

## MINUTES

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE September 22, 2023**

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, September 22, 2023, at 1:30 pm, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following STTC members or representatives were present: Savannah Doshier (representing Melissa Baker), David Boski, Shon Brooks, Daniel Burnham, Travis Campbell, Lane Cline, John Cordary, Jr., Breanna Davis (representing Jackie Culton), Clarence Daugherty, Pritam Deshmukh, Caryl DeVries, Rebecca Diviney, Phil Dupler, Eric Fladager, Ricardo Gonzalez, Gary Graham, Tom Hammons, Barry Heard, Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Jeremy Hutt, Thuan Huynh, Joseph Jackson, Joel James, William Janney, Kelly Johnson, Major L. Jones, Gus Khankarli, Eron Linn, Paul Luedtke, Alan Hendrix (representing Stanford Lynch), Chad Marbut, Alberto Mares, Wes McClure, Brian Moen, Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Tim Palermo, John Polster, Kelly Porter, Tim Porter, Elizabeth Reynolds, Jahor Roy, Greg Royster, Kathryn Rush, Jeff Kelly (representing David Salmon), Brian Shewski, Walter Shumac, III, Randy Skinner, Chad Ostrander (representing Caleb Thornhill), Jennifer VanderLaan, Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize, Nathan Benditz (representing Daniel Vedral), Jana Wentzel, and Robert Woodbury.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Nick Allen, Julie Anderson, Gustoayo Baez, Taylor Benjamin, Natalie Bettger, Keith Brooks, Jackie Castillo, Jessica Cordova, Walter Council, Cody Derrick, Amber Ellis, Joaquin Escalante, Harrison Fuller, Gypsy Gavia, Irlenia Hermosillo, Ernest Huffman, Brian Jahn, Zachary Joseph, Dan Kessler, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Mike Landvik, Dillon Maroney, Charles Marsh, James McLane, Michael Morris, Vickie Morris, Marcia Nasamento, Anthony Padilla, Donald Parker, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Minesha Reese, Nick Vanhaasen, Brendon Wheeler, Brian Wilson, Jared Wright, Anteneh Yohannes, Alexander Young, and Ralph Zaragoza.

1. **Approval of August 25, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the August 25, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Kelly Porter (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:
  - 2.1. **November 2023 Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** A recommendation was requested for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. November 2023 revisions to the 2023-2026 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 2.1 for the Committee's consideration.
  - 2.2. **Transit Strategic Partnerships Program: Selected Projects from the May 2023 Cycle:** North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff requested the Committee's support for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) recommendation for approval to provide funding in an amount not to exceed \$2,093,693 for the three projects selected through the Transit Strategic Partnerships Program May 2023 Cycle. As part of the program, staff is

