

## MINUTES

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE April 23, 2021**

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, April 23, 2021, at 1:30 pm, by videoconference. The Regional Transportation Council Bylaws establish that the Technical Committee approved membership in attendance at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for action to be taken, therefore individual attendance was not taken for committee members or other attendees.

1. **Approval of March 26, 2021, Minutes:** The minutes of the March 26, 2021, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Daniel Vedral (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
  - 2.1. **Changes to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Resulting from Statewide Financial Constraints:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was requested, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. Revisions resulting from changes proposed by the Texas Department of Transportation due to a determination that long-term State funding plans were not financially constrained were provided in Electronic Item 2.1.
  - 2.2. **Fiscal Year 2021 Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives: Phase 3:** Committee support for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to recommend North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Executive Board approval of \$326,000 in funding for education campaigns for Phase 3 transportation initiatives that will initiate in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 was requested. The benefits of the initiative and cost savings obtained from bulk education campaign purchasing for the Transportation Department were provided in Electronic Item 2.2.1. A reminder of Phase 1 and Phase 2 FY2021 budgets previously approved, as well as more information on Phase 3 FY2021 education campaign costs and examples of past education campaigns were provided in Electronic Item 2.2.2.
  - 2.3. **Regional Vanpool Program Modifications to Improve Overall Efficiency:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of Regional Vanpool Program modifications to improve overall efficiency, including defined agency boundaries, temporary flexibility to the subsidy funding structure, and a regional cooperative vanpool procurement to create a more unified program that will benefit current and future riders was requested. Electronic Item 2.3 included additional details.
  - 2.4. **Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Performance Measures:** A recommendation of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan regional transit safety targets, new federally required performance measures relating to improving transit safety in the region, was requested. Details were provided in Electronic Item 2.4.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Eron Linn (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **“Trade Fair” Partnership with Lubbock and Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations:** Ken Bunkley briefed the Committee on a proposed “Trade Fair” partnership with the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Rio Grande Valley MPO. Given the large carry over balance of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff has been working on solutions to reduce the balance to a more manageable level. Current efforts include the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Milestone Policy Round 2 and quarterly project tracking. As part of the Regional-10 Year Plan this year, staff will propose to advance projects currently funded with Category 2 funds, with STBG funds instead. In addition, staff proposed two “trade fair” partnerships to enable other regions to advance projects while implementing agencies in the Dallas-Fort Worth region finish getting projects ready for construction. Previous Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) coordination among regions to expedite project delivery as a part of the development of the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) was highlighted. After each region selected projects for inclusion in the UTP in past years, TxDOT Headquarters held periodic “trade fair” meetings. In these meetings, different regions of the state “negotiated” or “balanced” project readiness with the availability of funding and “traded” annual allocation amounts moving funding allocations around, instead of being evenly distributed each year. This enabled projects to proceed in the year in which funds were needed versus the year in which funds were individually available to any given region. This proposed partnership underscores that formula allocation at the State level is necessary to ensure equitable distribution of funding across the region. Once each region is certain that their total allocations will not change, they are more likely to be willing to negotiate innovative programs and partnerships to expedite projects. It also continues the long-standing tradition with other partners in the state, buys down carryover balances, and reduces risk within the region’s STBG program. In early 2018, NCTCOG met with the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) regarding a funding partnership for a feasibility study for High-Speed Transportation from Dallas-Fort Worth to Laredo. Initially, it was determined that the RTC would contribute \$300,000 in federal funds and AAMPO would provide a \$200,000 local match. It was later determined that moving local funds between regions was challenging. Instead in fall 2018, it was proposed and the RTC agreed to program \$500,000 in RTC Local funding for a NCTCOG-led feasibility study regarding High-Speed Transportation from Dallas-Fort Worth to Laredo. In return, AAMPO agreed to allocate \$200,000 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funding to the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place for this agreement. Mr. Bunkley noted the Lubbock MPO has approached NCTCOG staff about a potential trade fair partnership between the DFW and Lubbock MPO regions. The Lubbock MPO receives \$6 million of STBG funding per year. In order to cashflow priority projects, the Lubbock MPO needs an additional \$10.5 million in FY2023 and additional \$10.5 million in FY2025 for two separate projects. Staff proposed the RTC loan the Lubbock MPO \$21 million in STBG cashflow in FY2023 and FY2025. In turn, the Lubbock MPO would transfer back \$21 million of STBG allocations over three years (FY2028, FY2029, FY2030) until fully repaid. In addition, the Rio Grande Valley MPO has approached NCTCOG staff about a potential trade fair partnership between the DFW and Rio Grande Valley MPO regions. The Rio Grande Valley MPO receives \$25 million of STBG funding per year. In order to cashflow priority projects, the Rio Grande Valley MPO needs an additional \$14.6 million in FY2022. Staff proposed the RTC loan the Rio Grande Valley MPO approximately \$14.6 million in STBG cashflow in FY2022. In turn, the Lubbock Rio Grande Valley MPO will transfer back \$14.6 million of STBG allocations in FY2026. A table documenting the trade fair partnership program for FY2022 through FY2030 was highlighted. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 3. Mike Galizio asked if the NCTCOG has done this kind of loaning to other MPOs before. Mr. Bunkley noted yes, AAMPO was an example of RTC funds loaned to another region. Michael Morris noted that annual trade fares were at one time a regular occurrence and added the proposed trade fair partnership would assist with obligating funds to help

