

MINUTES

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
September 23, 2022**

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, September 23, 2022, 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: Melissa Baker, Bryan Beck, Shon Brooks, Tanya Brooks, Ceason Clemons, John Cordary, Jr., Clarence Daugherty, Arturo Del Castillo, Caryl DeVries, Rebecca Diviney, Phil Dupler, Chad Edwards, Claud Elsom, Chris Flanigan, Mike Galizio, Eric Gallt, Ricardo Gonzales, Gary Graham, Tom Hammons, Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Jeremy Hutt, Joel James, Kelly Johnson, Gus Khankarli, Chad Marbut, Wes McClure, Brian Moen, Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Kevin Overton, Dipak Patel, Matt Phillips, John Polster, Kelly Porter, Tim Porter, Greg Royster, Brian Shewski, Randy Skinner, Caleb Thornhill, Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize, Daniel Vedral, and Robert Woodbury.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Nick Allen, Thomas Bamonte, Natalie Bettger, Angie Carson, Lori Clark, Charles Covert, Cody Derrick, Rebecca Divi, Brittany Fan, Lynell Harris, Jeff Hathcock, Duane Hengst, Chris Hoff, Andrew Hooker, Amy Johnson, Dan Kessler, Ken Kirkpatrick, Michael Kirsch, Chris Klaus, Dan Lamers, John MacLean, Alonda Massey, Michael Morris, Jenny Narvaez, Jeff Neal, Gary Salazar, Toni Stehling, Shannon Stevenson, Brendon Wheeler, and Amanda Wilson.

1. **Approval of August 26, 2022, Minutes:** The minutes of the August 26, 2022, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Kelly Porter (M); Daniel Vedral (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 2.1. **Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** Staff requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be requested, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. November 2022 Revisions to the 2023-2026 TIP were provided as Electronic Item 2.1 for the Committee's consideration. The modifications were reviewed for consistency with the Mobility Plan, the Air Quality Conformity Determination, and financial constraint of the TIP. Modifications for projects on US 75 to convert existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to technology lanes were included in this modification cycle in order to facilitate Federal Highway Administration approval.

A motion was made to approve the modifications to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program with the ability for staff to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with the TIP-related changes. Jim O' Connor (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Access North Texas:** Gypsy Gavia provided an overview of developed regional goals and requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval of the 2022 update of Access North Texas, including a brief overview of outreach efforts and a summary of developed regional goals. Access North Texas is the regional public transportation

coordination plan that aims to identify the public transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and others with transportation challenges. It lists specific strategies to address needs and current challenges, eliminate gaps in service, avoid duplication of transit services, and meet federal and state requirements for transit coordination in the 16 counties. The plan is required to be updated every 4-5 years; since the region is in a nonattainment area, it is on a 4-year cycle. For this update, some key differences include conducting virtual outreach due to the COVID-19 pandemic, introducing a coding key to analyze the qualitative responses and comments, and outlining regional goals and then prioritizing strategies per county. Overall, the information identified through this plan can guide planning and funding decisions for transit over the course of the next several years. Access North Texas was last updated in 2018. Since then, regional partners have implemented various strategies from that plan. Although there are more than these three, the listed projects demonstrate the breadth of initiatives that have been implemented by partners. These projects include City of Arlington, Via Rideshare Service, DART, GoPass expansion and discount program, and My Ride North Texas 2.0. With all of the successful projects since 2018, we know there are still challenges. One large component to help us gauge the public transportation needs of individuals throughout the region is the public outreach. It started in April 2021 and the different methods are listed in Electronic Item 3. These efforts continued throughout the summer of 2021 and over 2,900 individuals and agencies were contacted for virtual meetings. Staff conducted 28 county-specific virtual meetings with 84 attendees, various one-on-one meetings, emails, and conversations. A public transportation survey in English and Spanish was offered and received over 1,500 responses from individuals and agencies. Staff supplemented outreach activities with data collection and analysis. Efforts included updating the Transit Accessibility Improvement Tool (TAIT), which is used to map potentially transportation disadvantaged populations and compare areas region-wide, staff collected and analyzed demographic information about population growth, limited English Proficiency status, and zero-car households for each county in the region, and it was identified the existing transportation providers in each county and shared information online via the regional Get-A-Ride Guide. All information was synthesized to develop goals to address needs across the entire region, as well as specific strategies for each county. The five overarching regional goals help guide efforts over the next four years to improve public transportation for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations across the 16-county region. These goals are 1) Plan and develop transportation options by assessing community needs and challenges.; 2) Implement services by enhancing transportation options and expanding where service gaps exist.; 3) Coordinate with transportation providers, public agencies, and stakeholders to increase efficiencies; 4) Support public transportation recovery and growth.; and 5) Promote access and information about available transit. Gypsy emphasized goal number 4 since it is a new focus area as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the public comment period, the draft was posted online in early August and presented as part of NCTCOG's public involvement process in August and September meeting month and included as part of September's public meeting. In addition to the public meetings, comments were encouraged via email or through conversations with staff. The draft document was also shared with stakeholder groups and promoted through social media. The goals and strategies saw no changes, but minor revisions were made to the Tarrant County chapter. The next steps are outlined as follows: Access North Texas will be taken to the Regional Transportation Council and NCTCOG Executive Board for action in October, and then provided to the Texas Department of Transportation. Upon approval, staff and regional partners will begin to implement strategies identified in the plan, and projects that seek funds through the Transit Strategic Partnership Program should address these updated goals and strategies that is

