

Interagency Transportation Report
RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR
October 2018

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Auto Occupancy Verification Technology and High-Occupancy Vehicle Rewards Program.

NCTCOG staff held a workshop for RTC members prior to last month's meeting to present the recommended technology solution for verifying the number of occupants in a vehicle using TEXpress managed lanes, and a proposal to shift to a program that "rewards" ridesharing rather than using tickets to penalize violators of the HOV discount program on managed lanes.

This initiative was discussed extensively at the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) on September 28th. The STTC which includes staff representatives from TxDOT and NTTA, expressed concerns about the level of development and timeline for implementing the reward program. As a result, NCTCOG staff agreed with the STTC to recommend that the RTC move forward with the verification technology but continue to work with partner agencies on the development of an incentive-based "enforcement" program. The RTC approved the STTC recommendation.

Funding for Cotton Belt Trail. The RTC approved funding to support the regional trail planned within the Cotton Belt commuter rail corridor from Plano to Coppell. It will fund all the design, but will only cover construction of "critical segments" that need to be built in conjunction with the DART rail project for logistical reasons. Construction funding would be provided for a significant portion of the trail within North Dallas. The City of Dallas will use Transportation Development Credits (TDC) to cover the local match requirement for federal funds – a cash match would not be required. City staff is engaged in discussions with NCTCOG to identify additional funding to complete the trail.

Automated Vehicle (AV) Support Program. The RTC approved funding for three programs to assist local governments with the planning and deployment of automated vehicle projects:

- \$1.5 million to provide AV planning assistance to local public agencies.
- \$10 million to cover the costs of hosting an AV deployment by private sector AV developers.
- \$20 million to fund AV project deployments that are identified in the region but are not being sponsored by a private sector AV developer.

The opportunity to host an automated vehicle demonstration project can occur very quickly. Government agencies tend to move slowly relative to the quick pace of private sector innovation in this field. Having these programs in place will help the region and local agencies to quickly respond to these opportunities.

2018 Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects. The RTC approved a call for projects providing \$1.5 million (\$990,000 in the Eastern Subregion) for the purchase of equipment and technology by public sector agencies involved in incident management activities. Purchases could include traffic barriers, cones, flares, protective clothing, signs, cameras, lighting, and crash reconstruction technology. Dallas Police and Fire have been notified about this funding opportunity.

Ozone Monitoring Update. As of October 1st, there have been 31 ozone exceedance days in 2018. There were 24 exceedance days during 2017. The 8-month ozone season runs through the end of this month. Even though the number of exceedance days is up this year from last year, the three-year average for ozone has declined from 79 ppb to 76 ppb. The 2015 standard for ozone is 70 ppb, so there is still work to be done to achieve that level.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

S.H. 78 (Garland Road) at Gaston Avenue Public Hearing. TxDOT will hold a public hearing to present planned improvements for the intersection of Garland Road and Gaston Avenue in East Dallas. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 13th at the Dallas Arboretum (Rosine Hall) 8525 Garland Road. There will be an open house format meeting from 6 to 7 p.m. with the formal hearing beginning at 7 p.m.

SM Wright Smart Street. SM Wright is a TxDOT project that will remove the existing freeway and replace it with an urban thoroughfare that will help to reconnect the residential neighborhood it passes through. At the October 12th DRMC meeting, Michael Morris (NCTCOG) committed to working with TxDOT and the City of Dallas to make SM Wright the first “smart street” in the region. They will be working collaboratively to incorporate advanced technologies in the corridor to enhance its operation and benefit to the community.

