

Minutes

Regional Transportation Council Thursday, August 8, 2024 Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 2:00 pm, at the Irving Convention Center during the 2024 Infrastructure Summit. The following RTC members or representatives were present: Bruce Arfsten, Steve Babick, Rick Bailey, Elizabeth Beck, Gyna Bivens, Alan Blaylock, Tandy Boroughs (representing Daniel Alemán), Ceason Clemens, Michael Crain, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Pat Deen, Andy Eads, Gary Fickes, Raul Gonzalez, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Ron Jensen, Jill Jester, Brandon Jones, Brad LaMorgese, Stephen Mason, Tammy Meinershagen, Cara Mendelsohn, Ed Moore, Jesse Moreno, John Muns, Omar Narvaez, Long Pham (representing Jim Ross), Matthew Porter, Paul Ridley (representing Adam Bazaldua), David Salazar, Gary Slagel, Andy Sommerman (representing Clay Lewis Jenkins), Bobby Stovall, Jeremy Tompkins, William Tsao, Duncan Webb, and Chad West.

Others present at the meeting were: Donna Adams, Rifat Alam, Javier Arguello, Robin Ayers, Micah Baker, Berrien Barks, Brian Barth, Kelvin Bass, James Bell, Natalie Bettger, Brandi Bird, Jodi Bird, Lonnie Blaydes, Jason Brodian, Michael Buchler, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Trey Childress, Melissa Chrisman, Tom Cochill, Michael Collins, Dina Colarossi, Jeff Coulter, Greg Cox, Matt Craig, Tara Crawford, Paul Cristina, Mark Cronenweft, Dawn Dalrymple, Clarence Daugherty, Brian Dell, Bob Dubey, Chad Edwards, Staron Faucher, Janel Forte, Carmen Garcia, Ellen Garcia, Gypsy Gavia, Jillian Giles, Rebekah Gongora, Mike Hale, Robin Handel, Ashley Haney, Tony Hartzel, Mark Holliday, Austin Hood, James Hotopp, R. Ibarra, Joseph Jackson, Amy Johnson, Katie Kachel, Cliff Keheley, Dan Kessler, Kayan Khosla, Ken Kirkpatrick, Matt Klindbeck, Dan Lamers, Tom LeBeau, Nadine Lee, Trudy Lewis, Eron Linn, Aaron Long, Terry Lynne, Karina Maldonado, Leany Malina, Chad Marbut, Dillon Maroney, Omayra Mata, Caroline Mays, Wes Mays, Jack McCarty, Bill Medina, James Meier, Bridell Miers, Arash Mirzaei, Brian Moen, Rebecca Montgomery, Erin Moore, Michael Morris, Aaron Myers, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Brian O'Neill, Cintia Ortiz, Luis Oseguera, Pablo Pena, John Polster, Kelly Porter, James Powell, Lauren Prieur, Jim Proce, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Abbas Rastandeh, Phedra Redifer, Chris Reed, Jacob Roberts, James Rogge, Ruben Roman, Kathryn Rotter, Kelly Rouse, Aaron Russell, David Salmon, Steve Savanberg, Mike Schneider, Rick Shaffer, Brian Shamburger, Kay Shelton, Tom Shelton, Marcus Shepehero, Bill Smith, Toni Stehling, Derek Sweeney, Aaron Tainter, Stephen Tanner, David Timbrell, Kimberlin To, Shane Tully, Jill Van Hoewk, Victor Vandergriff, Paulette Vanderkamp, Paul Wageman, Caroline Waggoner, Jay Walder, Chris Wallace, Jana Wentzel, Brendon Wheeler, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, Karla Windsor, Alicia Winkelblech, Marcus Wood, Glynnis Woolridge, Khalid Yasin, and Mobeen Yousafzai.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda:** Rick Bailey, Regional Transportation Council Vice Chair and Commissioner, Johnson County noted that no members of the public chose to speak at the meeting or provide written comments.
2. **Approval of July 11, 2024, Minutes:** The minutes of the July 11, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Jeremy Tompkins (M); Duncan Webb (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** There were no items on the Consent Agenda.

