MINUTES
Regional Transportation Council
PUBLIC MEETINGS

Target Setting for FAST Act Performance Measures
Auto Occupancy Rewards Program for Managed Lanes
Electric Vehicles Update

Meeting Dates and Locations
The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held public meetings as follows:

1. Monday, Oct. 8, 2018 – 2:30 pm – North Central Texas Council of Governments (Arlington); attendance: 7; moderated by Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager
2. Monday, Oct. 15, 2018 – 6:00 pm – Richardson Civic Center (Richardson); attendance: 8; moderated by Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager
3. Thursday, Oct. 18, 2018 – 6:00 pm – Fort Worth Central Library (Fort Worth); attendance: 2; moderated by Natalie Bettger, Senior Program Manager

Public Meeting Purpose and Topics
The public meetings were held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and amended on February 12, 2015. Staff presented information about:

1. Target Setting for FAST Act Performance Measures – presented by Dan Lamers
2. Auto Occupancy Rewards Program for Managed Lanes – presented by Natalie Bettger
3. Electric Vehicles Update – presented by Bailey Muller (Arlington and Richardson); Lori Clark (Fort Worth)

The NCTCOG public meetings were held to educate, inform and seek comments from the public. Comments were solicited from those present who wished to speak for the record. The presentations made at the meetings are available at www.nctcog.org/input, and a video recording of the Arlington public meeting was posted at www.nctcog.org/video.

Each person who attended one of the public meetings received a packet with a meeting agenda, a sheet on which to submit written comments and copies of the presentations.

Summary of Presentations


The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) requires all metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to develop performance measures and targets related to their transportation planning process. Due to this legislation, NCTCOG conducts performance-based planning initiatives, utilizes required federal performance measures, supports the Texas
Department of Transportation (TxDOT) State performance targets as much as possible and sets additional goals to support the long-range transportation plan for the region.

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved performance targets for both transit asset management and safety performance in December 2017. The adopted transit asset management targets state rolling stock, infrastructure, equipment and facilities are not to exceed their useful-life benchmark. Additionally, the adopted safety targets aim to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries on all roads by the year 2022. The RTC takes regional safety very seriously and states even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable. NCTCOG staff is currently working to develop a regional Towards Zero Deaths Plan for North Central Texas.

NCTCOG staff is proposing the RTC support the TxDOT statewide targets for National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge conditions, adopt the regional targets set forth for interstate, non-interstate and truck reliability, and adopt regional targets identical to TxDOT’s regional targets for peak-hour excessive delay, non-SOV travel and emissions reductions.

**Auto Occupancy Rewards Program for Managed Lanes presentation:**

The Regional Transportation Council’s (RTC) current Tolled Managed Lane Policy includes a provision for peak-period carpool discounts but requests an exploration of automated occupancy verification technology. The current high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) detection program requires drivers to download an application to their phone and declare their HOV status 15 minutes prior to every trip taken on a tolled managed lane within the region. Once a driver’s status has been declared, the 50 percent discount is applied to the toll collected and sent directly to the North Texas Tollway Authority’s back office system for billing. Police officers currently patrol the managed lanes to help enforce this process.

The new proposed HOV program would still require drivers to download a phone application to register their vehicle. However, participants would no longer need to declare their HOV status before every trip. Through a partnership with Carma, a technology company specializing in verified ride technology, vehicle occupancy would automatically be detected utilizing car beacons and bluetooth capabilities. Additionally, this new approach would shift from carpool discounts to a rewards system that would begin on tolled managed lanes and could be expanded throughout the region. The need for manual enforcement would also be eliminated. Pilot testing for this project has already been conducted on the DFW Connector Corridor, where 98.4 percent of reported occupancies were an exact match.

Indirect benefits of shifting to an automated vehicle occupancy verification program include a more user-friendly system, legal savings, privacy protection, air quality improvements and congestion mitigation, among others. This new program is estimated to cost approximately $24 million over a span of 10 years.

On Oct. 11, 2018, the RTC voted to proceed with occupancy verification technology and pilot testing and allocated funding for the project through Fiscal Year 2021. The toll discount will continue to be offered instead of shifting to a new rewards program at this time. NCTCOG and its partner agencies will continue to evaluate the feasibility and cost savings of another incentive-based program that considers data security, US 75 implementation, existing enforcement, institutional and legislative items, etc.
Electric Vehicles help improve air quality, provide energy security, have lower vehicle maintenance and fuel costs and allow owners to “refuel” at home. There are currently three different types of EVs: the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV), the plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) and the all-electric or plug-in electric vehicle (PEV). A level one charge port has a range of two to five miles per hour of charge. A level two charge port has a range of 10 to 20 miles per hour of charge, and a level three charge port has a range of 60 to 80 miles per 20 minutes of charge. The electric load of three EVs is equal to approximately that of one average household.

As of Oct. 1, 2018, Texas had 15,056 EV registrations, with 5,752 of those registrations located in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. In September 2018, NCTCOG hosted its own National Drive Electric Week (NDEW) event at the Grapevine Mills Mall, where over 169 EVs gathered. It was the 2nd largest NDEW event in the country behind San Diego.

