

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
July 9, 2020

In accordance with the Texas Governor's March 13, 2020, Disaster Declaration which was renewed through July 11, 2020, and subsequent suspension of certain Texas Open Meetings Act provisions, the July 9, 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, Mo Bur, Loyl Bussell, 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, Jungus Jordan, Ray Smith (representing John Keating), Mike Leyman, David Magness, Curtistene McCowan, B. Adam McGough, William Meadows, Cara Mendelsohn, Robert Miklos, Cary Moon, Barbara Odom-Wesley, Philip J. Ritter, John Ryan, Chris Schulmeister, Jeremy Tompkins, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Paul N. Wageman, Dennis Webb, Duncan Webb, B. Glen Whitley, W. Jeff Williams, and Ann Zadeh. Individual attendance was not taken for non-RTC member attendees.

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 June 11, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the June 11, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 2. B. Glen Whitley (M); Andy Eads (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 3.1. **FY2020 and FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program Modifications:** Regional Transportation Council approval of proposed modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program, provided in Electronic Item 3.1.1, was requested. Action also included direction for staff to amend the Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved modifications. Details were provided in Electronic Item 3.1.2. A positive comment was received through the public involvement process and provided to members in Electronic Item Handout 4.5.1 as part of the June Online Input Opportunity minutes, as well as posted online.
 - 3.2. **Ratification of Action Approving \$300,000 in Temporary Interim Funding for Air Quality Initiatives:** Regional Transportation Council (RTC) ratification of staff action to approve \$300,000 in temporary, interim RTC Local funding to support air quality initiatives was requested. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 3.2.
 - 3.3. **2020 Traffic Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects – Recommendations:** Regional Transportation Council approval of the 2020 Traffic Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects recommendations for an amount not to exceed \$1.375 million was requested. Project

recommendation tables were provided in Electronic Item 3.3.1 and the presentation was provided in Electronic Item 3.3.2.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Curtistene McCowan (M); Dianne Costa (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to the Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris welcomed new members of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). In addition, he discussed the passing of former RTC member John Monaco. He also provided follow-up information to questions asked by members at the June 11, 2020, meeting. On the SH 360/SH 161 Connector, the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) has the lead on the project. It is moving ahead on all projects under construction and will monitor its revenue stream to determine when to focus on new projects. B. Glen Whitley thanked staff for the follow up and requested that the project remain a priority for NTTA. Regarding progress on the IH 30 project from Linkcrest to IH 820, the project is slotted for 2023 and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is working to advance the project sooner. Mr. Morris reviewed additional items on the Director of Transportation report. He thanked members for their support on the Dallas to Houston high-speed rail project. In addition, he noted that North Central Texas Council of Governments staff would be providing comment on the TxDOT 2021 Unified Transportation Program. A letter of support to the Texas Transportation Commission on the Fort Worth to Laredo High-Speed Transportation Study was provided in Electronic Item 4.1. The State plan for high-speed rail was highlighted. The remaining items were not presented. The Trail of the Month Video item was postponed at the March 12, 2020, meeting and will remain postponed. Electronic Item 4.2 contained the latest auto occupancy/high-occupancy vehicle quarterly subsidy report. Details on future updates to federal performances measures was provided in Electronic Item 4.3. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities upcoming events were provided at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings> and current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles were provided at <https://www.nctcoq.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>. Electronic Item 4.4 contains the latest status report on ozone. The North Central Texas Council of Governments was recently featured on SmartWay Affiliate in Action. Details are available at <https://www.epa.gov/smartway/smartway-affiliates-action>. In addition, details regarding Clean Air Action Day, August 5, 2020, are available at www.airnorthtexas.org/socialdistancing. June online input opportunity minutes were provided in Electronic Item 4.5, the public comments report in Electronic Item 4.6, and news articles in Electronic Item 4.7.
5. **Regional Transportation Council Policy Position Establishing Guidelines for Ratification Actions:** Michael Morris highlighted a potential opportunity for the region to host the National Hockey League (NHL) Hub City Tournament discussed at the June 11, 2020 Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting. At the meeting members were asked to support interim authority to fund transportation elements of the bid, with ratification requested at today's meeting. The letter of commitment provided to the Dallas Stars as part of the effort was provided in Electronic Item 5.1. The NHL did not select the Dallas-Fort Worth region as one of the host sites. However, he noted staff believed it is important to formalize a policy for ratification actions outside of the Transportation Improvement Program modification process. The proposed policy provided in Electronic Item 5.2, P20-02, establishes guidelines for instances when an emergency or time-sensitive item must be implemented prior to the ability for staff to request official RTC approval. It is anticipated that the provision would be used rarely. Specific guidelines define that projects or initiatives would be lower cost, likely less than \$5 million, with projects over this dollar amount requiring the Chair to call a special meeting of the RTC. Instances would occur infrequently

