

Background: The Unified Planning Work Program is required by federal and State transportation planning regulations and provides a summary of the transportation and transportation-related air quality planning tasks to be conducted by Metropolitan Planning Organization staff. The FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP identifies the activities to be carried out between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2021. Amendments to this document are being proposed to reflect new initiatives, project updates and funding adjustments. The proposed amendments have been posted on the North Central Texas Council of Governments website for public review and comment, and are also included as [Electronic Item 3.1.1](#). Additional information is provided in [Electronic Item 3.1.2](#). Public comments received as a result of the public outreach process, if any, will be provided. The Surface Transportation Technical Committee took action at its February 26 meeting to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative

1:20 – 1:35

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 15
Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

1. Approval of Letter to the Secretary of Transportation ([Electronic Item 4.1](#))
2. Strategic Plan for the North Central Texas Council of Governments: 2020-2025 (www.nctcog.org/executive-director/nctcog-strategic-plan)
3. Development of FY2022 and FY2023 Unified Planning Work Program: Project Ideas
4. Section 214/United States Army Corps of Engineers Update ([Electronic Item 4.2](#))
5. Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery ([Electronic Item 4.3](#)) (www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19)
6. Initial Discussion of Regional Transportation Council Meetings in Person
7. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Upcoming Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>)
8. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>)
9. Status of Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program Funding Programs ([Electronic Item 4.4](#))
10. Recipient of the SolSmart Bronze Award ([Electronic Item 4.5](#))
11. February Online Input Opportunity Minutes ([Electronic Item 4.6](#))
12. March Public Meeting Notice ([Electronic Item 4.7](#))
13. Public Comments Report ([Electronic Item 4.8](#))
14. Recent Correspondence ([Electronic Item 4.9](#))
15. Recent News Articles ([Electronic Item 4.10](#))
16. Recent Press Releases ([Electronic Item 4.11](#))

1:35 – 1:45

5. **Previously Approved COVID-19 Infrastructure Program #015: Transit Partnership Funding**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Christie Gotti, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the COVID-19 Transit Partnership projects within this program will be requested.

Background: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, transit ridership in the United States, Texas, and Dallas-Fort Worth region has suffered declines and stagnation. There is an urgency to support transit agencies and coordinate efforts to address ridership concerns. In the fall of 2020, the Surface Transportation Technical Committee and the RTC approved the third round of the COVID-19 Infrastructure Program, including a \$25 million placeholder for investments in transit. Since then, discussions have occurred about how this funding could be utilized across various transit initiatives to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transit and advance transit in the region. The details of the specific partnership programs and projects being proposed are provided in [Electronic Item 5.1](#). [Electronic Item 5.2](#) contains additional details about the partnership and programs/projects being requested.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Transit, Safety

1:45 – 1:55

6. **Federal Transit Administration Funding Allocations in Response to COVID Relief 2.0 Funding Authorization**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Shannon Stevenson, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff is requesting Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval for US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding allocations in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Background: FTA announced January 11, 2021, a total of \$14 billion nationwide in federal funding to help alleviate funding shortfalls for the nation's largest public transportation systems due to COVID-19. Funding is provided through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA). The primary objective is to ensure public transit agencies receive sufficient funding, when combined with Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act apportionments, to equal at least 75 percent of the Urbanized Areas' (UZA) public transit operating costs based on 2018 expenses. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is the designated recipient for the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington (DFWA) UZA and the Denton-Lewisville (DL) UZA.

The DFWA UZA will receive \$129,172,478 and the DL UZA was allocated \$41,938. Funding will be provided at a 100 percent federal share and prioritizes the use of funds for

operational and payroll needs but also supports expenses traditionally eligible under the Urbanized Area Formula Program and the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The DFWA UZA is receiving Urbanized Area Formula Program funds only because Dallas Area Rapid Transit falls below the 75 percent threshold. Congress did not provide any Urbanized Area Formula Program funds to the DFW UZA for Trinity Metro, but assistance may occur through other methods.

Staff is requesting RTC approval of funding allocations based on FTA's methodology for Urbanized Area Formula Program funds under CRRSAA and for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds to be distributed based on eligibility and need. Details can be found in [Electronic Item 6](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Transit

1:55 – 2:05

7. **2021 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Discretionary Grant Program**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Jeff Neal, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of projects proposed for submittal in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Discretionary Grant Program for highway and freight projects of national and regional significance will be requested.

Background: In February 2021, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced the solicitation of project applications for the 2021 INFRA Discretionary Grant Program regarding surface transportation initiatives that have a significant impact on the nation, a region, or a metropolitan area. [Electronic Item 7.1](#) is a copy of the Notice of Funding Opportunity that details the \$1.039 billion discretionary grant program for FY2021, as well as the application requirements. Applications are due to the USDOT by March 19, 2021. [Electronic Item 7.2](#) details NCTCOG's most recent discretionary grant program efforts in the Dallas-Fort Worth region which were not previously awarded. Given the short timeframe for application development, NCTCOG will work with the Regional Transportation Council to identify previously approved projects for resubmittal. In addition, the Texas Department of Transportation has requested us to cosponsor a project with them. Below are the three projects being proposed for INFRA funding:

- East Lancaster Ave. Complete Streets & Transit Technology
- Enhancing Mobility within the Southern Dallas Inland Port
- IH 30 Downtown (Co-Sponsor)

For agencies in the region submitting projects, please be aware that you must complete the www.grants.gov registration

process before submitting the application and that this process usually takes two-four weeks to complete. In addition, if an agency would like to receive a letter of support from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), requests must be submitted to Kyle Roy by Friday, March 12, 2021, at kroy@nctcog.org.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Goods Movement

2:05 – 2:10

8. **Air Quality Calls for Projects Recommendations**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 5

Presenter: Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council approval of funding recommendations for the Clean Fleets North Texas 2020 Call for Projects (CFP) and North Texas Emissions Reduction Project 2020 CFP.

Background: The North Central Texas Council of Governments opened three different Calls for Projects, under three separate Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards, North Texas Emissions Reduction Project 2020 CFP, North Texas Freight Terminal Electrification 2020 CFP, and Clean Fleets North Texas 2020 CFP. These CFPs award grant funds for diesel vehicle or equipment replacement projects and installation of EPA verified electrified parking spaces and related infrastructure in North Central Texas. The most recent application deadline was January 8, 2021. Staff has completed review and emissions quantification and developed recommendations regarding projects to be funded. These CFPs were funded through the Environmental Protection Agency's National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. This initiative is an extension of clean vehicle efforts listed as Weight-of-Evidence in the current State Implementation Plan. [Electronic Item 8.1](#) provides an overview of the call for projects and staff recommendations. [Electronic Item 8.2](#) and [Electronic Item 8.3](#) provide detailed project listings.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

2:10 – 2:20

9. **Legislative Update**

Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Rebekah Hernandez, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide an update on federal and State legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Legislative actions to be covered include the following:

- Federal Stimulus Bill Update
- Texas Legislative Committee Actions
- Update on Bills of Interest

Background: Transportation issues continue to be a focus for both the United States Congress and the Texas Legislature. The 1st session of the 117th US Congress convened on January 3, 2021. The 87th Texas Legislature convened on January 12,

2021. This item will allow staff to provide updates on key positions of the Regional Transportation Council and allow any additional positions to be taken, if necessary.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Transit

- 2:20 – 2:30 10. **Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study Update**
 Action Possible Action Information Minutes: 10
Presenter: Kevin Feldt, NCTCOG
Item Summary: Staff will provide an update regarding the Dallas to Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation (DFWHST) Connections Study. Currently the project is proceeding through the first phase, including analysis of route and mode alternatives.
Background: In April 2020, North Central Texas Council of Governments staff began work on the DFWHST Connections Study with consultant assistance. The project is divided into two phases, the first being an alternatives analysis effort. The second phase will be a National Environmental Policy Act effort resulting in a federal government action identifying the project's next steps. Since April 2020, staff and the consultant have been analyzing alternatives while engaging the public and stakeholders. Phase 1 efforts are designed to reduce the number of alternatives to a minimum for more detailed analysis in the Phase 2 effort. The following items will be presented:
- Draft preliminary project purpose
 - Potential route alternatives
 - Potential mode alternatives
 - Technology update
 - Engagement opportunities
 - Project schedule

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Transit, Safety

11. **Progress Reports**
 Action Possible Action Information
Item Summary: Progress Reports are provided in the items below.
- RTC Attendance ([Electronic Item 11.1](#))
 - STTC Attendance and Minutes ([Electronic Item 11.2](#))
 - Local Motion ([Electronic Item 11.3](#))
12. **Other Business (Old or New):** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.
13. **Future Agenda Items:** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of future interest before the Council.
14. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for **1:00 pm, Thursday, April 8, 2021.**

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
February 11, 2021

In accordance with the Texas Governor's March 13, 2020, Disaster Declaration which was renewed through March 6, 2021, and subsequent suspension of certain Texas Open Meetings Act provisions, the February 11, 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 E. Aubin, Dennis Bailey, Ceason Clemens (representing Mohamed Bur), Dianne Costa, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Pat Deen, Rudy Durham, Andy Eads, Kevin Falconer, Gary Fickes, George Fuller, Barry L. Gordon, Rick Grady, Lane Grayson, Mojoy Haddad, Roger Harmon, Ivan Hughes, Ron Jensen, Carl L. Johnson, Jungus Jordan, Mike Leyman, B. Adam McGough, Raj Narayanan (representing Bill Meadows), Gary Roden (representing Allan E. Meagher), Cara Mendelsohn, Robert Miklos, Cary Moon, Ignacio Nuñez, Philip J. Ritter, John Ryan, Chris Schulmeister, Mark Aldredge (representing Casey Thomas II), Jeremy Tompkins, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Paul N. Wageman, Duncan Webb, B. Glen Whitley, Barbara Odom-Wesley (representing 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 (RTC) Chair Roger Harmon asked if there were any public comments. Marcus Wood, of Dallas, spoke in support of Agenda Item 6, Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy recommendations, especially for Dallas County and City of Dallas Riverfront Blvd. reconstruction from Cadiz to Union Pacific Railroad for which he noted the construction let date has been again delayed.
2. **Approval of the January 14, 2021, Minutes:** The minutes of the January 14, 2021, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 2. B. Glen Whitley (M); Theresa Daniel (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following item was included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 3.1. **Fiscal Year 2021 Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives: Phase 2:** Regional Transportation Council approval to recommend North Central Texas Council of Governments Executive Board approval of \$1,485,500 in funding for education campaigns for transportation initiatives was requested. The benefits of the initiative and cost savings obtained from bulk education campaign purchasing for the Transportation Department, primarily from Fiscal Year 2019, was provided in Electronic Item 3.1.1. Additional information on Phase 1 and Phase 2 was provided in Electronic Item 3.1.2.

A motion was made to approve the item on the Consent Agenda. George Fuller (M); Richard Aubin (S). The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Orientation to the Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris reviewed items in the Director of Transportation Report. He recognized Eugene Shen and the DLG Group for its donation of 24,000 N-95 masks to the region. Mr. Shen noted that the DLG Group was happy to partner with the region as a corporate citizen. Mr. Morris provided a status report to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on the Cotton Belt Trail schedule. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4.1. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

contracted with an engineering firm in December 2020 to complete the design process for the bicycle and pedestrian components of the project. He noted that DART is reaching out to local governments and staff will inventory which local governments have been contacted. The design is expected to be 30 percent complete by May 2021. DART will soon move ahead with selection of Contractor 2 to implement the critical trail sections. By early November 2021, 60 percent of the plans and opinions of construction costs will be available which will provide a better idea of how much of the trail can be constructed by funding previously approved to date by the RTC, Dallas County and other local contributions. He noted staff will continue to monitor progress on the project. In addition, Mr. Morris provided a brief overview of Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery. He highlighted impacts by mode of travel. Bicycle/pedestrian activity remains high, and freeway volumes have stayed around 9 percent below pre-COVID volumes. Toll road transactions remain approximately 20 percent less versus the same month in 2019, and SH 360 transactions are improving. Telecommuting trends were also highlighted. Staff is working on a region-wide policy to try to maintain some of the benefits of reduced commutes. Transit ridership has also shown consecutive months of improvement and staff continues to coordinate with transit authorities on efforts to improve ridership. 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. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4.2 and available through the online dashboard at www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities upcoming events were available at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings> and current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles were available at <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>. Electronic Item 4.3 contained information on the status of Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program funding programs. Electronic Item 4.4. contained information on a Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Call for Interested Cities and the current Auto Occupancy/High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.5. The East/West Equity Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.6. Electronic Item 4.7 contained the January online input opportunity minutes, and the February online input opportunity notice was provided in Electronic Item 4.8. The current Public Comments Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.9, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 4.10, recent news articles in Electronic Item 4.11, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 4.12.

5. **Update on the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Timeline and Changes Resulting from Statewide Financial Constraints:** Ken Bunkley briefed the Council on the altered 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP approval timeline and proposed revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP/STIP listings. The 2021-2024 TIP/STIP was submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in June 2020. Around the time of the submittal, staff learned the approval of the STIP would be delayed due to issues balancing project programming to available revenues statewide. In order to resolve this issue, changes were needed to project fiscal years for selected projects to adjust to available funding. Until these changes are made, the 2019-2022 TIP/STIP will remain in effect. The primary impact of the delay is on any projects that were newly added or changed substantially in the 2021-2024 TIP since funding agreements or new federal/State actions for these projects cannot be executed until the STIP is approved. Changes to projects requested through the November 2020 TIP modification cycle have also been delayed, as well as the February 2021 TIP modification cycle. November 2020 and February 2021 TIP revisions, as well as changes to balance statewide fiscal constraints have been incorporated

into the original 2021-2024 TIP/STIP submission. TxDOT approval of the updated 2021-2024 TIP/STIP documents is anticipated in late March 2021 and US Department of Transportation (USDOT) approval in May 2021. Since the May 2021 STIP revision cycle coincides with USDOT review of the new TIP/STIP, TxDOT anticipates cancelling the May 2021 TIP revision cycle meaning the next deadline for TIP modification requests would be the August 2021 cycle, with April 26, 2021, as the deadline for modifications requests to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Resulting STIP revision approval would be anticipated in late September or early October 2021. This timeline means that new projects in FY2021 are extremely limited and most new funding would not be available until FY2022. Mr. Bunkley noted that as part of the updates, there are items that need RTC review and approval. Items include 13 projects TxDOT has identified as needing to be moved due to financial constraints, 34 projects that have obligated since original submittal of the 2021-2024 that no longer need to be double listed, 7 revisions from the November Modification cycle and one revision from the February Modification cycle that were initially processed administratively but have been amended and now require RTC approval. Mr. Bunkley noted that resulting revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP were provided as Electronic Item 5.1 for the Council's consideration. These changes have been reviewed for consistency with the mobility plan, the air quality conformity determination and financial constraint of the TIP. Electronic Item 5.2 contained additional information. A motion was made to approve the changes to projects in the 2021-2024 TIP requiring RTC action as provided in Electronic Item 5.1 and for staff to administratively amend other planning and administrative documents, as needed. Rick Grady (M); Ivan Hughes (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **2020 Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy Implementation (Round 2):** Christie Gotti presented proposed recommendations and deadlines for the projects that are part of the second round of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy initiative. As a reminder, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has been selecting projects since 1992. In 2015, staff instituted the first round of the MPO Milestone Policy which reviewed projects selected from 1992 to 2005 that had not been implemented and was successful in getting 51 out of 57 projects to construction. The second MPO Milestone Policy effort began in November 2019. Projects impacted through the second round were primarily those funded between 2006 and 2010 that had not let or obligated as of December 2019. The effort also included projects funded prior to 2006 that had let, but have had implementation issues, those funded with RTC-selected sources, locally funded projects that were being tracked because of regional significance, and a few projects funded with Congressional earmarks that are subject to rescission. Intended outcomes of the Milestone Policy were reviewed, as well as the reapproval process. Agencies with projects on the Milestone Policy list were notified by letter and notified once again when the deadline to provide responses was extended due to COVID-19 impacts. Agencies were required to reconfirm the projects as a priority by providing a realistic and achievable schedule that was vetted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Texas Department of Transportation, providing documentation of policy board support, and documenting that any required local match was still available. A summary of the 41 projects and funding proposed for cancellation, as well as projects under construction/complete or letting in the future was provided. Ms. Gotti noted that staff did not restrict the schedules provided by local governments and only asked that the schedules provided were realistic. In addition, she noted when presented to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) and the RTC, staff proposed two policy position changes to the procedures associated with the Milestone Policy. Staff proposed that there would no longer be a one-year grace period and further extensions would not be offered to projects that missed their

deadlines. Staff proposed that failure to meet the schedules set forth will result in automatic removal of funding from a project. At the January 22 STTC meeting, staff received feedback from members that they were not comfortable with the automatic cancelation of projects. As a result, staff proposed to enable reconsideration of individual projects prior to cancelation through a Milestone Policy tracking process that includes quarterly performance reports. Local agencies that are implementing projects at risk will be required to report the status of any project on the Milestone Policy list until the project lets. Reports would detail steps the project sponsor is taking to advance the project. NCTCOG staff will evaluate the reports and rate the projects based on how well the project sponsor is implementing the projects: green, low risk of project delay; yellow, medium risk of project delay; or red, high risk of project delay. If the committed schedule is missed and the project has been graded as red/high risk, the project will likely be recommended for cancelation. The schedule for this effort was reviewed and an overview of the requested action was provided. The draft list of proposed recommendations for these projects was provided in Electronic Item 6.1. Details on the MPO Milestone Policy were provided in Electronic Item 6.2. Andy Eads noted he was supportive of staff's recommendations and asked if staff considered a financial penalty to the local partners, some type of diminishing financial partnership, as an incentive to keep projects on track. Ms. Gotti noted a financial incentive may help, but as projects are delayed and inflation increases the cost of projects, then a delayed project loses money on both the inflationary side and through diminishing funding which may make the project infeasible to deliver. Michael Morris noted that various incentives were considered, but that local government support or cash match may not be the source of the problem. Staff has decided to move towards taking a more active role through the requirement of quarterly reports, so that the cause for project delays is understood earlier in the process and communication is enhanced with the project sponsors. RTC Vice Chair Theresa Daniel noted she was also supportive and appreciated the increased communication to the Council so that members can be aware of project delays, monitor, and see if they have any influence regarding efforts to move forward the delayed projects or cancel projects. A motion was made to approve the proposed recommendations outlined in Electronic Item 6.1, including the cancelation of certain projects, established timeframes for each project, and the revised Milestone Policy procedures included in Electronic Item 6.2. Action also included approval for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents as needed. Theresa Daniel (M); Barry L. Gordon (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Unmanned Aircraft Systems Resolution:** Ernest Huffman provided an overview of the proposed Regional Transportation Council (RTC) resolution to support the safe and efficient integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) transportation system. Elements of the draft resolution, R21-01 Resolution Supporting the Safe and Efficient Integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems into the DFW Regional Transportation System, provided in Electronic Item 7.1, were highlighted and include RTC support for: a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process to integrate land-based and aerial-based transportation systems in a safe and cost-effective fashion; safe and responsible UAS activity within the region including current and future uses; encouraging agencies to support their public safety services use of UAS; encouraging agencies to work with the UAS industry to adopt "pilot" programs to demonstrate the technologies properly operated in and around a metropolitan area; encouraging educational institutions in North Texas to provide UAS-oriented educational offerings to help prepare the transportation workforce of the future; the development of UAS aircraft pilot certification standards; and encouraging agencies to participate in the North Texas UAS Safety and Integration Task Force Community Integration Working Group. The Community Integration

Working Group was created in an effort to help cities collaborate on integration issues. The working group will help cities categorize community concerns, inventory available applications for city use, inventory funding mechanism for city use, inventory training available to cities, identify how small UAS aircraft and other UAS operations can supplement existing transportation methods, and identify how UAS can replace existing transportation methods in emergency situations. Mr. Huffman requested that entities interested participating in the North Texas UAS Safety and Integration Task Force Community Integration Working Group to contact staff. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 7.2. Barry L. Gordon asked if additional North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff would be needed for the certification process. Mr. Huffman noted that NCTCOG staff would not be directly engaged on creation of the certification processes but will inventory the current certification processes and relay that information to those involved in the region. No additional NCTCOG staff would be required for the effort. A motion was made to approve R21-01, Resolution Supporting the Safe and Efficient Integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems into the DFW Regional Transportation System, provided in Electronic Item 7.1. Rick Grady (M); George Fuller (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Legislative Update:** Rebekah Hernandez provided an update on federal legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Pete Buttigieg has been confirmed as the new United States Secretary of Transportation, and he recently spoke about his support for high-speed rail and focus on climate change, resilient infrastructure, and maintaining safety as some of his priorities. In addition, Congress recently passed a budget resolution that paves the way for President Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan. In the most recent action, the House Transportation Committee on Infrastructure approved language that would provide \$30 billion of emergency funding for public transit and \$1.5 billion for Amtrak. As committee hearings continue, the House is expected to take up the bill for consideration. Since the President took office, he signed a series of executive orders that either froze or rolled back regulations implemented by the previous Administration. One new executive order repealed the 2017 One Federal Decision rule which encouraged federal agencies to cooperate on environmental permitting for major infrastructure projects. Other executive orders also signed include those related to climate change, wearing face masks on public transportation systems, and environmental justice enforcement. Also highlighted were new Congressional committee members. Those related to transportation include Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson as Chair of the House Science Committee, Representative Kay Granger as a ranking member on the House Appropriations Committee, and Representatives Eddie Bernice Johnson, Collin Allred, and Beth Van Duyne as members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Ms. Hernandez also provided an update on State legislative actions. The Lieutenant Governor and Speaker both announced committee assignments. The chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation remains Senator Robert Nichols, and North Texas members include Senator Hancock and Senator West. The Chair of the House Transportation Committee also remains the same, Representative Terry Canales and Texas members includes Representatives Yvonne Davis and Glenn Rogers. Other notable changes include a new House Appropriations Chair and new Senate Committee on Local Government. Regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 State budget, the House and Senate released its versions which both total slightly over \$251 billion and include the same amounts in general revenue. Included for transportation in both bills is \$30.4 billion, which is a 7.5 percent decrease from FY20-21 and includes Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 transfers. Overall, fewer bills have been filed this session, including fewer transportation bills. Of interest to Regional Transportation Council (RTC) members is HB 427 that would create an additional \$200 fee for electric vehicles and a \$100 fee for hybrid vehicles at the

time of registration that would go to the State Highway fund. She noted the RTC Legislative Program supports additional transportation revenue and that both Chairs have noted an alternative fuel vehicle fee is an important topic. In addition, Senator Nelson has scheduled 16 hearings of the Senate Finance Committee over the next few weeks, and Senate Redistricting Committee hearings are also being held. She noted that the bill filing deadline is March 12 and staff will continue to track bills related to the RTC Legislative Program. Ms. Hernandez also noted the Governor listed emergency topics for which legislators can start to consider previous to the 60-day mark to take up legislation. No transportation items were included but staff will continue to monitor the broadband topic. Regional Transportation Council Secretary Ann Zadeh discussed HB 442 (safe streets), SB 221 (prima facie speeds) limits, HB 443 (stopping for pedestrians), and SB 42 (consistent statewide handsfree) and asked if the RTC has a position on supporting the safe streets agendas of Vision Zero Texas. Michael Morris requested that any bills of interest for RTC support should be provided to staff who will include the topics in a future RTC agenda item. No action was requested for the item.

9. **Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Fleet Recognition and Annual Survey Results:** Chris Klaus presented an overview of results from the 2019 Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities (DFWCC) Coalition Annual Survey. As the host organization for DFWCC, each year the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) collects fleet information that is centered around the use of alternative fuel vehicles and equipment and fleet efficiency improvements such as practices that reduce vehicle miles traveled, idling, and fuel use. In 2019, 42 fleets reported totaling nearly 10,000 alternative vehicles and equipment. Details on the gasoline gallon equivalents reduced, as well as a reduction of nitrogen oxides were highlighted. In addition, energy impacts of fleets in the region, as well as the breakdown of impact for greenhouse gas reductions, fine particulate reductions, nitrogen oxides and number of vehicles were detailed in Electronic Item 9 and additional detail is at www.dfwcleancities.org/annualreport. Also highlighted were Fleet Recognition awardees, based on the 2019 annual report. Bronze fleet winners included the cities of Arlington, Frisco, North Richland Hills, and Watauga, Tarrant County and the towns of Addison and Flower Mound, as well as Trinity Metro. Silver fleet winners include the cities of Bedford, Coppell, Irving, and Mesquite, as well as Denton and Prosper Independent School Districts. Gold fleet winners included the cities of Carrollton, Dallas, Denton, Euless, Lewisville and Southlake, as well as Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. He also recognized fleets that are making the greatest progress in three areas: greatest progress in nitrogen oxides reductions included Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and North Richland Hills; greatest progress in gasoline gallon equivalent reductions included City of Denton and SPAN Transit; and greatest progress in transitioning to alternative fuels included Trinity Metro and Denton Independent School District. In addition, Mr. Klaus noted NCTCOG recently celebrated its 25th anniversary as a Clean Cities Coalition and that a celebratory video was available at www.dfwcleancities.org.
10. **Transit-Oriented Development Survey Results (This item was postponed from the December 10, 2020, RTC Meeting):** Karla Weaver presented results of the completed Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Red and Blue Lines Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Survey produced by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The effort was part of a Federal Transit Administration Planning Pilot for TOD and included a survey of residents, businesses, and employers in a one-mile area around 28 Red and Blue Line DART stations and was completed in partnership with the Cities of Dallas, Richardson, Garland, and Plano. Ms. Weaver noted that data was collected between August 2019 and February 2020, pre-COVID. The survey included a varied sampling of those living or working

near transit, as well as employers and covered many travel preferences and behavior topics. The presentation focused on travel and transit use, location impacts, and challenges/opportunities. Results indicate that proximity matters. Respondents who live closer to rail stations are more likely to use transit. When asked about travel mode, the majority of residents reported they drive alone; however, those living near transit use light rail and bus significantly more than the regional averages. Survey results also indicate that density matters, with areas of dense concentration of development seeing higher transit usage. For residents, higher density indicated higher likelihood of walking, and while 16 percent of those at high densities walked or bike, no more than 6 percent at all lower densities reported similar alternative modes of transportation. Additionally, the denser the housing development, the higher the likelihood people are using other modes of transportation for last mile connections. Ms. Weaver also highlighted some of the main factors in housing choices indicated by the survey. Cost of housing and low crime were most important, sidewalks through neighborhoods was the third highest response. There was also interest in quiet neighborhoods, parks/open spaces, and access to major transportation. The survey also helped identify challenges regarding TOD. There is still a high utilization of cars by TOD residents, and while 23 percent said a place of employment in walking distance was important, only 16 percent walked to their place of employment. Many cited the need for frequent stops, long trips and too many transfers as barriers to transit use. Businesses and employers see transit as less influential when considering business locations. In addition, when there is a lot of parking available transit is likely not being used to its full capacity. One of the challenges reported by respondents related to home/work trips was that DART did not connect to their work and home. Staff continues to look at the data to determine the role of demographics and how to better implement TOD solutions. For example, if the right mix of uses is available, 27 percent of residents report walking or biking to restaurants, coffee shops, and similar spaces and 52 percent would prefer to walk/bike or take transit to similar destinations for daily activities. Finally, the survey helps identify options to encourage walking or biking as entities design communities and consider connectivity. In summary, Ms. Weaver noted the survey results provide staff a better understanding of challenges and opportunities for TOD in the region and provide insight to the perceptions of those in the community. Results also show areas where staff can refocus. She noted more analysis was still needed on various areas of interest and the full report and data table were available online at www.nctcog.org/TOD. Michael Morris encouraged members to view the report, especially from a policy perspective, when considering the impacts of land use and transportation.