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:**

The following topics were listed on the agenda:

1. Regional Transportation Council 50th Anniversary
2. Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery (Electronic Item 4.1)
3. Connecting the Dots: High-Speed Rail, Transit 2.0, and 2050 Demographics Forecast
4. Op Ed (Electronic Item 4.2)
5. North Central Texas Council of Governments Not Selected Under Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Implementation Grants Program
6. Current Hold on Regional Transportation Council Policy – Temporary Suspension of Dynamic Pricing of Managed Lanes During Reconstruction
7. 2023 Annual North Central Texas Council of Governments Roadway Safety Program, Traffic Incident Management Program, and Safety Patrol Performance Measure Report (Electronic Item 4.3)
8. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
9. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>)
10. 2024 Ozone Season Update (Electronic Item 4.4)
11. Local Clean Air Spotlight (Electronic Item 4.5)
12. July Public Meeting Minutes (Electronic Item 4.6)
13. August Public Meeting Notice (Electronic Item 4.7)
14. June – July Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 4.8)
15. Recent Correspondence (Electronic Item 4.9)
16. Recent News Articles (Electronic Item 4.10)
17. Recent Press Releases (Electronic Item 4.11)

Michael Morris highlighted several topics, including several from those listed above. The Texas Municipal League Conference is scheduled for October 9-11, 2024, which is in conflict with the scheduled October 10 Regional Transportation Council (RTC) monthly meeting date. Michael will work with RTC Chair Clay Lewis Jenkins to determine if the RTC meeting will be moved. Michael requested members to notify Toni Stehling if they would prefer to meet on October 10 or October 17. Staff will notify members once the meeting date is confirmed. Michael plans to attend the August Texas Transportation Commission meeting to represent the RTC during discussion of the United States 380 project in the draft Unified Transportation Plan. Regarding Transit 2.0, Michael noted that a Summit panel was being held following the meeting. Souvenir coins, commemorating the RTC's 50th anniversary as the metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth region, were provided to members in attendance at the celebration luncheon held prior to the meeting. Michael expressed appreciation to North Central Texas Council of Governments staff members Dan Kessler, Brian Wilson, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Rebekah Gongora, Kimberlin To, and Kenny Bergstrom for their hard work on the anniversary luncheon and celebration and RTC members, local governments and their staffs, and the many others that served the RTC and the region over the years for the unbelievable success the RTC has experienced. Souvenir lapel pins were also distributed to members at the RTC meeting. Michael provided a quarterly report on the Changing Mobility performance measures. At airports, the region is 18 percent above pre-COVID (2020) in airport enplanements, which is a significant load that the airports are taking. Michael noted that in the presentation, staff focused on modes of transportation that have bonds, either public sector bonds by the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) or Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program loans on the region's managed lanes. As of April 2024, toll road volumes and transactions have increased by 13 percent. The data is from April because NTTA presents the data to its Board before releasing it to NCTCOG. The Interstate Highway 35E TEXpress managed lane in Denton

County is up 24 percent in toll transactions. Transit ridership continues to be down by 28 percent. Michael noted that a large part of the transit ridership is not due to the return of workers. Staff will work to see if all of the micro-transit information is being captured because there may be some modes that did not exist prior to COVID that could cause a math error. Michael briefed the Council regarding trends in regional average freeway speeds since 2020. Morning peak-hour speeds are almost back to pre-COVID. Noonday peak traffic is an overlap of two behaviors, people that are not working and travel behavior in a post-COVID world. The PM peak is worse than pre-COVID due to the same behaviors. Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas, asked if the presentation was missing transit micro-transit numbers for this month's presentation only or if when numbers were not previously included. Michael Morris responded that he was not sure about the data but he recently noticed that there were modes that may not have existed prior to 2020. He added that he will look into all micro-transit data, prior to and after 2020, to ensure that all micro-transit data is captured, and bring the information back if there is an error or if an update is needed. Steve Babick, Mayor, City of Carrollton noted there seems to be a correlation between the increase in commute times and decrease in ridership in spite of the managed lanes being used. He added that ridership needs to grow in order to get some of the cars off of the freeways and reduce travel time. Michael agreed and added that the easy way out would seem that people jumping in their cars has returned, but more complicated is that the transit mode is related more to the work frequency of the employer and other behaviors that have happened in a COVID world. The more difficult transit mode that is much greater is the frequency of employees to work. Michael added that all of the behaviors mentioned above have contributed to the transit numbers. Regarding Item 3, Connecting the Dots: High-Speed Rail, Transit 2.0, and 2050 Demographics Forecasts, Michael noted that Transit 2.0 and high-speed rail are getting a lot of discussion. 2050 Demographics are out on the street and the numbers are more rural than in previous years. Population capacities are holding in both Dallas and Tarrant Counties which contributed to Michael Morris writing an editorial piece. He noted that population density is needed in historic downtowns, areas with low-income neighborhoods, and around rail stations, among other areas. Staff will work with the Regional Transportation Council on these connected topics to develop an innovative, integrated policy so that the region does not have to chase the issues on the transportation side by getting more taxpayers money but can help on the efficiency side regarding land use, Transit 2.0, and high-speed rail. Michael encouraged everyone to read the editorial provided in Electronic Item 4.2 and look for opportunities to help with density. On Item 5, Michael noted that the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) was not selected for the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Implementation Grants Program. Michael mentioned that Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Dallas District Engineer and RTC member Ceason Clemens wishes to hold the temporary suspension of dynamic pricing as she continues to work with TxDOT headquarters. TxDOT is building Interstate Highway 35 north of LBJ towards Denton and the construction may not have electricity at all locations. Electronic Item 4.3 contained the 2023 Annual NCTCOG Roadway Safety Program, Traffic Incident Management Program, and Safety Patrol Performance Measure Report.

