

MINUTES**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
January 11, 2024**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following members or representatives were present: Daniel Alemán, Bruce Arfsten, Steve Babick, Rick Bailey, Adam Bazaldua, Gyna Bivens, Alan Blaylock, Joel Burns (representing Raj Narayanan), Ceason Clemens, Michael Crain, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Pat Deen (representing J.D. Clark), Michael Evans, Gary Fickes, Carlos Flores (representing Elizabeth Beck), Barry Gordon, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Brandon Jones, Pham Long (representing Raul Gonzalez), Cara Mendelsohn, Ed Moore, Omar Narvaez, Jim Ross, David Salazar, Chris Schulmeister, Gary Slagel, Jeremy Tompkins, Oscar Trevino, Jr., William Tsao, Duncan Webb, and Chad West.

Others present at the meeting were: Angela Alcedo, Vickie Alexander, Susan Alvarez, Micah Baker, David Boski, Jason Brown, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Nancy Cline, Dena Colaross, Juan Contreras, Jeff Coulter, Dawn Dalrymple, Clarence Daugherty, Jeff Davis, Brian Dell, Caryl DeVries, J. DeWitt, Bob Dubey, Mike Eastland, Rebekah Gongora, Christie Gotti, Tom Hammons, Tony Hartzel, Courtney Holt, Dan Kessler, Gus Khankarli, Tony Kimmey, Ken Kirkpatrick, Andrew Kissig, Michael Knowles, Tom LeBeau, Eron Linn, Paul Luedtke, Stanford Lynch, Dillon Maroney, Stephen Mason, Rob Matwick, Wes McClure, Rebecca Montgomery, Michael Morris, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, Michael Peters, John Polster, Kelly Porter, James Powell, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Andrei Radu, Abbggs Rastandeli, Randy Richardson, Tito Rodriguez, Sarah Rogers, Connor Sadro, Randy Skinner, Vivek Thimmavajhala, Lauren Trimble, Juliana Vandeborn, Don Williams, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, and Susan Young.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda:** This item allows members of the public an opportunity to comment on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Gyna Bivens asked if there were any public comments. No members of the public chose to speak at the meeting or provide written comments.
2. **Approval of December 14, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the December 14, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Michael Crain (M); Daniel Alemán (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following item was included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 3.1. **Emergency Funding: Backstop Funding for Agile Curriculum Development Program:** The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) accepted a grant award from the Department of Defense (DOD) in September 2021. The grant terminated on November 30, 2023, and NCTCOG has been working with DOD to document project success and justification for continuation of the project. It is anticipated that DOD will grant an extension of the project in the next few months. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) was requested to ratify emergency funding authorization in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 in RTC Local funds for the Agile Curriculum Development Program as a backstop to fund staff and subrecipient efforts as the grant amendment is being processed or in the event DOD does not approve an extension. RTC Local funds will be returned upon a DOD grant time extension.

A motion was made to approve Item 3.1 on the Consent Agenda. Duncan Webb (M); T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris highlighted selected items in the Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report. He noted that he was wearing pink in honor of US Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson who recently passed. In addition, a moment of silence was held in remembrance of Representative Johnson. Michael mentioned that an air quality workshop would be held during Agenda Item 7 of the agenda. He announced the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) rulemaking on Category 5 and Category 7 is on the agenda for the January 2024 Texas Transportation Commission meeting in anticipation that they will proceed with what was in the draft rulemaking. Staff will work closely with local governments, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) districts, and TxDOT Headquarters to get those agreements expedited to hit the procurement and commitment schedules in Categories 5 and 7. He also encouraged the members to continue to think of innovative ways to partner with the Commission with the new Legislative session approaching. Michael reflected on the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting in December with regards to high-speed rail. He noted that he had received a lot of questions and all questions would be answered. He's hopeful that a resolution can be obtained. The region has won the Corridor ID Program on high-speed rail that is now Fort Worth, Arlington, Dallas, Houston which opens the region to implementation dollars for implementation of high-speed rail. It's a great victory for the federal government to respond to the region's seamless connection from Fort Worth to Houston, which is the same initiative of high-speed rail most likely from Arlington to San Antonio, and to the south. City of Dallas Transportation Committee Chair Councilmember Narvaez is holding a meeting on January 16 to connect the dots in downtown Dallas which should also help to answer some of the questions regarding high-speed rail. Michael reported that over the last year North Central Texas Council of Governments' staff has been working on five to six key City of Dallas items that are proceeding to public meetings, but these items have been put on hold. He noted that he cannot proceed with these items at the same time that he's dealing with other policy issues regarding high-speed rail. He hopes to resolve the issues with high-speed rail as quickly as possible, permit the Dallas projects to go through public meetings, and then remove the projects from hold. He hopes to expedite all policy questions regarding high-speed rail in downtown Dallas, get answers and consensus on those questions, work with the appropriate transportation and economic development committees in Dallas, report back to the RTC, and proceed with all slotted projects in this round of the Transportation Improvement Program. Regarding Transit 2.0, Michael noted that the staff is still negotiating the final costs for consultants and believes the costs will come within the estimate that were previously shared, a little north of \$1 million. All seven tasks are still included in the work scope. There's been a breakthrough on Broadband and the four proposed elements for the RTC to help advance broadband seamlessly in the region include assisting the region with the coordination of data collection and analysis, creating a policy committee consisting of elected officials in the region to provide clear and consistent feedback to the Texas Broadband Development Office, leverage this policy committee, continue with outreach to broadband practitioners in the region. The remaining items were not presented.
5. **Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovative Program:** Natalie Bettger requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) submission of a 2023 Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovative (ATTAIN) Program application. The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) will provide funding of up to \$12 million per project with a