required for those that seek funding under the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. Staff will monitor progress and propose amendments if changes are needed before the next plan update in 2026. The plan is available at www.AccessNorthTexas.org.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of Access North Texas 2022 Update, the region's locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. John Polster (M); Daniel Vedral (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Management, Operations, Air Quality, and Safety Program:** Cody Derrick requested a recommendation for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the latest efforts to extend existing and fund new Management, Operations, and Safety programs and projects every few years. Many are legacy projects that the RTC has funded for several years (Vanpool program, Mobility Assistance Patrol, etc.). The last review occurred in 2018-2019 and projects were funded through Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. In January 2022, the RTC approved funding for projects/programs that did not have sufficient existing revenues to continue without interruption through FY2023. Now, staff is requesting funding for FY2024-2026 projects and programs. The purpose of the program is to provide funding in addition to Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) to conduct operations, planning, and implementation activities. Assigns resources for RTC priorities and air quality initiatives. Ensures existing programs and projects can be continued without interruption in FY2024-2026. Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and regional funds will be proposed for the FY2024-2026 program. Ensures CMAQ and STBG funding is obligated in a timely manner. The Regional Safety Program supports the RTC's policy that not even a single death on the transportation system is acceptable. \$50 million of RTC-selected funds are proposed to be set aside for a regional safety program, and funding will cover FY2024-2026. The following safety categories are proposed: Freeway Operations Engineering and Intercity Connections (\$25 million), Bicycle/Pedestrian Engineering (\$10 million), Bicycle/Pedestrian Education (\$2 million), Speed Enforcement (\$7 million), Speed Education (\$2 million), and other (\$4 million). The importance of regional air quality and M&O projects was also emphasized. Management and Operation summary for the funding category; Planning Activities, Data Collection, and Engineering Activities with the RTC share of \$25.24 million, Air Quality Initiatives with the RTC share of \$11.65 million, Implementation/Operations Activities (e.g., Auto Occupancy, Special Events, Mobility Assistance Patrol) with the RTC share of \$51.74 million, Travel Demand Management/Transit with the RTC share of \$6.75 million, and Innovative Technologies with the RTC share of \$10.40 million that brings a total additional funds being requested to \$105.78 million. Additional details on proposed funding are a portion of the requested funding to be used by North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff to implement regional projects and programs. The balance will be passed through to other agencies in the region (for projects like the Vanpool Program, Mobility Assistance Patrol, etc.), and 66 percent of funding will be pass-through to transportation entities. Categories of expenditures: NCTCOG-Implemented (staff time) with M&O funding amount of \$48.06 million and Safety funding amount of \$4.67 million; Pass-Through to Local Transportation Agencies with M&O funding amount of \$57.72 million and Safety funding amount of \$45.33 million with a total of \$105.78 million of M&O funding amount and a total of \$50.00 million of Safety funding amount. Approval timeline; Surface Transportation Technical Committee's (STTC) Director's Report on August 26, 2022, an information item at the RTC meeting on September 8, 2022, Public meeting September 2022, STTC action on September 23, 2022, and RTC action on October 13, 2022.

