

## MINUTES

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**March 22, 2024**

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, March 22, 2024, 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: Joe Atwood, Nathan Benditz (representing Melissa Baker), Shon Brooks, Tanya Brooks, Daniel Burnham, Farhan Butt, Brenda Callaway, Travis Campbell, John Cordary, Jr., Clarence Daugherty, Arturo Del Castillo, Pritam Deshmukh, Caryl DeVries, Phil Dupler, Chad Edwards, Chris Flanigan, Austin Frith, Ricardo Gonzalez, Kathleen Bednarz (representing Gary Graham), Tom Hammons, Brian McNulty (representing Ron Hartline), Barry Heard, Shannon Hicks, Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Thuan Huynh, Joel James, William Janney, Gus Khankarli, Clay Lipscomb, Paul Luedtke, Stanford Lynch, Chad Marbut, Alberto Mares, Wes McClure, Brian Moen, Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Alfredo Ortiz, Cintia Ortiz, Dipak Patel, Martin Phillips, John Polster, Kelly Porter, Jenneen Elkhaid (representing Tim Porter), Elizabeth Reynolds, Jahor Roy, Greg Royster, Molly Carroll (representing Kathryn Rush), Sirwan Shahooei (representing David Salmon), Brian Shewski, Chelsea St. Louis, Errick Thompson, Caleb Thornhill, Jennifer VanderLaan, Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize, Daniel Vedral, Caroline Waggoner, and Jana Wentzel.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Valerie Alvarado, Julie Anderson, Natalie Bettger, Rachel Bradford, Jason Brown, Jesse Brown, Shelley Broyles, Todd Buckingham, Carolyn Burns, Lorena Carrillo, Jackie Castillo, Meredith Cebelak, Matt Craig, Alyssa Cunningham, Kevin Feldt, Harrison Fuller, Gypsy Gavia, John Godwin, Rebekah Gongora, Amy Hodges, Brian Hoefl, Chris Hoff, Jeremy Hutt, Dan Kessler, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Siddhesh Kudale, Michael Morris, Jeff Neal, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Minesha Reese, Ahmed Sadegh, Connor Sadro, Samuel Simmons, Toni Stehling, Shannon Stevenson, Daniela Tower, Juliana VanderBorn, Brendon Wheeler, Anna Wilits, Karla Windsor, and Alexander Young.

1. **Approval of the February 23, 2024, Minutes:** The minutes of the February 23, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. John Polster (M); Daniel Vedral (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:
  - 2.1. **Endorsement of the Modification to the Critical Regional Infrastructure Land Banking Program:** A recommendation was requested for an endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of a reallocation of funding: \$2,400,000 in parcel acquisition and \$300,000 in site improvements and maintenance, with the total funding amount of \$2,700,000 associated with the Critical Regional Infrastructure Land Banking Program. The reallocation of funds will be used to accommodate acquisition of the second remaining parcel through a land exchange. The property is located at the south end of the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth runway, within the Accident "Clear Zone." Additional supplemental materials were provided in Electronic Item 2.1.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation approval of Item 2.1 on the Consent Agenda. John Polster (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.

- 2.2. **Modifications to the Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program:** Item 2.2 was pulled from the Consent Agenda to present a change to the description included in Electronic Item 2.2.1 for the proposed modification to Subtask 5.10, Transportation Technology and Innovation Program. The new language was presented to the Committee and reads as follows: “5.10 Transportation Technology and Innovation Program – Automated Vehicles: Development and Deployment, Updated Regional Automated Vehicle Program (AV 2.0), Technology and Innovation Program 3.0, and Dallas-Fort Worth Freight Optimization Corridors (program \$3,771,200 in previously approved Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits, to align with the FY2024 and FY2025 budgets)”. Dan Kessler explained that the funds had been budgeted, but not programmed into the UPWP, requiring the modification.

A motion was made to approve the proposed modifications to the FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program outlined in Electronic Item 2.2.1, including the revised language for Subtask 5.10, and direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved modifications. John Polster (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 2.2.2 in the Committee meeting materials.