prevent the region from losing obligation authority due to large carryover funding balances. The partnership does not negatively impact other projects and future trade fairs are not anticipated. Mr. Galizio also asked if there would be mechanisms in place for repayment of funds. Mr. Morris noted that agreements would include repayment terms and remedies. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of a trade fair partnership with the Lubbock MPO of transferring: \$10,500,000 in STBG cash flow/allocation in FY2023; \$10,500,000 in STBG cash flow/allocation in FY2025; receiving \$6,903,818 back in FY2028; receiving \$6,994,465 back in FY2029; and receiving \$7,101,717 back in FY2030. Also included in the motion was a recommendation for RTC approval of a trade fair partnership with the Rio Grande Valley MPO of transferring: \$14,578,845 in STBG cash flow/allocation in FY2022 and receiving \$14,578,845 back in FY2026. In addition, action included a recommendation directing staff to enter into interlocal agreements with the Lubbock MPO and Rio Grande Valley MPO that outline the terms of agreements and directing staff to monitor the funds transfer agreement process at TxDOT to ensure that the teams of agreements are honored over time. Mark Nelson (M); Wes McClure (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **American Rescue Plan Act Transit Funding Allocations: Round 3:** Edgar Hernandez presented a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval for the third round of funding to the public transportation industry from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in response to the Coronavirus. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) provides approximately \$30.5 billion nationwide in additional emergency funds to help alleviate the funding shortfalls to the nation's public transportation systems due to COVID-19. In addition, a small amount of funding has been made available through the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310). Funding is in addition to emergency funding received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), which in total provided approximately \$39 billion to the public transportation industry. ARP funding is not required to be included in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); however, funding will be added to the TIP later for informational purposes. Projects awarded under Section 5310 must be included or be consistent with the coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for the region, Access North Texas. Funding is being provided at a 100 percent federal share, no local match required, and prioritizes the funds for operational and payroll needs but does also support expenses traditionally eligible under the funding programs to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. The primary objective of the funding is to ensure public transportation agencies receive sufficient funding, combined with CARES Act and CRRSAA apportionments to equal at least 132 percent of the urbanized area's public transit operating costs. Expenses incurred on or after January 20, 2020, are eligible for reimbursement. ARP funding must be obligated by September 30, 2024, and disbursed by September 30, 2029. As the designated recipient of urbanized area formula funds for North Texas, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is responsible for allocating the funds within the region. Available funding was highlighted, which includes approximately \$340.4 million for the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Urbanized Area and \$14.1 million for the Denton-Lewisville Urbanized Area across both programs. Funding has also been allocated for the McKinney Urbanized Area and will be administered by the Texas Department of Transportation. The methodology used to allocate funds was highlighted and follows the primary objective of legislation at the regional level which provided additional Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program funds to urbanized areas below 132 percent of their 2018 operating expenses as reported to the National Transit Database. Five transit providers fall below the 132 percent threshold: Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), Trinity Metro, Public Transit Services (PTS), and STAR Transit. All other transit providers exceeded the 132 percent threshold of 2018 operating expenses due to the CARES Act. Section 5310 funding will be awarded