5. **2025 Unified Transportation Program and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:** Brian Dell of NCTCOG presented information on the 2025 Unified Transportation Program and Regional 10-Year Plan and requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) action on the proposed changes for the Regional 10-Year Plan Update. Since December 2016, the RTC has annually approved a set of projects funded with Category 2 (Metropolitan Planning Organization selected) and Category 4 (Texas Department of Transportation [TxDOT] District selected) funds and submitted for Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) consideration

with Category 12 (TTC selected) funds that cover 10 years of highway projects. Since the last update in 2023, North Central Texas Council of Governments staff has coordinated with the TxDOT Dallas, Paris (Hunt County), and Fort Worth Districts regarding updates to previously approved projects, as well as potential additions to the 10-Year Plan to be included in the 2025 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). Electronic Item 5.1 included additional information about the process. Electronic Item 5.2 contained the proposed list of planned projects for the Regional 10-Year Plan. Electronic Item 5.3 contained the 10-Year Plan projects that have let or been completed. Electronic Item 5.4 contained a copy of the letter that was submitted as a public comment on behalf of the region regarding the 2025 UTP. Duncan Webb, Commissioner, Collin County, expressed his support for this item and thanked the Texas Transportation Commission, the Dallas District with the Texas Department of Transportation, and the Regional Transportation Council members for their help in getting the United States 380 project funded.

A motion was made to approve the Regional 10-Year Plan project listing, including the proposed changes on the "Planned Projects" and "Let or Completed Project" listing, and for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) along with other planning/administrative documents as needed to incorporate these changes. Duncan Webb (M); Gyna Bivens (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail: Advancing Environmental Review:** Brendon Wheeler of NCTCOG updated the Council on the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail project. Following meetings with relevant project partners and stakeholders since the July 11, 2024, High-Speed Rail Workshop, the project team proposed a path forward to continue advancing the project through preliminary engineering and environmental documentation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Additional project funding was requested of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) as a result of the additional alignment alternatives and the ensuing effect on the NEPA process. Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds were requested for this purpose, with the request not to exceed 15 percent of the original consultant contract budget. In April 2020, North Central Texas Council of Governments staff began work on the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study with consultant assistance. The project is divided into two phases. The first phase, an alternatives analysis of high-speed modes and corridors, recommended high-speed rail generally following the Interstate Highway 30 corridor in 2021. The second phase includes conceptual and preliminary engineering and an environmental analysis within the NEPA process, resulting in a federal government action identifying the project's next steps. Following the RTC's workshop held on July 11, 2024, the project team has coordinated with the Federal Transit Administration; Federal Railroad Administration; other federal and state partners involved in the NEPA process; the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Arlington; Amtrak; and other project partners and stakeholders. These discussions inform the direction staff presented on which downtown Dallas alignments to advance and impact to NEPA scope and schedule. More information was included in Electronic Item 6. Michael Morris mentioned that a request was received from the Dallas City Manager's office asking that the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) make sure there is a rail connection to the Dallas Convention Center. Michael noted that any station would have access to the Convention Center. Omar Narvaez, Councilmember, City of Dallas and Chair of the Dallas Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, thanked the RTC, the City of Fort Worth, and the City of Arlington, for giving the City of Dallas time to complete the economic impact study for the downtown portion of the high-speed rail alignment, and for working with the City of Dallas. He also mentioned the Request for Proposals for the economic impact study was approved and the