required 20 percent non-federal match. Applications are due to the US DOT by February 2, 2024, with staff's summary grant and overview of the application. The ATTAIN program's goals are to reduce fatalities and injuries by increasing safety, reduce traffic delays by improving travel time reliability, reduce emissions, optimize multimodal system performance, improve access to transportation alternatives, integrate payment systems and multimodal transportation information, and create transportation-related cost savings. NCTCOG staff's focus is on regional operations related issues with silo-based operations, with ways to integrate the system with minimal real time information sharing, better coordination and cooperation. Natalie presented the proposed system of systems, Phase 1, Interstate Highway 30 Digital Corridor that focuses on the freeway, frontage roads, managed lanes, and intersections within Dallas, Grand Prairie, Arlington, and Fort Worth in the Texas Department of Transportation's Dallas and Fort Worth districts. Natalie presented the back end that is referred to as the Regional Data Hub that brings data and communicates to the Road Side Units that sends messages to connected vehicles and field components. The Regional 511 system that also feeds into the data hub and brings the data together, and the Work Zone Data Exchange (WZDx) that collaborates on a regional basis for multiple agencies to utilize were also introduced. Letters of support requests are due to Nicholas Allen at nallen@nctcog.org by January 22, 2024. NCTCOG Executive Board action and Surface Transportation Technical Committee endorsement will be requested at their respective January meetings. More information was provided in Electronic Item 5.

A motion was made to approve of the submittal of Regional Technology Corridor and Data Hub for funding consideration through the FY23 Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Program (\$10 million) and Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) (\$6 million) for a total of (\$16 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 ATTAIN Grant total award (\$16M). Theresa Daniel (M); Adam Bazaldua (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Fiscal Year 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program:** Jeff Neal briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program. The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) announced availability of \$1.5 billion toward the solicitation of project applications for the FY2024 RAISE Discretionary Grant Program targeting strategic capital investments for surface transportation projects that have significant local or regional impacts. He acknowledged the appreciation to all of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff and all of the partnerships with eleven applications and five programs, bringing \$262 million to the region. Jeff highlighted where work still needs to be done on seven applications with five programs that are still awaiting award announcements. With these five programs, the region has the potential to receive \$342 million into the region. Jeff noted the three applications that have been asked to provide additional information indicating advancing to a higher level of review: INFRA – AllianceTexas Smart Port (Fort Worth), MEGA – US 81/287 North Tarrant Reconstruction, and INFRA/RURAL – Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity. Moving forward in his presentation, he encouraged everyone to pay attention to the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program: implementation grants that bridge highway divides for Dallas-Fort Worth communities: Klyde Warren Park – Phase 2.0 (KWP2.0), Southern Gateway Park – Phase 2.0 (SGP2.0) - FY 23 RAISE “Project of Merit”,

Interstate Highway 30 Canyon: Dallas Heritage Village/Farmers Market “Tri-Deck”, and State Highway 5 McKinney – Lower 5 Plaza. He also mentioned there are six active Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) on major grants and seven pending expected NOFO releases through the first quarter provided in his presentation. He brought up three key points, with the first is the RAISE NOFO only includes money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL); \$1.5 billion split across the nation between planning and implementation. The second key point is the RAISE Extra program, for unawarded projects that are resubmitted, they are automatically advanced to the next level of review. The third key point is that for all grant programs primarily funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and not primarily through annual Congressional budget appropriations, US DOT is releasing all allocated funds through FY 2026 through NOFOs published this year. As a result, and in the case of the RAISE Program, application deadlines, award announcement dates, and obligation/expenditure deadlines are listed for each year of funding between FY 2024 and FY 2026. This enables all prospective applicants to plan well ahead of time to slot candidate projects and get applications prepared for appropriate solicitation rounds each year. For FY 2024, RAISE applications are due to the US DOT by February 28, 2024, and awards will be announced by June 27, 2024. The application requirements were presented, as well as several candidate projects under consideration for application submittal and/or authoring for other partners to submit given application limit constraints. These details, in addition to finalization of project scope, cost, and revenue attributes, will be provided for review ahead of Surface Transportation Technical Committee and Regional Transportation Council action prior to the RAISE application deadline.