11. **Safety Performance Targets Update:** Sonya Landrum presented an update on the regional Roadway Safety Performance regional targets for the 2021-2022 target schedule for federally required performance measures. Roadway Safety targets are focused on reducing serious injuries and fatalities for motorized and non-motorized travelers. The status of the various federally required performance measures the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) tracks and monitors was noted in the presentation. Ms. Landrum noted that today's presentation focused on Roadway Safety (PM1) performance measure targets. In February 2019, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved support for the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) 2018-2022 Safety Performance Targets. As part of its safety target development, NCTCOG also established the regional safety position that even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable and most recently in May 2019 the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) directed TxDOT to work toward the goal of reducing the number of fatalities on Texas roadways by half by the year 2035 and to zero by the year 2050. The Roadway Safety performance targets include: the number of fatalities, rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, serious injuries,

rate of serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries combined. The targets are calculated based on a five-year rolling average. Ms. Landrum highlighted the performance of all five targets at the statewide and regional level, with a reminder that there is a two-year lag time in evaluating the performance of safety targets, so the 2018 target performance was first evaluated in 2020 and the 2019 performance is being evaluated in 2021. For the 2018 targets, the region met targets for fatalities, fatalities rate, and bicycle/pedestrian fatalities and injuries rates and significant progress was made for serious injuries and serious injuries rates. Staff anticipated the final statewide assessment for 2019 targets will be released by the Federal Highway Administration in March 2021. Based on preliminary analysis for the region, all targets have been met for 2019. Data for each of the five performance targets was highlighted. Also highlighted was TxDOT safety targets and NCTCOG's projections for 2021 performance targets. The 2021 regional targets include a 1.6 percent reduction from the original trend line projections. Based on the specified target reductions for 2021, the regional target for the number of fatalities is to decrease the expected rise in traffic fatalities to no more than 572.4 fatalities, to limit the expected rise in fatalities rates to 0.762 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, to decrease the rise in serious injuries to 3375.3, to decrease the rate of serious injuries to no more than 4.485 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and to limit the expected rise in bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and injuries to no more than 592.3 incidents combined. She added the proposed reductions are based on the original trend line projections that show major increases in these areas. Ms. Landrum also noted that beginning with the 2021 targets, TxDOT has modified its fatality targets to an aspirational goal to reduce fatalities and the statewide fatality rate by 50 percent by 2035 and to zero by 2050. Serious injuries, serious injuries rates, and bicycle/pedestrian fatalities and injuries targets will maintain the reduction schedule of 2 percent reduction by 2022. NCTCOG staff will continue internal discussion on the direction it would like to take regarding the five targets and the programs and projects that can be implemented to more aggressively reduce serious injuries and fatalities for motorized and nonmotorized users. The schedule for Safety Performance target actions was highlighted which includes updates to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee, Regional Safety Advisory Committee, and the RTC.

12. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 12.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes in Electronic Item 12.2, and the current Local Motion in Electronic Item 12.3.
13. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, March 11, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

TO: Regional Transportation Council

DATE: March 4, 2021

FROM: Vickie Alexander
Program Manager
Program Administration

SUBJECT: Modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program for Regional Transportation Planning

The Unified Planning Work Program for Regional Transportation Planning (UPWP) is required by federal and State transportation planning regulations and provides a summary of the transportation and related air quality planning tasks to be conducted by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff. The FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP was approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in July 2019 and identifies the activities to be carried out between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2021.

Listed below, and in the following attachment, is the fifth set of proposed modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP. Included in these amendments are new initiatives, project updates and funding adjustments. The proposed modifications have been posted on the NCTCOG website for public review and comment. Public comments received as a result of the public outreach process, if any, will be provided. The Surface Transportation Technical Committee took action at its meeting on February 26, 2021, to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the proposed modifications.

Transportation Planning Fund (TPF) Modifications

- 1.01 Community Outreach – Public Involvement, Publications, and Legislative Support (update text to add virtual public engagement as another method or opportunity for public outreach and input; existing funds are being redistributed to cover subscription costs; no funding increase needed)
- 3.02 Regional Air Quality Planning – Regional Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Program (update text to reflect that Transportation Planning Funds [TPF] will be utilized to support staff activities in the development of a regional Greenhouse Gas [GHG] emissions inventory rather than for the cost of the software as initially anticipated. Local funds will be used for the purchase of the GHG software, as noted in Subtask 3.02 below.)

5.04 Transportation Asset Management – National Highway System (NHS) Infrastructure Performance Measures and Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) Coordination and Reporting (update text to reflect a change in funding source from TPF to Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds for staff work activities related to performance targets and the Texas Department of Transportation’s TAMP as noted in Subtask 5.04 below. University assistance related to transportation infrastructure vulnerability remains funded through TPF.)

Chapter VIII Overview of Work Program Funding (update Exhibit VIII-1 to reflect increase in Federal Highway Administration PL 112 funding allocation for FY2021 in the amount of \$1,008,140)

Chapter VIII Overview of Work Program Funding (update Exhibit VIII-3 to reflect an increase in funding for public involvement subscriptions from \$5,000 to \$80,000 to support a virtual public engagement platform, as noted above in Subtask 1.01, and to reflect a change in funding source from TPF to local for the purchase of Greenhouse Gas software as noted in Subtask 3.02)

Other Funding Source Modifications

1.04 Computer System Applications and Data Management – Regional Digital Aerial Imagery (add \$100,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, \$225,000 Texas Department of Transportation [TxDOT] funds, and \$432,000 local funds to support the attainment of high-resolution color digital and Light Detection and Ranging [LIDAR] imagery)

3.02 Regional Air Quality Planning – Regional Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Program (update text to reflect that local funds will be utilized for the purchase of software to create a regional Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory rather than for staff activities to support development of the GHG emissions inventory as initially anticipated. Transportation Planning Funds will be utilized for staff activities to support development of the GHG emissions inventory, as noted in the TPF modification above for Subtask 3.02)

3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations – Consumer Initiatives (update text to reflect a project work scope change removing pilot projects to evaluate potential for emissions reductions through public awareness campaigns, such as an Idle Free School Zones project that includes a before-and-after emissions assessment from the list of anticipated products)

3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations – Local Government Policies/Community Readiness (update text to reflect a project work scope change adding resources and guidance to school districts on best practices to minimize idling at school campuses to the list of anticipated products)

- 5.01 Regional Transportation Studies – High-speed Rail/Cedars Planning Study (add initiative and \$4,000,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], for a study of potential improvements including the review of transportation thoroughfare systems over IH 30, transportation planning in the Cedars neighborhood of Dallas, transportation connections to the southern sector on both sides of the Trinity River, review of potential structures in proximity of IH 30, and preliminary engineering of recommended improvements)
- 5.04 Transportation Asset Management – National Highway System (NHS) Infrastructure Performance Measures and Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) Coordination and Reporting (add \$40,000 previously approved Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], and update text to reflect a change in funding source from TPF to STBG for staff work activities related to NHS performance targets and the Texas Department of Transportation’s TAMP, as noted in Subtask 5.04 above)

The following modifications have previously been approved by the Regional Transportation Council and/or NCTCOG Executive Board, or are already included in the Transportation Improvement Program and are now being incorporated into the Unified Planning Work Program:

Other Funding Source Modifications

- 3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations – Fleet and Commercial Strategies, Consumer Initiatives, and Local Government Policies/Community Readiness (add \$2,500 Department of Energy [DOE] previously approved funds to support activities related to the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition Program)
- 3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations – Fleet and Commercial Strategies (add \$2,498,086 in Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] funds and \$3,129,910 in local funds to reflect receipt of a grant award under the 2020 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act [DERA] Request for Applications to provide funding for projects that improve air quality by reducing emissions from diesel vehicles or equipment. This initiative will be administered as a rebate program and provide funding for the replacement of diesel vehicles, equipment, or engines; installing electric recharging infrastructure if necessary; or installing idle-reduction technology.)
- 3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations – Fleet and Commercial Strategies (add \$42,691 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ] funds for school bus replacements under the North Central Texas Clean School Bus Program Supplemental Environmental Project)

- 3.04 Public Transportation Planning and Management Studies – Regional Transit Planning Assistance (add \$85,000 in previously approved Regional Toll Revenue [RTR] funds to support staff work activities on the Frisco passenger rail corridor and add \$2,500 in previously approved Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], for staff activities in the Collin County transit study)
- 5.01 Regional Transportation Studies – Regional People Mover Initiative (add \$2,089,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], to support work activities on various people mover technologies and opportunities, including the Dallas Midtown People Mover, and update text to include engineering activities in addition to planning for particular locations)
- 5.01 Regional Transportation Studies – Forest Hill Drive Planning Study (add initiative and \$500,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], for a study of transportation, land use, and flooding issues in the corridor and identification of needed improvements; corridor is within the geographical area of the Integrated Planning for Regional Transportation, Urban Development, and Stormwater Management project in Subtask 4.02 of the UPWP)
- 5.02 Subarea Studies and Local Government Assistance – Collin County Outer Loop (add \$50,000 previously approved Regional Toll Revenue [RTR] funds in support of staff work activities)
- 5.04 Transportation Asset Management – National Highway System (NHS) Infrastructure Performance Measures and Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) Coordination and Reporting (add \$1,000,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], for activities related to a review of pavement condition ratings and projection assessments, as well as engineering assistance to identify and address needed improvements on RTC-focused National Highway System off-system roadways)
- 5.05 Congestion Management Planning and Operations – Regional Traffic Signal Retiming and Minor Intersection Improvement Program (add \$200,000 in previously approved Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program [CMAQ] funds, \$25,000 in previously approved Texas Department of Transportation [TxDOT] funds, and \$25,000 in previously approved local funds to support continued work activities on the Regional Traffic Signal Retiming Program)
- 5.05 Congestion Management Planning and Operations – Traffic Incident Management Training (add \$65,900 Regional Transportation Council [RTC] Local funds and update text to reflect use of RTC Local as a funding source for projects selected under the Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects)

- 5.05 Congestion Management Planning and Operations – Transportation System Management and Operations (add \$1,600,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program [STBG] funds, matched with Transportation Development Credits [TDCs], for the evaluation and integration of a Regional Data Hub with other relevant systems in the region, including the 511DFW platform)

Please contact Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins at (817) 608-2325 or VPruitt-Jenkins@nctcog.org or me at (817) 695-9242 or valexander@nctcog.org if you have any questions or comments regarding these proposed modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP prior to the Regional Transportation Council meeting. Your approval of these modifications will be requested at the meeting, as well as your direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved modifications.

vpj
Attachment

AMENDMENT #5 TO THE FY2020 AND FY2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

1.01 Community Outreach

Public Involvement, Publications, and Legislative Support

Transportation Planning Funds

Staff will appear regularly at community and business events to discuss transportation and air quality matters. Efforts to ensure full and fair participation in the transportation decision-making process consistent with Title VI and Environmental Justice principles are implemented through a Public Participation Plan. Anticipated products include:

- Regular opportunities, including public meetings, online opportunities, **a virtual public engagement platform**, and listening sessions, among others, for North Texans to learn about and provide input on transportation and air quality plans, programs and policies;
- Summaries of public input provided to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC);
- Appearances at neighborhood meetings, professional association meetings, business community/chamber of commerce meetings, and other events;
- Dynamic outreach and communications plan to continually enhance public involvement;
- Enhanced multimedia and social media presence;
- Communications through email services on transportation planning projects as well as other projects supported through the UPWP;
- Press releases and other media relations materials;
- Department newsletters including Local Motion and Mobility Matters, among others;
- Progress North Texas state-of-the-region report and other reports and brochures;
- Contributions to agency newsletters;
- Communications pieces that explain the transportation planning process and opportunities to provide input;
- Summaries of activity in the Legislature and Congress relating to Metropolitan Planning Organization functions;
- Legislative testimony;
- RTC state and federal legislative programs; and
- Regular updates to policy and technical committee members on legislative initiatives related to RTC priorities.

3.02 Regional Air Quality Planning

Regional Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Program

Transportation Planning Funds

A regional Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions inventory will be initiated by NCTCOG staff in FY2021 to understand the sources and sectors contributing to regional GHG emissions. GHG inventories provide regions an opportunity to understand the GHG profile to adequately determine appropriate reduction actions and allow the region to set regional GHG emission goals; enable cities who have their own inventories to compare themselves against a regional inventory; and provide a framework upon which to evaluate, analyze, and prioritize GHG reduction actions. ~~This inventory will consist of utilizing Greenhouse Gas emissions management software.~~ **Staff will**

identify primary sectors that contribute to GHG emissions at the regional level, input data into a Greenhouse Gas emissions management tool, conduct test runs of the tool, analyze model output results, and create a regional Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory. This will support a future regional GHG control strategy catalog. Anticipated products in FY2021 include:

- ~~Purchase of the GHG emissions management software with support for 24 months;~~
- ~~Understanding of the GHG emissions management software; and~~
- ~~Test runs of the GHG emissions management software.~~
- **Data from emissions sources;**
- **Regional Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory; and**
- **Report of quality assurance/control of results.**

Other Funding Sources

~~Utilizing local funds, in FY2021, staff will identify and gather data towards the development of a regional GHG emissions inventory. Activities will include the identification of primary sectors that contribute to GHG emissions at the regional level, inputting data into the Greenhouse Gas emissions management software, and analyzing model output results. In addition to the use of Transportation Planning Funds for staff to develop a Regional Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory as noted above, local funds will be used to purchase the software necessary to create the inventory.~~ Anticipated products in FY2021 include:

- ~~Data from emissions sources; and~~
- ~~Report of quality assurance/control of results.~~
- **Purchase of a GHG emissions management tool with support for 24 months.**

3.03 Air Quality Management and Operations

Consumer Initiatives

Other Funding Sources

This work element will be supported through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds, Department of Energy funds, Regional Transportation Council Local funds, Transportation Development Credits, and private funding sources. This element is ongoing throughout FY2020 and FY2021. Anticipated products include:

- Opportunities for individuals to try vehicles on a short-term basis, through avenues such as loaner programs or ride-and-drives;
- Educational and awareness events, such as an annual National Drive Electric Week event and car care clinics;
- ~~Pilot projects to evaluate potential for emissions reductions through public awareness campaigns, such as an Idle Free School Zones project that includes a before and after emissions assessment;~~
- Education about consumer practices that can reduce vehicle emissions, such as idle reduction and proper vehicle maintenance;
- Incentives for consumers to adopt cleaner technologies or behavior changes;

- Communications about incentives available to citizens for cleaner, lower-emitting technologies;
- Comments and recommendations to state and federal agencies regarding consumer incentive programs;
- Periodic meetings, training classes, education, and recommendations for law enforcement, federal and State agencies and other interested parties regarding emissions enforcement and similar programs; and
- Enhancement of existing programs such as the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program's reporting and correspondence and air quality data information systems.

Local Government Policies/Community Readiness

Other Funding Sources

This work element will be supported through Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds, Federal Highway Administration funds, Department of Energy funds, Regional Transportation Council Local funds, other local funds, and Transportation Development Credits. NCTCOG may seek assistance through the University Partnership Program for analysis of health risks related to transportation impacts as opposed to other factors. This element is ongoing throughout FY2020 and FY2021. Anticipated products include:

- Technical and planning assistance to local governments, workplaces, and multifamily properties regarding deployment of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and other electrification or alternative fuel infrastructure to facilitate clean vehicle or technology adoption by fleets and consumers;
- Development of a Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Deployment Plan along IH 45 to enable zero-emission travel from Dallas-Fort Worth to the Houston area, with emphasis on goods movement;
- Communications to local governments encouraging adoption of RTC-recommended local government policies, including anti-idling rules and Clean Construction Contract Language;
- Template language for contracts, ordinances, codes, and other local government mechanisms (e.g., EV-ready best practices, low-emissions requirements for contractors, etc.);
- Comments and recommendations to federal, State, and local agencies regarding regulatory practices that are relevant to use of cleaner technologies;
- Meetings, webinars, conference calls, and other forums to educate local governments about opportunities to influence fleet and consumer choices, or facilitate energy efficiency/renewable energy activities;
- Innovative new partnerships with key stakeholder organizations, such as vehicle auctioneers, charities and non-profits who accept donated vehicles, hospitals and universities, vehicle rental companies, and major employers in the region;
- Support for local government peer exchange on comprehensive air quality issues through the North Central Texas Stewardship Forum and other avenues;
- A task force to convene government representatives, health officials, academic representatives, and air quality experts to evaluate regional data that may indicate areas of need for additional air quality improvement or strategies;
- Support for local government efforts to provide air quality education, including to the Hood County Clean Air Coalition;
- Equitable, favorable options for capturing revenues from vehicles that do not pay traditional gasoline tax;

- Identification and development of additional policy positions by the RTC that encourage actions to help reduce mobile and other transportation sector air emissions;
- Data collection of electric vehicle and electric vehicle infrastructure use and performance; ~~and~~
- Education and data collection with local governments and utilities with regard to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and integration of energy topics with the transportation sector, especially with regard to transportation electrification and renewable natural gas potential; ~~and~~
- **Resources and guidance to school districts on best practices to minimize idling at school campuses.**

5.01 Regional Transportation Studies

Regional People Mover Initiative

Other Funding Sources

Throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth region, many opportunities exist for an appropriate technology to serve as a “last mile” connection or distribution system within a mixed-use activity center area. During FY2020 and FY2021, NCTCOG staff, working in collaboration with the many project opportunity owners, stakeholders, and local government and transportation authority partners, will identify the merits of alternative people mover technologies available and assess each regional project opportunity for unique needs, including similarities and synergies. **This initiative also includes engineering design efforts for people mover system(s) at particular locations.** Consultant assistance will be utilized for this initiative. Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds and Transportation Development Credits will be used. The following products will be delivered as the result of work done on this project:

- Technical memorandums covering evaluation of alternative people mover technologies; ~~and~~
- Technical memorandums evaluating the needs of the various regional people mover project opportunities; ~~and~~
- **Engineering designs of location-specific infrastructure for alternative people mover systems.**

High-speed Rail/Cedars Planning Study

Other Funding Sources

This study of potential improvements, anticipated to begin in FY2021, will include the review of transportation thoroughfare systems over IH 30. This project will include transportation planning in the Cedars neighborhood of Dallas, transportation connections to the southern sector on both sides of the Trinity River, review of potential structures in proximity of the IH 30 freeway, and preliminary engineering of recommended improvements.

This work will be performed by NCTCOG staff and engineering consultants. It is anticipated that 50 percent of the entire project will be performed by NCTCOG staff and will be conducted in the first 18 months. Consultants will be used for engineering activities in the

second 18 months of the study. It is anticipated this effort will be conducted over three years. Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds and Transportation Development Credits will be utilized to support work activities. The anticipated products will include:

- A proposed gridded thoroughfare system over IH 30;
- Transportation recommendations for the Cedars neighborhood;
- Transportation recommendations crossing the Trinity River, connecting Oak Farms to the Cedars neighborhood;
- An inventory of possible transportation and economic development structures in proximity to IH 30; and
- As stated previously, 50 percent of the effort will go primarily to engineering of critical projects.

Forest Hill Drive Planning Study

Other Funding Sources

Beginning in FY 2021, NCTCOG will prepare a corridor development plan facilitating the future reconstruction and widening of Forest Hill Drive between Lon Stephenson Road and Shelby Road within the cities of Everman, Forest Hill, and Fort Worth. The study will not only encompass corridor sustainability and reliability issues solely based on transportation concerns, but also the distribution and intensity of current/future land uses, and their possible contributions toward flooding and other stormwater management effects within the corridor's watershed. Proposed recommendations from the corridor development plan will be informed by data, activities, and outcomes resulting from the "Integrated Adaptation and Durability Planning for Regional Transportation, Urban Development, and Stormwater Management Study", described in detail under subtask 4.02, and due to the location of Forest Hill Drive within the larger study area.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds and Transportation Development Credits will be utilized, and consultant assistance may also be acquired to support these efforts. Anticipated deliverables include:

- Technical memoranda documenting analysis of corridor transportation constraints, needs, and comparisons of proposed operational and capacity improvement alternatives;
- Technical memoranda highlighting potential engineering products and tools utilized for calculation of corridor-based infrastructure/land-use design parameters, performance degradation rates/scenarios, and lifecycle needs;
- Benefit-cost analyses and other economic outputs assessing potential multi-disciplinary alternative applications within the corridor;
- Coordination with resource agencies, technical committees, stakeholders, and other partners highlighting outreach, education, training, and regulatory needs/actions based on sustainability and asset management principles; and,
- Final environmental documentation and clearance declaration.

5.04 Transportation Asset Management

National Highway System (NHS) Infrastructure Performance Measures and Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) Coordination and Reporting

Transportation Planning Funds-Other Funding Sources

Existing federal regulations now require that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) coordinate on the establishment and reporting of performance targets for pavement and bridge conditions on the National Highway System (NHS). The NHS includes all Interstate Highways and other roadways designated by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) as important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. NCTCOG has the discretion to support TxDOT's NHS pavement and bridge targets (i.e., agree to plan and program projects so that they contribute toward the accomplishment of TxDOT's established targets) or to establish its own quantifiable NHS pavement and bridge targets specific to its metropolitan planning area. **As part of NCTCOG's contribution toward achieving established targets, data analysis, project review, and other technical assistance will be applied toward expediting condition improvements, particularly for bridges and NHS "off-system" pavements.**

In addition to complying with NHS infrastructure performance measures, TxDOT is required to develop and implement a Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for the National Highway System (NHS) to preserve or improve asset condition and system performance as part of the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). TxDOT has prepared a TAMP that not only focuses on pavement and bridge conditions on the NHS but also addresses the entire State Highway System. The scope of this TAMP includes asset management objectives and performance measures, life-cycle planning, risk management, financial planning, and performance gap analyses. To assist TxDOT with TAMP implementation, this element highlights the supporting role of NCTCOG to provide assistance to TxDOT to collect data and to disseminate TAMP findings to local jurisdictions with NHS roadways.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds and Transportation Development Credits will be utilized to support work activities. Work will be ongoing throughout FY2020 and FY2021, and the following products will be delivered as the result of work done on this element:

- Collection and analysis of NHS pavement and bridge data in coordination with TxDOT and local jurisdictions with NHS roadways;
- Establishment and reporting of NHS pavement and bridge performance targets in coordination with TxDOT and in accordance with federal deadlines;
- Distribution of presentations and reports to guide incorporation of NHS infrastructure performance measures and TAMP findings into updates to the MTP and TIP; ~~and~~
- Development and maintenance of a web page on NHS infrastructure conditions and TAMP compliance, including status updates, meeting materials, and resource information.; **and**
- **Development and management of a data and project management system to facilitate reviews of pavement scores and engineering applications directed toward improving NHS "off-system" roadways in poor condition.**

Transportation Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment

Transportation Planning Funds

Improved asset management requires acknowledgment and engagement of the various environmental and economic risks that can affect infrastructure vulnerability and longevity. A durable system not only reduces the probability of component failure but also reduces the potential extent and severity of overall destruction, service interruption, and recovery time as the result of major disruptive events such as severe weather (e.g., flooding, drought, extreme heat, etc.). To that end, this element includes an initiative with the University Partnership Program (UPP) to appraise the endurance dimensions of transportation infrastructure in North Central Texas. This work will form the basis for conducting systemwide multilevel criticality and vulnerability assessments, establishing customized durability enhancement tactics, and developing decision-making and/or economic justification tools to aid in prioritization of multimodal durability measures and strategic projects, as appropriate.

Work will be ongoing throughout FY2021 and the following products will be delivered as the result of work done on this element:

- Creation of multilevel color-coded vulnerability analysis and condition ratings maps for existing and future regional transportation infrastructure modes; and
- Formulation of a multilevel asset endurance measurement model customized for North Central Texas infrastructure and environmental characteristics, yet consistent/compatible with USDOT parameters concerning TAMP and other performance management requirements.