based on eligibility and overall need, projects must be included or consistent with Access North Texas, and project selection is not yet determined but will follow the TIP process. It was noted NCTCOG staff reviewed the formula allocations to ensure CARES Act and CRRSAA funding was correctly allocated and accounted for the Trinity Railway Express, confirmed ARP funding was allocated to North Texas because agencies were below the 132 percent threshold and which agencies were below the threshold, and that the RTC has discretion on how to distribute the ARP funds. Proposed ARP funding allocations for 5307 funds were highlighted. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4. The five transit agencies are all near the 132 percent threshold except for DART, but not enough Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Urbanized Area Formula funds were provided through ARP to bring DART up to the 132 percent threshold. The schedule for this effort was reviewed. Because two agencies recommended for additional funding are NCTCOG subrecipients, Executive Board approval will be requested at the May 27, 2021, meeting. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding allocations detailed in Electronic Item 4 and to recommend that staff revise administrative documents as appropriate to incorporate the additional funds. Eron Linn (M); Todd Plesko (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris provided an overview of current transportation items. Highlighted were metrics from Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects during COVID Recovery. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 5.1 and available at [www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19](http://www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19). Travel behavior by mode was discussed, and he specifically noted that bicycle/pedestrian trips remained strong and freeway volumes decreased in February 2021 due to inclement weather. Aviation passenger numbers continued to increase slowly, and transit ridership has leveled. Financial implications by category were also highlighted, including toll transactions on SH 360 which have continued to operate higher than the rest of the system. Construction cost changes were also discussed and remained 10 percent lower than the previous year. Also highlighted was the status of projects being implemented in the region. He noted efforts were moving forward for high-speed transportation, autonomous transit, and the Y Connector. In addition, he discussed the SH 183 Section 2E project, as well as the revenue sharing proposal recently completed for the IH 35E/IH 635 Interchange. John Polster asked if staff could elaborate on the revenue sharing proposal with Cintra on the IH 35E/IH 635 Interchange project. Mr. Morris noted all impacted parties met earlier in the week. Cintra has two weeks to respond to the proposal and is expected to respond positively. Staff will provide an update to the Committee at its May 28 meeting.

Mr. Morris also presented information on a proposed recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval regarding SH 360 South. The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) has been in discussions with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff about its desire to pay off the loan for the SH 360 project and place the project into the NTTA system. There is some urgency for NTTA to move forward due to increasing interest rates. Refinancing is expected to lower the interest rate from 4.25 percent to approximately 3.25 percent for a savings of approximately \$50 million through a larger refinancing effort. There are two agreements related to the SH 360 South project. The first is a project agreement between NTTA and that Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) that is related to the \$300 million loan and the interest accumulated, for a balance of \$330 million that NTTA would pay to TxDOT Headquarters. The second is a backstop agreement including TxDOT, NTTA, and the RTC. Repayment of the loan would release the RTC from the financial backstop for the project and eliminate RTC risk. In addition, NCTCOG previously set aside \$15 million as a contingency in case the loan backstop were utilized, so the \$15 million contingency funds could be released for project selection in the western subregion with Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds. Other benefits

