

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL**  
**January 14, 2021**

In accordance with the Texas Governor's March 13, 2020, Disaster Declaration which was renewed through February 4, 2021, and subsequent suspension of certain Texas Open Meetings Act provisions, the January 14, 2021, 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 A. Aubin, Mohamed Bur, Dianne Costa, Theresa Daniel, Chad Davis, Pat Deen, Rudy Durham, Andy Eads, Kevin Falconer, Gary Fickes, George Fuller, Stephen Mason (representing Barry Gordon), Rick Grady, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Roger Harmon, Ivan Hughes, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Carl L. Johnson, Jungus Jordan, John Keating, Mike Leyman, B. Adam McGough, Gary Roden (representing Allen E. Meagher), Cara Mendelsohn, Cary Moon, Ignacio Nuñez, Philip Ritter, John Ryan, Chris Schulmeister, Jeremy Thompkins, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Paul N. Wageman, 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 December 10, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the December 10, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 2. Theresa Daniel (M); Tennell Atkins (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
  - 3.1. **Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** Regional Transportation Council approval of revisions to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes was requested. February 2021 revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP were provided as Electronic Item 3.1 for the Council's consideration.
  - 3.2. **Regional Transportation Council Local Contingency for Fiscal Year 2021 Regional Aerial Photography Program:** Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of a \$1.8 million cash flow contingency in RTC Local funds to cover the costs of the Fiscal Year 2021 Regional Aerial Photography Program, in the event federal funds are not available, was requested.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Rick Grady (M); George Fuller (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to the Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris and members of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) recognized Gary Thomas, President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) for his public service to the region and congratulated him on his retirement. Members expressed appreciation for his leadership and efforts to improve mobility within the region. DART Board Chair Paul N.

Wageman expressed gratitude on behalf of the DART Board for the service he has provided to North Texas as President/Executive Director of DART for 20 years.

Mr. Morris congratulated the City of Dallas, the Texas Department of Transportation Dallas District, and North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff on receipt of a \$4 million Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ACTMTD) grant from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the City of Dallas SM Wright Smart Corridor Project. In addition, he recognized NCTCOG staff member, Ernest Huffman, who recently received that Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International Lone Star's Excellence Award for his work on integrating Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into North Texas and advocating for advancement of UAS technologies. He also noted that the USDOT recently issued two, much-anticipated drone rules to advance safety and innovation. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4.1. Electronic Item 4.2 contained information about the recent announcement by the Federal Railroad Administration regarding full implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) and certification of TEXRail's PTC system. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities upcoming events were provided in <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings> and current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles were provided at <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>. Electronic Item 4.4 included information on the status of Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program funding programs. Upcoming transit study meetings are scheduled for the following dates: Tarrant County Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting, January 28, 2021, 2:00 pm; South Dallas County Public Meeting, February 4, 2021, 6:00 pm; Denton County Initial Stakeholders Meeting, February 5, 2021, 1:30 pm; and East Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties Initial Stakeholders Meeting, February 12, 2021, 10:00 am. December online input opportunity minutes were provided in Electronic Item 4.5, and Electronic Item 4.6 contained the January online input opportunity notice. The Public Comments Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.7, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 4.8, recent news articles in Electronic Item 4.9, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 4.10. Mr. Morris also provided an overview of slides from Electronic Item 4.3, Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery. He highlighted impacts by mode of travel, noting that bicycle/pedestrian activity remains strong and transit ridership has improved. In addition, he discussed impacts to revenue as well as the lower cost of construction. The region continues efforts to implement projects in order to take advantage the of the reduced construction costs. Detailed data is available through the online dashboard at [www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19](http://www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19).

5. **Legislative Update:** Rebekah Hernandez provided an update on federal legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. At the end of December, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Appropriations and a COVID-19 stimulus relief package were approved and signed into law. The bill includes \$25.3 billion for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) with funding levels as prescribed by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act extension. Also included is \$1 billion in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant funding, \$10 billion for State DOTs to be administered as Surface Transportation Block Grant funds, and \$14 billion for large public transit providers, as well as funding for aviation and Amtrak. Ms. Hernandez noted the 117<sup>th</sup> Congressional session began January 3, 2021. The new administration has stated a new infrastructure bill is an early priority, and the FAST Act one-year extension expires September 30, 2021. Pete Buttigieg has been announced as the new USDOT Secretary of Transportation and is expected to be confirmed. New committee chairmen and ranking minority members have been announced but have not yet taken their position. In

addition, the Senate will switch over parties on January 20, 2021. Staff will continue to monitor federal legislative actions. Ms Hernandez also provided an update on State legislative actions. The 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature convened on January 12, 2021. The first order of business was the election of a new Speaker of the House, Dade Phelan. In addition, the Comptroller released biennial revenue estimates and the House and Senate released new safety protocols, as well as lowered the threshold of support needed to bring a bill to the floor to 18 members in the Senate. Bill filings started after the November election and continue through March 12. Regarding the Comptroller biennial revenue estimate for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the State will have an estimated \$112.5 billion in revenue available for general-purpose spending during the 2022-2023 biennium, an approximate 0.4 percent decrease from Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Overall, the \$946 million shortfall is an improvement from the estimated \$4.6 billion deficit in the summer. Specifically related to transportation revenue, it is estimated that approximately \$2.3 billion in Proposition 1 Oil and Gas Severance Taxes revenue will be available in the biennium. In addition, a projected \$61 million transfer from the Proposition 7 Motor Vehicle Sales Tax and the full \$5 billion from the State Sales Tax are expected. Bill topics of interest to the RTC are being tracked and include bills related to funding, safety, high-speed rail, and air quality/alternative fuel. Staff will continue to provide weekly updates online at [www.nctcog.org/legislative](http://www.nctcog.org/legislative) and notify members when new information is available. Regional Transportation Council Secretary Ann Zadeh noted that several of the safe road initiatives have been filed in previous sessions that support the complete streets and vision zero that many cities throughout the state have adopted, and she is hopeful these type bills move forward this session.

