are interested in passing a second COVID-19 relief bill in December. Staff will continue to provide updates to members regarding State and federal legislative actions.

7. **Overview of General Workshop on the Transportation Improvement Program**

**Training:** Ken Bunkley provided an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) training held prior to the Committee meeting. During the workshop, held in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation, a general overview was given of the TIP and project implementation, including the TIP development and modification processes, project selection, and steps necessary after projects are selected. A refresher on the Regional And Project Tracking System (RAPTS) for Regional Toll Revenue projects was also provided, as well as information on agreements, funding obligation, and project delivery.

8. **Success of SH 161 Pilot Project and Introduction of Wrecker Service on SH 121:**

Natalie Bettger briefed the Committee on the State Highway (SH) SH 121 technology lane. An overview of the successful bottleneck improvement implemented on SH 161 was highlighted. Lanes opened to traffic September 2015. Irving Police Department assisted in expediting vehicle removal and tow trucks were staged in the corridor. Directional hourly volume by lane was highlighted, as well as before and after speed data. The peak-hour lane increased traffic volume through the bottleneck portion of SH 161 and faster speeds were observed after the opening of the lane but as volume increased, speeds normalized. Violations, such as driving in the lane while closed, occurred frequently right before or after the lane was open. In addition, no increase in crashes occurred. Similar to the SH 161 improvement, a bottleneck improvement for SH 121 between Glade Road and SH 183 in Euless and Bedford is planned to open for traffic December 7, 2020. The improvement consists of shoulder restriping to enable three lanes of traffic during peak travel times for a total of four general purpose lanes and two technology lanes. The additional capacity will provide congestion relief for travelers within and adjacent to this three-mile section. The improvement will be accompanied by staged tow trucks to respond quickly to incidents along the project location. Additional information summarizing the success of SH 161 and project improvement details on SH 121 was provided in Electronic Item 8.

9. **End of Ozone Season, Compliance with Federal Requirements, and Future Outlook:**

Jenny Narvaez presented a summary of the 2020 ozone season activity and other air quality updates for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region. The region remains in nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone. The attainment dates for both standards are in 2021 and will be based on ozone data from 2018, 2019, and 2020. Exceedance days at each monitor were tracked for the 2020 ozone season and design value data was summarized at the meeting. Reclassification due to failure of attaining the ozone standards was also highlighted. North Central Texas Council of

Governments staff are continuing to assess the regional implications of stricter standards, including whether vehicle miles of travel (VMT) growth offset is an additional analysis required due to reclassification, if existing transportation control strategies are sufficient to offset anticipated emission increases, and if additional transportation control strategies will be required. Ms. Narvaez highlighted impacts of COVID-19 restrictions in the region, which have included increased bicycle/pedestrian trips and reduced congestion. However, despite the reduction in vehicle traffic and congestion, improvements to air quality were not as significant as expected. In fact, in a comparison of 2019 and 2020 ozone exceedance data, more exceedances were experienced in May 2020 versus May 2019. Staff is looking into reasons behind inaccurate ozone alerts for predicted exceedances, impacts of background emissions, the accuracy of nonattainment boundaries, comprehensive multipollutant interactions, unexplained emission increases in May, June, and August 2020, and potential changing of NOx/VOC ratios. Staff is also researching COVID-19 literature from the Transportation Research Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and Texas Department of Transportation and is dedicated to continuing the pursuit of additional and innovative transportation and emission control strategies. Ms. Narvaez noted that March 1, 2021, marks the beginning of the 2021 ozone season. Official reclassification of both the 2008 and 2015 standards is yet to be determined and compliance with VMT offsets must be determined before submittal of the State Implementation Plan. It is anticipated that the deadline for the 2008 standard will be no later than July 20, 2027 (severe classification) and August 3, 2024 (moderate classification) for the 2015 standard. Details were provided in Electronic Item 9. Additional updates will be provided to members in the future. Members discussed ozone attainment in the region.

10. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.
  1. 2021 Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) and Regional Transportation Council Meeting Schedules (Electronic Item 10.1)
  2. STTC Survey on Virtual Work and Public Meetings (Electronic Item 10.2)
  3. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>)
  4. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Upcoming Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>)
  5. Reminder: Local Government Energy Reporting Coming Soon (Electronic Item 10.3)
  6. Status of Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Funding Program (Electronic Item 10.4)
  7. October Online Input Opportunity Minutes (Electronic Item 10.5)
  8. December Online Input Opportunity Notice (Electronic Item 10.6)
  9. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 10.7)
  10. Written Progress Reports:
    - Local Motion (Electronic Item 10.8)
    - Partner Progress Reports (Electronic Item 10.9)
11. **Other Business (Old and New):** There was no discussion on this item.
12. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on January 22, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.