include the elimination of possible SH 360 toll rate increases due to low project performance, potential for next state SH 360 improvements beginning sooner, and consideration for some portion of the \$330 million being returned to the region by the Texas Transportation Commission in the next Unified Transportation Program. Another benefit, discussed at the recent local government meeting, was the advancement of NTTA system landscaping in the corridor. Mr. Morris also highlighted other items that were negotiated at the April 19 local government meeting. NTTA was asked and agreed to extend the wayfinding sign pilot program from five to ten years. Also negotiated was revenue sharing that will begin no later than 2053 and advancement of certain transportation improvements in the SH 360 corridor specifically SH 360 T Elbow, widening, interchange at US 287, and SH 360 T Section 2 previous to 2050. If the improvements do not occur, revenue sharing would begin in 2050. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval to terminate the SH 360 financial backstop. John Polster (M); Bryan Beck (S). The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Morris also provided a status report on the Dallas City Council resolution regarding the D2 Alignment. He noted the D2 project and IH 345 are included in Mobility 2045, but that current alignments are in conflict. Efforts continue to garner interest for an adjusted D2 alignment and advancing IH 345 as a depressed facility instead of an elevated facility, to avoid conflict between the two projects and that meets the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration for core capacity and addresses IH 345 as a depressed facility with gravitational drainage. A map of the area was provided in Electronic Item 5.3. Mr. Morris also recognized Kevin Feldt for his commitment to the region and noted he has resigned from NCTCOG. He also recognized NCTCOG staff who have recently received the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship through the US Department of Transportation: 2020 – Catherine Osborn and Rachel Jenkins and 2021 – Vivian Fung and Nicholas Allen.

6. **Map Your Experience: Interactive Online Tool for Public Comments:** James McLane presented information on Map Your Experience, a new online mapping tool that allows the general public to submit comments on their transportation experiences at specific locations in the region. Functionality of the system was highlighted. The focus is on specific issues, not projects and fits into current data-driven planning initiatives of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Once submitted, comments are routed to the correct staff by category for roadway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian. Mr. McLane noted the application was initially created to engage the public at in-person community events but became an important online strategy as in-person events were cancelled. As comments are received, they are processed and integrated into the current public comment framework. Recent developments include a Spanish translation of the interface. In addition, staff are working on various summary and dashboard tools to help summarize the types of comments received and categories of comments. Staff will continue to refine the interface as needed to respond to feedback and ensure the needs of the user are fulfilled. An additional tool will be introduced through the Mobility 2045 Update public involvement process. Mr. McLane discussed the value of public comments to NCTCOG when developing/evaluating policies, programs, and projects as well as determining if draft recommendations are meeting the region's needs, how recommendations could be adjusted, and if additional programs are needed to address recurring issues. Public comments are also valuable to agencies in the region to help address transportation needs in communities. Comments can help identify where issues are occurring, and which specific issues are most important to citizens. Highlighted were various options for connecting agencies with the comments received including online dashboards, maps, customized reports, exported comment data, and direct connection to the comment data feed. Details were provided in Electronic Item 6 and access to the tool is available at [www.nctcog.org/MapYourExperience](http://www.nctcog.org/MapYourExperience). Committee Chair Brian Moen asked if communication with agencies for which comments have been submitted was currently occurring, or if the method for that communication was still being developed. He

also asked if there was any interest in agencies providing comments received through their processes to NCTCOG. Mr. McLane noted that information was not currently being provided to agencies, but that staff would be happy to work with interested agencies on data-sharing options. He added there is potential for a two-way information flow and that receiving comments related to transportation would be helpful to NCTCOG. John Polster discussed the public comment process and noted he believed raw data should not be input without significant review, particularly if the data were to be used as a method to score projects. Michael Morris noted that this was a public involvement tool for engagement with citizens in the region and there was no intention of using data as part of project scoring. As comments from the dashboard or categorized, it will help staff focus on areas of concern for which they may not have been otherwise aware.