recommending projects for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding under two programs: Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program and Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula's Job Access/Reverse Commute Program. From the May 2023 Cycle of applicants, three projects have been selected for funding: 1 – Dynamic Direct Route pilot in the City of Arlington; 2 – Mobility Management in/to Collin County by the Denton County Transportation Authority; and 3 – Transit On-Demand Service provided by Trinity Metro in the City of Forest Hill. All projects align with the goals set forth in Mobility 2045. Electronic Item 2.2 contained more information.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of Items 2.1 and 2.2 on the Consent Agenda. Kelly Porter (M); Eron Linn (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Partnerships for Regional Events:** Karla Windsor requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of funds to support planning and infrastructure for upcoming regional events. These events will bring significant economic development to various parts of the region but present transportation challenges. The Dallas-Fort Worth area has national and international events coming to the region. In 2024, the Texas Rangers will host the Major League Baseball All-Star game. The region has also been selected to participate in the North American FIFA World Cup in 2026. Both events will be held in the Arlington Entertainment District. The funding needs and strategies: North Central Texas Council Of Governments (NCTCOG) gave an update to FIFA World Cup, formed subcommittees to identify needs for operations, transit, streetscape/safety, 50 electric vehicles requested to United States Department of Transportation, stakeholders from public and private sector involved. Staff recommended \$6 million for dynamic message signboards, software improvements, traffic signal enhancements, fiber, and Traffic Management Center (TMC) modifications. Transit recommends \$3 million for Trinity Railway Express (TRE) station improvements, bus staging, and enhanced transit capacity. Streetscape and safety recommended \$8 million for sidewalks, lighting, crossing improvements, and wayfinding/signage. A total of \$17.5 million in funding was requested with a \$500K cushion for cost overruns. Funding between NCTCOG and the City of Arlington will be exchanged for Randol Mill. There were \$17.5 million in local funds available for exchange of federal funds plus an interim asphalt overlay was needed for \$3.8 million in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) and \$750,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for dynamic message boards for Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)/NCTCOG. An additional partner in need of assistance in preparing for an event that will affect transportation systems in areas with constrained access was presented. The Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) in Fort Worth will be hosting "Wings Over Cowtown" Air Show featuring the Blue Angels in April 2024 and is expecting 150,000 – 180,000 spectators daily to access their facility off State Highway (SH) 183. Areas for assistance: parking on-base; regional park and ride lots such as Ridgemar Mall. Traffic analysis: base circulation and security protocols, increased transit support through Trinity Metro Route 91 connections to base entrance, Tex Rail North Side stop, TRE downtown (stations), connections to and from Ridgemar Mall, charter service/buses from regional park and ride lots with a total of \$250,000 in estimated costs. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 3. Questions were asked during the item. John Polster, Denton County, "What were the source of the Regional Toll Revenue funds? What account?" Staff answered that they would need to get back with the answer. Kelly Porter with the City of Fort Worth asked, "Who would be receiving the funds for the Air Show". Staff answered that the funds would be coordinated through NCTCOG for the study and parking. Additional funding for

transit and charter services, if needed, would flow through NCTCOG to Trinity Metro and private companies that would be procured.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of a \$17.5 million allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to the City of Arlington, matched with Regional Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in exchange for \$17.5 million of City "local" funds to be applied to projects identified within the Arlington Entertainment District, an allocation of \$3.8 million Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds to the City of Arlington for interim improvements on Randol Mill Road, an allocation of \$750,000 in federal funds to Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) for regional dynamic message signs, an allocation of \$250,000 RTC local to be allocated for transportation support for the NAS JRB Wings over Cowtown Air Show, and administratively amend Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) and Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project(s). Tim Palermo (M); Eron Linn (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Strengthening Mobility and Revolving Transportation Grant Endorsement:** Ernest Huffman requested an endorsement for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) submission of Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program applications. In October 2022, staff briefed the Council on the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) under the SMART program. The purpose of the grant is to demonstrate projects using technology interventions to solve real-world challenges, build data, technology capacity, and expertise in the public sector for funding of up to \$100 million per year. The first year in phase 1, will have 30-50 planning grants with \$2 million as a maximum grant with no local match. In the later years of phase 2, implementation grants of up to \$15 million. Ernest refreshed the Council with the status of the three projects from last year: project 1 – North Texas Micro-Weather Infrastructure for Advanced Air Mobility, pivoted to a 2023 submission with all Autonomous Vehicles as the focus and the City of Fort Worth as the applicant, project 2 – Flooded Roads Information System, NCTCOG to pursue another funding mechanism, and project 3 – Traffic Signal Technology and Deploying AI based Autonomous Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) Platforms, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) pursuing via another mechanism. The 2023 proposed application submission on the North Texas Minimum Viable Unmanned Traffic Management Infrastructure for feasibility study to determine viability of regional solution for minimum viable Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) Infrastructure to integrate into Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UTM key site locations regionwide for \$2 million with no local match. The benefits of regionally owned and managed infrastructure that is required for drone operations to scale up to efficient Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Services. The remaining schedule: action requested at the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting on September 14, 2023, the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) meeting on September 22, 2023, and the Executive Board meeting on September 28, 2023. The application deadline is October 10, 2023, at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Electronic Item 4 contained additional details.