goal for completion is October 2024. Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas asked is there was a plan to rebuild Interstate Highway 30 and whether taxes or federal funds would be used to pay for the rebuild. Michael Morris responded that the section Councilmember Mendelsohn was questioning was in the Western Subregion and that the IH 30 corridor from Arlington to downtown Dallas is complete. In the Western Subregion, there is an apron situation that is elevated. The original toll road exists from Cooper Street west. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is designing the IH 30 corridor and they may elect to do the same as the TxDOT Dallas District, which would be elevated. To potentially reduce the costs of high-speed rail by giving the priority grade and tangent to high-speed rail and permitting the freeway to flex around it. Councilmember Mendelsohn also asked why the Trinity Park Conservatory was included in the presentation in a different color than the other stakeholders and added that everyone that is part of the public involvement process should be included in the list. Michael said that staff did not think to include the group previously but that the group had requested a meeting and for full disclosure, he requested that the group be added to the slide. He added that the slide included every that staff thought to meet with or those groups that requested meetings and mentioned that staff would be happy to meet with anyone if provided with names and contact information. Omar Narvaez stated that multiple community meetings have been held in West Dallas and the proposed alignment does not go through the park, it goes adjacent to it. He added that the Conservancy agreed to have it above their parking lot so that it would not affect anything. Gyna Bivens, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth commented that it is important to have full transparency and requested a list of persons and groups that staff has met with or spoken with regarding high-speed rail. She also thanked the City of Dallas for listening to the members' concerns about making sure that the economic impact study is completed in time and that the project is not in danger of losing federal funding.

A motion was made to approve the two Dallas Alignment Options: 1) Concept West of Downtown: advance planning and stakeholder coordination, and 2) Alignment East of Hyatt with Pedestrian Lobby (2B): review opportunities in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to maintain option pending results of Dallas' Economic Impact Study; continue advancing high-speed rail through the NEPA process; coordinate with Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration on appropriate process and schedule in NEPA; direction for staff to respond to Amtrak's position regarding the possible move from Alignment Option 2B; and increase the study budget by \$1,650,343 in Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds for the project team to accomplish the actions listed above. Omar Narvaez (M); Elizabeth Beck (S). The motion passed unanimously.

- 7. Safe Streets and Roads for All Planning Grant Application:** Karla Windsor of NCTCOG presented background information on the regional planning grant application and requested action for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to approve the submittal of the application and local match funds for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant program. United States Department of Transportation announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the solicitation of applications for FY2024. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new SS4A discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over five years. A maximum of one grant application of any type may be submitted per agency each cycle. Staff provided an overview of the proposed regional planning grant totaling \$2 million to be submitted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The grant application requested \$1.6 million in SS4A federal funds and requested RTC approval of \$400,000 of RTC Local funds for the required 20 percent local match. If awarded, the planning grant will advance the regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan by conducting a feasibility study and in-depth planning for regional trail

and on-street bikeway connections through the cities of Fort Worth, Haltom City, North Richland Hills, and Richland Hills to passenger rail stations in northeast Tarrant County including various Trinity Metro TEXRail stations and the Trinity Railway Express Trinity Lakes station. This supplemental safety planning included the future Cotton Belt Trail alignment between Fort Worth and North Richland Hills and numerous necessary safe trail crossings of major arterial roadways, highways, freight railroads, and waterways. An overview of the proposed planning was contained in Electronic Item 7.

Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas, noted her support for this this agenda item and asked if it is the intent of the Regional Transportation Council to fund the entire length of the Cotton Belt Trail. Karla Windsor responded that there may be supplemental dollars over time. Karla added that staff's first priority was to develop the design and establish cost estimates for the remaining gap in the West. The Cara Mendelsohn stated she thought it was the responsibility of the RTC to fund a trail that would connect Plano to Fort Worth, and it was regionally significant and important to the region.

