

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL**  
**September 10, 2020**

In accordance with the Texas Governor's March 13, 2020, Disaster Declaration which was renewed through October 7, 2020, and subsequent suspension of certain Texas Open Meetings Act provisions, the September 10, 2020, meeting of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) was conducted as a videoconference via Zoom. Staff conducted a roll call of members and the presence of a quorum was confirmed. The following members or representatives were present on the videoconference: Tennell Atkins, Richard Aubin, Mohamed Bur, Dianne Costa, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Pat Deen, Rudy Durham, Andy Eads, Kevin Falconer, Gary Fickes, George Fuller, Rick Grady, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Roger Harmon, Ivan Hughes, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Ron Jensen, Carl L. Johnson, Jungus Jordan, John Keating, Mike Leyman, Curtistene McCowan, B. Adam McGough, Cara Mendelsohn, Robert Miklos, Cary Moon, Barbara Odom-Wesley, Philip J. Ritter, John Ryan, Chris Schulmeister, Mark Aldredge (representing Casey Thomas II), Jeremy Tompkins, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Paul N. Wageman, Dennis Webb, Duncan Webb, B. Glen Whitley, W. Jeff Williams, and Ann Zadeh.

1. **Opportunity for the Public to Speak on Today's Agenda: Consistent with HB 2840:** This item allows members of the public an opportunity to give input on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Roger Harmon asked if there were any public comments. No members of the public chose to speak.
2. **Approval of the August 13, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the August 13, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 2. B. Glen Whitley (M); Richard Aubin (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following item was included on the Consent Agenda.
  - 3.1. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle Round Four:** Approval of the fourth round of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle funding opportunity, including the plan to distribute available Transportation Development Credits as identified in Electronic Item 3.1, was requested.

A motion was made to approve the item on the Consent Agenda. Curtistene McCowan (M); T. Oscar Trevino (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to the Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris provided an overview of items on the Director of Transportation Report. He noted he received a call from Senator John Cornyn's office regarding good news for the region. Members will be provided the information by email once official announcement has been made. In addition, he congratulated new Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Fort Worth District Engineer Carl L. Johnson, P.E. Mr. Morris also discussed the current method performance measures are addressed on the agenda and noted staff is working on a new format to be implemented on October 1, 2020. He noted Alan Clark, Director of Transportation Planning at the Houston-Galveston Area Council is retiring and remembered Wick Allison, founder of D Magazine, who recently passed. Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Chair Roger Harmon has approved a Legislative Workshop at 11:30 am on October 8, 2020, prior to the RTC meeting. The workshop will be conducted via Zoom. He noted the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association recently awarded a Certificate of Merit awarded to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Automated Occupancy Detection and Verification Project, GoCarma. He also provided a status report on the advancement of engineering funds for the North Texas