5.05 Congestion Management Planning and Operations

Transportation System Management and Operations

Other Funding Sources

This program also uses Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds, Regional Toll Revenue funds, Texas Department of Transportation funds, and Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) to support activities in this area. Consultant assistance may be utilized. Anticipated products include:

- Agreements for regional communication, infrastructure, and information sharing including the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dallas-Fort Worth regional ITS partner agencies;
- Identification and documentation of standards for interagency communication of data and video, and the implementation of Center-to-Center-related software and requirements to facilitate information sharing between agencies;
- Update of the Regional ITS Architecture and development of associated plans and documents;
- Evaluation and implementation of vehicle and infrastructure technology;
- Identification of needed ITS integration;
- Collection and verification of data ensuring that devices and systems are operated and maintained at a level to detect and report accurate information (i.e., speeds, counts, and other data items);

- Evaluation, improvement, and implementation of the 511DFW System with outreach and communications planning and educational services to enhance public awareness and use of 511DFW;
- Evaluation and integration of 511DFW System **and Regional Data Hub** with other relevant systems operated within NCTCOG and by partner agencies;
- Review of statements of consistency with the Regional ITS Architecture;
- Staging of wreckers and other ancillary services for incident clearance and operational improvements;
- Strategies to integrate operations and rapidly clear collisions and stalled vehicles to improve roadway efficiency; and
- Accumulation of video footage of signage along the region's limited access roadway facilities, and the evaluation of this footage to identify deficiencies and improve wayfinding.

Traffic Incident Management Training

Other Funding Sources

This program is ongoing throughout FY2020 and FY2021, providing training for agencies responsible for managing and clearing traffic incidents. This training has been demonstrated to improve responder and motorist safety, and to reduce significantly the length and size of roadway closures. The Dallas-Fort Worth area was the first area in the nation to formalize the training process to reach out to all responders and generate improvements in the management of traffic incidents. The goal of NCTCOG Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training is to initiate a common, coordinated response to traffic incidents that will build partnerships, enhance safety for emergency personnel, reduce upstream traffic accidents, improve the efficiency of the transportation system, and improve air quality in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. By implementing best practices techniques throughout the region, clearance times can be reduced by as much as 40 percent. Such an improvement will reduce the impact of congestion, improve regional air quality, and improve the safety and efficiency of travel for all residents and visitors in the area. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds, **Regional Transportation Council Local funds**, local funds, and Transportation Development Credits support this program. Consultant services may be utilized. Anticipated products include:

- Program management and oversight for the TIM Training Program;
- TIM First Responder and Manager's Courses and TIM Executive Level Courses;
- Quick Clearance Crash Reconstruction Training workshops;
- Annual TIM Self-Assessment, performance tracking and coordination activities;
- Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects;
- Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Equipment and Training Program development and CVE Working Group oversight; and
- Support of general training, educational projects and initiatives that promote the implementation of strategies that mitigate traffic and/or CVE incidents.

VIII. Overview of Work Program Funding

Proposed Budget

The US Department of Transportation provides funds through programs of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. Both FHWA PL 112 and FTA 5303 funds are provided annually to Metropolitan Planning Organizations to support metropolitan regional transportation planning activities based on an 80 percent federal/20 percent local match requirement. TxDOT will provide the 20 percent match for the FHWA 112 and FTA 5303 funds for FY2020 and FY2021 to the MPO to carry out the UPWP in the form of transportation development credits. These transportation development credits are provided by metropolitan areas building toll roads and are used on a statewide basis to provide the match funds needed for all metropolitan planning organizations. The FY2020 and FY2021 FHWA and FTA funding levels reflected in this program are summarized in Exhibit VIII-1. The formula-based FHWA PL 112 allocation to the Unified Planning Work Program for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area is \$8,728,069 in FY2020 and ~~\$7,455,075~~ **\$8,463,215** in FY2021 for a two-year total of ~~\$16,183,144~~ **\$17,191,284**. The Federal Transit Administration 5303 funding is \$2,920,626 in FY2020 and \$3,110,814 in FY2021 for a two-year total of \$6,031,440. An estimated balance of \$4,629,455 in unexpended/unobligated FHWA PL 112 funding will be available from the FY2019 authorization. Each of these funding amounts is incorporated by source agency into the Work Program by task and subtask. Total FHWA PL 112 and FTA 5303 funding for the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP is estimated at ~~\$26,844,039~~ **\$27,852,179**. Transportation Planning Funds in the amount of \$23,656,200 have been programmed and allocated to each of the UPWP subtasks as shown in Exhibit VIII-2. These programmed funds include the FTA 5303 allocation of \$6,031,440, the estimated FY2019 FHWA PL 112 fund balance of \$4,629,455, and \$12,995,305 of Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 FHWA PL 112 funding. The remaining balance of Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 FHWA PL 112 funds of ~~\$3,187,839~~ **\$4,195,979** is anticipated to be carried over to Fiscal Year 2022.

EXHIBIT VIII-3
ANTICIPATED EQUIPMENT/SOFTWARE PURCHASES/LEASES

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED PRICE	FUNDING SOURCE	SUBTASK
131	Computer systems (desktops, portable, tablet)	\$529,000	RTC Local	1.04
11	Laser printers for network group usage	\$61,000	RTC Local	1.04
7	Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) phone devices, including accessories such as microphones for conference phones or hands-free devices.	\$2,800	TPF	1.04
33	Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) phone devices, including accessories such as microphones for conference phones or hands-free devices.	\$13,000	RTC Local	1.04
---	Other computer hardware items, replacements, accessories, and upgrades (for example, text and image scanners, hard drives, additional RAM, projectors, monitors/televisions, video cards, network cabling, warranty extensions)	\$6,000	TPF	1.04
---	Other computer hardware items, replacements, accessories, and upgrades (for example, text and image scanners, hard drives, additional RAM, projectors, monitors/televisions, video cards, network cabling, warranty extensions)	\$84,000	RTC Local	1.04
---	Licenses to traffic simulation and assignment software packages (two "TransModeler" and one "DTA" dynamic)	\$6,000	TPF	1.04
---	Two years of software support by Caliper and specific renewal for 50 TransCAD licenses	\$150,000	TPF	1.04
---	Software purchases/upgrades (for example, the current or higher versions of: SPSS and Adobe licenses), software/services, cable service, application subscriptions, advanced mapping/presentation software, and software support renewals	\$88,000	TPF	1.04
---	Web-based traffic count reporting software, including annual maintenance and support	\$40,000	TPF	2.02
--	Audio/video equipment, updates, maintenance, and video/web hosting services for the Transportation Council Room	\$150,000	RTC Local	1.02
--	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Software	\$30,000	TPF Local	3.02

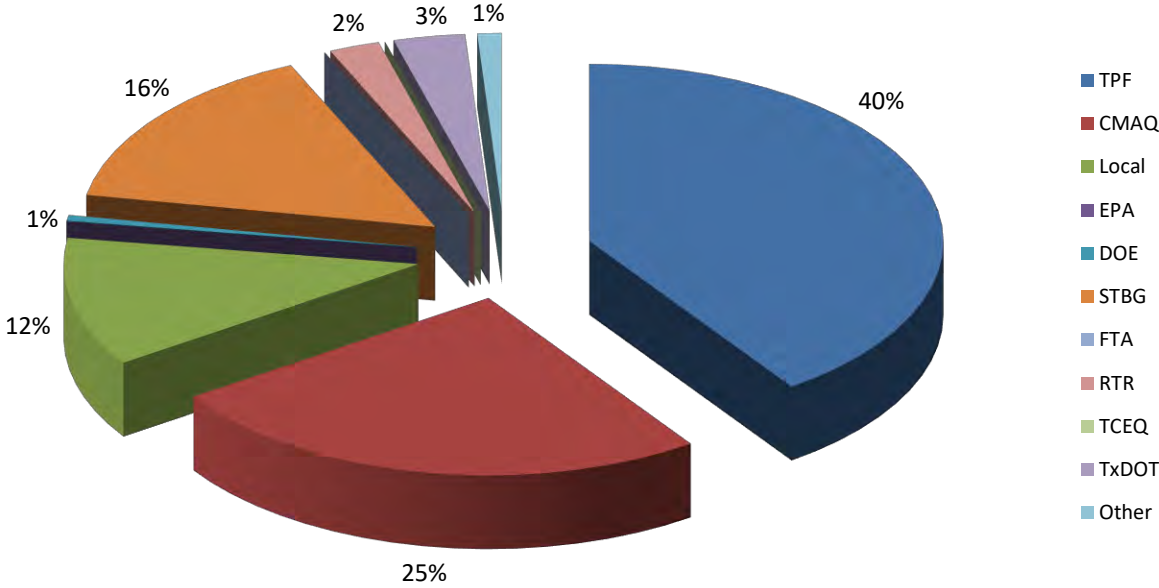
QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED PRICE	FUNDING SOURCE	SUBTASK
--	Bicycle-Pedestrian Count Equipment	\$55,000 \$35,000	STBG Local	5.03
6	Computer tablets	\$9,000	DOE	1.01
--	Photography equipment	\$6,000	CMAQ	1.01
--	Video equipment	\$10,000	DOE	1.01
--	Public involvement subscriptions	\$5,000 \$80,000	TPF	1.01
--	Outreach and educational subscriptions	\$50,000	CMAQ	1.01

E. Funding Summary

Subtask	TPF ¹	Additional Funding		Total
		Amount	Source	
1.01	\$3,906,800			
		\$3,288,000	CMAQ	
		\$68,500	DOE	
		\$4,000	NCTCOG Local	
Subtotal				\$7,267,300
1.02	\$573,700			
		\$196,200	Local	
		\$119,800	NCTCOG Local	
		\$306,800	STBG	
Subtotal				\$1,196,500
1.03				
		\$16,400	Local	
		\$20,000	NCTCOG Local	
		\$300,000	RTR	
		\$1,000	STBG	
Subtotal				\$337,400
1.04	\$768,100			
		\$1,700,000	STBG	
		\$1,319,000	Local	
		\$425,000	TXDOT	
Subtotal				\$4,212,100
Total	\$5,248,600	\$7,764,700		\$13,013,300

¹Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) includes both FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 funds. TxDOT will apply Transportation Development Credits sufficient to provide the match to FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 programs. As the credits reflect neither cash nor man-hours, they are not reflected in the funding tables.

Task 1.0 Funding Summary

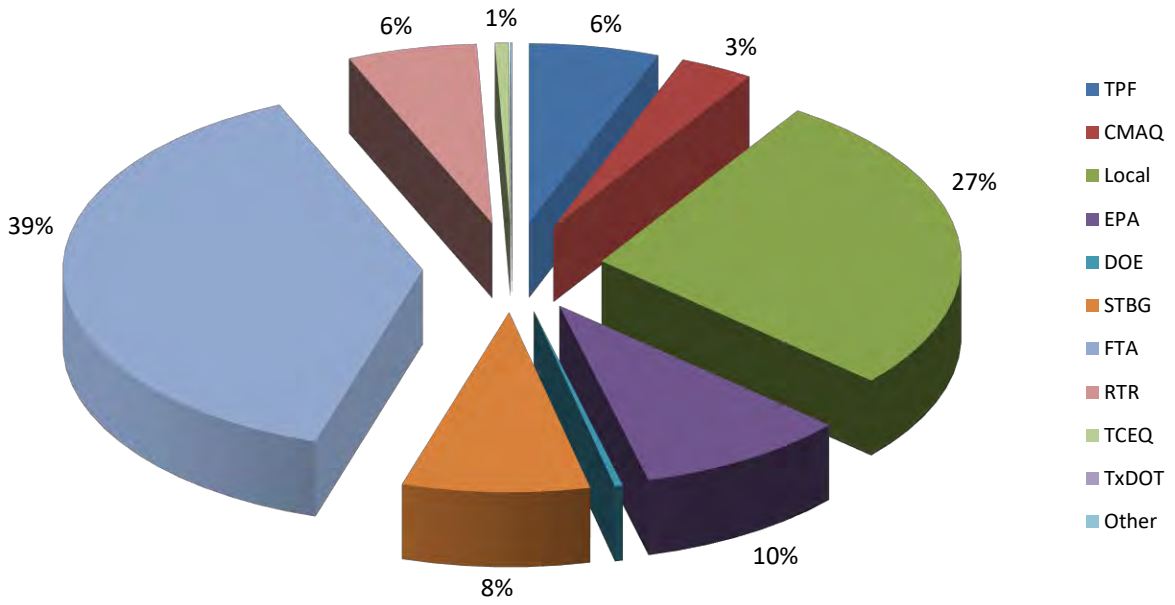


E. Funding Summary

Subtask	TPF ¹	Additional Funding		Total
		Amount	Source	
3.01	\$2,648,400	\$1,888,000	RTR	
		\$1,218,400	STBG	
Subtotal				\$5,754,800
3.02	\$1,206,000	\$285,000	TCEQ	
		\$25,000	Local	
Subtotal				\$1,516,000
3.03		\$3,088,360	CMAQ	
		\$337,060	DOE	
		\$8,838,521	EPA	
		\$80,000	FHWA	
		\$19,338,385	Local	
		\$4,774,400	STBG	
		\$273,641	TCEQ	
Subtotal				\$36,730,367
3.04	\$1,604,700	\$850,000	FTA	
		\$385,000	RTR	
		\$1,857,000	STBG	
Subtotal				\$4,696,700
3.05		\$35,176,382	FTA	
		\$6,130,000	Local	
		\$3,167,400	RTR	
Subtotal				\$44,473,782
Total	\$5,459,100	\$87,712,549		\$93,171,649

¹Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) includes both FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 funds. TxDOT will apply Transportation Development Credits sufficient to provide the match to FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 programs. As the credits reflect neither cash nor man-hours, they are not reflected in the funding tables.

Task 3.0 Funding Summary



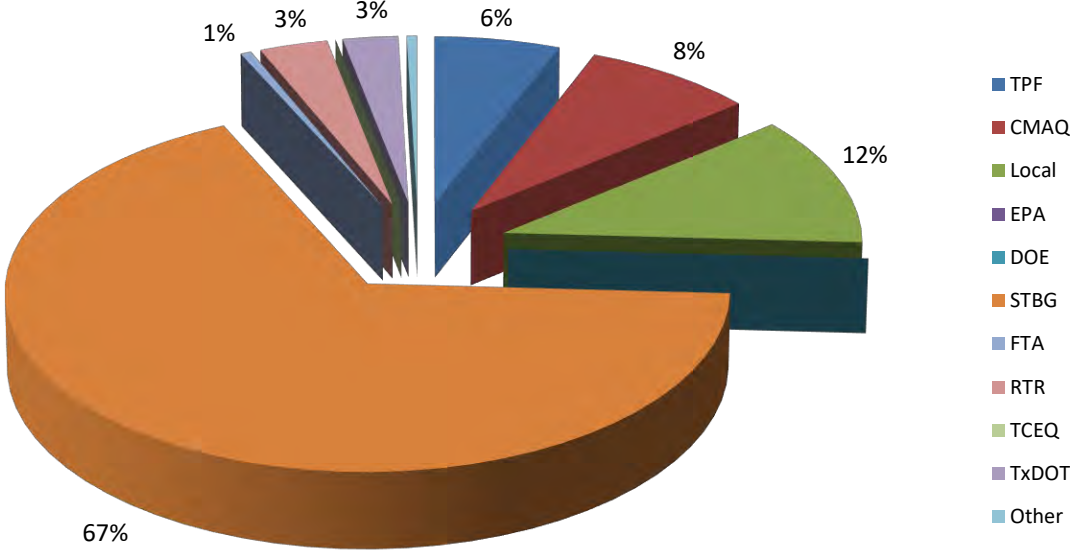
E. Funding Summary

Subtask	TPF ¹	Additional Funding		Total
		Amount	Source	
5.01	\$1,209,500			
		\$736,700	Local	
		\$76,400	NTTA	
		\$2,575,600	RTR	
		\$23,634,400	STBG	
		\$200,000	TxDOT	
Subtotal				\$28,432,600
5.02	\$1,159,200			
		\$205,100	RTR	
Subtotal				\$1,364,300
5.03	\$837,000			
		\$557,500	CMAQ	
		\$529,800	FTA	
		\$2,110,665	Local	
		\$9,107,700	STBG	
Subtotal				\$13,142,665
5.04	\$311,400			
		\$1,390,000	STBG	
Subtotal				\$1,701,400
5.05	\$968,300			
		\$7,736,740	CMAQ	
		\$4,408,100	Local	
		\$547,900	RTR	
		\$14,396,285	STBG	
		\$2,427,855	TXDOT	
Subtotal				\$30,485,180
5.06	\$51,700			
		\$8,885,400	STBG	
		\$400,000	Local	
Subtotal				\$9,337,100
5.07	\$60,700			
Subtotal				\$60,700
5.08	\$618,100			
		\$24,000	Local	
		\$725,280	STBG	
Subtotal				\$1,367,380

Subtask	TPF ¹	Additional Funding		Total
		Amount	Source	
5.09	\$164,200			
		\$856,900	Local	
Subtotal				\$1,021,100
5.10				
		\$432,000	DOD	
		\$281,100	Local	
Subtotal				\$713,100
5.11	\$743,500			
		\$263,100	Local	
		\$122,500	CMAQ	
		\$11,171,240	STBG	
		\$64,975	TXDOT	
Subtotal				\$12,365,315
5.12				
		\$500,000	Local	
Subtotal				\$500,000
5.13				
		\$2,500,000	Local	
Subtotal				\$2,500,000
Total	\$6,123,600	\$96,867,240		\$102,990,840

¹Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) includes both FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 funds. TxDOT will apply Transportation Development Credits sufficient to provide the match to FHWA PL-112 and FTA Section 5303 programs. As the credits reflect neither cash nor man-hours, they are not reflected in the funding tables.

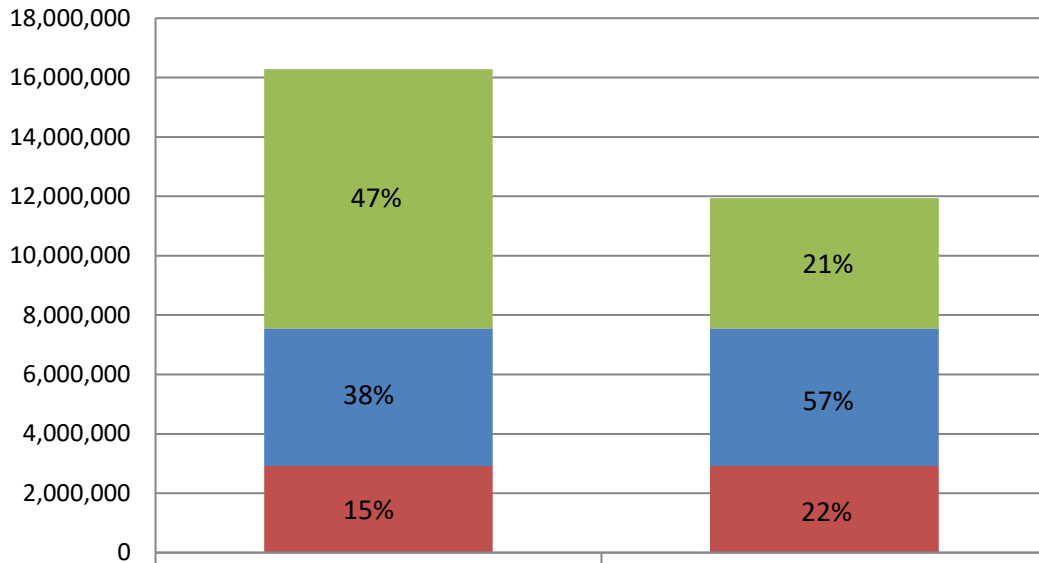
Task 5.0 Funding Summary



**EXHIBIT VIII-1
FY2020 AND FY2021 TPF PROGRAMMING SUMMARY**

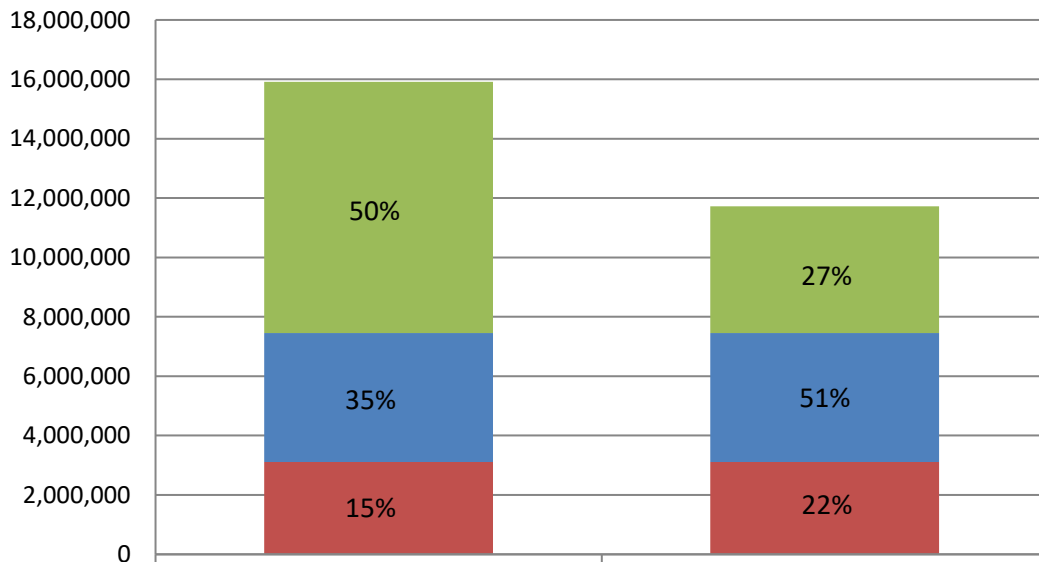
	FY2020		FY2021	
	Allocation	Programmed	Allocation	Programmed
FTA Section 5303	2,920,626	2,920,626	3,110,814	3,110,814
FHWA (PL-112)				
Carryover	4,629,455	4,629,455	4,344,050	4,344,050
New Allocation	8,728,069	4,384,019	8,463,215	4,267,236
Total TPF	16,278,150	11,934,100	15,918,079	11,722,100
Carryover		4,344,050		4,195,979
Two-Year Totals				
FTA Section 5303	6,031,440			
FHWA PL-112	21,820,739			
Total	27,852,179			
Programmed	23,656,200			
Carryover	4,195,979			

Summary of TPF 2020 Funding Levels



	Allocation	Programmed
FHWA (PL-112)	8,728,069	4,384,019
Carryover	4,629,455	4,629,455
FTA (5303)	2,920,626	2,920,626

Summary of TPF 2021 Funding Levels

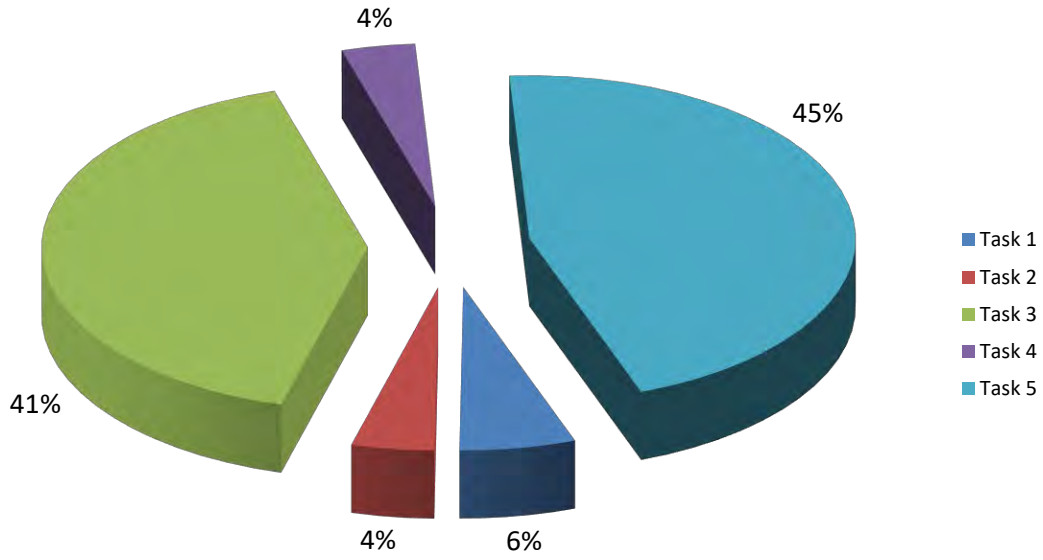


	Allocation	Programmed
FHWA (PL-112)	8,463,215	4,267,236
Carryover	4,344,050	4,344,050
FTA (5303)	3,110,814	3,110,814