- 7. Regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2021):** Matt Fall provided an update on the regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) completed in early 2021 in response to the steadily increasing number of pedestrian fatalities across North Texas. Texas is one of the seven states that account for 54 percent of pedestrian fatalities nationwide, with fatality rates that are consistently above the national average. For this reason, the Federal Highway Administration designated Texas as a pedestrian focus state and the Cities of Dallas and Fort Worth as focus cities. To address the region's pedestrian fatality rates being consistently above the national average, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) developed a regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan that will compliment Mobility 2045 goals and policies with a more targeted focus on pedestrian safety. Key elements of the plan include the analysis of the demographics and contributing factors to determine who is involved in pedestrian crashes and how they occur, crash density maps, and pedestrian safety corridors that identify areas with the highest frequency of documented crashes between motor vehicles and pedestrians. Infographics developed through analysis of the PSAP data were highlighted. Of note, approximately 95 percent of fatal and serious crashes happen in urban areas, with two-thirds of those occurring in non-intersections. Analysis also revealed that two-thirds of all pedestrian crashes and 80 percent of fatal pedestrian crashes happen in dark lighting conditions. Mr. Fall highlighted key elements of public outreach throughout development of the plan, which included a public opinion survey that was conducted online between May and July 2019. Key results of the online survey showed that residents want to work more and want to walk on wide sidewalks and shared-use paths. They viewed the absence of sidewalks as the most significant barrier to not walking more frequently and favorably ranked the use of various pedestrian safety treatments on walkable facilities. Respondents also favorably ranked educational programs for all roadway users including bicyclist and pedestrians, not just motorists. He noted that the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) Research and Technology Implementation Office completed a crash data research project just prior to the completion of NCTCOG's PSAP in the 12-county region. Coordination with researchers was beneficial to NCTCOG's work including the guidance they provided while developing the methodology to identify safety corridors. The full TxDOT report is included as an appendix in the PSAP. Also highlighted was pedestrian crash density. The highest concentration of crashes occurs in the core areas of Dallas and Tarrant Counties, mainly Dallas and Fort Worth. A total of 105 safety corridors were identified within four counties and ten cities. Crashes reported along the safety corridors comprise 30 percent of all reported pedestrian crashes even though the linear miles of the safety corridors in the plan comprise less than 1 percent of the total centerline miles of the region. PSAP goals, policies, and action items were also highlighted. Details were provided in Electronic Item 7 and also available in the finalized plan available at [www.nctcog.org/pedsafetyplan](http://www.nctcog.org/pedsafetyplan). In summary, Mr. Fall noted that the top five takeaways from the plan are residents desire to walk more, targeting key corridors is the most effective way to stretch limited funding for safety measures, level of service needs to be an integral part of infrastructure development, regionally significant corridors should be prioritized for project selection, and local governments are encouraged to develop their own



detailed local pedestrian safety plans. The schedule for this effort was reviewed, with action requested for endorsement of the PSAP at the May 28, 2021, Committee meeting. The ultimate intent is for the plan to be adopted by reference as part of the Mobility Plan 2045 Update. In the near future, NCTCOG staff will facilitate the initial round of road safety audits focused on pedestrian safety in some of the safety corridors identified in the plan. John Polster discussed data analysis that indicated approximately two-thirds of all pedestrian crashes and 80 percent of fatal crashes happen in dark lighted conditions and noted he believed staff should focus on these areas. If 80 percent of the problem can be resolved by fixing what happens in dark lighted conditions, he noted focusing on dark lighted conditions will address 30 percent of the fatalities in the most urban areas. He also suggested that staff include review of the percentage of pedestrian crashes and fatalities that involve pedestrian alcohol use, as well as time of day. Mr. Fall noted that staff has reviewed alcohol related incidents and will include information involving both pedestrian and motorist alcohol use in the next presentation to the Committee. Alonzo Liñán noted that in review of data related to fatalities that occur in dark conditions, staff should be sure not to inadvertently interpret that the fatalities happen because it is dark even though they occurred in the dark and cautioned against concluding that additional lighting will solve all fatalities that occur in dark lighted conditions.