A motion was made to approve the recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval the FY2024-2026 Management, Operations, Air Quality, and Safety program. Administratively amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and amending other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes. G. "Gus" Khankarli (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Fiscal Year 2022 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program:** Jeff Neal provided the Committee information on the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP) and requested endorsement to apply for a candidate project. Applications were previously due to US DOT by October 4, 2022, but has been extended to October 11, 2022, with a three-application limit. The funding categories are split up into different categories: Planning/NEPA/Design (\$18 million), Rural/Tribal – Construction (\$114.7 million), and Urban – Construction (\$440.6 million). The category for Urban funding is the largest. Project eligibility includes at-grade closure or safety/mobility solutions (technology, education, etc.); grade separation (via bridge, tunnel, embankment or combination thereof); track relocation; add/improve devices, signals, signs, or other safety measures (with #2/#3 above); group of above-related projects, and planning/NEPA/Design (above projects). The purpose of the program is to fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects to focus on enhancing the safety and mobility of people and goods preference for grade separations, closure of at-grade crossings through track relocation, and corridor-wide grade crossing improvements. An overview of RCEP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) details was provided, including the evaluation criteria: 1) technical merit (quality of work statement(s) and application materials; readiness/completion of prerequisites; applicant past performance, technical capacity, and funding; private-sector participation; qualifications and experience of key personnel/organizations; consistency with local, regional, and State planning documents [including freight]); 2) Project benefits (improved highway-rail/pathway-rail safety; proposals to grade-separate, eliminate, or close one or more highway-rail/pathway-rail grade crossings; mobility improvements for both people and goods; environmental protection, emission reductions, and community benefits; access improvements for communities, emergency services, and economic opportunities; and optimizing contracting incentives to employ local labor). The RCEP Grant is similar to some other new USDOT grant opportunities where candidates for project selection may be impacted by eligible applicants, submittal limits, project readiness, and various merit criteria, and particularly in early rounds an east-west subregion imbalance may be observed. However, increased coordination, strategic project slotting, and a comprehensive effort among regional partners to get more projects through preliminary engineering and environmental clearance will greatly remove that imbalance. Evaluation and status of specific candidate road/rail grade separation projects were listed in Electronic Item 5. The grade separation proposed as NCTCOG's RCEP submittal is located in Dallas, the Prairie Creek Road/Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Grade Separation Project. The project will construct the Prairie Creek Road grade separation at the 4-track UPRR corridor just west of Mesquite Intermodal Facility, with non-federal funds of \$9,450,590 from the City of Dallas, \$3,241,000 from Dallas County, and \$1,500,000 from UPRR. Federal funds will consist of \$1,602,360 from a Congressional earmark, \$5,322,653 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds, and \$15,138,299 in requested RCEP Grant funds, with a total project cost of \$36,254,902. The RCEP schedule is as follows, RCEP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was requested on July 6, 2022, and RTC action on September 8, 2022. NCTCOG Executive Board action is scheduled for September 22, 2022, and the Surface Transportation Technical Committee will be requested to endorse the

candidate project on September 23, 2022. The RCEP submittal deadline (Grants.gov) was due October 4, 2022, but has been extended to October 11, 2022.