3. **Safe Streets for All Grants Submission:** Karla Windsor requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC’s) approval of a regional planning project submittal and local match funds for the fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program. Karla announced the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released on March 1, 2024, for the SS4A. The SS4A grant was created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roadways to focus on comprehensive safety action planning and implementing projects/strategies identified in safety action plans with \$1.26B for FY24 available, and inclusive of all types of roadway safety interventions across the Safe Systems Approach. Only one application per agency allowed. There’s \$580 million of available funding, with a \$100,000 minimum or \$10 million maximum award for the planning/demonstration grant, and Karla highly encourages people to apply for. There’s \$657 million of available funding with \$2.5 million minimum or \$25 million maximum award for the implementation grant. The SS4A proposed the Crossing Students Safely in the Dallas-Fort Worth Region (CroSS-DFW) to conduct additional planning around schools in targeted corridors and beyond recommended by the Regional Roadway Safety Plan and the Regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. The total planning budget - \$6.25 million with \$5 million in federal and \$1.25 million non-federal match as Regional Toll Revenue as the match source. Karla noted the applications deadlines as follows on April 1, 2024, May 16, 2024, and August 29, 2024. NCTCOG will be submitting by the May 16<sup>th</sup> deadline. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 3 for more information. Karla also mentioned that NCTCOG had been awarded the \$80 million for the Reconnecting Communities in Neighborhoods grant for the four dec parks in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. An overview of the proposed project was contained in Electronic Item 3.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) planning grant application for the FY 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant Program, the use of \$1.25 million in Regional Toll Revenue funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding, and staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement

Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program along with other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes. Kelly Porter (M); Brian Moen (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **2024 Federal Transit Administration Low or No Emissions and Bus/Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program:** Lorena Carillo requested a recommendation of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval on a proposed regional submittal to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Low or No Emissions and Bus/Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program. On February 8, 2024, the FTA released a Joint Notice of Funding Opportunity under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) with \$1.1 billion in funding available for the low or no emissions and \$393.5 million in funding available for the Bus and Bus Facilities grant. The purpose of the grant programs is to provide support for the state and local efforts to buy or modernize buses, improve bus facilities, and improve regional air quality goals, but have two requirements that must include a zero-emissions transition plan with 5 percent of federal request that must be dedicated to workforce development. Lorena mentioned North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) proposal for the Low or No Emissions and Bus/Bus Facilities grant to purchase up to 59 electric vehicle (EV) buses and 12 EV charging stations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and regional transit providers. The total budget estimated at \$55,472,890 million that includes a local match of \$2,840,916 from Trinity Metro and 5,906,168 Transportation Development Credits (TDCs). Lorena provided the application deadline was April 25, 2024, with the anticipated award announcement on July 10, 2024. More information was provided in Electronic Item 4.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTCs) approval of a regional project grant application submittal to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Low-No and Bus/Bus Facilities Competitive Grant programs, not to exceed \$55,472,890 including the use of 5,906,168 Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in lieu of local match. Trinity Metro will provide \$2,840,916 local match for their buses and infrastructure, along with staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Statewide TIP, and other planning/administrative documents to include this FTA grant. Chad Edwards (M); Tanya Brooks (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Broadband as a Transportation Service: Four Proposed Elements:** Connor Sadro requested a recommendation of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of program criteria related to the Four Proposed Elements of Broadband Activities. He provided a brief background from March of 2022 with the approval of proposed deployments of phase 1/emergency autonomous vehicles in McKinney and Dallas and phase 2 infrastructure broadband project with the City of Fort Worth. On December 4, 2023, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) hosted a municipal stakeholder broadband round table to compile the suggested action steps be taken to increase the presence of broadband in the region. The four proposed elements include: NCTCOG will assist the region with the coordination of data collection and analysis for the purpose of better reporting broadband availability, affordability, and residential usage rates, NCTCOG will create a policy committee consisting of elected officials in the region to provide clear and consistent feedback to the Texas Broadband Development Office, NCTCOG will leverage this policy committee to form a legislative program that will help guide the State of Texas legislature on regional needs, and NCTCOG will continue with outreach to broadband practitioners in the region and encourage municipalities to appoint broadband technical leads. Additionally, the NCTCOG will create a strategy for municipal best practices in achieving internet for all residents. The NCTCOG will assist the region with the coordination of data collection and analysis for the purpose of better reporting broadband availability,