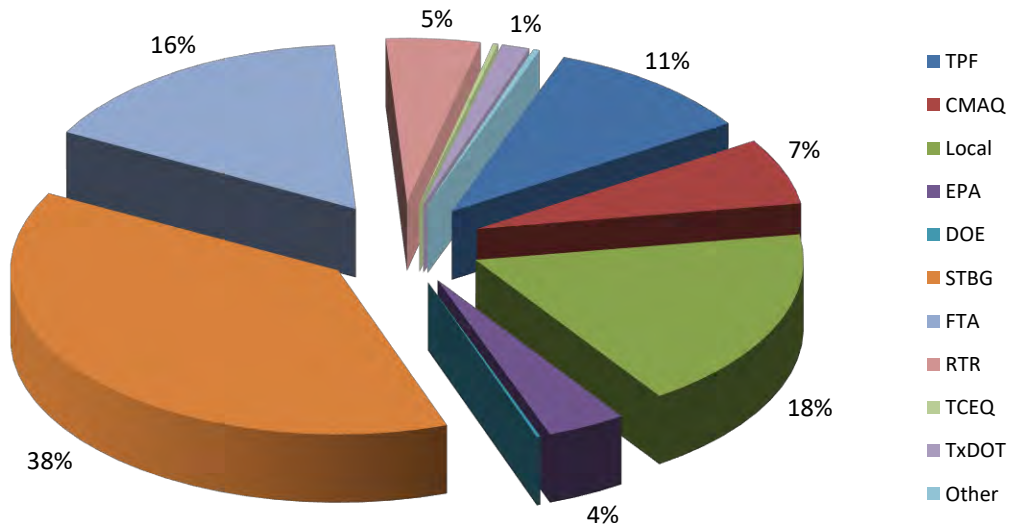
**EXHIBIT VIII-4
FY2020 AND FY2021 UPWP FUNDING SUMMARY**

Funding Source	Task 1.0 Administration	Task 2.0 Data Development	Task 3.0 Short Range Planning	Task 4.0 Metropolitan Transportation Planning	Task 5.0 Special Studies	Total
FTA Activities	44.21.00	44.22.00	44.24.00 44.25.00	44.23.01	44.23.02 44.24.00 44.22.00 44.27.00	
TPF	\$5,248,600	\$3,512,600	\$5,459,100	\$3,312,300	\$6,123,600	\$23,656,200
CMAQ	\$3,288,000	\$0	\$3,088,360	\$0	\$8,416,740	\$14,793,100
DOD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$432,000	\$432,000
DOE	\$68,500	\$0	\$337,060	\$0	\$0	\$405,560
EPA	\$0	\$0	\$8,838,521	\$0	\$0	\$8,838,521
FAA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FHWA	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	\$0	\$80,000
FTA	\$0	\$188,600	\$36,026,382	\$0	\$529,800	\$36,744,782
HUD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local	\$1,531,600	\$1,283,020	\$25,493,385	\$492,500	\$12,080,565	\$40,881,070
NCTCOG						
Local	\$143,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$143,800
NTTA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$76,400	\$76,400
RTR	\$300,000	\$0	\$5,440,400	\$1,468,180	\$3,328,600	\$10,537,180
SECO	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
STBG	\$2,007,800	\$4,295,600	\$7,849,800	\$3,000,000	\$69,310,305	\$86,463,505
TBD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TCEQ	\$0	\$0	\$558,641	\$0	\$0	\$558,641
TxDOT	\$425,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,692,830	\$3,117,830
Subtotal	\$13,013,300	\$9,279,820	\$93,171,649	\$8,272,980	\$102,990,840	\$226,728,589

Summary of Funding by Task



Summary of Total Funding



Modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program

**Regional Transportation Council
March 11, 2021**

**Transportation Department
North Central Texas Council of Governments**

Transportation Planning Funds Two-year Summary

Current Total FY2020 and FY2021 Transportation Planning Funds (FTA 5303 and FHWA PL 112)	\$26,844,039
<u>Additional FY2021 FHWA PL 112</u>	<u>\$ 1,008,140</u>
New Total FY2020 and FY2021 Transportation Planning Funds (FTA 5303 and FHWA PL 112)	\$27,852,179
Anticipated Expenditures for FY2020 and FY2021	\$23,656,200
New PL Balance to Carry Over to FY2022	\$ 4,195,979

*No additional programming of TPF in Amendment #5

Total Programming Increase from Other Sources

Funding Source	Additional Funding
Department of Energy	\$ 2,500
Environmental Protection Agency	\$ 2,498,086
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program	\$ 200,000
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	\$ 9,331,500
Regional Toll Revenue	\$ 135,000
Texas Department of Transportation	\$ 250,000
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	\$ 42,691
Local	\$ 3,652,810
Total	\$16,112,587

Modification Schedule

February 8	Initiation of Online Public Outreach
February 26	Action by Surface Transportation Technical Committee
March 11	Action by Regional Transportation Council
March 25	Action by NCTCOG Executive Board
March 26	Submittal of Modifications to Texas Department of Transportation

Requested RTC Action

Approve:

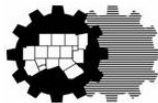
- **Proposed UPWP modifications outlined in Electronic Item 3.1.1**
- **Direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved modifications**

Unified Planning Work Program

Contact Information

Vickie Alexander
Program Manager
817-695-9242
valexander@nctcog.org

Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins
Administrative Program Coordinator
817-608-2325
VPruitt-Jenkins@nctcog.org



North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation Department

[**https://www.nctcog.org/trans/study/unified-planning-work-program**](https://www.nctcog.org/trans/study/unified-planning-work-program)

DRAFT



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, we would like to congratulate you on your confirmation as Secretary of Transportation. I would like to commend you on your early commitment to equity in the transportation system and reconnecting communities where transportation facilities now serve as barriers. A membership roster of the RTC is included as Attachment 1.

The RTC has been taking a holistic approach to reconnecting communities, sometimes removing freeways and sometimes depressing or lowering freeways. Additional information on current and future projects is enclosed as Attachment 2 but let me highlight a few notable efforts. The foremost example is S. M. Wright freeway south of downtown Dallas. This is an elevated highway that bifurcated a community and had a number of safety concerns. A new connection to IH 45 was provided to preserve access for the community, and a section of S. M. Wright is being torn down and turned into a boulevard. We invite you and your staff to visit the Dallas-Fort Worth region in person or virtually so you can visualize your policy direction already in operation.

Klyde Warren Park was built as a freeway deck plaza over Woodall Rogers Freeway and serves to connect downtown Dallas with Uptown Dallas. The RTC is assisting with funding an expansion to this premier community amenity. Our region is replicating this freeway deck plaza model in the reconstruction of the Southern Gateway project south of downtown Dallas in a primarily low-income and minority neighborhood to reconnect communities separated by a highway facility that is being reconstructed as a highway but in a way that can bring economic development opportunities. In Fort Worth, examples of projects include the Hemphill-Lamar connection and Fort Worth Housing Solutions land acquisition near downtown.

Thank you for your leadership on transportation issues facing the Nation. We look forward to working with you on reconnecting communities historically separated by transportation facilities and would like to invite you to visit the DFW region to see these project examples for yourself. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for NCTCOG, at mmorris@nctcog.org or (817) 695-9241.

Sincerely,

Roger Harmon, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
County Judge, Johnson County

AW:kw
Enclosures

cc: Mr. Al Alonzi, Texas Division Director, Federal Highway Administration
Ms. Gail Lyssy, Region 6 Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

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Theresa Daniel, Ph.D., Vice Chair

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Mohamed “Mo” Bur, P.E.

District Engineer
Texas Department of Transportation,
Dallas District

Dianne Costa

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Denton County Transportation
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Jeff Davis

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North Texas Tollway Authority

Ivan Hughes

Councilmember
Town of Addison

Clay Lewis Jenkins

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Texas Department of Transportation,
Fort Worth District

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B. Adam McGough

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William Meadows

Board Member
Dallas Fort Worth International Airport

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Mayor Pro Tem
City of Mesquite

Cary Moon

Councilmember
City of Fort Worth

Ignacio T. Nuñez, M.D.

Councilmember
City of Arlington

Philip J. Ritter

Citizen Representative
City of Dallas

John Ryan

Councilmember
City of Denton

Chris Schulmeister

Councilmember
City of Allen

Casey Thomas II

Councilmember
City of Dallas

Jeremy Tompkins

Mayor Pro Tem
City of Euless

T. Oscar Trevino Jr., P.E.

Mayor
City of North Richland Hills

William Tsao, P.E.

Citizen Representative
City of Dallas

Paul N. Wageman

Chair
Dallas Area Rapid Transit

Duncan Webb

Commissioner
Collin County

B. Glen Whitley

County Judge
Tarrant County

W. Jeff Williams, P.E.

Mayor
City of Arlington

Overview Materials for Secretary Buttigieg

Urban Freeway Reconnections

March 11, 2021

Urban Freeway Reconnections: Dallas-Fort Worth Examples Provided

- S.M. Wright Freeway
- Klyde Warren Park Extension
- Southern Gateway Deck Plaza
- IH 30 Deck Opportunities
- IH 345 Feasibility Study
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit D2 Line at IH 345
- IH 635 (LBJ Express) Tolled Managed Lanes
- Hemphill-Lamar Connection in Fort Worth
- Butler Place Redevelopment

IH 635 (LBJ Express) Tolled Managed Lanes



13.3 miles

\$2.6 billion investment

26% equity

56% debt

18% public subsidy

Open since September 2015

Key Principles

- Through intense Public involvement community determined need to add capacity but wanted the ultimate project **no higher-no wider** and that was achieved through depressed managed lanes with freeway lanes cantilevered over
- Project is carrying **15% higher volume** than before construction with roughly same footprint
- Continuous frontage roads were added to provide **access to local businesses** with the goal of enhancing economic opportunity



S.M. Wright Phase II Project

I-45 and SH 310 Project



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The S.M. Wright Phase II project will improve the neighborhood environment, safety and mobility in the area of Interstate 45 (I-45) and US 175/C.F. Hawn freeways. The project transforms the existing S.M. Wright freeway into a six-lane, street level boulevard with traffic signals. Freeway overpasses will be removed, and the boulevard will include landscaping and sidewalks. The project will feature enhanced community gateways to help promote neighborhood identity and local connections, while also helping spur community investment, development and rejuvenation. The S.M. Wright Phase II project is \$79 million and is scheduled for completion in fall 2023.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



- Converting the existing freeway-to-freeway connections between I-45 and State Highway 310 (SH 310) to a diamond interchange providing access to two cross-streets: Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) and Al Lipscomb Way (formerly Grand Avenue).



- The proposed improvements will extend SH 310 to connect exclusively to Cesar Chavez Boulevard.



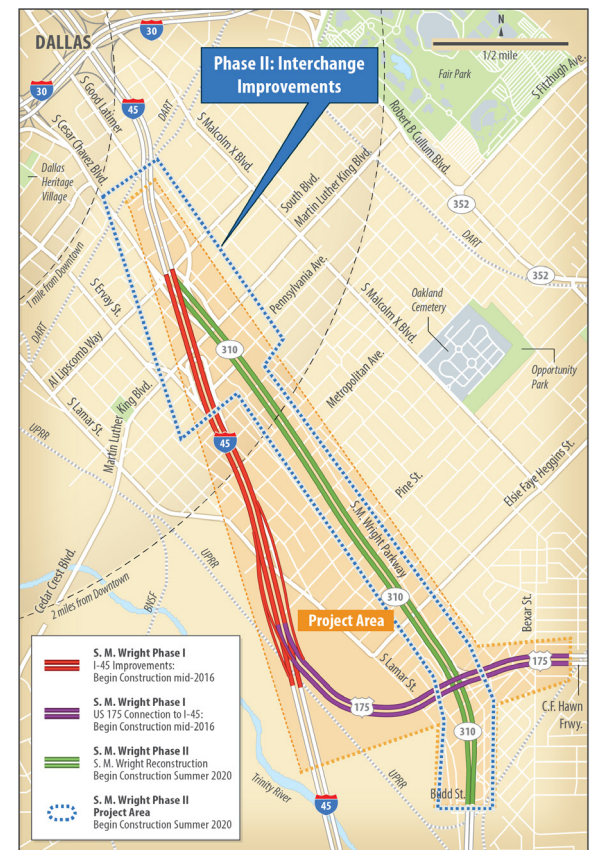
- The existing SH 310 underpass of MLK will be converted to an at-grade, signalized intersection.
- The existing I-45 frontage roads will be extended to MLK, and the existing ramps connecting MLK and I-45 will be relocated to the proposed signalized intersections of the proposed frontage roads and MLK.



- A northbound exit ramp to Al Lipscomb Way from I-45 as well as a southbound entrance ramp from Al Lipscomb Way to I-45 will also be constructed.



- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including sidewalks and shared use bicycle lanes, will be constructed along SH 310 to create a continuous network between SH 310, MLK, Al Lipscomb Way and Good Latimer Expressway.



DID YOU KNOW?

The S.M. Wright Phase II construction will consist of the reconfiguration of the existing interchange between IH 45 and SH 310 (S.M. Wright Parkway), Cesar Chavez Boulevard and Good Latimer Expressway.



Project Website:

To learn more about the S.M. Wright Phase II Project, please visit the website at smwrightproject.com.



For Additional Information Contact:

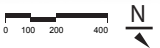
info@smwrightproject.com
214-390-7130

S.M. Wright Phase II Project

I-45 and SH 310 Project



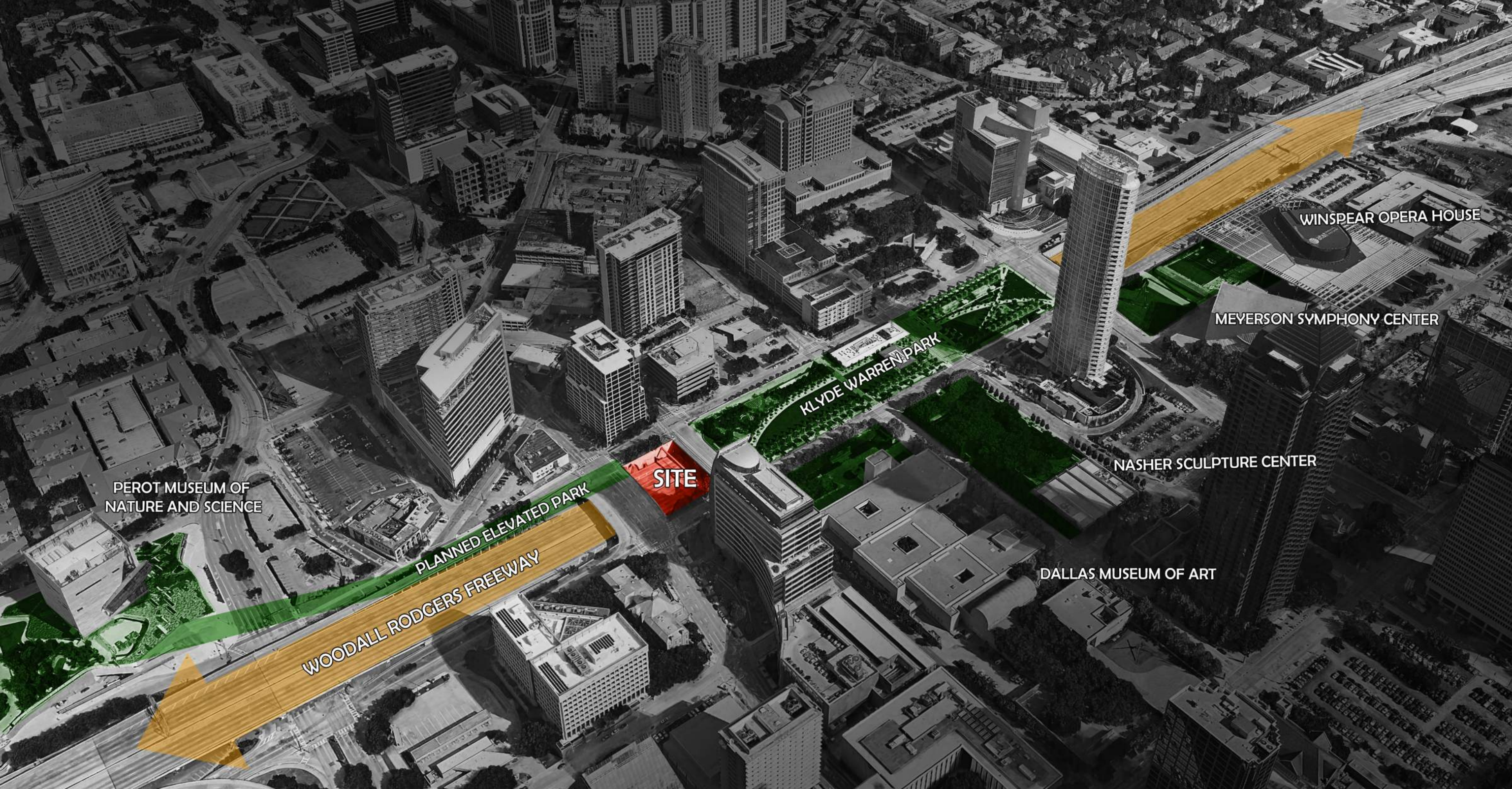
S.M. WRIGHT | SITE PLAN RENDERING



PINE STREET & S.M. WRIGHT | SOUTH EAST CORNER LOOKING WEST



PINE STREET & S.M. WRIGHT | SOUTH EAST CORNER LOOKING WEST



PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

WOODALL RODGERS FREEWAY
PLANNED ELEVATED PARK

SITE

KLYDE WARREN PARK

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER

MEYERSON SYMPHONY CENTER

WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE



IH 30 Deck Opportunity Areas

Site Forces and Considerations for Currently-Proposed Locations

2

Illustrative Plan | DRAFT
Canton - Griffin - Akard | Deck Park + Parkway

Source: TxDOT/City of Dallas (<http://www.keepitmovingdallas.com/sites/default/files/docs/CoD%20Landscaping%20Board.pdf>), 2019

SECTION A-A



Dallas Heritage Village | Deck Park + Parkway

SECTION B-B



P-UD I-30 Canyon
October 29, 2019

Legend
Parks/Open Space
Trees
Paved
Potential location
Developmental land
Challenged to EDCIF
Process for Handling
Unpaved Land

- Maximizing Downtown Dallas views
- Shift to consistent neighborhood scale
- Proximity and circulation to / from critical destinations (HSR, Convention Center)

- Drainage, utilities, and maintenance needs
- 16'-0" min. clearance above IH 30 assets
- Appropriate load type distribution(s)
- DART / Freight rail maintenance buffers

- Deck alignment to existing grade(s)
- Deck length threshold for ventilation (350')
- Adjacent land use type / intensity / access
- Potential air rights opportunities / constraints

I-345 Feasibility Study

PROJECT DETAILS

Limits: I-345 Feasibility Study from I-30 to Spur 366/
Woodall Rodgers Freeway

CSJ: 0092-14-094

Description: Feasibility Study

Project Let: TBD

Total Length: Approximately 1.4 miles

PROJECT TIMELINE

Late 2019 – Public Meeting Series #1

TBD – Recommended Alignment

2021

2019

TBD

2021 – Public Meeting Series #2

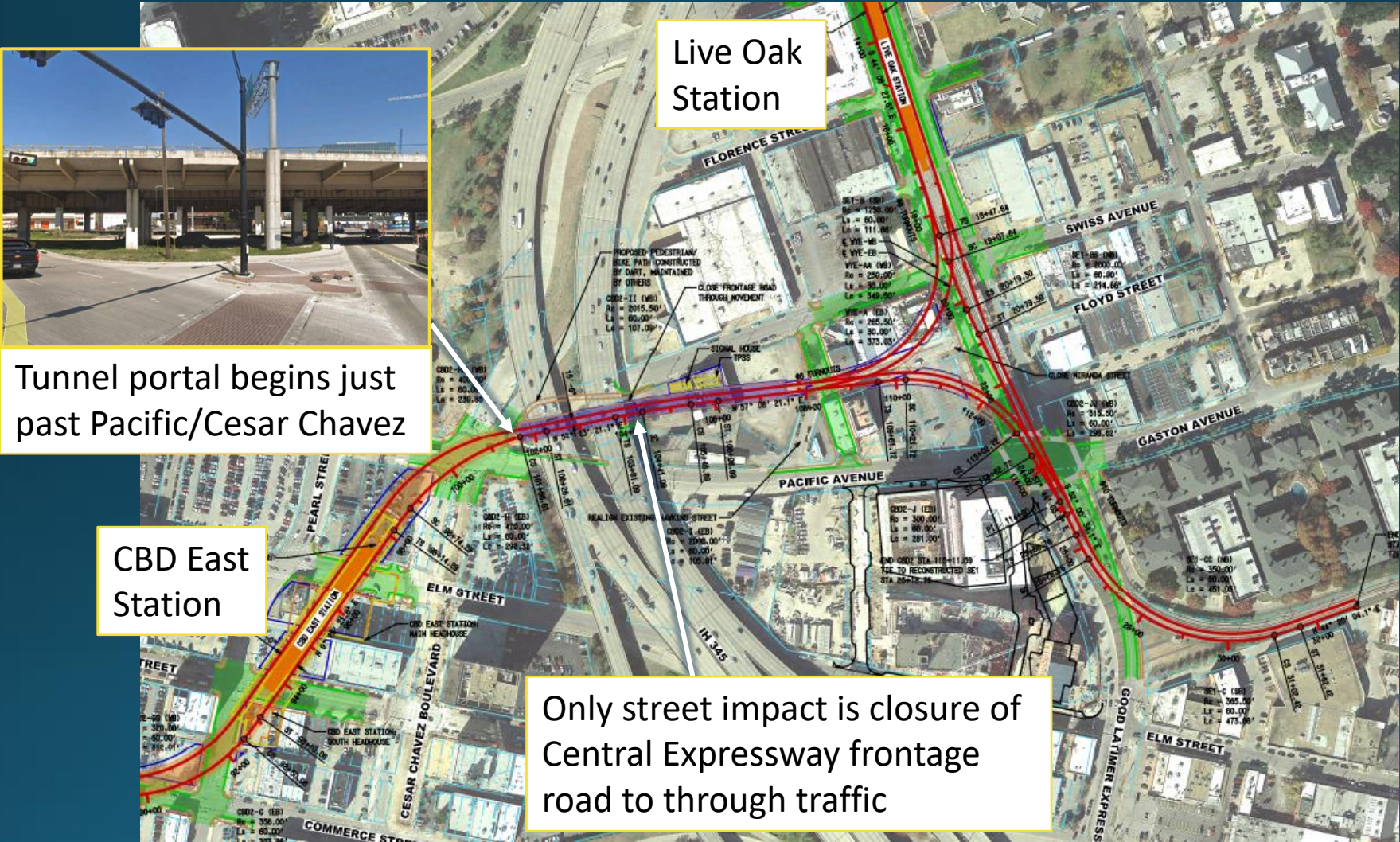
TBD – Public Meeting Series #3



Estimated Construction Cost: TBD

Funded Amount: TBD

D2 Project



Hemphill-Lamar Connector

Long-Awaited Downtown/Near Southside Linkage

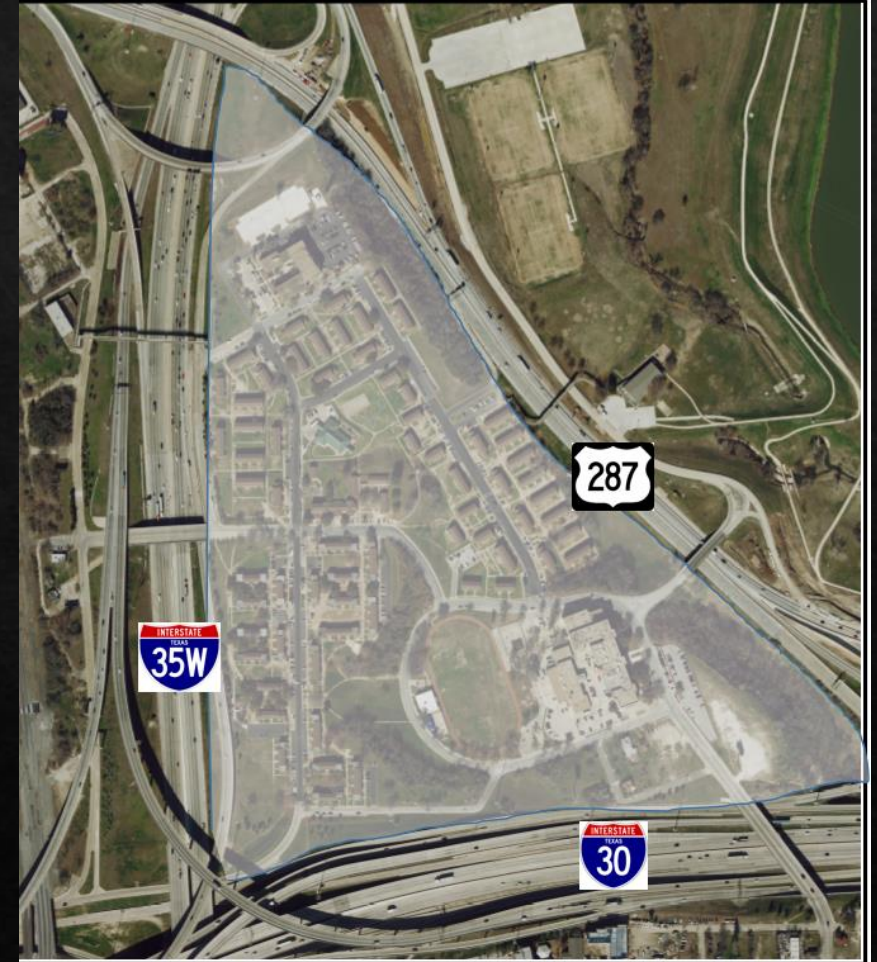
5



- \$53 Million partnership project
- Anticipated completion – Dec. 2019
- 4-lane divided arterial (Lancaster Ave. to Vickery Blvd.)