A motion was made to request STTC approve (endorsement) of submittal of Prairie Creek Road/Union Pacific Railroad Grade Separation Project for funding consideration through the FY2022 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP). Administratively amending North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and State Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP/STIP), as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project if selected for a FY2022 RCEP Grant award. G. "Gus" Khankarli (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Fiscal Year 2022 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program:** Michael Morris provided an overview on the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP) and requested action to apply for a candidate project. In June 2022, the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to solicit applications for FY22 RCP funding. The \$195 million program includes certain funding amounts set-a-side for the following purposes: 1) Planning Grants - \$50 Million, and 2) Capital Construction Grants - \$145 Million nationwide. Applications for each funding category are due to the US DOT by October 13, 2022, and eligible entities are limited to a maximum of three applications per solicitation. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for a project that removes, retrofits, or mitigates transportation facilities which create mobility, accessibility, and/or economic development barriers to community connectivity and vitality. The FY22 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) NOFO describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, applicable program and federal requirements, and available technical assistance during the grant solicitation period that is available at https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-06/RCP_NOFO_FY22.pdf. The candidate projects were: 1) Klyde Warren Park, Phase 2, with a RTC submittal, existing funding plus \$23.6 million RCP Grant plus \$9 million private sector. 2) Southern Gateway Deck Park Phase 2, City of Dallas. 3) IH 30 City Park/Farmers Market, engineering for future decks near Dallas Farmers Market with existing Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) Funds of \$2 million to expedite design that will facilitate IH 30 "Canyon" integration without let date delay.

A motion was made to recommend Surface Technical Transportation Council approval of submittal of Klyde Warren Park – Phase 2.0 for funding consideration through the FY22 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program of \$33.8 Million and 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 FY22 RCP Grant award \$2 Million. G. "Gus" Khankarli (M); Tanya Brooks (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris announced Paul Cristina as the new Executive Director for Denton County Transit Authority. He proceeded to provide an update on items on the Director's Report by highlighting that the Department of Energy is moving ahead with four hydrogen hubs, that Ken is overseeing the project as well. Michael was excited to mention that he got to attend the Scenario Outreach with Chris Cassidy and Emmitt Smith. He also mentioned we are getting responses from the High-Speed Rail and encourages everyone to take this back to their respective communities, so we don't lose High Speed Rail. Michael congratulated North Central Texas Council of Governments Staff on the approval of DART Board's distribution of \$214 million unallocated funds to service 13 area cities. Michael also congratulated the new district engineers for

Texas Department of Transportation, Ceason Clemons, P.E., for the Dallas District and David Salazar, P.E., for the Fort Worth district. He briefly mentioned the Traffic Signal Program, that they are working on a new timing program. Natalie Bettger will bring more information back in October. Michael went over how to get through the process quicker. Michael notified the Committee of the cancellation of Weatherford Downtown Bypass Loop Project of \$21 Million. He briefly went over we are seeking a Second Financial Revolver on the BUILD Grant and Trinity Railway Express (TRE), we had a \$10 million revolver five years ago. He updated the Surface Transportation Technical Committee that Fast Facts will be presented going forward.

8. **Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant Briefing and Need for Local Match:** Thomas Bamonte provided a briefing on the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program. The purpose is to demonstrate projects focused on advanced smart city or community technologies and systems in a variety of communities to improve transportation efficiency and safety. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is emphasizing technology interventions to solve real-world challenges and build data and technology capacity and expertise in the public sector with funding provided for \$500 million over five years (\$100 million per year). The first year will consist of 30 to 50 planning grants with a \$2 million maximum grant and no local match for planning grants. In the later years, there will be implementation grants up to \$15 million, limited to planning grant recipients. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was issued on September 19, 2022, with the application deadline of November 18, 2022. Eligible applicants include State, political subdivision of State, tribe, transit agency, public toll authority, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), and groups of eligible entities. Funding is split as follows: large communities (>400k) is 40 percent; midsized communities at 30 percent; and rural/regional partnerships are at 30 percent. Planning project recipients should build internal buy-in and partnerships with stakeholders to refine and prototype their concepts and report on results. At the conclusion, recipients should have the information to either create a fully realized implementation plan with robust performance metrics or to make an informed decision not to proceed with the concept. Eligible projects include coordinated automation, connected vehicles, intelligent sensor-based infrastructure, systems integration, commerce delivery and logistics, innovative aviation technology, smart grid for electric vehicles, and smart technology for traffic signals. USDOT seeks project benefits of safety, reliability, resiliency, equity, access, climate, partnerships, and integration. Funding priorities for USDOT are fit, scale, and adoption; data sharing, cybersecurity, and privacy; workforce development; and measurement and validation. Staff outreach efforts began on June 21, 2022, with a North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff briefing and was followed up with a briefing for Surface Transportation Technical Committee members and regional partners on June 28, 2022.– On August 2, 2022, staff distributed notice of a USDOT webinar on the SMART program.–The NOFO and various brainstorming sessions were distributed on September 20, 2022..Local partners filing SMART grant applications should request NCTCOG letters of support requests by November 4, 2022. The Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) program is a continuation of the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment program with \$60 million a year, five to ten awards up to \$12 million apiece, and 20 percent local match required. ATTAIN projects should: Reduce fatalities, injuries, traffic congestion, emissions; improve travel time reliability; optimize multimodal system performance; improve access to transportation alternatives; integrate payment systems; integrate multimodal transportation information; or result in transportation-related cost savings. The USDOT ATTAIN priorities are climate, resiliency, environmental justice, equity, removing barriers to opportunity, and job creation.