7. **Air Quality Workshop**: Chris Klaus, Vivek Thimmavajhala, and Savana Nance hosted a workshop tying critical transportation and air quality initiatives together. There are five components that were highlighted.

The first component, State Implementation Plan Update (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has lead): The TCEQ has proposed the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) severe area State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision for the 2008 eight-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Severe area attainment is July 20, 2027, and will be based on ozone monitored data from 2024 through 2026. If a region is unable to reach ozone compliance by the future attainment date, the Clean Air Act requires a “Section 185” Fee Program for major stationary sources of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). These fees could be implemented as soon as 2028. The TCEQ estimates an annual penalty fee of \$45 million might be subject to the region imposed upon the facilities. Chris provided the 2022 major point source facilities in the 10-county nonattainment area along with the magnitude of NOx emissions reported that could be subject to penalty fees. TCEQ Comment period to the DFW severe SIP ends on January 16, 2024. He highlighted a number of topics that staff intends to provide comments on, including technical review of photochemical model validation and sensitivity analysis to determine strategy effectiveness.

The second component, Update on Particulate Matter Standard. Chris noted that particulate matter is ambient air containing a mixture of solid particles and droplets of liquids collectively known as Particulate Matter (PM). Two notable classifications of regulatory air quality standards: PM10, that is “course”, includes particles ≤ 10 micrometers in diameter (pollen, mold, dust, etc.) and PM2.5, “fine”, includes particles ≤ 2.5 micrometers in diameter (smoke, metals, combustion particles, etc.). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed to modify the PM2.5 annual standard to 9 - 10 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) from the current $12.0 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. He noted the implications if the EPA does make the

suggested change to the standard for the PM_{2.5}, potential for Dallas and Tarrant Counties to be in nonattainment based on existing 2020 – 2022 data; Dallas Convention Center at 9.4 µg/m³ and Tarrant - Fort Worth Northwest at 9.1 µg/m³, respectively. EPA estimates that 112 counties across the United States do not meet 9 µg/m³ and that 51 counties would not meet 9 µg/m³ in 2032. Final PM rules from EPA is anticipated by Spring 2024, area designations 2 years after final rules, and SIP revisions by the TCEQ in 18 months after area designations. These SIP revisions would include updated emission inventories and applicable control strategies. Texas Rider 7 Planning Funds and EPA's PM advance program are programs to utilize in effort to avoid nonattainment.

Vivek Thimmavajhala provided a summary on the third component, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory Results. The year 2019 inventory adds to the ozone precursors and criteria pollutant inventories by supporting the multipollutant comprehensive approach within the region to mitigate pollutants that pose substantial risks to the future well-being of the area. Results of the GHG emissions inventory has our 12-county Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) equaling 102,856,587 metric tons. CO₂e adjustment is the combination of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), and Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) multiplied by their respective Global Warming Potentials (GWP) of 1, 28, and 265, respectively. Vivek concluded with next steps including inventory expansion to the entire 16-county NCTCOG area by adding Erath, Navarro, Palo Pinto, and Somervell counties utilizing consistent tools and approaches previously applied.

Savana Nance provided an update on the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan currently under development to identify measures that will reduce emissions of ozone-forming pollutants, fine particulate matter, and greenhouse gas in the 16-county planning area. The plan is being funded with \$1 million in EPA funds from the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Planning Grant Program. The first deliverable is a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) that is due March 1, 2024, followed by a CPRG grant application that is due April 1, 2024. Savana briefly highlighted there are five components for the first deliverable's measures. She pointed out that the EPA is looking for short-term measures that provide benefits in the next five years between 2025 and 2030. Savana noted the CPRG Implementation Grant contains 5 tiers with minimum funding of \$2 million up to \$500 million. She briefly provided an overview of the selection, screening, and scoring criteria. Savana presented a potential list of measures for the PCAP and provided a preliminary listing. Measures were identified through workshops, public surveys, public meetings, and local governments submitting proposed measures.

The fifth component on Federal Highway Greenhouse Gas Performance Measures, was not presented due to time constraints.

8. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 8.
9. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
10. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
11. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for Thursday, February 8, 2024, 1:00 pm, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.