Tollway Authority (NTTA) on the SH 360/SH 161 Connector. He recently met with Elizabeth Mow who has indicated if SH 360/SH 161 Connector is advanced she would also like to advance the George Bush Extension south of IH 30 and would like to discuss options with the NTTA Board. Staff's recommendation would be for the RTC to fund engineering of the two projects with repayment made by NTTA if it desires to move forward. Additional updates will be provided to members in the future. Mr. Morris also discussed two items for RTC action. The first was a request to permit staff to send correspondence to TxDOT Headquarters and NTTA regarding the extension of SH 360 and Chisholm Trail to the south to alleviate congestion on IH 35W. This is in follow up to discussion by members at the August 13, 2020, RTC meeting. The second request was approval of a letter regarding the advancement of the bypass channel in the City of Fort Worth. A copy of the correspondence was provided in Electronic Item 4.1. The RTC has funded and TxDOT is constructing three bridges north of downtown Fort Worth in partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and in conjunction with the bypass channel. The letter requests that the USACE meet its original design and construction commitments on the bypass channel. A motion was made to approve correspondence to TxDOT Headquarters and NTTA regarding the extension of SH 360 and Chisholm Trail to the south. Jungus Jordan (M); Mike Leyman (S). The motion passed unanimously. A motion was also made to approve correspondence to the United States Army Corps of Engineers regarding the bypass channel in the City of Fort Worth, provided in Electronic Item 4.1. Jungus Jordan (M); Curtistene McCowan (S). The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Morris noted that a response to the public comment received at the August 13, 2020, RTC meeting was provided in Electronic Item 4.2, and the latest east/west equity report was provided in Electronic Item 4.3. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities events were provided in <https://dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>. Current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles were provided in <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>. Electronic Item 4.4 contained information about electric vehicle infrastructure funding from the Volkswagen Settlement and details regarding the National Drive Electric Week virtual event were provided at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/ndew>. Electronic Item 4.5 contained an ozone season status report. August online input opportunity minutes were provided in Electronic Item 4.6. Mr. Morris noted that a comment was received after the mail out material was distributed and that the comment would be documented through the public involvement process. The September online input opportunity notice was provided in Electronic Item 4.7. The current Public Comment Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.8, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 4.9, recent new articles in Electronic Item 4.10, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 4.11. RTC Chair Harmon and Vice Chair Daniel expressed appreciation to staff for their continued efforts to maintain progress in transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. **Federal Highway Administration Performance Measures Target Reaffirmation or Revisions:** Chris Klaus presented proposed adjustments to 2022 regional targets for federally required performance measures. As required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) tracks and monitors federal performance measures targets for: Safety (PM1); Transit Asset Management (TAM); Transit Safety (PTASP); Pavement and Bridge (PM2); and System Performance, Freight, and Congestion Management and Air Quality (PM3). Updated PM3 targets are due to FHWA via the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on October 1, 2020. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) initially approved PM3 targets for 2020 and 2022, and 2020 marks the mid-point of this performance period and rulemaking allows 2022 targets to be revisited at this time. Mr. Klaus noted the seven measures included in PM3, desired trend, current targets, and updated forecasts/trends for each measure remained the same as presented last month and was

detailed in Electronic Item 5.2. For interstate reliability, non-interstate reliability, peak hour excessive delay, and non-single occupancy vehicle travel targets, staff recommended that the current 2022 targets be reaffirmed. Truck travel time reliability is an index representing the reliability of travel for freight movement in the transportation system. New data and methodologies suggest that the trends for 2022 are worsening and staff proposed that the 2022 target be revised upward from 1.66 to 1.90 to meet the updated 2022 trend but with an aspirational goal to maintain the 2020 observed value at 1.83 in 2022. Staff will be actively addressing worsening freight reliability with programs, policies, and projects to support freight movement on the transportation system. Staff also recommended revision of targets for the emission reductions for nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. Benefits associated with recent projects has allowed for additional reductions in emissions resulting in 2020 and 2022 trends that are significantly increased over original targets. Staff proposed that 2022 targets for nitrogen oxides be revised to 7,402.95 and for volatile organic compounds to 1,814.02. The schedule for this effort was reviewed. The Surface Transportation Technical Committee recommended approval of the proposed adjustments and no negative comments were received as part of the public involvement process. Action on additional performance measures will be requested in the future. Mr. Klaus noted that an RTC resolution documenting approval of the PM3 performance measure targets was provided in Electronic Item 5.1 and will be used to transmit recommendations to TxDOT. An overview of the resolution was provided. A motion was made to reaffirm existing 2020 regional targets for interstate reliability, non-interstate reliability, peak hour excessive delay and non-single occupancy vehicle travel targets and to approve new 2020 regional targets for truck travel time reliability and emission reductions for nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds as outlined in the Resolution Approving System, Freight, and CMAQ Performance Measures and attachment provided in Electronic Item 5.1. Theresa Daniel (M); B. Glen Whitley (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Response to Members of the Texas House of Representatives House Committee on Transportation on Request for Information:** Michael Morris provided an overview of proposed letters to the House Committee on Transportation in response to its request for information on select interim charges in lieu of public hearings. North Central Texas Council of Governments staff proposed that the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) provide comments in four areas of RTC responsibility: 1) innovative funding, 2) COVID-19, 3) safety, and 4) technology. In response to interim charges on funding the letter requests the State ensure fair-share allocations to region, consider funding options, and utilization of innovative tools. Letter two is related to COVID-19 impacts and comments include the four metrics being tracked by staff. The third letter responds to interim charges on safety and identifies areas of focus proposed to address safety, and the final letter provides comments on technology. A copy of the letters to the House Committee on Transportation was provided in Electronic Item 6. Comments on each interim charge must be submitted by September 18, 2020. Mr. Morris noted that the hope is for staff or the RTC to provide testimony to the Texas Legislature in the fall. A motion was made to approve letters responding to interim charges of the House Committee on Transportation provided in Electronic Item 6. Rick Grady (M); Theresa Daniel (S). Mohamed Bur and Carl Johnson abstained from the vote. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **Optimized Freight Movement Project:** Thomas Bamonte presented a proposed project to improve goods movement from freight hubs to expressways in the region through technologies optimizing truck traffic through intersections. The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region has many freight hubs and facilities that are related to two major components of the transportation system: 1) expressways for long-distance travel and 2) local road linkages between freight hubs and expressways. The proposed project focuses on optimizing the flow of freight vehicles from hubs to expressways, which supports the truck travel time reliability performance measure. The Texas

Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is focused on optimizing the operation of the expressways and the North Central Texas Council of Governments has been fortunate to partner with TxDOT on its Connected Freight Corridors Project with the inclusion of IH 30 between Dallas and Fort Worth in this effort. As part of the project, TxDOT surveyed the freight industry and identified optimization of truck signals as a top priority. Optimization is important to the industry because one minute of delay costs approximately \$1.20. Another development being explored is connected vehicle technology to optimize intersections. The City of Arlington is implementing a connected vehicle project on Cooper Street that will look at efficient options to bring vehicles through intersections. In addition, the Atlanta region is investing in the optimized flow of freight vehicles on local streets through an ongoing project to optimize over 1,000 intersections. The proposed Freight Optimization project has four major components: 1) appropriate technology solution to optimize the flow of trucks from hubs to expressways identified through a procurement process, 2) benefit-cost analysis to identify the type of investment and technology with the most benefit that will include consideration of truck travel time savings, improved traffic flow, public health, and any adverse impacts such as cross-traffic delay, 3) coordination with local agencies and the freight industry to identify locations where the preferred technology will best be utilized, and 4) ongoing monitoring of the technology in the field to identify potential incremental improvements to maximize the value of the investment. The project would contribute to optimizing the flow of freight vehicles, improving reliability, and ensuring that the Dallas-Fort Worth region remains competitive as a freight hub. Details about the project were provided in Electronic Item 7. A motion was made to approve \$5 million for the Optimized Freight Movement Project, including \$200,000 RTC Local, with the remainder in federal funds and RTC Transportation Development Credits. Action also included approval for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning documents as required to effectuate the project. Barbara Odom-Wesley (M); Ann Zadeh (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Regional Cotton Belt Veloweb Trail Action Plan:** Karla Weaver presented a funding request for the Cotton Belt Regional Veloweb Trail. In 2018, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved funding for the design and construction of the corridor and what was deemed critical sections of the trail that needed to be built in conjunction with the rail project. The proposed trail design and construction costs as part of the Silver Line rail design/build process provided by the rail contractor are higher than the original cost estimates. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff proposed a new, phased approach to minimize the current high costs and expedite the construction with two contractors. Staff proposed to increase the RTC funding for the project to complete 100 percent of the design for the entire corridor which will minimize overall risk. Staff also proposed to proceed with construction of strategic critical sections with the current Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) contractor for the crossing of the Dallas North Tollway since there will be impacts to the retaining walls and structural framework of the roadway. Additional construction of strategic critical sections will be made using a second contractor. The second contractor will have experience as a trail contractor. This new approach, proposed by DART, will provide cost savings and allow public funding to go further. DART will procure the second contractor within 6-9 months to build in various crossings before the trains are operable and may include connections as well. The construction of these locations will follow the agreed upon design crossings and design will be reviewed with all local governments along the corridor. A map of the Cotton Belt Regional Veloweb Trail from the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to Plano was highlighted. In addition to the increase in funding for design, construction funding is needed to be added to the existing rail project to ensure adequate safety walls in the rail corridor near Fairhill School and Ivy Montessori School. Several members thanked NCTCOG staff for its leadership regarding this effort. A motion was made to approve an increase of the Regional Transportation Council award from \$8.2 million to \$14.9 million to