Texas Freight Mobility Plan. TxDOT is hosting a series of meetings throughout the state to gather input on truck parking and freight infrastructure design issues and solutions. Workshops will be held in Fort Worth and Dallas on December 11th and 12th, respectively. More information can be found at www.movetexasfreight.com.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Committee Recommends Removing Construction Speed Limits on DNT. The NTTA Board’s Customer Service, Projects and Operations Committee recommended removing the 55 mph speed limits that were posted during construction on the Dallas North Tollway (DNT). Staff reported that there have been more accidents during construction, but the lower speed limits have helped to reduce the severity of the accidents. The Texas Transportation Institute assists the NTTA with safety planning for construction projects. The speed limit between LBJ Freeway and the Bush Tollway will be raised to 65 mph after Board approval. The 55 mph construction speed limit will remain in place south of LBJ Freeway until that project is completed.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Positive Train Control (PTC) Implementation in North Central Texas. Commuter rail lines like the TRE (DART) and A-Train (DCTA) in North Texas are required by federal law to implement positive train controls by the end of December 2018. An extension can be approved if certain statutory requirements are met prior to the current deadline. Due to the limited number of contractors with expertise in PTC technology, both DART and DCTA will be requesting Federal Railroad Administration approval for a time extension. DART staff has been briefing their Board on PTC progress on a monthly basis.

New Service Standards Approved. On October 9th, the Board approved an updated Service Standards Manual which addresses bus and rail operations. DART staff will immediately begin an update of their Bus Service Plan to respond to Dallas Council concerns about poor bus service especially for low-income and transit dependent citizens. The new Bus Service Plan will

be a component of DART's Transit System Plan which addresses all of their programs and operations.

DART Board Officers. The Board retained the current slate of officers for 2018-19: Sue Bauman (Dallas), Chair; Paul Wageman (Plano), Vice Chair; Michelle Wong Krause (Dallas), Secretary, and Jonathan Kelly (Garland), Assistant Secretary. Although officers are elected to one-year terms, it is typical for DART Board officers to serve in their positions for two years.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Jennifer Sanders, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Dallas Innovation Alliance (DIA), was the guest speaker at the October 12th meeting. The DIA is a nonprofit public-private partnership whose mission is to support the City of Dallas in the design and execution of a multi-phased smart city strategy.

The DRMC Executive Committee continued discussion on their state agenda for the upcoming 86th legislative session. They added an item calling for a state resolution addressing Texas' continuing status as a "donor state" in regard to federal gas tax collections. Texas is the only state that receives less transportation funding from the federal government than it contributes through federal gas tax revenues. They also added an item objecting to any state caps on the ability of local governments to raise revenue. The DRMC will finalize their legislative agenda in November, and it will be included in the next Interagency Transportation Report.

DFW International Airport (DFW)

American Airlines Announces New Destinations. DFW Airport customers will have more connecting options than ever as American Airlines adds 12 new destinations and increases flights. New international service includes Durango, Mexico; Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, Honduras; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. They will also serve 8 new domestic destinations including Harlingen, Texas; August, Georgia; Gainesville, Florida; Yuma and Flagstaff, Arizona; and Bakersfield, Monterey and Burbank, California. DFW Airport will now offer airline service to 244 destinations worldwide, including 62 international destinations.

DFW Airport Begins Anti-Human Trafficking Campaign. DFW is collaborating with A21 – a global, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of human trafficking, freeing slaves and disrupting demand – on an awareness campaign in the airport's terminals. The campaign, called "Can You See Me?", will equip customers to recognize indicators of human trafficking and report suspected scenarios through the US National Human Trafficking Hotline or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The campaign will feature videos and static signs throughout the terminals and in baggage claim areas.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

15th Annual Southwestern Rail Conference. The Annual Southwestern Rail Conference will be held January 24-25 at the Magnolia Hotel in Dallas. This is the only all-rail conference held in Texas every year that deals with both freight and passenger rail issues. The Southwestern Rail Conference gives rail advocates, elected and appointed leaders, rail stakeholders and interested citizens the opportunity to learn more about how freight and passenger rail are a vital component of a multi-modal transportation system. The 2019 conference will include a keynote address by Tony Hatch, a national rail transportation analyst, a presentation by TxDOT on the Texas Rail Plan, and an update from Texas Central on the Dallas-Houston HSR project.