affordability, and residential usage rates; create a policy committee consisting of elected officials in the region to provide clear and consistent feedback to the Texas Broadband Development Office; will leverage this policy committee to form a legislative program that will help guide the State of Texas legislature on regional needs; and will continue with outreach to broadband practitioners in the region and encourage municipalities to appoint broadband technical leads. Additionally, the NCTCOG will create a strategy for municipal best practices in achieving internet for all residents. This program requires that the RTC form an ad hoc policy committee that creates and executes a legislative program, guided by the needs of the Technical Committee, that accomplishes the following goals: suggested broadband legislation amendment, additions or deletion, State-level broadband funding program language, and will have 15 seats encompassing the following designations – 2 urban and 2 rural in the county and 7 urban and 4 rural within the municipal jurisdiction. Connor mentioned the critical role for the Internet for All Coalition's is to guide broadband data collection, coordination, and final function is to guide NCTCOG staff in the creation of a regional broadband activity strategy. The Regional Broadband strategy document will serve as a foundation for all public agencies interested in starting or expanding their broadband efforts. Electronic Item 5 provided more details.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTCs) approval of the program criteria associated with the Four Proposed Elements of Broadband Activities for North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation and an additional \$1.5 million Surface Transportation Block Grants and/or any federal resources that are appropriately available for funding. John Polster (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **North Central Texas Council of Governments Grant Management and Regional Transportation Council Initiative Fund**: Karla Windsor requested a recommendation of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC's) approval of the development of a Grant Management and Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Initiative Fund. These funds were in response to several federal grant awards in the last few years. This account would support application development, grant management, compliance, performance measures, oversight, and would also be available for staff assistance to broader RTC directed projects if not budgeted through authorized programs. RTC Local funds would be added to the fund as new grants are won (estimated 2-5 percent of award) and establish \$3 plus million which provides direct project benefit by fully funding the original grant project. Karla presented details and an overview of the 15 federal grant applications with either NCTCOG direct funding recipients and grantees, or recent direct awards authored by NCTCOG; implemented and/or submitted by others. Additional details provided in Electronic Item 6. Chad Edwards from Trinity Metro asked how long the funds would be good for or how long staff anticipated they would be available. Karla said she thought it was approximately three to five years but could add that to the RTC item. Gus Khankarli followed up asking that the timeframe be included in the RTC item.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTCs) approval of Grant management and RTC Initiative Fund of \$3 million plus of RTC local funds, additional funds to be programmed by Director for new awards and recommend staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/STIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes. Gus Khankarli (M); Mark Nelson (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris congratulated Dan Kessler for the University of Texas at Arlington 2024 Star Partner-Public Award. Dan Kessler mentioned there were only 3 awards given with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) receiving one of the three. Michael also congratulated Shannon Stevenson as one of the recipients awarded the 2024 Transit System of the Year by Federal Transit Administration Region VI. Shannon mentioned this award was for NCTCOG and the region as a whole presented by Gail Lyssy. Michael also mentioned and encouraged everyone to promote the 2024 National Work Zone Awareness Week was April 15 through 19, 2024. He also mentioned the recent federal approvals from national competitions of \$80 million for Reconnecting Communities; the four pedestrian caps. He provided the implementation for Transit 2.0 by presenting a table with the tasks and additional details as presented in Electronic Item 7. Michael mentioned the approval of \$122 million for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program application as of April 1, 2024. Michael highlighted the Look Out Texans Video Local Distribution with the link to the video: [www.lookouttexans.org/videos](http://www.lookouttexans.org/videos). He also mentioned Natalie Bettger will be putting together an application for the Fiscal Year 2022-2024 Congestion Relief Grant Program that was due April 22, 2024, more information provided at: [grants.gov/search-results-detail/352531](https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/352531).
8. **Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail: Status Update:** Brendon Wheeler provided an update on parallel efforts with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to qualify and promote this project for future private and public funding opportunities. Brendon presented the status of the FTA administrative process from the last four years by explaining the alternatives analysis and pre-National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) refinement. On December 8, 2023, FRA announced the selection of North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG's) application, Fort Worth to Houston High-Speed Rail Corridor, for the Corridor Identification and Development Program. On March 4, 2024, NCTCOG received the NEPA Class of Action Determination letter from FTA for the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Passenger Service, which was provided in Election Item 8.1. FTA has determined that an Environmental Assessment was the appropriate class of action, kicking off the official NEPA process with a 12-month deadline. Regarding the FRA Corridor ID process: step one to develop the scope, schedule, and budget; step two to develop the service plan. Brendon thoroughly presented the alignments that were reviewed and recommended for advancement into NEPA, that was also presented at Dallas City Council. Of the alignments, 2B and 2C were the favored options of the alignments. Additional information was provided and presented in Electronic Item 8.2.
9. **North Central Texas Council of Governments Spatial Data Cooperative Program:** James McLane and Shelley Broyles provided an update on the Spatial Data Cooperative Program (SDCP), an annual North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) program through which local governments and other entities can cooperatively purchase aerial photography and related data products at cost-effective prices. Planning is underway for the 2025 cycle, and the program is seeking early commitments from interested partners by Friday, April 12, 2024. Shelley provided information on the types of remote sensing data collected by the program: LiDAR and Orthophotography. There are two types of orthophotography collected by the program. The first is traditional high-resolution orthophotography which is flown to our specifications (leaf-off, ASPRS Class 1 standards for accuracy, minimal cloud cover, optimal sun angle) It is collected with engineering grade accuracy and more processing that requires a longer turnaround time. This product includes a 4<sup>th</sup> infrared band. The second is recurring high-resolution orthophotography that includes 2-3 captures a year, imagery specifications are less accurate with a faster turnaround time. For LiDAR, we currently fly 0.5 Meter LiDAR (elevation data). Our LiDAR includes