BUTLER PLACE

- City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Housing Solutions, and NCTCOG staff have coordinated about redevelopment of and accessibility to/from Butler Place in Fort Worth.
- Funding was approved by the RTC in April 2019 for engineering and land acquisition for this project.
- Additional funding is proposed for transportation connections to the site
- Limits: Bounded by IH 35W, IH 30, and US 287
- Scope: Improve accessibility to and from Butler Place
- Funding:
 - \$10,000,000 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) (matched with Transportation Development Credits (TDC))
 - Half of funding to be repaid to the RTC via Tax Increment Finance (TIF) revenues over time.
- RTC Policies/Federal Performance Measures Addressed: Accessibility, Infill Development

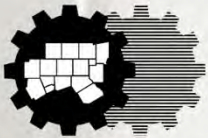


Section 214/USACE Update

Expediting Regional Transportation Projects

Regional Transportation Council
March 11, 2021

Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation



**North Central Texas
Council of Governments**

Program Background

Funding

- Original MOA signed in October 2008; \$500,000 RTC local funds
- Current MOA signed in October 2011; will expire September 2022
- Additional funding approved in 2015 and 2018
- Latest funding approved in May 2019 for an additional \$800,000
- A total of \$3,100,000 has been dedicated to the program since its inception
- Funds used for one USACE staff person dedicated to program

Projects Considered for Inclusion

Projects requested by NCTCOG partners

Program Participants

TxDOT	Union Pacific	City of Denton
NTTA	BNSF Railway	City of Irving
DART	City of Corinth	City of McKinney
Trinity Metro	City of Dallas	City of Prosper
USACE		

Program Success

Coordination

- Partner agencies have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program
- All performance measures under MOA have “exceeded expectations”
- Total number of actions taken by USACE has increased

Permitting

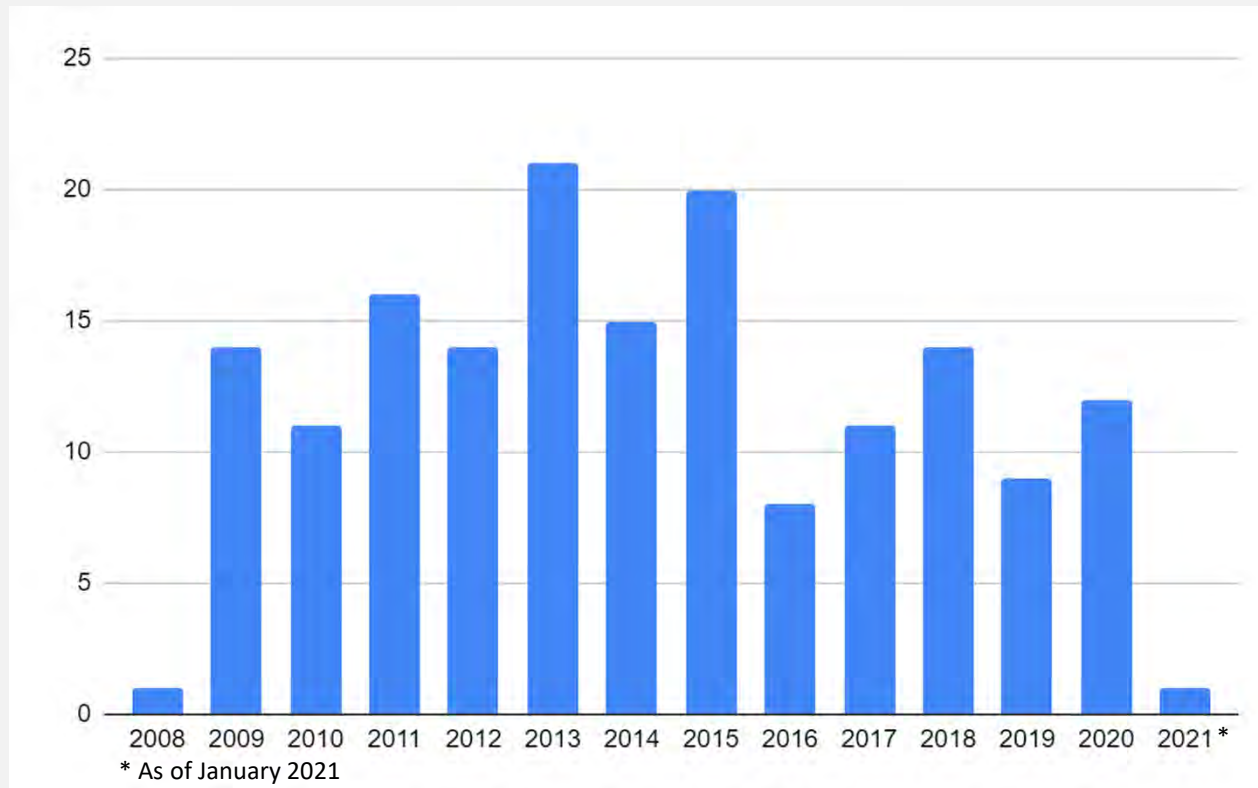
- Withdrawal of unnecessary permits
- Reduction in permit type (IP -> NWP)
- Reduction of time for permit decisions
- Developed Regional General Permit (RGP) to expedite 404 permits during the 408 permit process

Mitigation

- Reduction in mitigation requirements
- Cost Savings
- Reduction of impact to aquatic environment

Snapshot of Success

Number of Permit Decisions under MOA to Date



Includes permits withdrawn as a result of enhanced coordination

Snapshot of Success

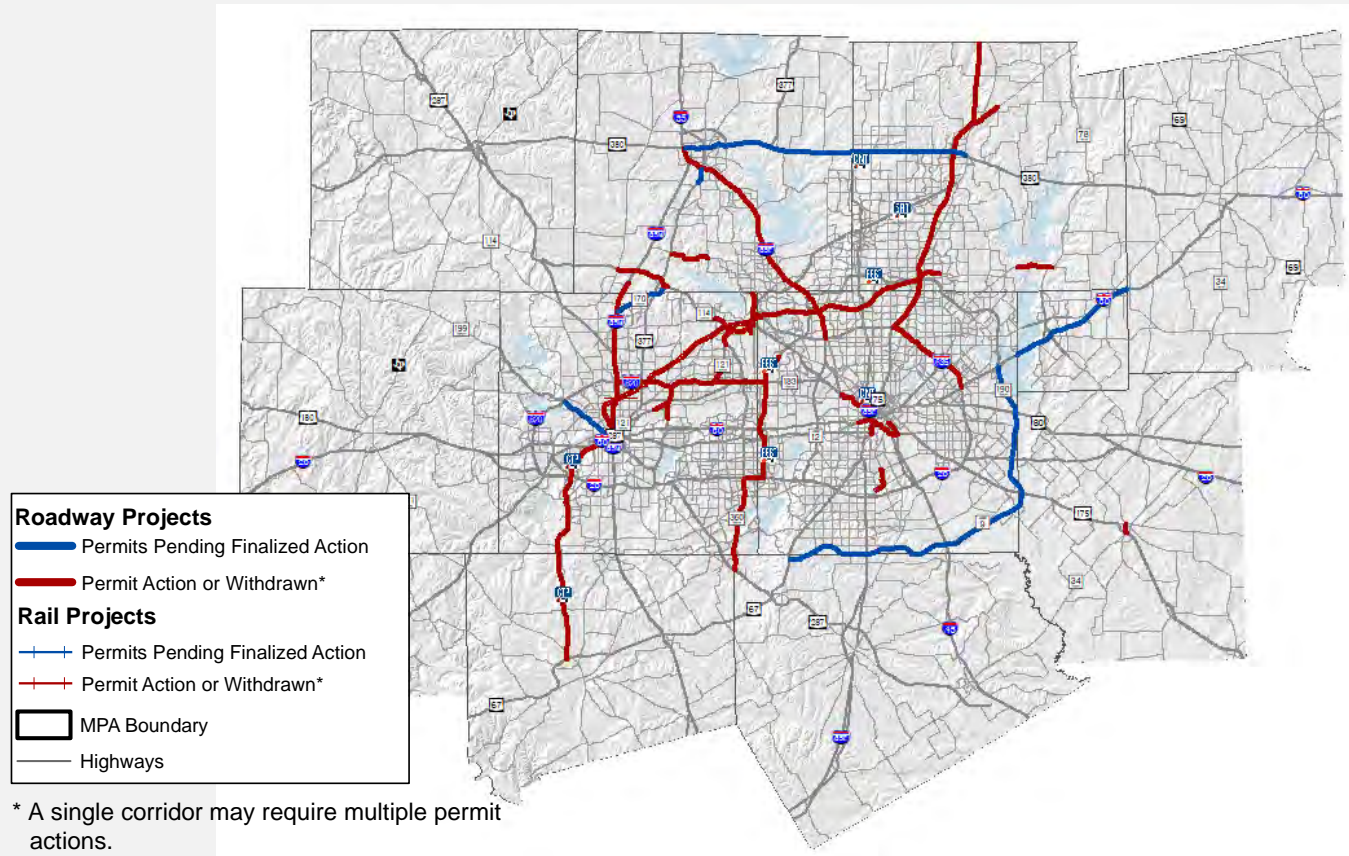
USACE Fort Worth District Statistics as of October 2020

Actions taken by USACE (counts)	Before Agreement	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Finalized Action	14	115	107	152	177	208	204	176
Coordinate External Agency	1	138	143	144	140	169	172	124
Site Visit	0	10	10	3	6	4	2	5
Applicant Information Request	4	73	69	68	67	59	53	47

Completion Timeframes	Processing Time for Branch	Processing Time for MOA Projects
Total Processing Time	36.8 days	2.3 days

Regional Program Significance

Major Projects Benefitting from Expedited Permits





Future of the Program

Program Extension

- Remaining funds from current agreement plus approved funds in FY2019 will cover the program through the end of FY2022.
- Staff is working on creating a new agreement after FY2022 instead of an extension of the existing agreement.

Satisfaction

- USACE and NCTCOG have been pleased with the program results.
- Partner agencies have been satisfied with the program.
- All parties have expressed interest in continuing the program.



Contact Information

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Senior Transportation Planner

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USACE Website

www.swf.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/North-Central-Texas-Council-of-Governments-NCTCOG/

CHANGING MOBILITY

DATA, INSIGHTS, AND DELIVERING
INNOVATIVE PROJECTS DURING COVID
RECOVERY

Regional Transportation Council
March 2021

Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR BY MODE



Bicycle/Pedestrian (+36%, December)



Freeway Volumes (-7%, January)

Toll Road (-17%, December)

Airport Passengers (-47%, December)

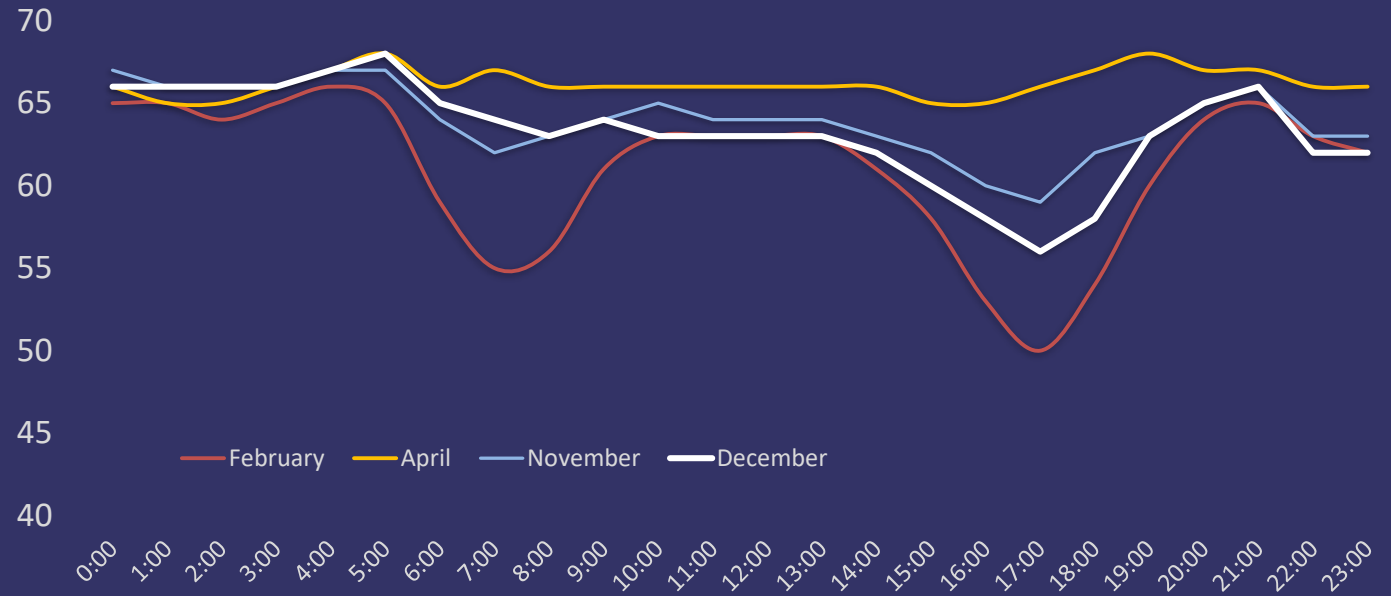
Transit Ridership (-51%, January)



ROADWAY TRENDS

Regional Average
Freeway Speeds

Average Weekday Speeds, Weighted by Traffic Volumes



Source: TxDOT Sidewire Devices

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



0



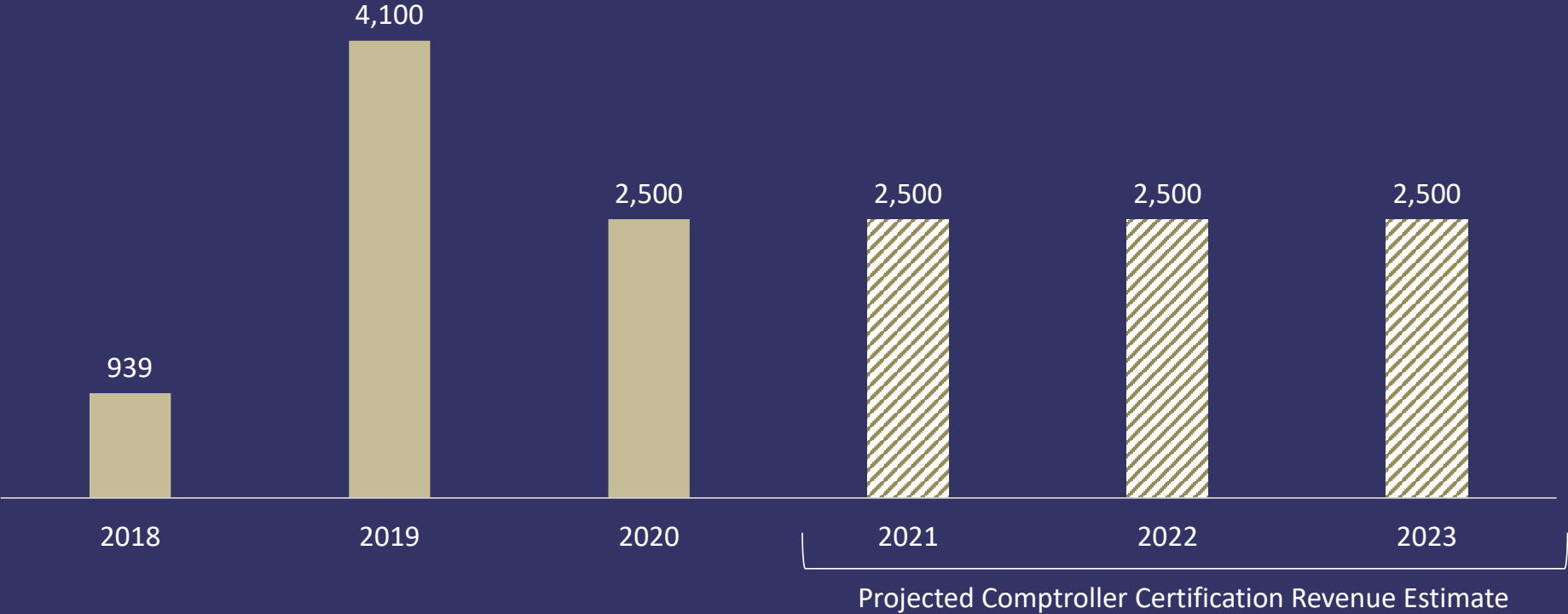
Transit Sales Tax Allocations (-2%, December)

Sales Tax (-0.3%, January)

Motor Fuel Tax (-4.7%, January)

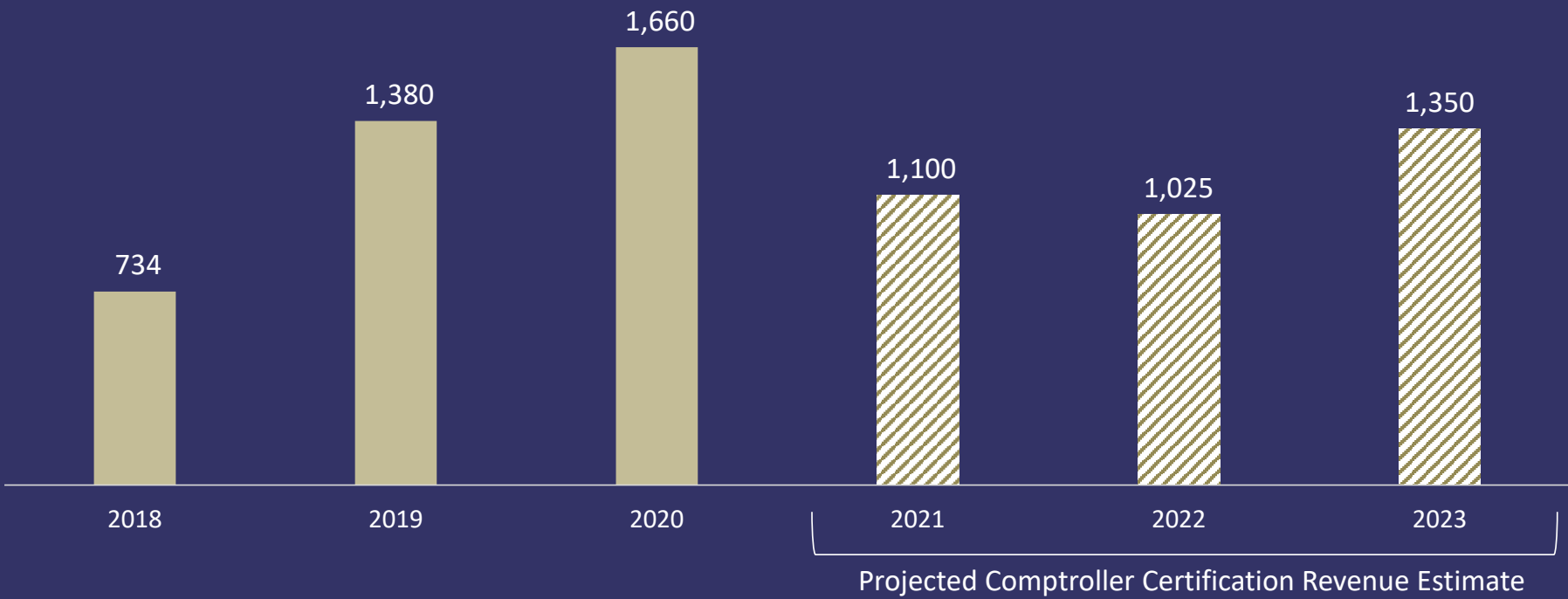
Motor Vehicle Sales and Rental Tax (-13.4%, January)

Proposition 7 (Sale & Use/MV Sales & Rental Taxes) Transfers to the State Highway Fund, Millions



Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Proposition 1 (Oil & Gas Severance Tax) Transfers to the State Highway Fund, Millions

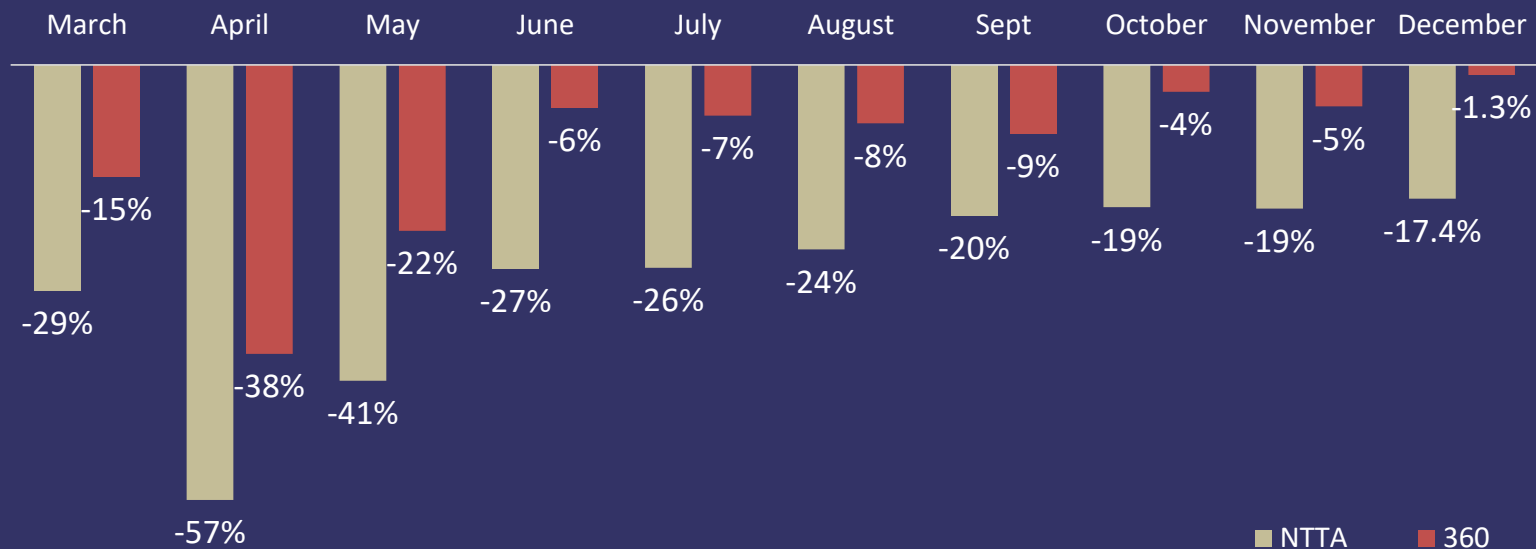


Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

FUNDING IMPACT

NTTA
Transactions,
Including
SH 360

Change in Tollway Transactions: 2019 vs 2020



Source: NTTA

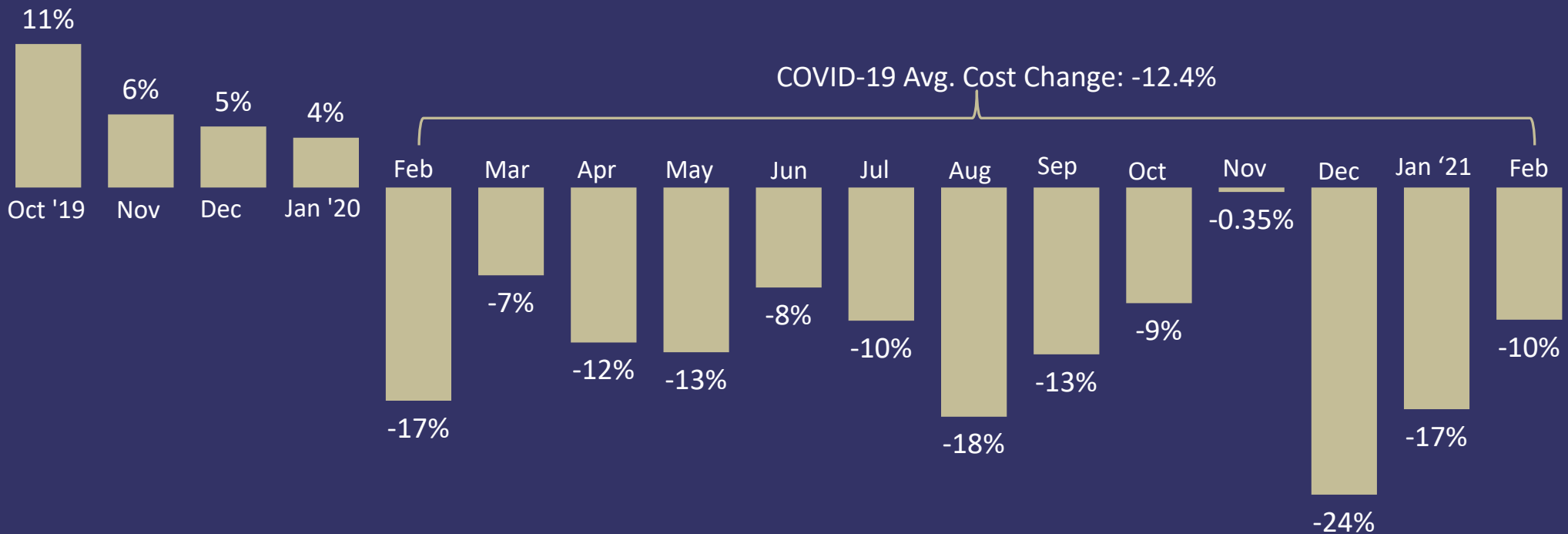
Note: Change for NTTA includes 360 Tollway

Additional Note: Despite decline in transactions, the revenues are sufficient to meet debt service for SH 360.

No current impact to RTC backstop expected.

Construction Cost Changes October 2019 to February 2021

Monthly Average Construction Cost Changes
(Letting Low Bid vs. Sealed Engineer's Est.)



