



## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Regional Freight Advisory Committee North Central Texas Council of Governments November 10, 2020 1 pm-2 pm**

The Regional Freight Advisory Committee convened at 1 pm on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, in a Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting.

#### **Meeting Outline**

1. Welcome/Previous Meeting Recap
2. BUILD Grant 2020 Award
3. Roundabouts for High-Speed Intersections
4. The Impact of Increased Adverse Weather Events on Freight Movement
5. DFW Freight Optimization
6. Air Quality Funding Opportunities
7. General Discussion

#### **1. Welcome/Previous Meeting Recap, Mike Johnson, NCTCOG**

Mike welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and gave a brief overview of the previous meeting on May 19, 2020. He noted the automated freight technology developments, supply chain automation, and the connected freight arterial connectors being tested in Arlington. Mike also mentioned that the North Texas region did not win the bid for Virgin Hyperloop's first test site. He noted the previous meeting presentations and meeting summary are available online at [www.nctcog.org/rfac](http://www.nctcog.org/rfac).

#### **2. BUILD Grant 2020 Award, Mike Johnson, NCTCOG**

Mike announced that the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) was awarded \$25 million through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant for the North Texas Multimodal Operations, Velocity, Efficiency, and Safety Program (NT MOVES). Projects planned through NT MOVES include double tracking rail corridors and rehabilitation/replacement of several bridges in Tarrant and Dallas Counties, along with 2.4 miles of a second track in Tarrant County. Implementation of new Regional Rail Information System technology is also planned as part of this initiative.

#### **3. Legislation Helping Truck Drivers at Roundabouts, Jay VonAhsen, P.E., Kimley Horn**

Mr. VonAhsen discussed the accelerated rate of roundabout construction on Texas roadways and pending legislation that could enhance safety for automobile and commercial vehicle drivers. As roundabouts become more prevalent on Texas roadways, there is a real possibility of increasing incidents.

"The counter-clockwise movement in a roundabout prohibits the ability of a truck driver to use the passenger-side mirror." The geometry of roundabout designs should be taken into consideration, to accommodate large commercial vehicles, due to their turning radius and length. Commercial vehicles cannot safely navigate most roundabouts designed for automobiles

without driving in more than one lane. This creates a potential negative impact to safety. Several states have enacted legislation requiring all traffic to yield to commercial vehicles, with a length of at least 40 feet or a width of at least 10 feet, if approaching a roundabout at approximately the same time. Legislation to protect truck drivers and improve safety in roundabouts will be considered during the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative session. Mr. VonAhsen encouraged meeting participants to support this legislation and to encourage public education.

**4. Roundabouts for High Speed Intersections**, Marcus Brewer, Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). TTI is investigating intersection designs for potential high speed roundabout locations, in addition to reviewing and collecting data for safety and best practices at modern roundabouts. Roundabout design guidance from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program includes such features as a larger central island, a truck apron, and wider lanes. Design guidance has been supported by research indicating that specific design elements help to reduce crashes and reduce injuries. Across the nation, multiple states have built roadway infrastructure that includes high speed roundabouts, some with high truck volumes.

Several locations within Texas have been identified as potential high speed roundabout sites as well. TTI will develop preliminary design guidance based on best practices, research, and field study findings conducted at these locations. Final design guidance will include a summary brochure and webinar content. Mr. Brewer invited participants to share their experiences with Texas roundabouts and recommend potential study site locations.

**5. The Impact of Increased Adverse Weather Events on Freight Movement**, *Understanding Freight Activities During Hurricane Harvey*, Kate Hyun, University of Texas at Arlington Sponsored by the Transportation Consortium of South-Central States (Tran-SET) and the US Department of Transportation - Ms. Hyun presented an overview of ongoing research designed to understand and plan for adverse weather impacts to the transportation industry, in Texas coastal areas. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey had devastating impacts on freight transportation; flooding roadways and damaging infrastructure. Almost 10 percent of US Trucking along the Texas coast was negatively impacted. Even with such negative impacts to infrastructure and the economy, there remains a lack of understanding of the scale and significance of destructive weather on freight movements.