A motion was made to approve the endorsement for the Regional Transportation Council approval of the submittal of North Texas Minimum Viable Unmanned Traffic Management Infrastructure for funding consideration through the Fiscal Year 2023 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Program for \$2 million, and to administratively amend North Central Texas Council of Governments and State Transportation Improvement

Programs (TIP/STIP), as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project if selected for an FY23 SMART Grant total award of \$2 million. Kelly Porter (M); Bryan Moen (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **2023 Transportation Conformity and Mobility 2050:** Chris Klaus, presented for Jenny Narvaez, briefly highlighted several items for the Committee. He presented the overview of efforts on the 2023 Transportation Conformity analysis, including the reason for the analysis and the timeline. He also introduced the schedule of the next plan update (Mobility 2050). The purpose demonstrates that projected emissions from transportation projects are within emission limits (Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets) established by the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and ensures federal funding and approval is applied to transportation projects that are consistent with air quality planning goals. Chris wanted to point out that we are in violation of two ozone standards, but what governs is the nonattainment area that is the largest, so the 2008 ozone standards for  $\leq 75$  parts per billion (ppb) is a ten-county nonattainment area, as compared to the 2015 ozone standard for  $\leq 70$  ppb is a nine-county nonattainment area. The difference is Rockwall County, the largest of the two govern so the analysis will be performed on the ten-county nonattainment area. In April of 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Adequacy for the 2020 Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets for the purpose of transportation conformity with an effective date of May 24, 2023. This adequacy determination requires transportation conformity to be performed within two years of the effective date. Thus, staff will conduct a strategic analysis against new emission budgets only (no network/project changes to the current Mobility 2045 Update). The timeline: brought to the September 22, 2023, Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) meeting and the October 12, 2023, RTC meeting for information, October 9, 2023, is the start of the comment period for the public meeting, will be taken for action at the October 27, 2023, STTC meeting, for action (Endorsement of 2023 Transportation Conformity) (End of Public Comment Period November 8, 2023) at the November 9, 2023, RTC meeting, for action (Endorsement of 2023 Transportation Conformity) at the November 16, 2023, Executive Board meeting. In November of 2023, the 2023 Transportation Conformity documents will be sent to federal and state partners to begin interagency consultation review with anticipated United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) conformity determination by March of 2024. Chris then highlighted a draft schedule for the region's next long range transportation plan update, Mobility 2050, including RTC adoption in June 2025 and USDOT conformity determination by December 2025. This schedule will ensure the mobility plan horizon to be at least 20 years into the future. Electronic Item 5 provided presented details.
6. **2023 Ozone Season Update:** Nicholas Vanhaasen provided an update on the status of the 2023 ozone season including exceedance days, current design values, and future impacts facing the region. The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) nonattainment area is currently classified as "moderate" for the 2015 ozone standard with an attainment deadline in 2024 based on 2021, 2022, and 2023 monitor data. Since we are in a nonattainment area with two standards, we are looking at exceedances based off of the more stringent 2015 standard which is  $\leq 70$  ppb. As of September 21, we had 39 orange days and 8 red days, with a total of 47 exceedances. Preliminary monitor data indicates the area has failed to attain the 2015 standard and will likely be reclassified to "serious" in the future. A draft of the air quality plan for the "moderate" nonattainment has been prepared by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Staff comments on the TCEQ draft plan are included in Electronic Item 6.1. In addition, the DFW nonattainment area is currently classified as "severe" for the 2008 ozone standard with an attainment deadline in 2027. Attainment will be based on 2024, 2025, and 2026 monitor data. If the region fails to attain the 2008 standard

by 2027, the region will be subject to annual penalty fees for stationary major sources of ozone precursors. It's estimated by TCEQ that the DFW area would incur \$45 million in fees in 2028. The program rules for the fees are under development by the TCEQ and are anticipated to be submitted by the TCEQ to the EPA for approval on November 7, 2025. Electronic Item 6.2 contained more information.

7. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris briefly announced he was asked to serve as a moderator at a conference and was at an event that recognized our State representative, Yvonne Davis. He highlighted several items for the Committee. He presented the insights that High-speed rail is picking up steam between Dallas and Houston, with Amtrak's interest. The Judge from Waller County and also the president of the Houston-Galveston Council of Governments wrote a letter, all of the correspondence is provided in Electronic Item 7.1. We have recently encountered some bumpiness from the City of Dallas regarding the High-Speed rail between Dallas and Fort Worth. Michael is anticipating correcting and addressing the concerns from the City of Dallas. He noted the program with the Universities for the North Texas Center for Mobility Technologies is proceeding. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff have been attending a lot of public meetings including Transit East, Forest Hill Drive, and Fair Park. More information is available at: [www.publicinput.com/fairparklinks](http://www.publicinput.com/fairparklinks). Michael announced High-Speed Rail is advancing with the hope to get into the environmental phase, where the purpose for the need will be published. Recent meeting and news regarding High-Speed Rail were provided in Electronic Item 7.2.
8. **Regional Transit Version 2.0: Planning for Year 2050:** Michael Morris requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director, who met with selected transportation authority cities concerned that cities often take their local transit issues to the Texas Legislature bypassing opportunities closer to home for resolution. Staff is recommending that RTC initiate a comprehensive transit study focused on advancing transportation authority collaboration between agencies and additional attention on expanding transit services to areas with transit needs, therefore, the consideration of Transit Version 2.0. Three major occurrences: most of the demographic growth is occurring outside of the transportation authority areas, solve misunderstandings at home, and restart our philosophy on transit by starting a whole new partnership based on new information and collaboration on what the best path forward to prepare our region on eleven and half million people. NCTCOG staff proposed seven initiatives: more aggressive transit, legislative program, increased membership, three agency cost savings, creating in-fill development, transit board teamwork, transit fare rewards program, and budget understanding (Paradox). Electronic Item 8.1 contained correspondence from cities following the meeting with the NCTCOG Transportation Director. Electronic Item 8.2 contained the draft white paper laying out the intent of the effort.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of \$1 million in RTC local funds, a policy subcommittee for 12 Counties, addresses the seven areas presented, RTC requests North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Executive Board select a consultant in November of 2023 or January 2024, the recommended consultant by NCTCOG /City/Transportation Authority (TA) staffs, legislative findings in August and/or September of 2024, final report by January 2025, and NCTCOG/TA reports will be available lowering consultant cost. Eron Linn (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Fast Facts:** The following fast facts were provided by NCTCOG staff:

Camille Fountain highlighted the Fall 2023 Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course Announcement for Thursday, November 2, 2023. Registration for the course was provided in Electronic Item 9.1.

Jared Wright highlighted the 14 projects funded using Congestion Mitigation Air Quality improvement funding in the Local Clean Air Spotlight provided in Electronic Item 9.2. For the Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles, Jared also provided an update that the TxDOT EV charging stations will open 56 charging stations statewide and the program is open until October 16, 2023, for phase one of the charging sites. Applications for the Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator program opened on September 13, 2023, with availability of up to \$100 million in federal funding to repair and replace existing, electric vehicle charging infrastructure. More details provided at [www.nctcog.org/aqfunding](http://www.nctcog.org/aqfunding). Jared mentioned a few upcoming events, the Regional EV working group meeting on October 18, 2023, from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm, via zoom. The National Drive Electric Week on Sunday, October 1, 2023, from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm, at the Tanger Outlets in Fort Worth. The North Texas Facilities Expo is on October 4 and 5, 2023, from 8:40 am to 3:00 pm at 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX, 76011. More information, including registration for the upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities events available at: <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>.

Jackie Castillo mentioned that North Central Texas Council of Governments staff will be hosting a public meeting on October 9, 2023, at 12:00 pm. Details provided in Electronic Item 9.3.

Taylor Benjamin noted that the Public Comments Report, which contained general public comments received from July 20, 2023, through August 19, 2023, was provided in Electronic Item 9.4.

Written Progress Reports were provided in Electronic Item 9.5.

10. **Other Business (Old or New):** Gus Khankarli asked if there would be any impact on our business with the possible government shutdown and what can be done to help. Michael Morris reassured everyone that if there is a government shutdown, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff will proceed, but the federal employees will not. We are taking measures to ensure the feasibility for the NCTCOG staff to continue with business as usual.
11. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on October 27, 2023.