8. **2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Development:** Cody Derrick briefed the Committee on the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff have been reviewing all active projects currently in the Transportation Improvement Program and will be scheduling meetings with agencies to discuss projects. Meeting attendees should include staff from the appropriate departments that can answer questions about the status of projects and fiscal managers to answer questions about expenditures, agreements, and invoicing. Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) staff will also be present to help set realistic expectations regarding timing and process. During the meetings, agencies should provide project information by phases, estimated start and end dates in month/year format, and the availability of local match. The status of advanced funding agreements with TxDOT and interlocal agreements with NCTCOG will also be needed. Agencies were reminded to submit timely invoices to TxDOT for federal and State funds, and to complete monthly invoicing and reporting to the Revenue and Project Tracking System for Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) projects. Mr. Derrick also noted that requests for project modifications will also be included as part of the TIP-development process. Agencies can request changes to project scope or limits and funding changes (advancing or delaying a project, additional funding, cost savings), but certain changes may not be possible due to funding availability. Changes to implementing agencies should also be noted. During development of the 2022-2026 TIP, NCTCOG staff will focus on project readiness as well as projects on the Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy list, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Inactive list, FHWA Preliminary Engineering Audit list, and projects in the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program. Additionally, staff will review requests for projects to be placed in the first of the new TIP (FY2023) to determine project readiness and seek TxDOT concurrence when possible. Staff will also focus on closing out completed RTR projects. The timeline for this effort was highlighted. Draft listings are expected to be presented to the Committee in February 2022, followed by public meetings and presentation to the RTC. Action on final listings is expected by the Committee in April 2022 and RTC in May 2022. Upon approval, the final document will be submitted to TxDOT with Texas Transportation Commission approval expected in August/September 2022 and federal/State approval anticipated in October/November 2022. Details on the 2023-2026 TIP development process, timeline, and focus areas were provided in Electronic Item 8. John Polster asked if staff was closing out all RTR projects, or only existing RTR projects. Mr. Derrick noted that staff will be closing out recently or previously completed RTR projects. Wes McClure asked

if staff would also be reviewing TxDOT-managed RTR projects for close out. Mr. Derrick noted that staff has been coordinating with TxDOT about on-system close outs and will continue to focus on that effort.

9. **Legislative Update:** Nicholas Allen provided an update on federal legislative actions. He noted the Biden Administration's infrastructure plan provides approximately \$2.3 trillion in funding over an eight-year period, with approximately \$571 billion for transportation. The bill's expansive definition of "infrastructure" is controversial as it includes items not traditionally considered transportation infrastructure such as broadband, childcare, and long-term care facilities. Republicans have been vocal about a less expansive plan and have released details of an alternative plan. A partisan vote is anticipated in the Senate, so the bill must move forward through a budget reconciliation. Mr. Allen highlighted some of the major transportation funding allocations in the American Jobs Plan, which include electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, maintenance highways, roads, and bridges, Amtrak, mega projects, reconnecting minority neighborhoods, road safety, and ports (including land ports). A separate surface transportation reauthorization bill will still be needed since the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act expires on September 30, 2021. An update on State legislative actions was also provided. On April 6, 2021, the Senate approved its version of the budget, SB 1. On April 22, 2021, the House approved its version of a Committee Substitute for SB 1. The bill is expected to head back to the Senate to be heard in conference committee. Some version of the FY2022-23 budget is expected to go to the Governor on or before the May 31, 2021, deadline. Bill topics related to the RTC Legislative Program were highlighted. Related to transportation funding are bills that would require registration fees for alternatively fueled vehicles, as well as a bill that would allow the Texas Transportation Commission to issue Texas Mobility Fund obligations in FY2022. Related to high-speed transportation, a bill related to creation of a High-Speed Rail Legislative Review Committee was approved by the full Senate and the House version of the bill was heard on April 1. Other bills include those related to constraining high-speed rail projects in Texas, which have seen no new action. Several safety bills of interest were highlighted and included a bill that would allow Texas Department of Transportation districts to temporarily lower speed limits on certain roads and several bills related to pedestrian and bicycle safety. Air quality-related bill topics include a bill that would create the Texas Transportation Electrification Council to prepare and assess public electric vehicle charging infrastructure and develop a plan to implement the infrastructure and associated technologies throughout the state. Other bills include preemption of local regulations on greenhouse gas emissions and a bill that would allow for counties that paid into the LIRAP program to remit them and use them on air quality focused LIP projects. Also of interest is unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). On April 21, 2021, a committee substitute was heard in the Senate Veterans Affairs and Border Security Committee that would add military installations and airports to the list of critical infrastructure where UAS are prohibited. In addition, bills have been filed that would prohibit arming unmanned aircraft and that would have important implications for the definition of surveillance and image for the UAS industry in Texas. Legislative updates will continue to be provided to members.
10. **Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study:** Brendon Wheeler provided an update regarding the Dallas to Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation (DFW HST) Connections Study. The objective of the study is to evaluate high-speed transportation alternatives (both alignments and technology) to connect Dallas-Fort Worth to other proposed high-performance passenger systems in the state, enhance and connect Dallas-Fort Worth to the regional transportation system, as well as obtain federal environmental approval of the viable alternative. The initial set of alignments/corridors and modes of transportation being screened during Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 evaluations were highlighted, with the resulting recommendation of three alignments along IH 30 recommended for Phase 2 efforts to develop the draft environmental study documentation.