There are several EV incentives currently available for those interested in purchasing an EV, including the Plug-In Electric Drive Motor Vehicle Credit, the Lease Incentive Program and the AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine Program. Buyers could be eligible to save up to $13,500 on their vehicle purchase. An additional $3,000 rebate on a Nissan LEAF is available to Oncor customers who present the incentive flyer. More information on electric vehicles can be found at www.dfwcleancities.org/evnt.
ORAL COMMENTS RECEIVED AT MEETING
(Meeting location in parenthesis)

Target Setting for FAST Act Performance Measures

Chip Pratt, Canyon Creek HOA (Richardson)

A. Performance measure criteria for transportation modes

Question: Is the measurement criteria different for each transportation mode?

Summary of response by Jeff Neal: Since federal performance measures tend to concentrate on highly traveled roads instead of city streets, we try to convert them so they can be used at the local level too. It's very important for the system as a whole to work with the local governments on all transportation initiatives.

Auto Occupancy Rewards Program for Managed Lanes

Bailey Balmer, Citizen (Arlington)

Question: How are you going to market the new auto occupancy rewards program?

Summary of response by Natalie Bettger: Public information officers from around the region have put together a communications plan, and it includes numerous outreach efforts, such as billboards, newspaper ads, focus groups, etc.

Daniel Kirksey, Citizen (Richardson)

A. New auto occupancy process

Comment: I have a lot of concerns about the proposed auto occupancy rewards program. I don’t like the idea of having to register with another phone application. It seems like there are a lot of steps involved in this new process.

Summary of response by Natalie Bettger: The RTC’s current policy for tolled managed lanes provides a 50 percent discount on HOV lanes during the peak period. In order to receive this discount, drivers have to declare their HOV status every time they use the lanes. We think the new Carma app is more user-friendly and automatically identifies how many people are in each vehicle. Additionally, the utilization of the technology would remove police officers from the field. We have a feeling people are currently taking advantage of the system because the officers can’t be everywhere during the peak period to enforce the process.

B. Data collection policy

Question: What is Carma’s policy on collecting data?

Summary of response by Natalie Bettger: Carma cannot sell any of the data they collect.

Summary of response by Dan Lamers: Our contract with Carma does not allow them to use any of the data for anything other than this auto occupancy detection process. We can’t even use the data for legal purposes.
Byron Bradford, Citizen (Richardson)

A. Bidding process for auto occupancy technology

*Question:* Was there a bidding process for the auto occupancy technology?

*Summary of response by Natalie Bettger:* We went out for procurement, and two companies submitted bids. We had a selection committee score both submissions and make the final decision.

Electric Vehicles Update

Alexa Reed, Citizen (Arlington)

A. Charging station locations

*Question:* Is there a way to identify electric vehicle charging station locations?

*Summary of response by Bailey Muller:* The Alternative Fuels Data Center (AFDC) has a station locator as well as a phone application. The app has a route locator and provides hours of operation for charging stations. The PlugShare app also allows you to find a place to charge your vehicle.

B. Charging costs

*Question:* How much does it cost to charge an EV?

*Summary of response by Bailey Muller:* When you charge an EV at home, it’s very safe, cost effective and shows up on your electric bill. If you need to charge your vehicle when you are traveling throughout the region, different companies have different rates and subscriptions. For instance, it’s free to charge your EV at the Whole Foods in Fort Worth. You can use the phone applications to find that information.

Bailey Balmer, Citizen (Arlington)

A. Public outreach for EVs

*Question:* How do you all plan to educate members of the public on the benefits of owning an EV?

*Summary of response by Bailey Muller:* We want people to understand the range of uses and their availability. A lot of people have misconceptions, but 90 percent of the people currently driving an EV are charging at home.

Nicholas Badeaux, Citizen (Arlington)

A. Vehicle manufacturers’ thoughts on EVs

*Question:* This area is heavily influenced by companies like General Motors. Have you received any negative feedback from vehicle manufacturers?

*Summary of response by Bailey Muller:* No, we haven’t really experienced any negative feedback. Some vehicle manufacturers are more aggressive in developing their own EV models than others, but everyone is recognizing EV growth.
John Nicholson, Nicholson Contract Services (Richardson)

A. Charging station locations

**Question:** Where are the charging stations currently located, and how do you all spread word about those locations?

**Summary of response by Bailey Muller:** The Alternative Fuel Data Center (AFDC) shows all the charging station locations and provides hours of operation. They also have a phone application you can download. We work with a lot of private businesses and partners to educate people about EVs.

Byron Bradford (Richardson)

A. Responding to negative feedback

**Question:** What do you tell people who provide negative feedback on EVs?

**Summary of response by Bailey Muller:** We are in nonattainment for the ozone standard. We have to meet the federal standards for air quality, and EVs are an avenue to achieve that.

Other

Bud Melton, Citizen (Richardson)

A. Transit operations

**Question:** There needs to be an overarching transit agency. Why aren’t transit operations more unified?

**Summary of response by Dan Lamers:** Under current state legislation, transit authorities are only authorized to serve their city members. The RTC has lobbied for more than 15 years for a regional approach to transit service but has been turned down each time by the Legislature.