and would require approval by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director, who would notify the RTC Chair. The item would need to be placed on the next scheduled meeting of the RTC for ratification. If an item is not ratified, staff would be required to outline the implications from the lack of action. To minimize complications related to federal funds, the use of RTC Local funds for emergency purposes would be encouraged. Curtistene McCowan asked if it would be prudent to cap the dollar amount before a special meeting would need to be called. Mr. Morris noted that staff used the term "most likely less than \$5 million" to allow flexibility. A motion was made to approve P20-02, Regional Transportation Council Policy Position Establishing Guidelines for Ratification Actions, as provided in Electronic Item 5.2. Theresa Daniel (M); Dianne Costa (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **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 policy metrics were highlighted: 1) travel behavior response to COVID-19, 2) financial implications to traditional revenue sources, 3) benefits of travel responses to areas of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) responsibility and how we preserve those, and 4) prioritization of infrastructure improvements that offset unemployment increases and utilize lower costs. The first policy metric, travel behavior response to COVID-19, was discussed and specific data for freeway volumes, average speeds, crashes and fatalities, transit ridership, enplanements, and bicycle/pedestrian counts were highlighted. Freeway volumes have increased in recent weeks and are currently approximately 20 percent lower than pre COVID-19 restrictions. Bicycle and pedestrian activity are up approximately 65 percent. Toll tag transactions are currently down by approximately 40 percent, which is an improvement. Transit ridership is increasing, as well as airport passengers, which was previously down by approximately 98 percent. Presentations slides with additional details were emailed to members, as well as posted on the RTC website. The second policy metric is the financial implications to traditional revenue sources. Reductions in vehicles sales tax, motor vehicles sales and use, and motor fuel tax were highlighted, all of which have experienced significant reductions. He noted this is one reason the RTC believes the Texas Transportation Commission will not have the revenues anticipated for the Unified Transportation Program. Also discussed was the reduction in the North Texas Tollway Authority's toll transactions, as well as express lane transactions. Staff will continue to monitor data from projects in the region with associated TIFIA loans. Data from the GoCarma application was also highlighted. Policy metric three is the benefits of travel behavior responses, and staff is focused on the benefits to air quality. He stressed the importance of developing policies to take advantage of some of the behaviors that have had positive impacts in the region. With the reduction in emissions levels due to lower vehicle travel, the region's ozone season is more positive than normal, although it is currently not as improved as expected. The idea that a State Implementation Plan can be developed that focuses on urban regions as a way to come into compliance of the ozone standard is no longer the correct assumption, as seen by the fact that ozone exceedances have still occurred despite a 40-50 percent reduction in roadway travel. He noted this will be a topic that will be brought back before the RTC and the State. The final metric is how the RTC can use innovation to advance projects. Examples include high-speed rail investment between Dallas and Houston and the advancement of the environmental document for high-speed technology between Dallas and Fort Worth. Other candidate projects include the next phase of the Hyperloop Certification Center, autonomous transit, freeway induction loops, SH 183 improvements by the private sector, and the Y Connector. In addition, the COVID-19 #00X Program is an effort to document the advancement of smaller projects the region moves forward with through innovation. Projects

documented to date were highlighted. Mr. Morris noted that future reports will highlight the differences in new data and efforts as staff works to understand transportation behaviors, financial implications, and benefits that can be sustained into the future.