9. **Environmental Protection Agency Reclassification Dallas-Fort Worth Nonattainment**

Area: Nicholas Van Haasen provided an update on the ozone standard reclassifications for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) nonattainment area. Based on monitored ozone data between 2018 – 2020, the region failed to reach attainment for both the 2008 and 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards by the 2021 deadline. As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to reclassify the area for each of these standards. North Central Texas Council of Governments staff will continue to coordinate with staff from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the EPA with the impacts this action will have on the region and reaching attainment of both ozone standards. NCTCOG's Nonattainment region was required to attain the 2008 ozone standard by July 20, 2021, and the 2015 ozone standard by August 3, 2021. The EPA's Final Determination was issued on September 15, 2022, reclassifying the region from Serious to Severe for the 2008 ozone standard and from Marginal to Moderate for the 2015 ozone standard. The reclassification becomes effective 30 days after that action is published into the Federal Register. The new attainment deadlines for the 2008 Ozone standard reclassify the region from serious to severe, with attainment required no later than July 20, 2027, based on 2024-2026 Ozone Monitor Data. Air Quality Plan – State Implementation Plans (SIP) revisions by TCEQ are due 18 months after effective date modeling, based on analysis year 2026 for the 2008 standard. The new attainment deadlines for the 2015 NAAQS Attainment Date reclassify the region from marginal to moderate and require the region to reach attainment no later than August 3, 2024, based on 2021-2023 Ozone Monitor Data. Air Quality Plan (SIPs) revisions by TCEQ due January 1, 2023, modeling based on analysis year 2023, for the 2015 standard. SIP revisions to be updated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as a result of reclassifications. Statewide Implementation Plans include emissions from multiple sectors such as on-road vehicles, non-road engines, off-road engines, area sources, point sources, oil and gas, and biogenic sources. The two types of SIPs are: 1) Reasonable Further Progress SIP – to ensure at least 3 percent reduction of ozone precursor emissions (Oxides of Nitrogen (NOX)) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) per year and 2) Attainment Demonstration SIP – forecasts compliance to ozone NAAQS. NCTCOG staff's ongoing efforts include the Management and Operations and Air Quality and Safety Program, Federal Performance Measures (PM3) CMAQ Targets, Appendix H: Weight of Evidence (Voluntary Measures), Emission Reductions Control Strategy Catalog, RTC's Legislative Agenda for Air Quality Programs such as the TERP – Diesel Retrofit Program and Fraudulent Paper Registration Tags, national review of transportation control strategies, and continued collaboration with TCEQ and EPA on regional impacts of reclassification and engaging in a concerted effort to attainment.

10. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.

1. East/West Equity Update (Electronic Item 10.1)
2. North Texas Center for Mobility Technologies Project Tracking (Electronic Item 10.2)
3. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles
(www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
4. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events
(<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>)
5. 2022 Ozone Season Update (Electronic Item 10.3)
6. National Drive Electric Week (Electronic Item 10.4)
7. Local Clean Air Project Spotlight (Electronic Item 10.5)

8. Car Care Awareness Community Partnerships (Electronic Item 10.6)
9. August Public Meeting Notice (Electronic Item 10.7)
10. October Public Meeting Notice (Electronic Item 10.8)
11. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 10.9)
12. Written Progress Reports:
 - Partner Progress Reports (Electronic Item 10.10)

11. **Other Business (Old or New)**: There was no discussion on this item.

12. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on October 28, 2022.

Adjourned at 2:38 PM.