Sources: TxDOT Connect and Monthly TxDOT Letting Reports

Notes: Does not include CSJ 2266-02-151; Includes grouped and non-grouped projects; Includes Dallas and Fort Worth District data

CANDIDATE PROJECTS

High Speed Rail: Dallas to Houston

High Speed Rail: Dallas to Fort Worth

Autonomous Transit (Tarrant, Midtown)

Technology (Freeway Induction Loops)

State Highway 183 (Section 2E+)

Y Connector (IH820/IH20)

COVID-19 #00X Program



Imagery Provided By Getty

DASHBOARD PLATFORM

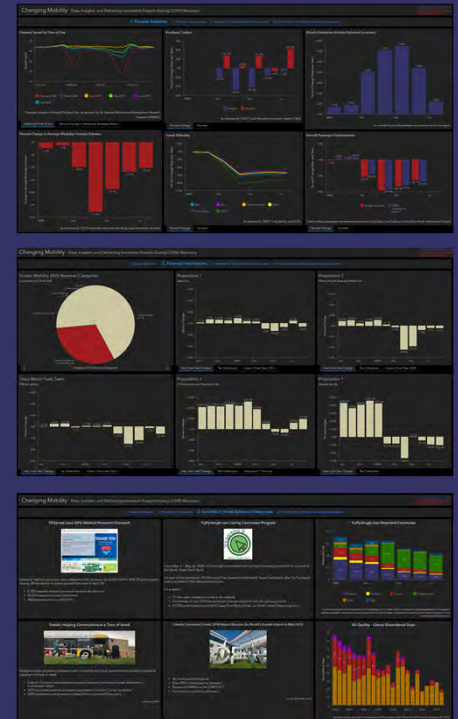
www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19

Newly launched online dashboard to display Changing Mobility information to the public

Replicates material presented to committees with enhanced interactivity

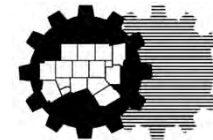
Separate dashboard for each metric tracked

Clean layout to help the public understand the story of the metrics at a glance



STATUS OF TEXAS VOLKSWAGEN ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM FUNDING

**Regional Transportation Council
March 11, 2021**



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

KEY TAKEAWAYS



NCTCOG Region is the Only Region That Has Requested All Available Funding in All Funding Buckets Thus Far



NCTCOG Region Has the Greatest Number of Public and Private Applicants for Both Refuse and Freight Funding



NCTCOG Region Is One of Only 4 of the 7 Identified Priority Areas That Have Requested Level 2 ZEV Infrastructure Funding

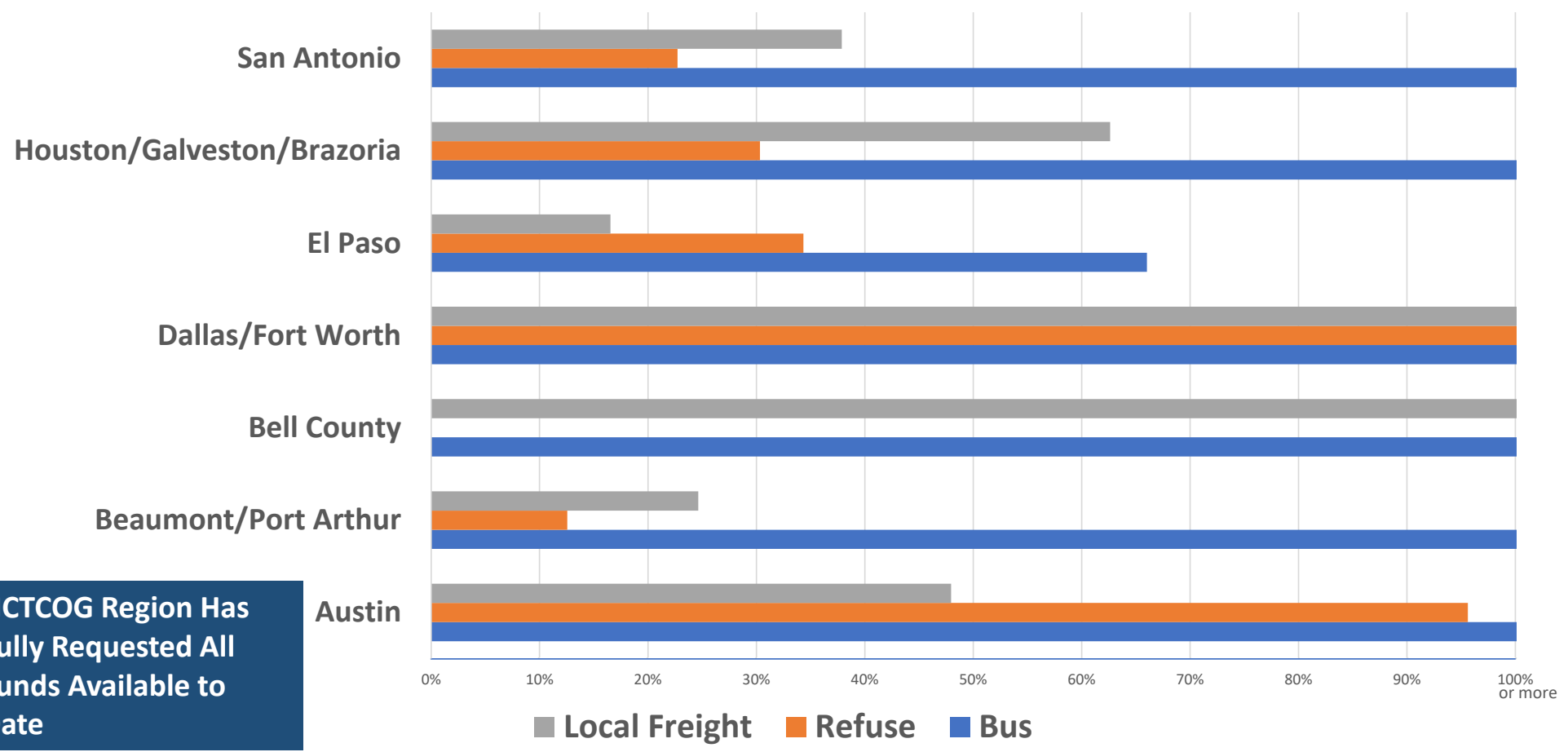
TEXAS VOLKSWAGEN ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

Statewide Allocation	Program	DFW Area Allocation	Schedule	Status (as of March 2, 2021)
~\$169.5 Million	School, Shuttle, and Transit Buses	\$11,684,806	Closed	All Funds Awarded; Over \$17.3 Million Requested
	Refuse Vehicles	\$8,346,290	Closed	\$9,363,508 Requested*
	Freight & Port Drayage Vehicles	\$6,677,032	Closed	\$8,850,532 Requested*
	Electric Forklifts and Port Cargo-Handling Equipment	\$6,677,032	To Be Determined	
	Electric Airport Ground Support Equipment			
	Ocean-Going Vessel Shore Power			
~\$35.5 Million	ZEV Infrastructure - Level 2 Rebate	\$10,465,958 (Statewide)	Open; First-Come First Served Until 9/9/2021	\$532,500 Requested* \$9,800,958 Available
	ZEV Infrastructure – DC Fast Charge Funding	~\$25 Million (Statewide)	May Open Spring/Summer 2021	

*Requested grant amounts are subject to change once an application has been reviewed.

PERCENT FUNDING REQUESTED BY REGION

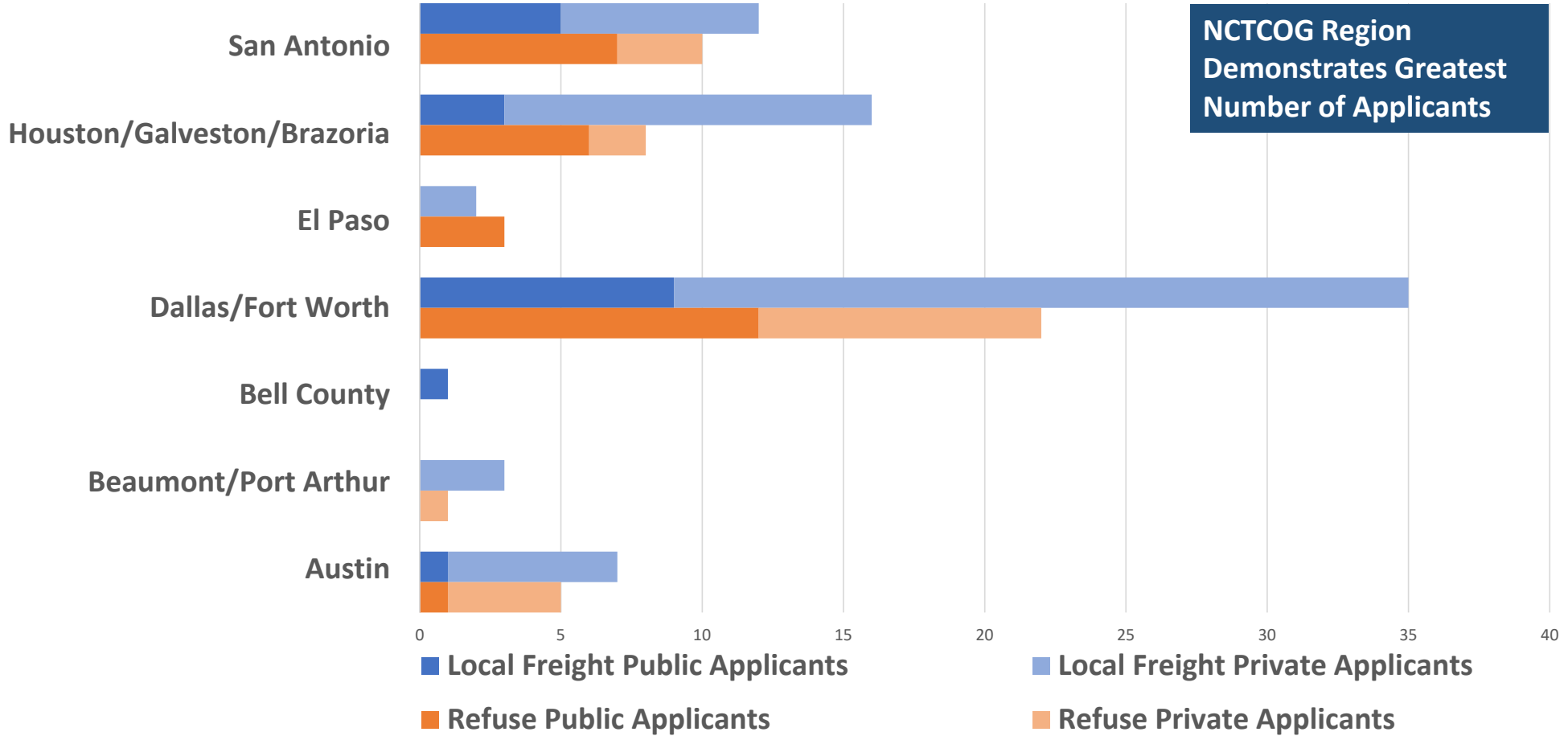
Percent Available Funds Requested by Funding Round



Data sourced from www.texasvfund.org on February 11, 2021

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS BY REGION

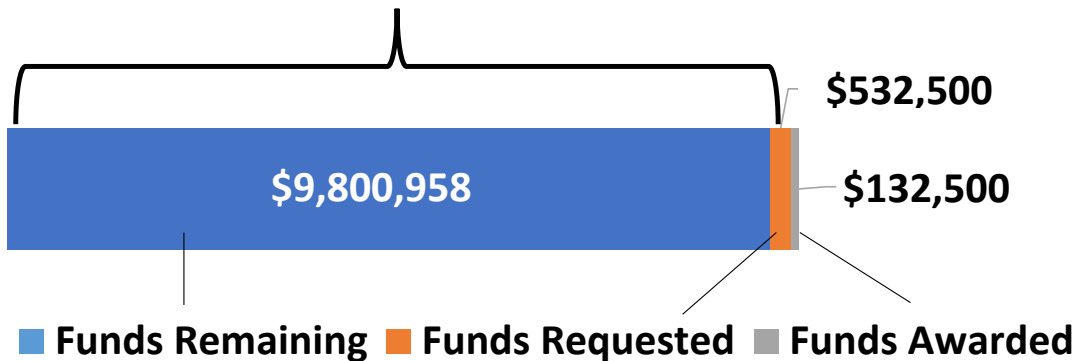
Local Freight and Refuse Vehicle Applicants



Data sourced from www.texasvfund.org on February 11, 2021

TxVEMP ZEV Infrastructure Level 2 Rebate

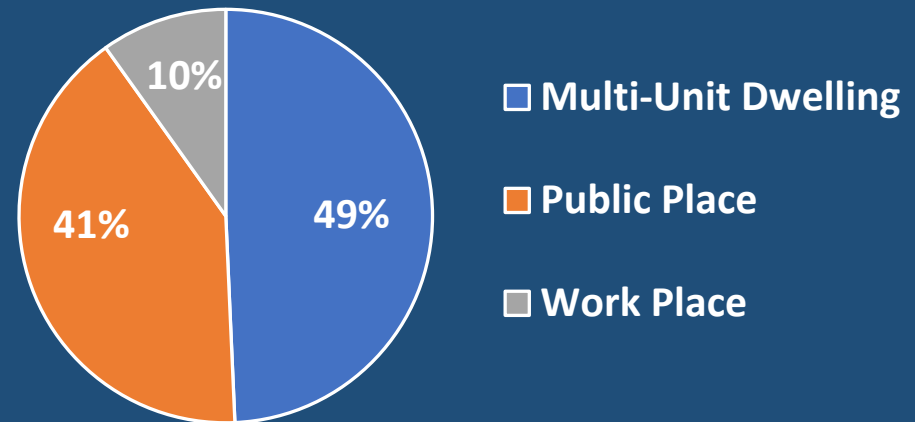
Total Statewide Allocation of Funds = \$10,465,958



Quick Facts

213
Total Activities Requested

Infrastructure Distribution to Date



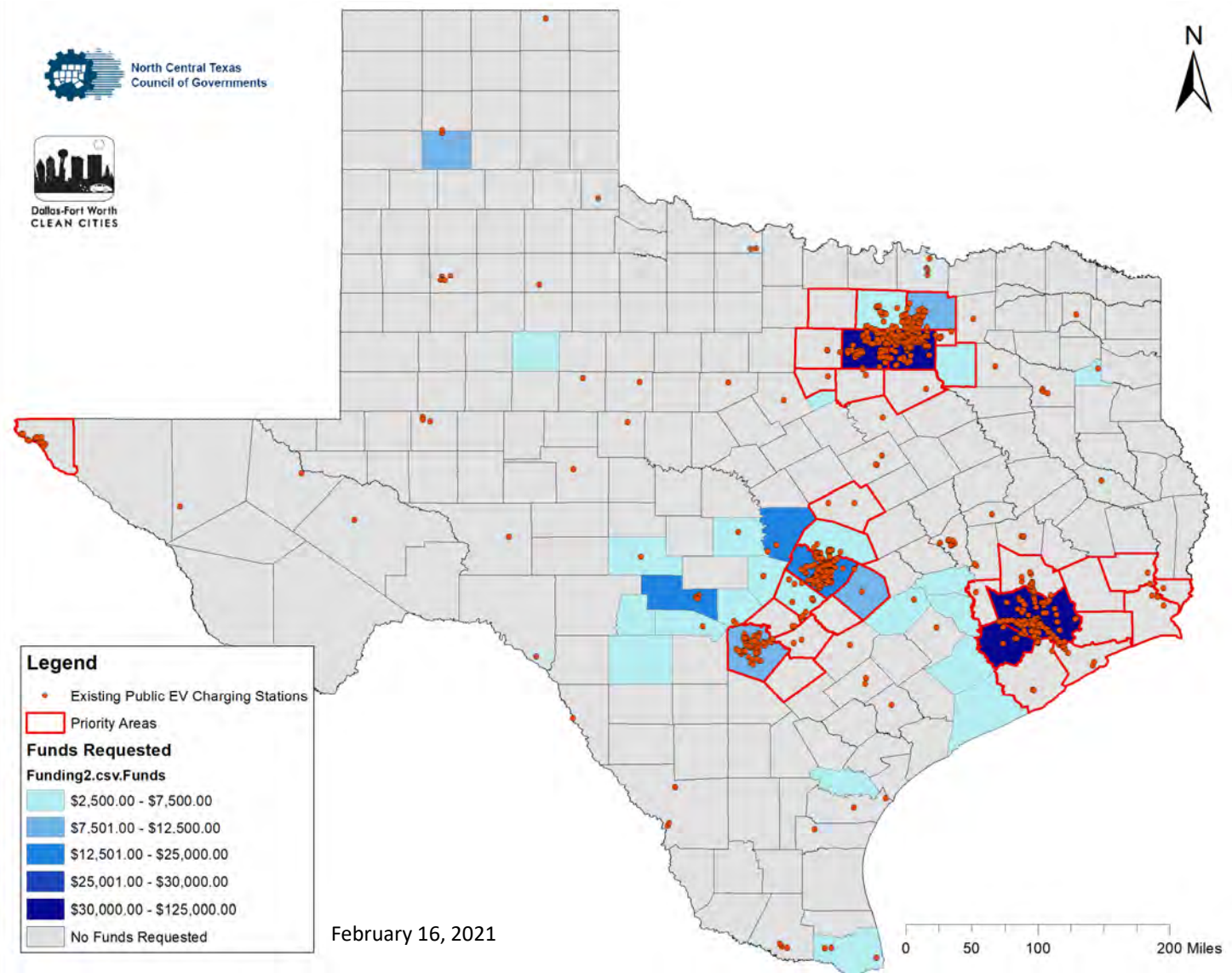
All Rebates First Come, First Served

DEADLINE: 9/9/2021 or until funds run out, whichever is first

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ZEV LEVEL 2 FUNDING REQUESTS

Priority Areas

Area	Counties
Dallas-Fort Worth Area	Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, Wise
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Area	Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller
San Antonio Area	Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, Wilson
Austin Area	Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, Williamson
El Paso County	El Paso
Bell County	Bell
Beaumont-Port Arthur Area	Hardin, Jefferson, Orange



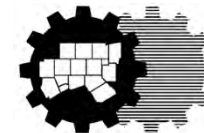
FOR MORE INFORMATION

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www.nctcog.org/aqfunding, “Hot Topics”



**North Central Texas
Council of Governments**

Recipient of the SolSmart Bronze Award

In April 2020, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) was awarded a Bronze Regional SolSmart Designation. The designation recognizes NCTCOG for taking bold steps to make it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar; and for helping member governments adopt programs and practices to advance solar energy. Designated SolSmart Cities within the NCTCOG region so far include: Cedar Hill, Corinth, Denton, Kennedale, Lewisville, and Plano.



Source: NCTCOG

Read the full press release about the NCTCOG SolSmart designation on the [SolSmart website](https://www.solsmart.org/press-releases/nctcog-awarded-bronze-regional-sol-smart-designation).

MINUTES

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITY

High-Speed Transportation Update

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects

Online Public Input Opportunity Dates

Monday, February 8, 2021 - Tuesday March 9, 2021 – The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) posted information at www.nctcog.org/input for public review and comment.

Purpose and Topics

The online public input opportunity was provided 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 November 8, 2018. Staff posted information regarding:

1. High-Speed Transportation Update
2. Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects

The NCTCOG online public input opportunity was provided to inform and seek comments from the public. Comments and questions were submitted by email at transinfo@nctcog.org, online at www.nctcog.org/input, by mail at PO Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005 and by fax at 817-640-3028. Printed copies of the online materials were also made available by calling 817-608-2365 or emailing transinfo@nctcog.org.

Summary of Presentations

High-Speed Transportation Update presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2021/02/HSTCS.pdf>

The High-Speed Transportation Connections Study (HSTCS) traverses Dallas, Irving, Cockrell Hill, Grand Prairie, Arlington, Pantego, Dalworthington Gardens, Hurst, Euless, Bedford, Richland Hills, North Richland Hills, Haltom City and Fort Worth. The study's purpose is to evaluate high-speed transportation alternatives, both alignments and technology, to connect Dallas-Fort Worth to other proposed high-performance passenger systems in Texas as well as obtain federal environmental approval of the viable alternative.

The study is divided into two phases. The first phase will analyze all reasonable alternatives regarding alignment and travel technology. The wide range of alternatives will be pared down to a small number of recommended travel technologies and a small number of alignment options through a multiple-level screening process. Staff anticipates the first phase to take approximately twelve months and conclude in spring 2021. During the first phase, there will be three opportunities for the region to participate in the study via public meeting events. Meetings

were held in September 2020 and January 2021. The next series is tentatively scheduled for April 2021.

The second phase will be an engineering and environmental analysis as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act. This phase will include conceptual and preliminary engineering tasks, and work efforts are expected to begin in early summer 2021 and conclude in late spring 2023. This 24-month schedule includes two primary public engagement events in early fall 2021 and late summer 2022.

The project team is using a three-level screening process to pare down the initial vast number of possible options to a select few by the end of the first study phase. This process begins with identifying all reasonable alternatives. The first level of evaluation for the alternatives is to determine if the alternative meets the project purpose and the project need. The alternatives that meet the project purpose and the project need then move to the second level of evaluation. The second level of evaluation focuses on identifying any flaws which may preclude the alternative from being built. This is where the project team is currently. The goal is to complete the third level of evaluation with a limited number of technologies and alignments or corridors to be evaluated in the project's second phase.

Using previous transportation studies that examined corridors between Dallas and Fort Worth, the project team identified many possible alignments and corridors to analyze. In general, the project team identified alignments and corridors along existing transportation routes as much as possible to minimize the need to acquire additional property. Each alignment and corridor option will connect the central station in downtown Fort Worth to the proposed high-speed rail station in downtown Dallas. In all, 43 distinct alignments and corridors were identified for study. The initial 43 distinct alignments and corridors were grouped into five families of options:

- Trinity Railway Express alignments
- Trinity River alignments
- IH 30 alignments
- SH 180 alignments
- SH 303 alignments

These are the alignments and corridors the project team analyzed during the level one screening.

There are several high-speed transportation technologies or modes of travel to be examined for their use to meet the region's travel needs. These initial modes of travel include conventional passenger rail trains, higher-speed trains, high-speed rail trains, magnetic levitation, (maglev for short), train technology, hyperloop technology and other emerging high-speed transportation technologies. Looking more closely at the design characteristics for each technology, it is important to understand how the footprint and profile could affect the surrounding environment, including the amount of right-of-way width needed. Typical sections of each technology give a view of the technology and its associated infrastructure required. A typical section is what could be expected to be generally built throughout the corridor. Conventional and higher-speed rail typical sections are generally constructed on the ground. The technologies with the highest speeds require the vehicles to operate on bridge structures throughout a corridor to separate them from other roadways and rail lines.

The level one evaluation was aimed at determining if the alternative would meet the project purpose and need and was conducted using two screening evaluations. The primary evaluation determined if the alternative would serve both downtown Fort Worth and downtown Dallas with a travel time faster than existing modes. The secondary evaluation in level one determined if the alternative would be safe, reliable, convenient, linked to other high-speed transportation systems serving Texas, connected to existing regional passenger systems and improve access to major activity centers in the study area.

Using the primary criteria, all alignments serve both downtown areas. The next part of this primary criteria screens out alignment and mode combinations that have a longer travel time between the Dallas and Fort Worth stations than the 20 minute threshold. Using this travel time criteria, none of the 43 alignments pass the test for conventional rail. Higher-speed technology has 8 alignments that pass the travel time test while high-speed rail passes on 39 alignments. Maglev and hyperloop technologies pass on all 43 alignments for travel time. Using the secondary level 1 screening criteria identified, many alignments should not be considered further in the second level of screening analysis. In total, 23 alignments were identified for consideration in the level 2 screening process.

Turning to the level 1 screening analysis regarding transportation technologies, as mentioned previously, the conventional rail technology did not pass the level one primary screening analysis and was eliminated from further consideration. The higher-speed, high-speed, maglev and hyperloop transportation technologies were recommended to be further evaluated in level 2.

Moving on to the level two evaluation process, level 2 centered on determining if the alternative has any fatal flaws, meaning a concern that would prevent further development of the project using that alignment. Various conditions are examined for each alternative, including proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, potential community impacts, technology maturity, compatibility with existing infrastructure and operational characteristics.

The level 2 screening results identified both alignment options and transportation technology options to move forward into the more detailed level 3 screening analysis. The results for the IH 30 alignments indicated 7 of 12 alignment options should be analyzed further. Additionally, three of 11 SH 180 alignment options are identified as needing additional analysis. Regarding transportation technologies or modes, the level 2 screening suggested the higher-speed technology not be analyzed further while high-speed rail, maglev and hyperloop technologies should be analyzed further. The new and emerging technologies initially analyzed were not recommended for consideration in the level 3 screening process.

The level 3 screening process will focus on a more detailed evaluation of the remaining alignments and transportation technology alternatives, including a conceptual design process for each. Criteria for this final evaluation level will include cost estimates, potential impacts to environmentally sensitive areas, other potential community impacts and the ability to construct the proposed project in the future. In conjunction with the level 3 screening process, the project team will be conducting an initial design for each alternative that has advanced to level 3 screening. This initial design will be used to support and provide information for the level 3 screening process. The project team anticipates the initial design process to be completed by the end of March 2021.

Public and agency engagement strategies occurring throughout the study include but are not limited to the following:

- Elected official meetings
- Federal Transit Administration/Federal Railroad Administration progress meetings
- Technical work group meetings
- Technology forum
- Project public meetings
- NCTCOG public meeting
- Resource agency meeting

For more information on the High-Speed Transportation Connections Study and to sign up for project notices, visit www.nctcog.org/dfw-hstcs.

Work Program Modifications (no audio presentation; handouts posted online for review and comment):

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2021/02/UPWP-Mods.pdf>

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) summarizes transportation activities for NCTCOG's metropolitan planning area, which covers a 12-county region. The UPWP is divided into five major task areas:

- Administration and Management
- Transportation Data Development and Maintenance
- Short-Range Planning and Programming and Air Quality and Transit Operations
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Special Studies and System Operations

The modifications in this fifth round of proposed modifications to the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP address new initiatives, project updates and funding adjustments.

The RTC will take action on the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP modifications in March 2021.

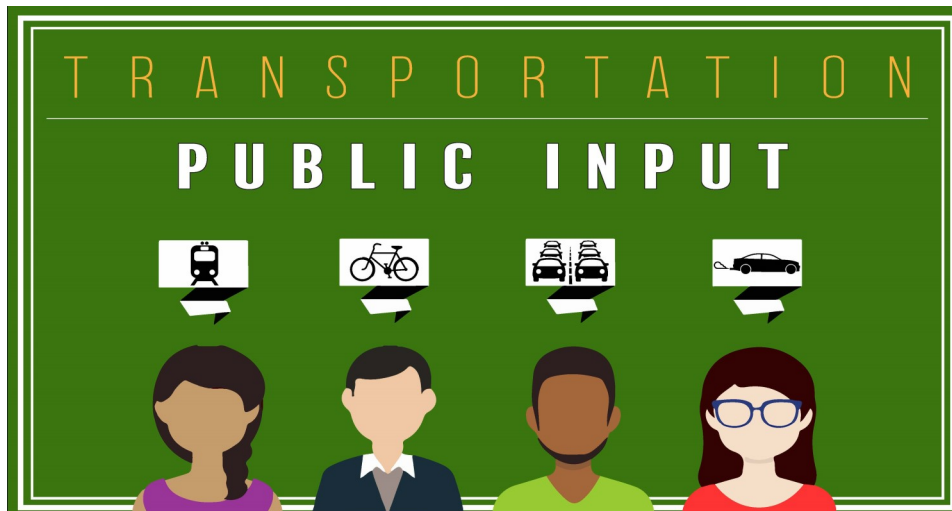
COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, MAIL, EMAIL and SOCIAL MEDIA

Email

Work Program Modifications

Michael Morris

Cedars Project should be \$4 million in federal funds and \$1M RTC transportation development credits (TDC's). This is a very important project but does not need RTC local funds.