A motion was made to approve submission of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) planning grant application for the Fiscal Year 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant program, the use of \$400,000 in RTC Council Local funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding; and direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes should the project be selected for funding. Jeremy Tompkins (M); Ed Moore (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. Regional Transportation Council Legislation Program and Status of Transit 2.0:

Michael Morris, NCTCOG introduced Michael Schneider, InfraStrategies, and Jay Walder, McKinsey & Company to the Regional Transportation Council as the consultants on contract for the Transit 2.0 initiative. Significant progress is underway. Michael highlighted the tasks associated with Transit 2.0 and the role of the RTC in the implementation of each task. Electronic Item 8.1 provided additional information on Transit 2.0 and Electronic Item 8.2 provided the schedule for the legislative program.

There were no questions or comments on this item.

9. Implications to Mobility 2050 Based on New Demographics: Dan Kessler and Brendon Wheeler, NCTCOG, provided a report regarding efforts to develop the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mobility 2050, including approaches to integrating the new demographic forecast, public perceptions and needs, and policy considerations. Federal guidelines require the Dallas-Fort Worth region to update the long-range transportation plan at a minimum of every 4 years and to look at least 20 years into the future. In addition, Mobility 2050 must demonstrate federal Transportation Conformity. The updated plan includes a new financial plan, updated demographics and technical analysis, updated project recommendation listings, and robust public involvement. Regional Control Totals were shared with the Regional Transportation Council in June. North Central Texas Council of Governments Research and Information Services and Transportation staff have completed an analysis and modeled a forecast for 2050 Population and Employment throughout the region, which is currently under local review. The implications of this forecast on the transportation system were presented.

Michael Morris emphasized the need for those communities in the transit authorities to review their demographics and holding capacities to determine if they can take more demographic activity, particularly around their rail stations. There is a need to grow the transportation authorities, either through memberships or their local government corporation. He encouraged the local governments to build density around rail stations and traditional downtowns or other areas that have economic development opportunities to get as much infill as possible. He stated that if this demographic forecast continues, the taxation on the transportation system is not sustainable; enough transportation cannot be built to meet such an inefficient land use.

Chad West, Councilmember, City of Dallas stated that the presentation was eye opening and asked for clarification on whether the \$33.5 billion shown in the presentation was the cost of construction or the cost of lost income. Brendon responded that this dollar amount is basically a user cost of the delay experienced in congestion, so the time lost and the opportunity cost of the individuals caught in congestion, either going to or from work, or those individuals that are working and trying to reach another job and aren't able to make it due to congestion. Councilmember West then asked if the amount was based off of area median income. Michael Morris responded that the standard procedure is to use the median wage rate. He added that staff thinks this number is too high and as a homework assignment they will continue to review it over the next two months.

Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas, stated that Dallas is having strong conversations about density and pointed out that most of the highest intensity red areas shown on the 2050 Level of Congestion map are actually not in Dallas and do not have very strong transit. She asked if there might be some sort of consideration to membership in DART in NCTCOG's analysis. Michael Morris responded that there were two solutions: 1) grow the transportation authorities, either in membership or in local government corporation and 2) infill as much demographic growth as we can around existing passenger rail stations. More information on both topics will be provided in Transit 2.0. Councilmember Mendelsohn then stated that the area she represents is the second most dense in Dallas and is a member of DART. Michael stated that the area Councilmember Mendelsohn represents has very little transit in the community, and he believes that a lot of the traffic is coming from outside the DART service area and doesn't have transit. The policy of integrating transit to end stations is a very complicated policy in DART and that's what Transit 2.0 is trying to solve.

Steve Babbick noted that the congestion map doesn't reflect Transit 2.0 and he was looking forward to hearing the information that would be provided in the Transit 2.0 session following the Regional Transportation Council meeting.

William Tsao, citizen representative, City of Dallas, asked for a little more explanation on the models used regarding population growth as well as job opportunity growth. Dan Kessler provided an explanation on the mechanics of the modeling process. The transportation system for the year being simulated is put in the model, then the demographic process sees the congestion for the next five years of allocation. The accessibility to jobs, residences to jobs, and jobs to residences is captured in that process. NCTCOG is connecting the relationship between accessibility and job growth and residential growth in five-year increments based on an understanding of what the transportation infrastructure is going to be at the time of each forecast. Every five years the transportation system is used to determine where the next population and employment growth will be.

10. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 10.1 and Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes were provided in Electronic Item 10.2.
11. **Other Business (Old or New):** On behalf of Dallas County, Commissioner Theresa Daniel presented a resolution honoring the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) 50th anniversary as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth region to RTC Vice Chair Rick Bailey
12. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm on September 12, 2024, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.