Dianne Costa discussed the transportation issues related to COVID-19 and the major impacts on transit ridership, developments, small businesses, major employment centers, school districts, and others. She noted the near-term plan seems to be the biggest struggle for the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) as it works to prepare for its response when activity increases. In addition, she discussed a return to work survey conducted by DC Metro questioning employers and employees to help it develop plans for increasing levels of rail and bus service in the DC region. The survey is confidential and includes questions related to employee telework, current employee travel patterns, employer in-office work schedules, and others. She noted she believes a similar survey in the Dallas-Fort Worth region would be beneficial to DCTA as well as business, universities, cities, counties, and school districts to help plan for appropriate responses in the next 90-120 days. She requested input from members regarding potential benefits of a similar survey. Mr. Morris discussed the challenges of a survey due to the ever-changing elements of the COVID-19 environment and that a continuous survey would likely provide more benefit and help identify changes that result from the stochastic set of circumstances. Ms. Costa agreed that such a survey could be challenging but that questions could request future planning options being considered. In addition, she noted that the North Central Texas Council of Governments would likely be the best organization to lead such a survey. RTC Secretary Theresa Daniel asked if the request is part of the data already being collected by staff. Mr. Morris noted that staff is currently collecting data from observed actions, but that the survey would be directed at individuals and agencies to determine future activities/plans. He added staff will need time to consider the elements of the request and bring information back to the RTC for approval. RTC Secretary Ann Zadeh discussed the delivery of innovative projects during COVID-19 recovery and the importance that the innovative projects should help the region not only return to normal, but also continue some of the actions that resulted in positive benefits within the region for air quality and congestion. If Ms. Costa is asking for a way to collect information to deliver projects that will encourage people not to just go back to the previous behaviors but to continue some of the behaviors that resulted in benefits, then questions addressing options that will help the region with air quality and congestion should be included. She suggested that experts should look for options to use roadways in the future that are more multimodal and that help with air quality and congestion. Mr. Morris clarified the Ms. Costa is asking for a survey that helps plan for future service improvements as ridership increases based on what institutions such as universities are planning in the near future. The request from Ms. Zadeh is to ensure that the region does not return to some of the past behaviors that produce negative air quality and congestion outcomes. Ms. Costa noted she believed the survey could present options that help the region to start thinking differently. Mr. Morris noted staff would work with Ms. Costa on the details of her request, as well as others who are interested. Details will be presented to the RTC in the future.

7. **Congestion Management Process Update:** Natalie Bettger provided an update on efforts underway to update the region's Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP is a federally mandated planning document required for urbanized areas with populations exceeding 200,000. Unlike other planning documents, there is not a mandated cycle update and the current CMP was last updated in 2013. The purpose of the CMP is to reduce the amount of roadway capacity that is added to the transportation system by implementing other strategies such as demand reduction, traffic operational improvements, public

transportation improvements, and others with capacity added as a last resort. Projects adding single occupant vehicle capacity must be evaluated and comply with the CMP by integrating congestion management strategies. The eight-step process to develop the CMP was highlighted and details were provided in Electronic Item 7. Regional goals and objectives of the CMP are consistent with those of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and as strategies are identified they are programmed into the Transportation Improvement Program and implemented. The strategies are then evaluated for effectiveness and the results are then fed back into the performance measures, as well as recommendations for the MTP plan. During the evaluation process, there are four main criteria for identifying deficiencies within corridors: 1) recurring congestion, 2) safety, 3) non-recurring congestion, and 4) pavement and bridge condition. In addition, staff conducts a corridor asset inventory to determine available roadway capacity, non-roadway capacity, and operational assets in the corridor. Corridors are then evaluated to determine if they need improvement or if they meet the needs of the corridor/are under construction. For those with deficiencies, staff identifies areas of deficiencies and selects strategies to help alleviate the congestion on the corridor. Staff also reviews performance measures after a strategy is implemented, often in comparison to performance before implementation, to better assess and understand the benefits of the identified strategies that may be applicable in other corridors. Ms. Bettger highlighted the schedule for the CMP update which includes a proposed Surface Transportation Technical Committee workshop in the fall, additional information presented in November, and a request for action by the Regional Transportation Council in December. Feedback on the process was requested.