WHAT DO YOU THINK? TELL US.

Information will be posted online at www.nctcog.org/input for public review and comment **March 8 - April 7, 2021**. To request printed copies of the information, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org.

MOBILITY 2045 UPDATE

One of the primary responsibilities of a Metropolitan Planning Organization is the development and maintenance of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). NCTCOG staff has initiated the development of an update to the current MTP, Mobility 2045, and will provide an overview and update on the timeline for the Plan.

LOOK OUT TEXANS CAMPAIGN

NCTCOG is once again launching the Look Out Texans campaign to inform people walking, biking, and driving on how to be safe and look out for one another on Texas roadways and trails. The campaign launches this spring and will run through the fall, focusing on crosswalk safety, biking tips, and how drivers should interact with people biking and walking. An overview of the campaign will be provided.

DFW CLEAN CITIES UPDATE: 2019 IMPACTS AND FLEET RECOGNITION AWARDS

NCTCOG is the host organization for Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities (DFWCC), a US Department of Energy initiative to reduce total energy impacts in the transportation sector. As part of these efforts, DFWCC surveys local fleets each year about alternative fuel use and other fuel-saving activities. The 2019 Annual Survey results highlighting energy impact and emissions reductions as well as details on the Fleet Recognition program will be provided.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Regional Smoking Vehicle Program: www.smokingvehicle.net

Vehicle Incentives & Funding Opportunities: www.nctcog.org/aqfunding

Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience: www.nctcog.org/mapyourexperience

Highlighted Regional Trails Videos: www.nctcog.org/bikeweb

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITY

Learn about transportation in the region and help set future priorities. The Regional Transportation Council and North Central Texas Council of Governments, together serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, are seeking public input.

Submit comments and questions to NCTCOG:

Email: transinfo@nctcog.org

Website: www.nctcog.org/input

Fax: 817-640-3028

Phone: 817-695-9240

Mail: P.O. Box 5888

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For special accommodations due to a disability or for language translation, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org.

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NCTCOGtrans



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The public comments report is in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Process, 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 November 8, 2018.

This report is a compilation of general public comments submitted by members of the public from Wednesday, January 20, through Friday, February 19. Comments and questions are submitted for the record and can be submitted via Facebook, Twitter, fax, email and online.

This month, public comments were received on a number of topics across social media platforms and via email. Transit comments primarily related to the Southern Dallas County Transit Study were in the majority.

In addition, comments were accepted through a new, online map tool. Users can drop a pin on a location in the region and leave a detailed comment. The tool was in test mode and was open to the public through August 2020. This month, there were 11 Bicycle and Pedestrian comment, four Transit comments and two Roadway comments. To read them, visit:

<http://nctcoggis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourcingReporter/index.html?appid=b014e6d39b604b3ca329d9094ed1e9e2>.

Electric Vehicles

Twitter –

1. @NCTCOGtrans know of any residential EV charger installation incentives? – Otto Mayo (@Otto_Mayo)

Hi, Otto! To retrofit your home with a charging station, you can find info on a tax credit here <https://nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle> under “Other Air Quality Improvement Strategies.” If you’d like to stay in the loop on EV topics, sign up for our EV NTX email list: <https://nctcog.org/stay-informed?ext=>. – NCTCOGTransportation (@NCTCOGtrans)

2. Would be awesome to see @NCTCOGtrans promote and incentivize e-bike adoption like they have for EVs – Loren S. (@txbornviking)



High-Speed Transportation

Online –

1. **Andrew Armstrong**

I am an eager supporter of a high speed transportation connection between downtown Dallas and Fort Worth. I travel between the two multiple times each year and would do so more often if the journey was quicker. Even if I didn't travel it I would support my tax dollars supporting projects like this as it is the future.

Also, as exciting as Hyperloop technology is I strongly support high speed rail as it is a proven technology and already operational. I think total unique annual trips need to be taken into account when weighing whether a single mid-point stop should be placed near the stadiums or near UTA. Whichever has the largest total annual unique trips should get the station.

Email –

1. **Allen Bussell**

Agree with your preferred alignments and modes. I recommend using maglev or hyperloop over conventional “bullet” type because of reduced ROW and noise. Also, the scale of the vehicles - would assume time to speed for the larger “bullet” would restrict it from reaching its potential while making a stop at the Arlington sports venues. The “bullet” seems more appropriate for longer stretches like between DFW and Houston / Austin

Thank you for the excellent presentation and the amount of work being done.

Q: What rails are planned from surrounding communities to connect to the Dallas and Fort Worth hubs where one will then catch the high speed to Arlington (for instance)? We live north of Frisco, near US380 and I've not seen the entire rail / mass transit plan that connects the region.

Again, thank you!

2. **Beth Knight**

After hearing the different options for high-speed trains, I am opposed to hyper-loop transit due to:

the lack of safety backups (no, I don't trust Elon Musk),
the lack of accommodation for wheelchairs or strollers, and
the relatively unproven technology.

Thanks for taking my comments!

Project Planning

Online –

1. Michael McDonald

Please construct more Managed Lanes. Constructing Managed Lanes helps to create a robust network and offers drivers more choices. All new construction in the DFW metropolitan area should include Managed Lanes.

Email –

1. Elaine Laisure

I/20 Weatherford TX to Fort Worth is heavily congested.

When I/20 has traffic accidents, the only way around the accident is driving at least 1 hour on Farm Market Roads.

I/20 needs to be widened to three lanes from East of Weatherford to the Brock Exit. This is a bottle neck with numerous accidents

Yet, I see not plans to fix these immediate needs.

Please address the above issues.

Public Meetings & Forums

Twitter –

1. There are two virtual public meetings on high-speed transportation in the region. This study will review high-speed options in the Dallas to Fort Worth corridor. Join in and let your voice be heard! For more information and to sign up, visit: <http://bit.ly/3cjZeIV>. @NCTCOGtrans - Green Dallas (@GreenDallas)



2. NCTCOG Transportation Department is holding two virtual public meetings this week on high speed transportation at noon on Wednesday and 6 p.m. Thursday. Visit <http://bit.ly/3cjZelV> for details on how to participate. – North Richland Hills (@CityofNRH)



3. Enjoying our (virtual) Infrastructure Forum Agency updates! Thank you to our first round of participants! @dartmedia @TxDOTFortWorth @TxDOTDallas @USACE_SWD @USACE_FortWorth @DallasCountyTx @CityOfDallas @NCTCOGtrans @NCTCOG_Official @mavengineering – Dallas SAME (@Dallas_SAME)

Facebook –

1. The North Central Texas Council of Governments is asking North Texans for their input on regional transportation initiatives, including innovative technologies being considered that could link region to other parts of Texas. – City of Rowlett



To cut traffic in Rowlett get Rockwall to vote in Dart. – Sam Ward

Sam Ward they know better. – John Roberts

2. Yesterday's meeting was great and we're back again for second round! Tonight at 6 pm, we'll be answering all your questions related to the high-speed transportation study for our region. Join us! <https://www.nctcog.org/.../dfw-high-speed-transportation....> – NCTCOG Transportation Department



Great meeting yesterday with excellent and informative presentations, as well as a great Q&A session, too! – Paul McManus

Glad you were able to participate! – NCTCOG Transportation Department

Safety

Online –

1. Alison Harris

I would like an online, app or text ability to report unsafe and dangerous drivers. Too many times on North Texas roads we all see dangerous drivers who pose a threat to public safety with no consequence. When able to do so safely, drivers could report vehicle description and license plate information via an online platform. This is similar to the smoking vehicle report and littering app supported by the Don't Mess With Texas program. I realize there is some subjectivity to such reports, but my earnest feeling is that if a driver has had enough reports of unsafe driving, this should show up if they are pulled over by law enforcement or trying to renew their vehicle registrations. It's clear that no city or county police department is capable of stopping all unsafe drivers, and too many time there is no police presence around. But, citizens could assist law enforcement greatly by providing this information to create some type of punitive or at least notification process to unsafe drivers. I think many of us feel that unsafe driving is all around us, and empowering citizens to feel that they can help in the process would be an innovative and necessary step in the right direction. Thank you for your consideration.

Twitter –

1. An absolute tragedy and a preventable one at that. Too bad it's working as designed by @NCTCOGtrans and @TxDOT. #EndTheStreakTX – Andrew Wallace (@agwallace92)



Sustainability

Email –

1. Becca Jones

Hello and greetings from Ms. Jones' Class!

Hope you are well and safe. My name is Becca and I am an online teacher for an alternative learning program for kids. As you can imagine, with the current state of things in the world, we have been getting a lot of new sign-ups for our online program. I am currently discussing sustainability and other environmental issues with the kids and we came across your website <https://www.airnorthtexas.org/links> while looking for resources. We wanted to say thank you!

One of my students, Jason, did some research and he sent in this article with a lot of really great information on eco-friendly cars:

<https://www.carcovers.com/resources/the-importance-of-eco-friendly-cars/>

I suggested that he share this with you because it had such great information we thought it could be useful to you and your other visitors. Would you please add a link to it to your web page for them, even if it is just for a little while? I want to show the increasingly large group of students that they can accomplish things if they aren't afraid to come out of their shells and simply ask, especially while being in so much isolation these days! Please let me know if you'd be willing to help so I can share the exciting news with them!

Thank you in advance!

Response from NCTCOG staff

Thank you so much for contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department and sharing your student's story with us.

Kimberlin To on our staff manages the Air North Texas program, and I know she'll be happy to hear the website is being used to help engage students in a virtual learning environment.

Additionally, I'm copying Lori Clark and Bethany Ross on our air quality team, as they work on all of our alternative fuel and electric vehicle initiatives. I'm sure they'll enjoy reading the article Jason found and might be able to find some great opportunities to share it with our target audiences.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you ever need additional assistance or have a question about anything related to air quality and transportation.

Transit

Online –

1. ReNona Lemmons

I am not interested and would not like a public transportation system in DeSoto.

Email –

1. Patricia Ajene

Cedar Hill residents have at least 3 cars per household. Which means just about every adult has a car and a job. Public transportation would just bring more crime into our Community with people coming in looking to commit offenses in the neighborhood, it would also bring down out property values and bring in “Walkers” who don’t work!

2. James Vaughn

WE DO NOT NEED NOR WANT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM!

3. Crystal Tyler

No Public Transportation Please!

4. Brandi Johnson

Hello.

We are not interested in providing public transportation in Desoto, Texas. Please do not conduct such project. Public transportation will kill the morale of the city, will cheapen the value of our property and will increase crime rate. We are not prepared to handle such things.

5. Debra Echols

I do not want public transportation in Desoto.

6. Sandra Jones

NO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN DESOTO TEXAS

7. Natasha Price

We are against it bec it will increase crime in our community. Not having a transit system here has made it harder for people to randomly pop up.

8. Arthur McKnight

As a taxpaying citizen in the City of DeSoto,

I do not want public transportation in our city. We cannot afford even higher taxes in our city and our primary focus should be on our struggling education system. Thank you.

9. Patricia Ajene

“NO” I don’t want public transportation inside Cedar Hill because I have lived almost 30 years with PT in a neighborhood that completely went from good, to bad, to worst; because white people took flight to further cities out. We watched as the buses came and people started walking everywhere. Theft became rampant in a neighborhood that didn’t have home security,

but all neighbors worked! It is no fun to watch your neighborhood go down further and further because streets were not large enough to traffic buses. But they were able to provide ways for those that wanted to hurt the neighborhood to move more freely between our area and other areas that were even more run down with crime! I don't see them proposing Public Transportation to North Dallas neighborhoods where the jobs are already established. Also, we should not take away from Cedar Hill all the beauty of trees and forestry that is a part of the Cedar Hill environment for other mammals that need to have their habitation preserved. Public Transportation will not make Cedar Hill better. Food for thought:: Cedar Hill needs a new high school, not just the one that was built in the 1950s and is so overrun with kids that teachers are having a hard time just monitoring who is in class or online! Think about how far down the ladder our grading system is for our kids to other districts. Let's put the money where it is needed, in exceptional schools for our kids so they can learn and better teachers so we can keep them!

10. **Josefina Chavira**

Yes, I am for public transportation for DeSoto TX

I am a resident of DeSoto and I currently have to drive to, or be dropped off at, Glenn Heights P&R to take the Express Bus to Downtown Dallas.

I truly hope DeSoto will have public transportation. It will not bring the value down; it will enhance our community. It would finally connect us with the metroplex. Traffic is horrific when driving, especially within the city where many prefer not to drive the speed limit. I have used public transportation whenever possible and I have found that I am able to relax and take care of other things without the stress of driving. Many of the naysayers mention "riff-raff" or persons who want to cause problems in our community, however, I don't see any "riff-raff" on the buses or trains that I ride. I believe that all depends on the community and each of us individually to keep the transit safe.

#DeSoto4PublicTransit

11. **Kay Moore Jackson**

No public transportation in Desoto Texas or any surrounding towns (I e Cedar Hill Glenn Heights) We have a Dart Park n Ride that meets the needs of residents for transportation.

12. **Sonya Battle**

We do not want or need buses in our small area.

Buses create more traffic.

Buses bring crime.

Over 90% of our residents own cars. Who exactly will be riding a huge bus?

We are experiencing a global pandemic. It's more imperative than ever for us to be socially distanced.

The elderly do not feel safe riding public public transportation. My elderly mother doesn't even consider a bus as an option to get to the places she needs to go. Additionally, if she were unable to drive, my brother and I would make transportation arrangements for her.

We've been in DeSoto for 27 years and this issue keeps coming up.

STOP!!!

Don't run our neighborhood with buses. There is zero benefit for us.

13. Ayub Jomanday

There should better public transport trams,buses,metros,trains in regions like california los angeles, florida miami,atlanta,texas,lousiana and new orleans and other regions that is still flat. We want more regions to be just like new york with better public transportation and more businesses and african american ownership in transportation.

14. Julie Ledford

Please confirm receipt of my comments. The main concern currently is the proposal for the bus rapid transit. I live in Historic Handley, and have attempted to voice opposition about the direct line that is proposed for our area to service near downtown Fort Worth. This depot is right near the homeless area. Currently buses run from that area all over town, but there is no direct line. During the presentation, the city leaders and Trinity Metro claimed that people needed to get to Handley to "work" and "shop" for groceries. This is completely inaccurate. Handley has only a handful of privately owned small businesses. There is no employment for people from other areas, because the shops on Historic Handley are upscale wedding venues, event planners, and a photography shop. The art gallery doesn't need help.

In addition, Walmart shut down their neighborhood market years ago following ongoing issues with theft and robbery. There is no grocery store nearby for shoppers.

This reasoning for installation of a direct line calls to question the motivation behind the proposal. It seems the only purpose of the line is to move the homeless population away from

downtown during the day and have them return to the shelter at night. During the pandemic, Trinity Metro gave all riders free bus passes unlimited (in order to limit contact with the bus drivers as a precaution). Before anyone knew what was happening, our neighborhood suffered a spike in petty crime, home break-ins, and car theft. We had never experienced this type of surge before the free passes. Occasional crime yes, but not continuous. This weekend the art gallery was broken into for the first time. It is irresponsible for the city to circumvent public approval and install a direct line that is unwarranted and not supported by statistical data for ridership. The current buses are frequently empty. If people don't pay to ride on a regular basis, then installing a direct line will not change the traffic.

We want more information about how to effectively oppose this project and be heard. People were silenced during the public meeting in the fall. City leaders (who promised to follow up with information after the meeting) never called or explained. The public opinion was not heard and now it is funded for \$500 million feasibility study. It seems the city skipped part of the process-establishing an actual need based on facts. I appreciate your consideration. Thanks in advance for your response.

15. Enid Gibbens

There is no public or private transportation in far North Tarrant Co. (Haslet) that is affordable for many with no transportation of their own. New senior apartment complex and a four year old mixed income with many disabled and elderly as well. Extremely hard to get to doctors or anywhere else.

Twitter –

1. When you visit Fort Worth but dress for Vermont...at TEXRail we don't mind as long as your mask is on.

#bernietransitmeme #fortworth #tarrantcounty #berniesandersmemes #transit @TarrantTransit @NCTCOGtrans @startelegram @DTFortWorth @VisitFortWorth @FWTXmag – Trinity Metro (@TrinityMetro)



#CozyBernie has been *train*ed to prepare for all sorts of temperatures! – Fort Worth Magazine (@FWTXmag)

2. AirplaneTrainMotor scooter Connect Dallas, the Dallas's Strategic Mobility Plan, is entering its final development stage and they're looking for your feedback on the draft plan! The deadline to submit feedback is Feb. 5.

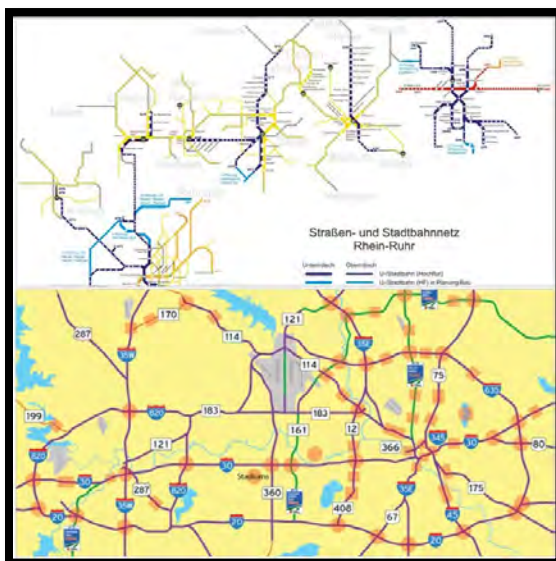
Personal computer Review the draft plan and take the survey here:

<http://bit.ly/connectdallas2021>. – NCTCOG Transportation (@NCTCOGtrans)



Interconnected regional transit networks throughout DFW.

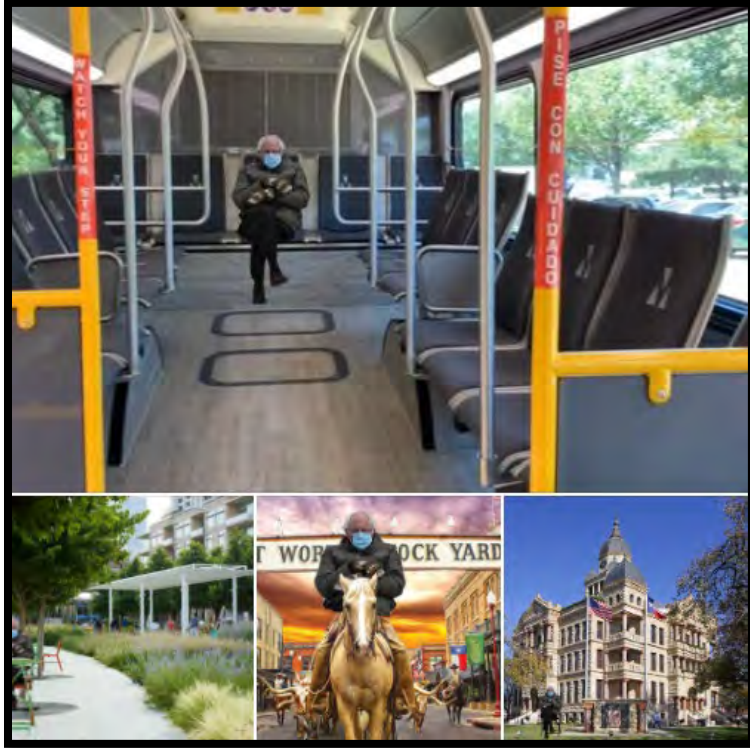
The Rhine-Ruhr region of German has a similar population and geographic size to DFW. It can be done. – Loren S. (@txbornviking)



3. @TrinityMetro to offer free rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites in @TarrantCountyTX. @CityofFortWorth @TCPHTweets @NCTCOGtrans @NTxCommission @FTWChamber @fwcc @FWMBCC – Salvador Espino Michel (@SAL_FW)

Facebook –

1. A tale in four parts:



A variety of ticket options are offered by DART, Trinity Metro and DCTA to customers through the GoPass app to travel in the Dallas/Fort Worth and Denton service areas. The fares include:

- Standard passes
- Reduced passes
- Peak/off-peak passes

Take a safe trip around the region! <https://www.gopass.org/customer-service/questions-answers>. – NCTCOG Transportation Department

Great to see Bernie taking public transit, lol. – Archie Nettles Jr.

Archie Nettles Jr., right?! We love to see it. 😄 – NCTCOG Transportation Department

YASSS SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER! I SEE YOU! – Christina Peace

Too funny! – Tarrant Transit Alliance

Other

Email –

1. **Phil Waigand**

I have repeated this input often to NCTCOG.

Just saying FW and Dallas doing a simple joint activity together is long overdue. I sent an example to Ernest Huffman as an example of this idea.

Truly, FW and Dallas are two great anchor cities and that needs to be shown in ways never done before.



Dallas Area Rapid Transit
P.O. Box 660163
Dallas, TX 75266-0163
214-749-3278

January 28, 2021

Mr. Michael Morris
Director of Transportation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

Dear Mr. Morris:

Thank you for your December 1, 2020 email in response to receiving a copy of our November 16, 2020 Dallas City Council Transportation and Infrastructure Committee briefing presentation, as requested by your staff. Since our last two agency coordination meetings on September 21, 2020 and January 4, 2021, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) has continued to make progress on advancing the D2 Subway project. The following is a brief summary of recent coordination activities and information related to our Capital Investment Grant funding window as a core capacity project.

Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Funding

In 2014, DART initiated a program of interrelated projects with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to address core capacity and enhance mobility and access. This program included two core capacity projects – Red and Blue Line Platform Extensions to allow DART to operate 3-car trains systemwide and the D2 second CBD light rail alignment. FTA allowed DART to advance both projects concurrently as one solves for core capacity with longer trains, and one solves for core capacity with increased frequency. Once one is in place and part of our operating plan, the other will not be eligible for core capacity funding based on published FTA guidance and criteria. Platform extensions will solve the near-term capacity issues by increasing person-carrying capacity. However, the D2 Subway is a longer-term investment to accommodate strong regional growth, continued transit expansion, and continued transit-oriented development (TOD) within the City of Dallas, the DART Service Area, and the region. The D2 Subway not only provides opportunity for increased frequency, but for operational flexibility, enhanced service reliability, redundancy, and access to new markets.

Both projects were proceeding with similar schedules until DART was directed to refine D2 as a subway. Given that the Project Development phase must be completed within two years, FTA denied an extension and recommended that DART request re-entry into the CIG program at Engineering, after completing environmental and 30% preliminary engineering design. DART has advanced the project with local funds to 30% design consistent with the City of Dallas and DART Board resolutions, and with over 150 community and stakeholder meetings. The FTA has completed their review of the FEIS/ROD, and issuance of a notice of availability is pending Dallas City Council action (see below regarding Service Plan).

The platform extension project will be substantially complete in January 2022, and the grant agreement requires 3-car trains during the peak hour by September 18, 2022. To ensure that the D2 Subway remains eligible for a core capacity grant, DART must work with FTA to accomplish the following:

1. Complete Project Development activities including completion of the FEIS/ROD;
2. Submit documentation to be evaluated and rated by FTA as a core capacity project, including templates that document current operations and existing ridership (pre-COVID 2019 ridership data may be allowable) to demonstrate eligibility prior to entry into Engineering;
3. Provide 6-month advance notice to request entry into Engineering, during which FTA will conduct a readiness review that typically takes 6 to 9 months to complete; and,
4. Once in Engineering, initiate negotiations for a grant agreement. Prior to a grant agreement, FTA will evaluate and rate the project a final time. Information for this rating must be submitted prior to platform service in September 2022 to be able to demonstrate eligibility under core capacity guidance.

Based on the above information, our window of opportunity to remain eligible within this funding program is extremely tight. While we anticipated City action by December 2020 or January 2021, anything beyond the March 2021 timeframe will put D2 at risk, both from the ability for FTA to have sufficient time to complete their review, and for D2 to continue to be eligible for the core capacity program. It is important to note that the core capacity program is undersubscribed. While the DART Board could choose to advance the project as a New Starts project, this program is oversubscribed, much more competitive, and FTA would assess the project against a much broader set of criteria. If the D2 Subway is to advance, the core capacity program provides the highest level of assurance of a significant grant award.

DART Service Plan Amendment

To advance the project into the next phase of the FTA program, DART needs to amend the DART Service Plan to add the alignment, stations and facilities. Since D2 is not in the current Service Plan, the Dallas City Council also needs to approve the alignment per our enabling legislation. The DART Board cannot take action until we receive council approval. On December 8, 2020, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was scheduled to discuss advancing a resolution of support to the full council but deferred the item. City staff scheduled a subsequent briefing on January 19, 2021 where they asked DART to discuss Deep Ellum concerns, I-345 interface, critical path schedule, and next steps for a City Council resolution by March 1, 2021. At that meeting, City staff indicated they were not ready to recommend advancing a resolution and desired another two months to review issues.

DART held a public hearing on September 22, 2020 for the Service Plan Amendment and received several letters in support, as well as some opposed. Letters of opposition were primarily associated with impacted property owners in the CBD East and Deep Ellum area, including the Deep Ellum Foundation (DEF). We believe we have addressed the key six issues identified in the DEF letter, which are highlighted below.

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TxDOT I-345 Design Coordination

Prior to the November 16, 2020 City Transportation Committee meeting, DART and TxDOT staff exchanged emails about our respective presentations (Enclosures 1 and 2). Based on their work to date and our recent meetings, the I-345 concepts developed by TxDOT include the D2 Subway as currently shown in our 30% design, and TxDOT has indicated publicly that the D2 Subway as designed can be accommodated under all scenarios, including a depressed option. DART is still willing to work with our agency partners to identify and mitigate issues should TxDOT select the depressed option. We would anticipate that this would occur during final design in 2022. Based on the information from TxDOT, they will have a preferred option in that timeframe, and we can refine where needed during our final design phase.