6. **2021 Top 10 Transportation Technology Initiatives: Recent Presentations:** Michael Morris noted recent presentations on transportation technologies to interest groups within the region and highlighted the top ten transportation technologies initiatives currently being pursued. He challenged members to become more involved with one of these transportation technologies and to take time to better understand how technology can be used to solve transportation problems. Often technology is cost effective, enhances business development, and brings talented employees to the region to work, live, and play creating a tax base for communities and the State. Mr. Morris noted these initiatives have been supported by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and include internet for all which will help with a variety of inequities such as access to education. In addition, the internet may help underserved population access healthy foods, address food deserts, provide access to telemedicine, and provide opportunities for online job recruiting. The next transportation technology discussed was dynamically priced managed lanes and efforts to include technology that allows communication between vehicles and infrastructure. Technology initiatives are also progressing related to high-speed transportation from Fort Worth through Arlington to Dallas, as well as Dallas to Houston. Another transportation technology moving forward in the region is Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). He noted that Bell Helicopter has restructured its company to address UAS and staff is working with agencies within the region regarding interest in the next generation technology, including the Department of Defense. Autonomous people movers are another transportation technology initiative in the region which are proposed in Tarrant County and in the Midtown area east of the Galleria. There may be other opportunities for this type of technology as well. Next, Mr. Morris discussed next generation freeway design on IH 30 from Fort Worth to IH 635, such as designing the project from the beginning for autonomous vehicles and including elements needed for higher throughput using advanced technologies. Related to air quality, Toyota has created a hydrogen fuel cell, electric heavy-duty truck whose exhaust is water. Staff is working with manufacturers to see how this technology can be advanced and potentially help address the emissions created by traditional heavy-duty vehicles in the

region. In addition, staff is working with autonomous heavy-duty diesel technology users, of which four are being operated in the region. This technology could help facilitate the movement of trucks outside of the peak periods and potentially in managed lane corridors to allow for the increased flow of goods movements. Also discussed was a mobility innovation zone being used by Hillwood in which an autonomous vehicle removes the shipping container from a train and places it on an autonomous truck that delivers the container to a warehouse. Finally, he discussed the use of induction loops in pavement for charging of electric vehicles during travel. Mr. Morris highlighted four major program areas that have helped the Dallas-Fort Worth region address congestion despite continued growth and the relationship with the State legislative delegation. The first area is partnering with agencies such as the North Texas Tollway Authority and Texas Department of Transportation districts to build mega transportation projects like IH 635 East and the Y Connector. This focus area is in addition to the focus on traditional transportation projects in the region. Also of importance, working with local governments on initiatives such as mixed-use development or building a tax base in partnership with transportation. This could be initiated by either the local or State government. The fourth area is generating economic development through the use of technology similar to the autonomous technology project being used at Hillwood. Mr. Morris noted that what helps fuel efforts in the region is the continued use of the fair share allocation of formula funds. He discussed the importance of maintaining and continuing the Dallas-Forth miracle with regard to transportation revenue and maintaining formula allocations regardless of the fact that the Dallas-Fort Worth region has been successful in implementing projects. In closing, Mr. Morris discussed the RTC's position of formula allocation and the desire that the \$2 billion diverted to other parts of the state is reimbursed. An option is the use of one public-private partnership (P3) that could generate enough money for the Texas Department of Transportation to reimburse the \$2 billion. Senator Nichols' letter from July 2016 supports formula allocation. Senator Nichols is currently the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, and as such his position on formula allocation is important. However, because the Senator nor other legislators support P3s and P3s are currently not permissible by State law, it is important that conversations regarding the tools, options, and methods that are available to help reimburse the \$2 billion continue during the legislative session. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 6. RTC Chair Harmon reminded members of the importance of communicating with representatives and senators, as well as continued support of transportation.

7. **Transit-Oriented Development Survey Results (This item was postponed from the December 10, 2021, RTC Meeting):** This item was postponed and placed on the February 11, 2021, meeting agenda.
8. **Update on Transit Ridership Related to COVID-19 (This item was postponed from the January 14, 2021, RTC Meeting):** This item was postponed and will be placed on a future meeting agenda.
9. **Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Fleet Recognition and Annual Survey Results (This item was postponed from the January 14, 2021, RTC Meeting):** This item was postponed and placed on the February 11, 2021, meeting agenda.
10. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 10.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes in Electronic Item 10.2, and the current Local Motion in Electronic Item 10.3.
11. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.

12. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, February 11, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.