8. **Transit-Oriented Development Parking Study:** Karla Weaver presented information on the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) parking utilization and management study that was completed in 2019 as part of a TOD Planning Pilot. Approximately \$1.75 from the Federal Transit Administration grant was received and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) partnered with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and the Cities of Dallas, Richardson, Plano, and Garland. The pilot looked at three main components, including parking. The goal of the effort was to increase transit-oriented development and ridership in the identified corridors, and as part of the process a series of parking tools and an interactive website was developed as a resource for communities. Parking challenges, particularly around TOD, were highlighted. Parking, especially around transit, subsidizes driving. If parking is free there is a reduced economic incentive to take another mode because transit has a cost. Parking also increases the initial development costs, as well as creates an environment that generally discourages walking and activity. The parking study helped to generate data to inform policy decisions such as appropriate parking ratios and development practices. Staff also wanted to develop best practices and recommendations for parking management around transit and areas of dense concentration, as well as identify ways managing parking can increase TOD performance such as increased ridership and dense development in these areas. With consultant assistance, staff conducted onsite observations at 16 locations for a continuous 72 hours to understand parking utilization at each of the developments. These developments were within walking distance of DART stations. Interviews were also conducted with property managers and developers to understand their perceptions of parking availability, issues with the finance industry, city codes, and other areas that may influence their parking construction decisions. Of the 16 sites, 13 never peaked above 80 percent utilization which is consider optimal use in the market. This meant that over 4,000 spaces were unutilized. Additionally, findings indicated that significantly less parking is utilized at workforce affordable housing developments than other traditional-type developments. Ms. Weaver discussed the cost of parking, noting that the impact of the nearly 4,500 underutilized parking spaces, when calculated at an average

cost of \$17,000 to \$40,000 per garage spaces, has a value of approximately \$80 million that is not being utilized. These costs impact the private developer, as well as public-private partnerships, local governments, and State investments. A smarter parking policy could help reduce construction costs. The developer influence to build beyond the minimum number of parking spaces, as well as the influence of lenders, brokers, and tenants in determining the supply of parking was discussed. To help advance the conversation for both the public and private sector, a toolbox has been created where agencies can find the study and relevant data: www.parkingtoolboxntx.org. Michael Morris noted that parking is an area in which it is important, as a region of 8 million, to advance a policy that addresses fundamental elements and appropriate solutions for parking in the region. Ann Zadeh discussed workforce housing and the benefit of using unneeded parking space for more affordable housing, as well as potential cost savings. She also noted the importance of educating the public who often have the perception that there is not enough parking. Cara Mendelsohn noted the areas included in the pilot and the estimated cost of \$17,000-\$40,000 per space for garage structures. She asked if staff had an estimate of surface parking costs, which is primarily the type of parking at the locations observed. Ms. Weaver noted that the \$1.75 million funding was for a study conducted at private developments that included multifamily, office complexes, or a combination of those near stations which were primarily parking garages. Ms. Mendelsohn also asked if staff has looked at places such as Galatyn Park that does not have parking to determine how many people are walking to the location versus being dropped off. Ms. Weaver noted that staff will confirm if Galatyn Park was an area that was studied and added that initial feedback from the pilot will help determine if this study can potentially be expanded to other areas. Ms. Mendelsohn noted she believed this is an important conversation, but that in her opinion the information presented does not quite hit the target of the situation and estimates that parking costs \$17,000-\$40,000 per space is not a fair way to measure since much of the parking is surface parking. Mr. Morris discussed the parking study and noted this is just one of many parking strategies on which staff works. Staff can provide any information that is helpful. Ms. Weaver added that as part of the study, surveys were conducted with users of the system, residents, employees, and employers and the information will be available soon.

- 9. Federal and State Legislative Update:** Rebekah Hernandez provided a federal legislative update. Regarding transportation reauthorization, action is needed by September 30, 2020. Currently, the House has approved the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act as part of HR 2. The Senate approved a partial version of a surface transportation bill in 2019 that only includes the highway portion and would still need to act and provide language for transit, safety, and rail. Funding must also be identified for the bill. HR 2, the Moving America Forward Act, is a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill that includes transportation, water, broadband, housing, energy, and healthcare, as well as INVEST text. The INVEST in America Act includes nearly \$500 billion in federal funding for FY2021 through FY2025 and was approved by the House Transportation Committee on June 18. The text was then rolled into HR 2 and approved by the House on July 1, mostly along party lines. The bill is divided into four divisions. Division A maintains existing program structure for FY2021 and extends authorized funding levels. In addition, it provides some additional funding for specific agencies for relief from COVID revenue loss. Division B reauthorizes highway, transit, and safety programs for four more years. Division C is for hazardous material safety reauthorization and Division D is for rail reauthorization. Major themes of the INVEST in America Act include focus on improvements to existing facilities versus new capacity, creates at least 20 new programs/grant programs, includes climate, resiliency, and greenhouse gas reductions, as well as bicycle/pedestrian access and safety, increased transit funding, and bridge