Further refinement of these alignments along IH 30 provides the opportunity for options to incorporate the design of the HST system with the IH 30 ultimate redesign efforts from IH 35W to west of Cooper Street. The project team has also identified the possibility of incorporating the HST system along IH 30 from east of Cooper Street to IH 35E within the existing managed lane footprint. Each of these opportunities will be compared with designing the HST system along the periphery of the existing IH 30 main lanes for the length of the corridor. Mode recommendations from the screenings include hyperloop (emerging technology) and high-speed rail (proven technology). He noted the project team went through an extensive effort to understand the technologies in order to properly rank options based on NASA's technology readiness scale regarding how the technologies compete for commercial application readiness. Public and agency engagement efforts were highlighted, including meetings with elected officials, federal agencies, working groups, public engagement, and stakeholder meetings, with the project team having hosted over 60 presentations, briefings, and meetings over the last year. Also highlighted was a new online engagement activity to incorporate additional public input that will allow the public to review Level 3 alignments directly and provide feedback on areas of significance and concern. In addition, he noted upcoming virtual public meetings scheduled for noon on May 19 and 6 pm on May 20. The upcoming schedule for this effort was highlighted, and Mr. Wheeler noted action on the alignment and mode recommendations to proceed into Phase 2 efforts would be requested at the June Committee meeting and July RTC meeting. John Polster noted one of the alignment alternatives mentioned was in Texas Department of Transportation right-of-way. When the region was pursuing the hyperloop test track, he asked if he recalled correctly that TxDOT Headquarters indicated this type of technology could not be implemented in the right-of-way and asked if there had been some type of policy change. Michael Morris noted that TxDOT Headquarters never provided a response about whether a hyperloop certification facility could be included in TxDOT right-of-way but noted a meeting in which the Governor's direction was to stay on public-sector property. He noted NCTCOG would move forward with the proposed recommendations and look forward to hearing comments from all parties.

