

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

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning Agreement. The RTC authorized the NCTCOG Director of Transportation to sign a new six-year MPO Planning Agreement with TxDOT establishing the transportation planning and funding relationship between the two agencies. The current agreement expires at the end of September.

Workshop on Auto Occupancy Detection Technology and Rewards Program. The RTC held a workshop on September 11th to provide in-depth briefings on the proposed technology solution for verifying the number of occupants in a vehicle using TEXpress managed lanes and a proposal to pair this program with a new focus on “rewarding” ridesharing choices rather than using tickets to punish violators of HOV lanes. The technology solution identified by NCTCOG was first presented to the RTC at a February 2018 workshop.

Volkswagen Mitigation Program Update. The RTC approved comments on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) draft plan to distribute funding from the Volkswagen Mitigation Program. Texas will be receiving about \$209 million and has proposed a funding distribution that would provide only \$29 million to North Texas while providing unusually large shares to San Antonio, El Paso, and Beaumont-Port Arthur. The RTC had previously suggested that TCEQ use a funding allocation model that would provide \$63 million to the DFW region. The comments included:

- Use a “fair share” allocation that results in DFW receiving about \$63 million.
- Allow regional MPO/COG to administer the program locally – the RTC would pledge to cover all administrative costs with non-Volkswagen funds.
- Utilize project cost-effectiveness calculations that consider only Volkswagen funds to encourage leveraging of other funding sources.
- Ensure equal treatment of electric and hydrogen infrastructure projects.

DFW Clean Cities Annual Survey Results and Fleet Recognition. The City of Dallas was recognized with a “Silver Fleet” award for its efforts to reduce petroleum consumption and improve air quality. Local agencies are evaluated based on several factors: efforts to reduce emissions through idle reduction and alternative fuel vehicles, reductions in fuel consumption through fuel economy improvements and reduced vehicle miles traveled, partnering with DFW Clean Cities on educational events, and outreach efforts such as driver training. No local agency received the “Gold Fleet” award this year.

Ozone Monitoring Update. As of August 30th, there have been 30 ozone exceedance days in 2018. There were 24 exceedance days in 2017. The 8-month ozone season runs through October.

Status of Upcoming RTC Meetings. The RTC moved up the start time for its October 11th meeting to 11:30 am to accommodate members attending the Texas Municipal League (TML) annual conference in Fort Worth.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

2019 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) Approved. The TTC approved the 2019 UTP which is the state's transportation funding document for the next ten years. The Dallas District was allocated \$6.8 billion over that 10-year period for mobility (congestion relief) projects. DRMC staff noted that there are still \$11.7 billion in unallocated funds in the UTP – most of which is in Commission discretionary funds. With so many expensive urban projects in development around the state (e.g., the \$8 billion I-35 project in Austin), it will be important to carefully monitor state funding to ensure that it is distributed equitable between urban regions.

Texas Clear Lanes Program Update. The TTC will hold a workshop on September 26th concerning the Governor's Clear Lanes initiative. Mo Bur, the Dallas District Engineer, recently reported that Phase 2 of the I-35E project north of I-635 LBJ Freeway and the I-30 project across Lake Ray Hubbard are expected to be included in the next round of Clear Lanes project funding.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Barr Testifies at State House Transportation Committee. Kenneth Barr, Chair of the NTTA Board of Directors recently testified before the House Transportation Committee regarding the role of the agency in providing critical transportation capacity in the North Texas region. He stressed the need to preserve the authority of the NTTA and highlighted that it operates and maintains over 1000 lane miles of high-speed roadways.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Cotton Belt Approved by DART Board. The DART Board approved three Cotton Belt resolutions at its August 28th meeting:

- **Service Plan Amendment.** The Board approved a Service Plan amendment that identified station locations, grade separations, alignment changes, and maintenance facilities. The action included the deletion of the Preston and Coit stations from the Cotton Belt project and eliminated any funding for the stations from the 20-Year Financial Plan. Their action did not delete the stations from the Service Plan.
- **Betterments Program.** The Board approved a betterments budget of approximately \$29 million which is expected to be enough to add walls along all the residential adjacency areas that have not already qualified for a sound wall under the mitigation program. The Betterments Program includes a process for working with affected residents to determine which betterments (e.g., walls, upgraded fences, landscaping) will be provided in each neighborhood.
- **Debt Resolutions.** The Board approved debt resolutions authorizing financing for both the Cotton Belt project and the D2 Subway project.

Update on Service Standards. The Board is nearing the completion of a year-long effort to review and update its Service Standards Manual particularly as it relates to bus operations. The Board is scheduled to approve the new standards on September 18th. Some of the key changes include the definition of a "Core Frequent Route Network" with higher service frequencies and longer hours of service, a new route performance measurement system; and a new point-based system for determining the placement of bus stop amenities, including

shelters, benches, and free-standing lighting. The bus route/service design guidelines also stipulate that travel times should be no more than two times the total travel time as a comparable automobile trip and that DART will regularly consider the impact on how route changes impact access to jobs from low-income neighborhoods, with a goal of increasing the share of destinations reachable in an hour.

Approval of the new standards is expected to kick-off an extensive review of bus routes and operations in response to the Dallas Council's continued concerns about poor bus service especially for low-income and transit-dependent persons.

DART Board Elections. The Board will elect new officers for 2018-2019 on October 9th.

Board Names Interim Legal Counsel. The DART Board named Gene Gamez as Interim General Counsel replacing Scott Carlson, who recently left the agency after six years. Mr. Gamez most recently served as Senior Assistant Legal Counsel at DART.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

The DRMC Executive Committee focused on development of a legislative agenda at their September 7th meeting. As expected, the discussion focused primarily on how to preserve and increase transportation funding. Some of the topics included: fully implementing Proposition 1 and 7 and ensuring the equitable distribution of those funds, supporting a policy against the diversion of any highway funds to other programs, and advocating for alternative funding mechanisms to speed the delivery of projects.

One potentially new item would be to encourage Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar to develop an investment fund within the State's "Rainy Day Fund" to finance transportation projects which could also benefit the state by earning a higher rate of return for the Fund. There is also expected to be a push in the next legislative session to define the term "tollroads" as it is applied to the use of Proposition 1/7 funds. These funds are restricted from being spent on tollroads, but does that include the non-tolled lanes of a facility that has managed toll lanes? It is expected that the DRMC will finalize its legislative program in October.

DFW International Airport (DFW)

New International Destinations and Services. Air France is making a return to DFW Airport in March 2019 with up to five weekly flights to their hub at Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport. Air France will service the flight on an Airbus A330, which will hold about 208 seats. They will be the sixteenth international carrier serving DFW Airport.

Additionally, American Airlines announced new service to Dublin, Ireland, and Munich, Germany, beginning in summer 2019. This will be DFW's first ever nonstop service to Ireland, and its third daily nonstop flight to Germany. American will operate the Munich route on a Boeing 787-800 with about 226 seats, and the Dublin route on a Boeing 787-900 with about 285 seats. The launch of Dublin and Munich service will give DFW a total of 58 international destinations and 234 total destinations.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

Texas Central Lands \$300 Million Loan for Dallas-to-Houston HSR project. Texas Central Partners has secured a \$300 million loan for work on the Dallas to Houston HSR project. They

will use the financing to move ahead on permitting, design and engineering. The loan is backed by Japanese sources, including the nation's only public-private fund that specializes in overseas infrastructure. Texas Central plans to use Japanese Shinkansen technology for its bullet train. The company continues to work on getting environmental approvals and hopes to have the project open by 2024 after a five-year construction period.