design 100 percent of the trail and an increase of regional Transportation Development Credits to 3 million in lieu of local match. Construction of strategic critical trail sections will be done with two Dallas Area Rapid Transit contractors. Also included in the action was approval of \$245,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds for additional safety walls near school locations with regional Transportation Development Credits used for match. An inventory of locations for the second DART contractor will be developed in partnership with local governments. In addition, the motion included approval for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate the changes. Paul N. Wageman (M); Duncan Webb (S). The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Transportation Alternatives Program Call for Projects Project Selection:** Kevin Kokes provided an overview of the Transportation Alternatives Program Call for Projects and presented a recommendation of projects to select for funding. In February 2020, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) took action to open the call for projects for improvements that advance walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation. Eligible projects included shared-use paths, on-street facilities, pedestrian accommodations, and various safety projects. The call was focused on construction, with a requirement that engineering and environmental must be funded 100 percent locally. All projects required a minimum of 20 percent local match for construction, however eligible agencies could request the use of Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in lieu of a local match. Funding available for this program included fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023 with a total of over \$19.8 million in federal funding available. Mr. Kokes reminded members that in the 2019 Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects, there were a large number of high-scoring projects in the east subregion and as a result, the RTC approved approximately \$3.9 million of the FY2021 funds to be awarded to projects in the east subregion which has been deducted from the total available funds for this current call. There were two application project categories consisting of active transportation or Safe Routes to School projects. The active transportation category placed emphasis on implementing the goals outlined in the Mobility Plan such as regional connectivity, implementing the Regional Veloweb corridors, access to transit, improving safety, reducing congestion, improving access for disadvantaged populations, as well as project readiness. The Safe Routes to School category emphasized improving walking and biking access for K-8 schools. A key element in this category included completed planning to document those safety issues, identifying targeted improvements, improving access for disadvantaged populations, and project readiness. A total of 38 applications were received requesting nearly \$68 million in federal funding, and applications in the eastern subregion account for nearly 75 percent of the total funding requested. Mr. Kokes reviewed the funding recommendations for each subregion and noted Electronic Item 9.2 contains the scoring and ranking of all projects based on the evaluation criteria. In the western subregion, recommendations included three Safe Routes to School projects in the City of Arlington and one complete streets project connecting neighborhoods in the City of Fort Worth. All entities in the western subregion requested use of TDCs in lieu of local match. Federal funding proposed in the western subregion totaled approximately \$6.2 million. In the eastern subregion, no applications were received in Hunt County so all fall within the Dallas Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) District. Eight projects were recommended for funding in the eastern subregion and included three Safe Routes to School improvement projects in the City of Dallas, a shared use path project in the City of Dallas, a trail bridge project for the Cotton Belt Trail in Plano by Dallas Area Rapid Transit, two projects led by Dallas County for a trail extension in Dallas and multimodal bike and pedestrian project in Garland, and a multimodal bicycle/pedestrian improvement project in the City of Richardson. Five projects requested the use of TDCs in lieu of local match, and the recommended federal funding total is approximately \$17.2 million. Mr. Kokes noted that the total recommended funding differs from what was originally available in