hydrologic break lines. Shelley highlighted two participating cities and how they were utilizing SDCP data and mentioned the most common use of SDCP data is a base map. James highlighted the transportation applications including digitization of transportation features, verification of lane counts and other attributes, right-of-way analyses, and project impact analyses. For future transportation applications, we're looking to automatically derive transportation features using deep/machine learning, perform change detection to check project implementation, and perform 3D analysis of stack interchanges. Shelley provided the timeline for the 2025 project as of February 2024, including dates on which Shelley will open the preliminary form with not-to-exceed pricing and begin accepting orders, close the preliminary form (April 12, 2024), calculate cooperative discount (May 2024), reopen the form with final, discounted pricing (June 2024), close the form and develop project scopes (August 30, 2024), send project scopes to vendor and sign project paperwork (October or November of 2024), and begin 2025 projects (December of 2024). Shelley provided an extensive list of participants from 2021. In conclusion, more program participants will bring lower costs for each participant, by two mechanisms: a bulk discount depending on economies of scale (overall size of flight), and a volume discount (i.e. cost sharing of overlapping areas). The data can be used for applications related and unrelated to transportation planning, including asset management, floodplain/hydrological analyses, engineering, etc. More details provided in Electronic Item 9 and available at: <https://www.nctcog.org/sdcp>.

10. **Air Quality Status Report:** Daniela Tower provided information regarding the region's 2024 ozone season and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) change of the Annual Particulate Matter 2.5 design value. The 2024 ozone season started on March 1, 2024, for the North Central Texas 9-and-10-county nonattainment areas and runs through the end of November. Concurrently, the region remains in nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone. Daily ozone information, including current conditions and forecasts, is provided at: <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/ozone>. On February 7, 2024, the EPA revised the level of the primary (health based) annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS from 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) to a level of 9.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The PM<sub>2.5</sub> 24-hour standard at 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and the PM<sub>10</sub> 24-hour standard at 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup> are retained. This change leads to the potential for Dallas and Tarrant Counties to be in nonattainment when the final designations are made in 2026. 112 counties in the US do not meet 9.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Daniela highlighted the designation process which will be based on a "5-Factor Analysis": air quality data - NAAQS - annual design value; emissions and emissions-related data as identified for both direct and precursors of PM<sub>2.5</sub>: SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, total VOC, and NH<sub>3</sub>; meteorology; geography and topography; and jurisdictional boundaries. The impacts and opportunities for initial area designations 2 years after final rules by February 6, 2026, are based on the 2022–2024 or early-certified 2023–2025 data, nonattainment will be classified as "Moderate", state implementation plan revisions (18 months after area designations) with updated emission inventories provided, control strategies, reasonable further process, Rider 7 PM planning funds can be made available based on Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ's) modeling and monitoring, Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (EPA CPRG), and PM Advance Program (EPA). More details can be found in Electronic Item 10.

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

Camille Fountain highlighted the Spring 2024 Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course Announcement, May 2, 2024, in the Transportation Council Room from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Registration and detailed information provided in Electronic Item 11.1.

Jesse Brown provided information on the Auto Occupancy/High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Quarterly Subsidy Report. The HOV 2+ Subsidy has reported RTC responsible for \$9,303,746 as of November 2023; and reimbursement of \$12,407 from the Vanpool Toll from October 2014 – November 2023. More information was provided in Electronic Item 11.2.

Valerie Alvarado provided information for March's Local Clean Air Spotlight, in October of 2023, the City of Irving acquired two all-electric class 8-day cab trucks with the awarded amount of \$ \$395,794, and a total cost of \$879,542. Additional details provided in Electronic Item 11.3.

Juliana VanderBorn highlighted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened the Clean Ports Program, a \$3 billion initiative. More details provided at [www.nctcog.org/aqfunding](http://www.nctcog.org/aqfunding). Juliana mentioned a few upcoming events, Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities will be hosting a showcase event on April 24, 2024, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room. More information, including registration for the upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities events available at: <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>.

Jackie Castillo announced the February Online Input Opportunity Notice was held from February 12, 2024, through March 12, 2024, more information provided in Electronic Item 11.4. Additionally, hosting a public meeting on April 9, 2024, at 12:00 pm, with more information provided in Electronic Item 11.5. Jackie noted that the Public Comments Report, which contained general public comments received from January 20, 2024, through February 19, 2024, was provided in Electronic Item 11.6.

Written Progress Reports were provided in Electronic Item 11.7.

12. **Other Business (Old or New)**: There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on April 26, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.