Severe weather in coastal areas can have extreme impact on port truck traffic. Social and economic impacts are felt for months afterwards at a regional and state level and the transportation industry interruptions and slow-downs are felt across the nation. Critical components of port infrastructure and freight transportation should be identified for high prioritization responses to minimize freight movement disruptions. A better understanding of the magnitude of adverse weather on freight movement will help in the development of mitigation strategies to enhance the transportation system's overall resilience and reduce direct impact.

Objectives of the research study include developing strategies to identify travel patterns and understand and predict spatial activity travel behavior changes during difficult weather conditions. Findings could influence both freight and community/neighborhood design strategies and help identify risks associated with more frequent and deadly storms, due to climate change. Research findings will be developed and distributed through multiple mediums. Port truck activities during adverse weather events, and the impacts caused by the disruption, will be evaluated. A methodology will be developed to characterize the transportation system and regional agency response to minimize the effects of the weather event.

## **6. DFW Freight Optimization, Clint Hail, NCTCOG**

Clint presented the benefits of optimized freight movements through connected vehicle technology. Optimizing truck flow is a freight industry priority that supports federally-mandated Performance Measure 3, Truck Travel Time Reliability. “Connected vehicle technologies enable cars, buses, trucks, trains, roads and other infrastructure, and smartphones and other devices, to communicate or ‘talk’ to one another” through short-range radio signals. Examples of connected vehicle technology projects include the Texas Connected Freight Corridor, the Arlington Connected Vehicle Corridor, and the Georgia Regional Connected Vehicle Program.

The benefits of these projects could improve roadway safety, reduce truck-related crashes, and reduce the amount of time trucks spend in congestion. The optimized freight movement project elements include technology to optimize truck movements from distribution hubs to expressways, a benefit-cost analysis to identify where the technologies will do the most good, public-private partnership coordination with agencies and the freight industry, and the opportunity to monitor performance and adapt as needed.

## **7. Air Quality Funding Opportunities, Jason Brown, NCTCOG**

Jason provided an overview of current air quality funding opportunities for fleet vehicle projects including Clean Fleets North Texas 2020 Call for Projects, North Texas Freight Terminal Electrification 2020, and North Texas Emissions Reduction Project 2020. These projects are designed to improve air quality in the Dallas-Fort Worth ten-county ozone nonattainment area and two additional counties near the DFW ozone nonattainment area, that include several goods movement and transportation hubs.

Detailed information and links to resources to assist in the funding application process can be found on NCTCOG’s air quality pages. See [www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources) for more information.

## **8. General Discussion, All**

Mike thanked all in attendance for their participation and noted the next meeting of the Regional Freight Advisory Committee would be scheduled for May 2021.

As there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting attendees are included on the following page.

## **Meeting Attendees**

817-832-0420 – Participated by phone  
832-703-7961 – Participated by phone  
Brewer, Marcus, Texas Transportation Institute  
Brown, Jason, NCTCOG  
Clark, Sara, TranSystems  
Cristina, Paul, BNSF Railway  
Gamez, Kassandra, NCTCOG  
Hail, Clint, NCTCOG  
Hathcock, Jeff, NCTCOG  
Hodges, Amy, NCTCOG  
Hyun, Kate, University of Texas at Arlington  
Johnson, Michael, NCTCOG  
Kacir, Kent, Kimley-Horn  
Kessler, Dan, NCTCOG  
Key, Lisa, NCTCOG  
Khankarli, Gus, City of Dallas  
Lahon, Dhruva, Kimley-Horn  
Melvin, Tiffany, North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO)  
Moeller, Tyson, Union Pacific Railroad  
Mitchell, Corey, NCTCOG  
Moffett, Collin, NCTCOG  
Morgan, Curtis, Texas Transportation Institute  
Najafi, Mohammad, University of Texas at Arlington  
Nance, Savana, NCTCOG  
Pohlen, Terrance, University of North Texas, Denton  
Pope, Trey, NCTCOG  
Rader, Mike, Prime Rail Interests  
Rhea, Mark, Quail Systems  
Rutter, Allan, Texas Transportation Institute  
Shahandashti, Seyed Mohsen  
Sharma, Sushant, Texas A&M University  
VonAhsen, Jay, Kimley-Horn  
Zientek, Richard, Union Pacific Railroad