11. **Status Report on Engine Off North Texas:** Huong Duong presented an overview of the updated Engine Off North Texas program. Engine Off North Texas was created to address unnecessary idling from heavy-duty vehicles in the Dallas-Fort Worth region which creates nitrogen oxides emissions. In 2007, locally enforced idling restrictions were added to the Dallas-Fort Worth State Implementation Plan and the North Central Texas Council of Governments began encouraging local governments to sign the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Memorandum of Agreement which authorized local governments to enforce the vehicle idling restriction rule. Engine Off North Texas Program purpose is to improve the air quality in the region by reducing the emissions related to unnecessary idling. In March 2021, Engine Off North Texas launched a revitalized program and continues to encourage local governments to adopt an idling restriction policy, offers outreach and educational materials about the effects of idling, and also offers alternative strategies to idling. Available resources include a local government guide that offers multiple options for implementation of idle restriction policy and enforcement strategies, regulatory signs, posters, brochures, a complaint hotline, and other information that can help bring awareness to the impacts of idling and available solutions. Materials are available online at [www.engineoffnorthtexas.org](http://www.engineoffnorthtexas.org) or by email at [engineoffnorthtexas@nctcog.org](mailto:engineoffnorthtexas@nctcog.org). The Engine Off North Texas Program has contributed to the adoption of idling policies in several cities, but much more remains to be done. Engine Off North Texas will continue to partner with local businesses and governments to identify problem areas in the region, continue to provide resources and bring awareness to the effects of idling, as well as promote idling alternatives. Lastly, staff will continue to encourage the adoption and enforcement of idling restriction policies. Committee members were asked to provide the appropriate contacts within their member agencies to help in efforts to improve air quality in the region. Kevin

Overton asked what happens when a complaint is received through the hotline. He also asked what happens when a MOA has expired. Ms. Duong noted the complaint is recorded in a database and the agency for which the complaint was made is then contacted. Regarding expired MOAs, she noted that expiration could impact whether an agency could continue to enforce idling restriction rules. Specifically for the City of Dallas, if the idling rule was included in city ordinances, the City could continue to enforce idling restrictions. Details were provided in Electronic Item 11.

12. **North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts Coalition:** Tamara Cook presented information regarding the North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition, an extension of an original effort to promote sustainability and environmental initiatives on a regional scale. In 2020, the original cities formed the RISE Coalition to facilitate peer exchange opportunities on a variety of sustainability efforts. Key topics for FY2021 were highlighted, and it was noted that the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) specifically supports two programs: a regional emissions inventory focused on greenhouse gas emissions and subsequently after the inventory is complete the development of a tool kit or menu of strategies that could be adopted by local governments. Currently, RISE voting members include the cities of Cedar Hill, Dallas, Denton, Farmers Branch, Fort Worth, Lewisville, Plano, and the Tarrant Regional Water District. She noted the purpose of the presentation was to bring the information to a broader audience and encourage local governments interested in expanding their sustainability efforts to participate. Participation is open to local governments eligible for membership in NCTCOG. In-person meetings are held quarterly, with the next meeting schedule for April 26. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 12 and at [North Central Texas Council of Governments - RISE Membership \(nctcog.org\)](https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/About/RISE/RISE-Membership). Michael Morris encouraged members to provide this information to broader city/county staff as transportation and environmental policies potentially overlap in the future. Committee Chair Brian Moen asked what department or staff positions are active in this area. Ms. Cook noted that involved staff include sustainability coordinators, as well as staffs from a variety of departments.
13. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.
  1. Auto Occupancy/High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report (Electronic Item 13.1)
  2. East/West Equity Update (Electronic Item 13.2)
  3. Deadline to Submit Requests for Transportation Improvement Program Modifications through the August 2021 Cycle – April 23, 2021 (<https://rtrinternal.nctcog.org/login/>)
  4. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>)
  5. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>)
  6. Commercial Motor Vehicle Violations: Enforcement, Prosecution, and Reporting Training Opportunity for Prosecutors and Judges,
  7. May 18 and 19, 2021 (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/safety/transportation-safety/commercial-vehicle-enforcement>)
  8. Status of Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program Funding Programs (Electronic Item 13.3)
  9. Status Report on Ozone Season (Electronic Item 13.4)
  10. March Online Input Opportunity Minutes (Electronic Item 13.5)
  11. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 13.6)
  12. Written Progress Reports:
    - Local Motion (Electronic Item 13.7)
    - Partner Progress Reports (Electronic Item 13.8)

14. **Other Business (Old and New)**: There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on May 28, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.