improvements. Ms. Hernandez noted that Congress must also act on appropriations by September 30 or a continuing resolution. On the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development section, the bill provides \$75.9 billion for the standard four titles in the bill, which is a \$1.65 billion increase over 2020 funding levels. However, there is a new, additional title that provides an additional \$75 billion in appropriations for FY2020. This basically doubles the bill but is designated for off-budget emergencies that both Congress and the President would have to designate and approve. The bill will go before the full House Appropriations Committee in mid-July and Senate markups have been delayed. Ms. Hernandez also provided a State legislative update. The House and Senate legislative committees have canceled all interim hearings due to COVID-19. Staff will continue to monitor if interim hearings are scheduled and will also continue to review comptroller revenue estimates. The comptroller is expected to provide a mid-cycle revenue estimate later in July. This is usually done at the beginning of a legislative session and legislators review the information as they craft the next two-year budget. Additionally, the Texas Transportation Commission continues to meet monthly and the public comment period for the draft FY2021 Unified Transportation Program is open from July 10-August 10. As a reminder, Ms. Hernandez noted that the first day of the 87th Texas Legislature is January 12, 2021. Bill filing begins November 9, 2020. North Central Texas Council of Governments staff will soon begin preparations for the draft Regional Transportation Council Legislative Program for the Texas Legislature and will provide updates to members.

10. **Update on Volkswagen Settlement and Zero Emission Vehicle Corridor:** Lori Clark provided an update on Volkswagen Settlement activities and specifically discussed those related to zero-emission vehicles. The Volkswagen Settlement includes two separate programs creating opportunities to reduce emissions and improving air quality: 1) Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program and 2) Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Investment. Several programs are included in the mitigation program and are in various stages. Funding opportunities for refuse vehicles and freight/port drayage vehicles remain open and applications are accepted on a first-come, first served basis. Staff continues to track the progress of the individual programs and the percentage of available funding that has been requested. The Dallas-Fort Worth region continues to lead the State in demonstrating demand for the funding and staff continues to prepare for potential opportunities to request consideration for allocation of funds remaining unallocated in various programs. Program eligibility and current funding availability for the two open programs were highlighted and details were provided in Electronic Item 10. She noted that staff has worked with the City of Dallas to help ensure that small contractors for cities have an opportunity to apply for funding and that those interested should contact staff. Ms. Clark also discussed Electrify America, a subsidiary of Volkswagen that is responsible for investing \$2 billion nationwide in ZEV infrastructure and education/outreach to raise awareness of zero-emission vehicles. Most of the emphasis has been on battery electric vehicles, but Electrify America is now requesting information to help guide its next funding opportunity. Comments are due July 31, 2020. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will be submitting information at the regional level, but individual communities were encouraged to provide community-specific information that may help with future funding investments in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Details are available at www.electrifyamerica.com. In addition, Ms. Clark highlighted information about the IH 45 ZEV Corridor Deployment Plan. In 2019, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded funds to NCTCOG to develop zero-emission infrastructure on IH 45 from the Dallas-Fort Worth region through Houston to the seaports, including both hydrogen refueling and battery electric vehicle charging. The corridor currently has a 111-mile gap in electric vehicle charging between Ennis and Madisonville. NCTCOG staff has submitted that this

should be an area of focus. Possible future infrastructure sites were highlighted in Electronic Item 10. By May 2021, NCTCOG expects to finalize a ZEV deployment plan that outlines a suggested number of stations and potential locations. Four stakeholder groups will be established to address infrastructure deployment, vehicle availability, customer identification, and policy/incentives and interested members and communities were encouraged to participate and asked to submit a stakeholder survey, provided through a link on page 12 of Electronic Item 10.

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, August 13, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.