the call for projects. In the western subregion, there were fewer projects recommended for funding, resulting in a balance of approximately \$1.8 million. Since the eastern subregion had a high number of strong applications that far exceeded available funding, staff recommended the \$1.8 million difference be awarded to projects in the east since Transportation Alternative funds are subject to congressional rescissions and must be programmed and obligated in a timely manner. To maintain equity, an equal amount of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program or Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds will be made available to other transportation projects in the western subregion to offset the balance transfer to the eastern subregion. This adjustment will be reflected in the quarterly East/West Equity tracking report. In addition to the balance transfer from the west, staff also recommended approximately \$3.6 million additional funds available in the eastern subregion to be awarded to this call for projects from the estimated FY2024 allocation. The timeline for this Call for Projects was reviewed and it was noted that pending RTC action, project sponsors that are awarded funds can submit modifications for the next Transportation Improvement Program modification cycle. An overview of the requested action was provided. Details were provided in Electronic Item 9.1. Mohamed Bur asked if it is possible for entities within the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that are not selected for MPO Transportation Alternatives funding to apply for statewide funding. Mr. Kokes noted that MPO Transportation Alternative funds in the application area for active transportation projects are specifically for the urbanized area so if a project is located outside the urbanized area boundary defined by the census, then that project would be eligible to submit under the statewide call. Mr. Bur encouraged entities with projects that are outside of the urbanized area boundary to submit applications to the statewide Transportation Alternatives program. Staff suggested that the RTC's action include that the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will contact entities directly that have projects outside of the urbanized boundary that are eligible for statewide funds. A motion was made to approve the list of projects to fund through the 2020 Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects as provided in Electronic Item 9.2 and for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate the changes. Also included in the action, per program rules, the project sponsor must execute an Advanced Funding Agreement with TxDOT within one year of project selection, projects must advance to construction within three years from selection or the funding may be reprogrammed, and cost overruns are the sole responsibility of the Project Sponsor. In addition, action included approval to transfer \$1.8 million from the western subregion allocation of Transportation Alternatives funding to the eastern subregion, with the same amount of CMAQ or STBG funds to be transferred back to the western subregion. East/West Equity tracking reports will reflect adjustments for funding in the western subregion to offset the balance transfer to the eastern subregion with this call for projects. In addition, NCTCOG staff will contact entities directly that have projects outside of the urbanized boundary that are eligible for statewide funds. Theresa Daniel (M); Barbara Odom-Wesley (S). The motion passed unanimously.

10. **Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID**

**Recovery:** Michael Morris provided an update on performance metrics to help understand the impacts of COVID-19 to the transportation system. Four performance metrics have been developed that will be tracked through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process: 1) travel behavior response to COVID-19, 2) financial implications to traditional revenue sources, 3) benefits of travel behavior responses to areas of RTC responsibility, and 4) prioritization of infrastructure improvements that offset unemployment increases. Related to travel behavior response, freeway volumes have recovered, and activity is approximately 10 percent lower than previous to COVID-19 restrictions. Average speeds indicate traffic is not the typical employee work traffic because speeds in the peak periods remain improved. Staff is working on innovative

options to prevent congestion during the peak periods and will provide more information to members in the fall. Transit ridership has flattened at approximately a 50 percent decrease in comparison to July 2019. Staff will meet with the three transit authorities to develop potential options to help increase transit ridership in the region and come back to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) with proposals in the fall. Bicycle/pedestrian activity remains 22 percent higher than pre COVID-19, but activity is decreasing. Like transit ridership, airport passenger trends remain decreased as of May, but improvements are expected in the June/July timeframe. Data related to financial implications, the second metric, was highlighted. Sales tax allocated for transit are increasing. Other funding has also recovered such as the motor fuel tax and others related to Proposition 7. Also highlighted was the oil and gas severance tax related to Proposition 1 which continues to be negatively impacted. Toll transactions have improved, but express lane transactions have not experienced the same improvement. Policy metric three is the benefits of travel behavior responses. Improvements have been seen regarding the number of exceedances for the 2020 ozone season, but the region has experienced more exceedances than expected despite the significant decrease in freeway volumes. The final metric is how the RTC can use innovation to advance projects and create needed employment opportunities. Every \$1 billion in transportation investment produces approximately 12,000-15,000 jobs and the employment impacts of recently funded projects were highlighted. Staff continues to advance projects within the region to have a positive impact on the economy. Supporting Metric 4, the next round of public meetings for high-speed transportation between Dallas and Fort Worth are scheduled later in September. Additional efforts include autonomous transit, freeway induction loops, SH 183, and the IH 820/IH 20 Y Connector, as well as additional projects included in the COVID-19 #00X Program which will be presented to the RTC in November. Details were provided in Electronic Item 10. RTC Chair Roger Harmon discussed the possibility that all employers will not require all employees to return to their normal business locations as the COVID-19 environment improves and asked how data from those businesses can help. Mr. Morris noted that data from employers will likely vary dramatically from one point in time versus another and highlighted strategies to bring back employees without having them all return during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

11. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 11.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes in Electronic Item 11.2, and the current Local Motion was provided in Electronic Item 11.3.
12. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, October 8, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.