B. Impact of speed limit legislation on fatality rates

**Comment:** A few years ago the Legislature passed a bill that allowed cities to lower their speed limits from 30 to 25 miles per hour. I know of only one city in Texas who has actually done that. Has there been any discussion on how this legislation might impact fatality rates?

**Summary of response by Natalie Bettger:** We have a Regional Safety Advisory Committee that looks at the safety data we receive, but I don’t think we’ve addressed it just yet. It’s certainly something we can discuss in the future.

John Nicholson, Citizen (Richardson)

A. Automated vehicles update

**Question:** Are you all working on any automated vehicle initiatives?

**Summary of response by Chris Klaus:** We have a team at NCTCOG devoted to automated vehicles and actually presented an update at last month’s public meetings. Arlington and Frisco are two of the local cities working on this initiative.
Chip Pratt, Canyon Creek HOA (Richardson)

A. Funding for road maintenance

**Question:** How are we going to pay for road maintenance?

*Summary of response by Dan Lamers:* The current gas tax system is not feasible to continue over time. There are programs being tested across the country to replace the gasoline tax with some type of miles-driven tax.

### WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS

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Public Meeting Comment Form

Instructions:
1. Please mark the box indicating whether you would like to make an oral comment, a written comment, or both oral and written comments.
2. Please fill in your name and affiliation as well as the date and location of meeting.
3. If you are submitting a written comment, please write your comment on this form.
4. Please return this form to an NCTCOG employee at the registration desk.

☐ I wish to make an oral comment at the public meeting
☒ I wish to submit a written comment at the public meeting
☐ I wish to make both oral and written comments at the public meeting

Name
Isabella Hong

Organization

Date
8/10/2018

Meeting Location
646 Six Flags Dr. Arlington, TX 76011

Please provide written comments below:

Recently, I got into a car incident on exit 440 of I-35 South at ramp to I-35 West. I ran over an object that ended up damaging my wheels and broke one nearly in half. I did not have enough time to go around the object due to it being on a blind spot as I was descending down a slope. What do we do if we see road hazards on the highway?

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or e-mail, please send to:
North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org Website: http://www.nctcog.org/trans
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Name ____________
Organization ________
Date ____________
Meeting Location ____________

Please provide written comments below:
Re: Adopted Safety Target - I'm confused hearing the relationship described as "speed vs. targets" - which would seem to contradict the relationship between faster autos and other mobility alternatives. (Speed kills!)

Safe user accommodation should be a metric (factor) in evaluation of bridge and pavement condition assessment.

Bicycles are vehicles in Texas, and should be better more safely accommodated on all public non-highway roadways.

To submit comments or questions by mail, fax, or e-mail, please send to:
North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888 Phone: (817) 695-9240 Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org Website: http://www.nctcog.org/transportation
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Name  THOMAS E. FRIESEN
Organization  LAKE HIGHLANDS WY STREETS
Date  10/15/2018
Meeting Location  RICHARDSON CITY HALL

Please provide written comments below:

ELECTRIC VEHICLES: BATTERY RECHARGE STATIONS SHOULDN'T BE LOCATED ALONG COMMERCIAL STREET CORNERS, SIMILAR TO GASOLINE FUELING STATIONS. INSTEAD, STEADY GASOLINE FUELING STATIONS SHOULD BE REPLACED BY ZERO-LOT LINED RETAIL STRUCTURES WITH MULTI-DU BUS STOP SHELTERS. THE BATTERY RECHARGE STATIONS SHOULD BE LOCATED IN EXISTING PARKING LOTS OR SUBWAY, WHILE A BATTERY IS RECHARGING, THE MOTORIST SHOULD SPEND HIS TIME STROLLING THROUGH THE SHOPPING DISTRICT. IN MOST CASES, SLOW RECHARGE IS SUFFICIENT. FAST RECHARGE ISN'T ALWAYS NECESSARY. THE CAR'S DASHBOARD DISPLAY SHOULD BE ABLE TO SHOW A MAP OR THE临近 STATION WITH DIRECTIONS TOWARDS THE NEAREST RECHARGE STATION.
HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLES VERIFICATION: I won’t discuss the electronic technology for such verification or passenger loads. Instead, I think several bus stop shelters should be installed in-line along a taxi stand. Thus passengers may self-sort themselves dropping upon destination. These passengers may use their Uber or Lyft accounts to announce their carpooling intentions. So if an Uber taxi driver has brought empty seats available, he can stop at the taxi stand’s bus stop shelters to pick up more passengers. A Lyft carpool driver may do likewise.

I lack a strong response to the argument that carpooling is unfair competition for public transportation, but it supposes that high population density is good for public transportation. Low population density is bad for public transportation, in the event of low population density, carpooling is a substitute for public transportation. In the event of high population density, more frequent public transit service becomes possible. In the event of such density, additional road lanes for the solo motorists is visibly bad policy. Instead, existing road lanes should be taken away from the solo motorists and given over to the buses and bicyclists. The worse the congestion for the solo motorists, the more incentive to switch over towards car pools and public transit.
WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

No public comments were received via website, email or social media.