The suggestion to move the tunnel portal into the central downtown area to the west side of the TxDOT right-of-way line could have a significant impact on city streets/property, and depending on the horizontal alignment, could have ripple effects on the project to the west along Commerce Street. DART had developed a concept for this in summer 2019, and the City staff developed two options in March/April 2020 based on NCTCOG suggestions to develop options that rework the street grid. The City presented and reviewed them at our April 16, 2020 agency coordination meeting. There was no City direction to advance any of these options, and we continued to move forward with our current design. A decision to move the portal into downtown at this time would require significant stakeholder involvement, affecting our ability to issue the FEIS/ROD and continue in the core capacity program. It also could potentially preclude an I-345 at-grade boulevard option, which is still under consideration by TxDOT.

Lastly, at our September 21, 2020 meeting, you discussed preparing a statement or white paper to demonstrate our multi-agency coordination and how we are all working together. We drafted an early version and sent it to NCTCOG staff in October 2020 and November 2020 to serve as a starting point. NCTCOG staff provided minor comments and we forwarded it to TxDOT and the City of Dallas on December 11, 2020. We forwarded this again to the group on January 6, 2021 after our last meeting but have not received any comments. We still believe this statement of cooperation would be beneficial.

In addition, we drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to begin to outline agency responsibilities based on prior meeting discussions, and this was provided to all parties on January 6, 2021. We have not yet received any feedback. Without a preferred I-345 option and detailed design, costs are unknown, and we view this as more of a precursor to a detailed agreement to come later.

Deep Ellum Foundation Issues

Regarding Deep Ellum, staff has met with Stephanie Hudiberg and Jon Hetzel from the Deep Ellum Foundation (DEF) and have responded to their six issues via correspondence (see Enclosure 3) detailing the steps we've taken to address their concerns. We also briefed their Board on December 16, 2020 where we answered questions about the property acquisition process and reviewed our responses to their key issues. We also have met with stakeholders in the area

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including Malouf Interests (CityLights), Asana Partners, Greenway Investments, and Baylor, Scott and White, to understand and address their concerns. Baylor, who is represented on the DEF Board, continues to be supportive of the project and has submitted a letter to City Council noting their support.

In June 2020, we completed the first milestone of a feasibility study with Westdale and their architects to prove out a concept for them to develop the future Epic phase 3 over our portal/track. There were no fatal flaws related to development over D2. Based on the coordination we made some additional refinements to the project at that location. While Westdale has more recently stated their opposition, we are confident we can integrate the east portal into any future development plans like that being done with DKW (Woods Capital) at the west portal.

The November 16, 2020 DART presentation (Enclosure 1) includes a map of property owners from whom we received a letter of opposition. Some of them are directly impacted, and DART may need to initiate property acquisition or temporary use efforts. As with any major capital project we will have some right-of-way acquisition. Our goal is to minimize our acquisitions in order to leave as much remaining property as possible for continued development or air rights in the area.

Lastly, we have met with NCTCOG and City staff on trail/pedestrian improvements and potential TNC (Transportation Network Companies) drop-off locations to coordinate with your package of Deep Ellum improvements that are in development. We believe between improvements proposed with the D2 Subway and your efforts, we can address many of the transportation priorities for this area. Once TxDOT selects a preferred option, there will be a much greater understanding of additional long-term opportunities.

MLK Corridor Alternative

During October 2020, DART met with City staff and several council members about the status of the D2 Subway and how the project is at a critical juncture to move forward. We also discussed a desire by some to shift the D2 Subway to the MLK Corridor. We became aware of this idea in October 2020, and the MLK Corridor was never formally submitted to DART for consideration. MLK is not an alternative to D2 and would not qualify for the FTA Core Capacity program. An MLK corridor investment would be a separate project and some think enhanced bus or streetcar may be more appropriate in that corridor. DART is starting a GoLink pilot in Spring 2021 for the area based on a community survey and stakeholder input since many needs in that area are shorter trips to places like grocery stores and community centers.

Summary

I hope this provides additional insight into where we are and how we are continuing to coordinate. We now know that the Deep Ellum Foundation is fundamentally opposed to any surface alignment connection in the east end. While we believe we have addressed their concerns through a range of mitigation measures and urban design plans, the City Council will need to determine if we move forward or not. If we don't move forward with this alignment, the DART Board will have to

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reconsider next steps including restarting the process to examine alternatives for a third time and exploring other funding opportunities. As you know, the D2 Subway is an important regional project within the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. We hope that NCTCOG and the Regional Transportation Council can provide support moving forward as we work with FTA to secure a grant.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at 214-749-2544 or by email at gthomas@dart.org.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gary C. Thomas

Reviewed and approved, but not signed due to
COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic

Gary C. Thomas

President/Executive Director

Enclosures

- c: David Leininger, DART, Deputy Executive Director
- Todd Plesko, DART, Interim Executive Vice President, Growth/Regional Development
- Kay Shelton, DART, Interim Vice President, Capital Planning
- Majed Al-Ghafry, City of Dallas, Assistant City Manager
- Gus Khankarli, City of Dallas, Interim Director of Transportation
- Mo Bur, TxDOT, Dallas District Engineer
- Ceason Clemens, TxDOT, Deputy District Engineer

December 18, 2020

Via U.S. Mail & Electronic Mail

Michael Morris
North Central Texas Council of Governments
616 Six Flags Drive
P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, TX 76005-5888

RE: Addressing TEXRail's Low Ridership Previous to COVID-19

Dear Mr. Morris,

We appreciate the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) letter addressing TEXRail's ridership previous to COVID-19. We are proud of TEXRail's inaugural year and witnessed strong on-time performance along with continuous month-over-month ridership improvements. TEXRail completed the 2019 calendar year with over 545,000 customer trips, at an average of 1,531 trips per day. Not shown in this number are the increases realized through the latter part of the year and carrying over into the early part of CY 2020. While we are incredibly proud of TEXRail's initial performance, work remains to witness the full potential of TEXRail ridership. Our team is continuously working to improve connectivity and public awareness to ensure the best possible experience and drive ridership of TEXRail.

Below, we detail the specific items listed within the letter mentioned above from NCTCOG:

1. Travel Time along TEXRail

The recommendation to improve the transit time along the entirety of the TEXRail alignment is noteworthy. Accurately noted in the letter, the travel time is approximately 52 minutes between the terminus stations, with an average speed of 30.2 mph. Improving the average speed to accommodate a 38-minute run time (41.3 mph) would require considerable investments due to needed alignment modifications. Modifications would include super elevating portions of the alignment, adding 8.5 miles of double track, signal/crossing modifications, and Positive Train Control (PTC) modifications. Trinity Metro will continue to explore potential operational efficiencies to improve the overall run time.



We request documentation from NCTCOG that supports a 38-minute transit time across the corridor.

2. Connectivity to Critical Employment Locations

Within the half-mile radius of existing TEXRail stations, there are roughly 45,300 jobs. Critical employment locations in Trinity Metro service area include Downtown, Stockyards, and Mercantile Center, served by four stations – Fort Worth T& P Station, Fort Worth Central Station, North Side Station, and Mercantile Center Station. The bus network and two mobility-on-demand zones (ZIPZONE) strongly support these major employment centers.

Recently, Trinity Metro initiated *A Better Connection* project to redesign the existing bus routes. In the redesigned network, North Side Station will be a vital bus transfer station and connect to the Stockyards area with an upgraded 15-minute frequency. The new network will also work to synchronize TEXRail and bus schedules better. Future modifications will focus on smoother cross-town connectivity and better connections to critical employment locations in our service area.

3. TEXRail/Orange Line Connectivity

The connection between TEXRail and the Orange Line does indeed provide opportunities to connect passengers between TEXRail stations and the Las Colinas job center.

a) *"...The actual operational schedules of these routes reveal average transfer wait times of 15 and 19 minutes for morning peak and off-peak from TEXRail to the Orange Line. For the reverse direction, the respective average transfer wait times are 38 and 42 minutes." Page Two.*

By our calculations, the average wait time for eastbound travel (TEXRail to Orange Line) is 17 minutes. Westbound travel (Orange Line to TEXRail) average is 13 minutes. It is important to note the TEXRail schedule remains consistent throughout our daily operations; the Orange Line schedule fluctuates in the early morning and late evening. Accurate average wait times vary slightly in peak and off-peak travel times.



The distance between the two stations, DFW Terminal B and the Orange Line DFW Terminal A, is just below one-quarter of a mile, with an average walking commute of 6 minutes. Considering the minimal walking commute time between transfer points, we firmly believe the current schedule provides an attractive and convenient connection for riders. Trinity Metro will continue to explore improved interchange opportunities for our customers.

We request the NCTCOG clarify the average minutes' wait time calculation as stated in the original letter referenced above.

b) *"...The current implementation of the fare structure does not provide a convenient transfer policy between TEXRail and the Orange Line." Page Two.* Trinity Metro agrees with this statement. A major component of excellent transit is seamless, stress-free options, and this is vital for ridership growth on TEXRail. Currently, our fare structure for a commute to/from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFWIA) offers the following options:

- Local Day Pass—\$5.00. Full day use of Trinity Metro services in Tarrant County, including ZIPZONE and TEXRail to/from DFWIA Terminal B station, includes round trips, multiple use.
- Single TEXRail Ride—\$2.50 one way. TEXRail service, all stations, one way only.
- Regional Day Pass—\$12.50. Full day use of all regional services, includes round trips, multiple use.

Trinity Metro is considering improved fare structures that will encourage more cross-network usage. One potential opportunity is a partnership with DART for a single regional rail ride consistent with the TRE rate cross-corridor. This option would allow customers to utilize the TEXRail line and seamlessly transfer to the Orange Line to continue their daily commute.

4. Public Awareness

The launch of TEXRail in January 2019 made public transportation available to an entirely new audience, many of whom have no background or familiarity with public transit or using it daily. Creating public awareness and encouraging TEXRail ridership has been and will continue to be a top priority of Trinity Metro staff. Before the pandemic, advertising TEXRail dominated the agency's marketing efforts with several campaigns. "Time to Train" was promoted from October 2018 to March 2019, and "Time to Make Your Move" highlighted the July 2019 service change that increased our peak headways. TEXRail marketing



also remained constant with placements at DFW International Airport through the arrivals network, advertisements through the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. The agency also

utilized owned-media resources, such as email marketing and the Trinity Metro website. These campaigns aligned with the positive ridership performance mentioned earlier.

Trinity Metro's community outreach representatives targeted employers along the alignment to promote the commuter discount program, EASYRIDE, for most of 2019, leading to 23 new participating companies. The program grew from 39 in January 2019 to 62 in November 2019. In the first quarter of FY 2020, the agency conducted a survey that collected 271 responses. The results showed that Trinity Metro TEXRail had the second-highest brand awareness of all Trinity Metro services, second only to the Trinity Railway Express (TRE). In the same survey, 39% of the respondents claimed they were likely to ride TEXRail in the next six months.

Then COVID-19 hit. During the pandemic, efforts have continued with a focus on communicating the safety of riding TEXRail. During times when campaigns are active, ridership has shown moderate increases.

Trinity Metro is aware of the challenge in rebuilding ridership, particularly with the daily corporate commuters. Many employers have shared that they do not plan to have staff back in physical office locations until July 2021, which impacts consistent daily ridership and the use of park-and-ride lots. Trinity Metro continues to aggressively look at all options, including a paid advertising campaign in 2021 and a ridership incentive program that would reward frequent riders. To help rebuild after the impact of COVID-19, Trinity Metro has been reviewing various discount opportunities. The goal is to build a comprehensive discount program that can offset decreases related to employees working from home instead of commuting. A proposed discount program may also include community and not-for-profit organizations so that the program is not entirely dependent on office commuters. Additional efforts will be made to include prospects from companies operating as usual, such as manufacturing and construction.



Trinity Metro has diligently reviewed the ridership model and assumptions from the study prior to 2014. As leadership and staff have changed since that time, there is confusion about the original model's information and assumptions.

We request the NCTCOG assist Trinity Metro in clarifying this model by providing the following information:

1. Further clarification of assumptions made for ridership numbers;
 - a. i.e., Explanation of data categories included in the original model
 - i. e.g., 2,107 riders in the DRIVE category for the T&P Station at year 14 (*see TEX Rail Vol_1_4_Item 7.2.3_YR14_YR35_Modes of access and egress by station (5)*). Please clarify what kind of drivers are in this category, and please further clarify how that number compares to the 378 parking spaces at the T&P Station parking lot.
 - b. i.e., Clarification of the significant amount of feeder service referenced in the study.
 - i. e.g., (*see TEX Rail Vol_1_4_Item 7.2.3_YR14_YR35_Modes of access and egress by station (5), year 14*). FWTA Local Bus column shows a total of 1,101 riders from non-Fort Worth stations (DFWIA Terminal (0), North DFW (47), Grapevine (110), Main/Davis/Smithfield (290), Iron Horse (378), US377 (276)). Please clarify the assumptions of an expanded Trinity Metro service to cover the non-Fort Worth stations and the expanded services' assumed funding sources.
2. All boarding and alightings per station in the original model to compare current performance.

Trinity Metro also kindly requests the following:

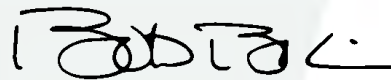
1. Documentation from NCTCOG that supports a 38-minute transit time across the corridor. *See 1. Travel Time Along TEXRail*
2. Clarification of the NCTCOG calculation of the average minutes' wait time, as stated in the original letter. *See 3. TEXRail/Orange Line Connectivity*



Trinity Metro values the importance of community partnerships and the vital role local businesses play in promoting transit. To this note, we request the assistance of the NCTCOG to ensure BNSF partners with Trinity Metro as part of our employer-funded EasyRide program. This show of solidarity will be a strong example to other organizations and will encourage local businesses to support transit. On the call, NCTCOG also offered assistance in gathering geographic data of employers that have partnered with the organization. Trinity Metro requests living/traffic data for marketing and ridership increase purposes.

Again, we appreciate the recommendations from the NCTCOG and are diligently working to improve TEXRail's ridership, as outlined above. Trinity Metro is incredibly thankful for all your team has done in support of this vital project. We look forward to continuing to work together to meet the region's transportation needs. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Bob Baulsir
President/CEO



Is it safe to walk or ride a bike in Dallas? The city wants your feedback on its new mobility plan

Connect Dallas, the city's first-ever strategic mobility plan, is entering its final stages of development.

By Destine Gibson, Dallas Morning News

Dallas is asking residents to help shape the future of transportation in North Texas by filling out a survey on Connect Dallas, the city's first-ever strategic mobility plan.

[A 106-page draft of the plan](#) was unveiled last week. [The city describes the plan](#) as an effort to develop transportation policies that support Dallas' housing, economic, equity and sustainability goals.

The report identifies problems with mobility in Dallas, a sprawling and "auto-centric" city, including:

- A lack of "frequent, reliable transit service in large parts of Dallas." This prevents many residents from getting to jobs.
- Danger to bicyclists and pedestrians. The plan cites data that shows walking and biking in the city is dangerous and getting worse: "Although walking trips account for less than 2 percent of work trips in Dallas, pedestrian fatalities represented 27 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2017."
- A growing — and aging — population. More drivers on the roads means more traffic, while the increasing number of older adults will see an accompanying "need for accessible, shared mobility options," according to the plan.

It also recommends solutions, suggesting improvements tailored to Dallas' specific neighborhoods. Overall, the plan emphasizes projects that would improve access to public transit and make streets safer for walking and bicycling.

Potential projects identified in the draft plan include everything from installing new bike lanes in Oak Cliff and South Dallas to building a shared-use path on West Illinois Avenue.

[Read the full plan here](#), and [give the city your feedback here](#). The survey will remain online until Feb. 5.

Is saving natural prairie from development possible in Fort Worth? These people say yes

By Haley Samsel, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

For more than a year, Jo Ann Collins led monthly tours of native prairie in southwest Fort Worth, near Crowley and the new Tarleton State campus. She and other nature advocates hoped to convince the Texas General Land Office to protect several acres from being paved over to build homes and businesses.

“There was an area that was prime habitat, and it had every piece of Fort Worth in it, and it was on the Chisholm Trail where cowboys took their cattle and left them out there waiting to go to the processing plants,” Collins, a retired teacher, said. “We were trying to save that history, but it didn’t happen.”

After much of that [land was sold to a developer in 2014](#), Collins became a self-styled “prairie preacher,” volunteering to lead the Fort Worth chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas and serving on the organization’s statewide board. She’s held workshops teaching residents to be “prairie seekers” and encouraged officials to not mow their prairie grass more than once a year.

Soon, Collins won’t be alone in preaching the gospel of the prairie. She will be joined by [a new full-time outreach director and land steward](#) for the Dallas-Fort Worth region, hired through a partnership between the Native Prairies Association of Texas and the Dixon Water Foundation, which promotes sustainable land management strategies for ranchers.

Each year, developers in Fort Worth [turn 2,800 acres of prairie into new subdivisions](#), retail businesses and more, the Star-Telegram reported in 2019. And of the original 20 million acres of tallgrass prairie in Texas, less than 1% remains, according to the association.

“North Texas has a lot of prairie, much of it still very high quality and worth saving,” said Kirsti Harms, the executive director of the association. “In the meantime, the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area is expanding. We’re trying to get ahead of the expansion and conserve green space.”

With two other full-time employees based in Houston and Austin, the position will be the first of its kind to focus on forming partnerships with North Texas government agencies and landowners, identifying properties to acquire, and educating rural and urban communities about prairie conservation. The association already owns and conserves several acres in North Texas, Harms said, with properties that go almost all the way to Texarkana.

Why is it crucial to save this ecosystem? Many remnants not touched by development, such as [the Tandy Hills Natural Area in Fort Worth](#), are ecologically rich and useful for wildlife, Harms said. Tallgrass prairies are increasingly endangered, but many Texans are unaware of how they absorb flood water and contain hundreds of plant species, she added.

“People look out, they see a field of grass, and think: Why is this field of grass special, and this one not?” Harms said. “There aren’t as many groups working on the North Texas ecosystems, so we feel like that’s kind of an area where we can step up and get the Dallas-Fort Worth area to become more excited about prairie conservation.”

The association works on both conservation and restoration projects, but largely focuses on convincing landowners to either donate their property to a land trust or sign an agreement known as a conservation easement.

In signing [an easement deal with an organization like the Native Prairies Association](#), landowners retain their title but agree to limit certain kinds of development on their property. Even if landowners sell their title later on, the easement agreement is permanent and will carry over forever, Harms said.

“Putting a conservation easement on your property is a big investment in the future, because you have to talk to your children and you have to decide that they will never be able to cut this up and sell it to a developer,” she said.

Conservation efforts should align with the priorities of ranchers across Texas, said Robert Potts, the president and CEO of the Dixon Water Foundation, which has offices in Decatur and Marfa. His foundation [promotes the ecological and financial benefits of cattle grazing](#) practices that improve soil health, restore grasslands, conserve water and limit the impact of drought.

“We work on our ranches to do research and demonstrate how you use livestock in the most effective way to improve the watershed health, sequester carbon and make money,” Potts said. “We need this position to raise awareness and engage landowners to preserve and enhance their prairies.”

There has already been some progress on the conservation front in North Texas, Collins said. She cheered Fort Worth’s Open Spaces Conservation program, which [launched last year in a city effort to acquire and preserve](#) natural areas. In June, officials [completed their \\$610,000 purchase](#) of Broadcast Hill in east Fort Worth using money from the oil and gas trust fund and donations from residents.

“Trying to save this land has become a bigger snowball, so to speak, that we never see very often here,” Collins said. “With climate change and noticing how much water a prairie holds compared to land that’s mowed or paved with concrete, it just makes so much sense to preserve these areas.”

Harms hopes to fill the North Texas position next month and said the association may hire two people since the job requires very different skill sets. In the meantime, Collins is dreaming of the possibilities, which include working with developers to recognize the importance of preserving even a small piece of prairie when they are building subdivisions on ranch land.

Collins points to Walsh, a massive development of more than 7,000 acres that the developer said could eventually be home to 50,000 people in west Fort Worth.

Bexie Nobles, Walsh’s spokesperson, told the Star-Telegram in 2017 that roughly [one-third of the 1,700-acre initial development was reserved for green space](#), and the developer took care to not “denigrate” the land. But Collins thinks builders can do more.

“When a big ranch is taken, like Walsh Ranch, it should be almost mandated that a piece of that be left for the enjoyment of the community and for all of the services that the particular piece of land provides with water retention and habitat for animals,” Collins said. “People need to realize that it’s not just grass that you’re supposed to mow. It has value, and it’s just as important as having the trees to walk through.”

UNT Awards Grants for Autonomous Vehicle Research

Three UNT faculty members receive a seed grant for autonomous vehicle research

By Demetrius Harper, NBCDFW

Maurizio Manzo and Hector Siller in the College of Engineering, along with Abdulrahman Habib in the College of Science, were selected by UNT's Jim McNatt Institute for Logistics Research as one of four teams to receive a seed grant.

These three University of North Texas faculty members are working on a project to use embedded fiber optical sensing for autonomous vehicles to increase day-to-day tracking of a variety of measurements.

Their research plans to use fiber optic sensors attached to autonomous vehicles or drones to help track and monitor a number of environmental factors.

They also want to evaluate machine learning techniques to help make the integration of sensors easier.

"These sensors would make it possible for autonomous vehicles to help detect pollution levels, monitor traffic or help locate contaminants or chemical substances in emergency situations," said Manzo, an assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

The group also wants to display the project to the Army Research Laboratory as part of the next-generation Vertical Take-Off and Landing Unmanned Aerial Systems initiative.

The seed funding grant comes as part of the new Center for Integrated Intelligent Mobility Systems initiative, which is a collaborative research unit at UNT focused on integrated intelligent mobility systems such as connected and autonomous vehicle research.

For more information go to <https://cos.unt.edu/research-seed-grants>

Fort Worth base will be home to Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets, Rep. Kay Granger says

By Brian Lopez, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth is set to be the home of F-35 fighter jets, new cargo aircraft and an airborne medical transport, U.S. Rep. Kay Granger said Monday.

Twenty-six Lockheed Martin F-35s will replace the aging F-16s used by the 301st Fighter Wing squadron, Granger said during a press conference at the base. Having the [F-35s in Fort Worth has been in the works since March 2020](#). The fighter jets are built at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth, which is next to the base.

The 301st Fighter Wing squadron is expected to receive its first F-35 jet in the summer of 2024, according to a press release.

The Texas Air National Guard's aging C-130-H aircraft, used for cargo and personnel transport, will be replaced with the new C-130J models. [Sen. John Cornyn previously announced that the U.S. Air Force selected Fort Worth to house eight new C-130J aircraft](#) and the planes would arrive in 2022 or early 2023.

The J models reduce manpower requirements, lowers operating and support costs and provide life-cycle cost savings.

"I'm glad the Air Force made the right decision to bring these modern aircraft forward, which add capability, performance and value," Granger said.

Fort Worth will also be the newest location of an aeromedical evacuation squadron, which uses aircraft to evacuate wounded military personnel and civilians from danger to medical facilities.

"It's amazing to see the same runway that trained pilots for World War II, now supporting the future of American air power," she said.

High-Speed Transit Plan Between Dallas and Fort Worth Moves Forward

Despite declining public transportation ridership, a North Texas association of local government officials continues to study high-speed transit options between Dallas and Fort Worth.

By Kim Roberts, The Texan

“If you build it, they will come” appears to be the attitude of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) as they continue to move forward studying high-speed transit options that would be built between Dallas and Fort Worth and connect to the proposed high-speed Texas Central Rail project from Dallas to Houston.

NCTCOG held public meetings on January 27 and 28 to receive public input and questions about the proposed transportation plans.

The study is based on the projections that the Dallas-Fort Worth region will grow to over 11 million people by 2045 and will require other forms of transportation besides roads and passenger rail.

“A high-speed option would also improve efficiency, with travel times between Dallas and Fort Worth and beyond reduced significantly,” the NCTCOG flyer states. The goal for the transportation mode is 20-minute travel time between the downtown areas of the two cities.

This is despite the [decrease in ridership](#) on local passenger rail systems and [across the country](#) and the continued struggles of [Texas Central](#) to build its project.

When asked about the demand and ridership estimates for the system, NCTCOG officials said that they don’t currently have those numbers, but they expect to get more specific ridership estimates in the next phase of the study.

The study is considering three major forms of high-speed transportation: high-speed rail, magnetic levitation (MAGLEV) systems, and hyperloop. It is also studying several route alignments along the Interstate 30 and State Highway 180 corridors.

The study has three phases for determining the preferred mode of transportation and route it will take. Phase 2 is expected to be completed at the end of March.

Phase 3 will be a more detailed evaluation with conceptual design, cost estimates, environmental impacts, and community impacts all taken into consideration, according to Chris Masters, a consultant working on the study. It is expected to be complete in the middle of 2023.

Previous similar studies of high-speed transportation options between Dallas and Fort Worth have been conducted. In a 2017 [study](#) conducted by Urban Engineers for the Federal Railroad Administration, the I-30 route was dropped from consideration due to “greatest engineering challenges, the highest design and construction complexity and construction risks, and the highest capital cost.”

When the public asked about funding for the project, Kevin Feldt, program manager with the transportation planning division of NCTCOG, said, “At this point, we don’t know. When we reach the federal decision at the end of this process in the middle of 2023, we will have identified a

funding strategy and a government implementation strategy. The project would be ready for a private group to come in and possibly oversee and move forward. There are a lot of options available to us: a pure public option, a private sector option, or a combination of the two.”

One citizen expressed concern that a new rail system would just be a redundancy of the already-existing Trinity Railway Express, which runs between Dallas and Fort Worth, but Feldt pointed out that the new system would provide a complimentary service with faster travel times because there would be fewer stops.

Recordings of the presentation can be found on the NCTCOG [website](#) and public comments can also be submitted there until February 22.

<https://thetexan.news/high-speed-transit-plan-between-dallas-and-fort-worth-moves-forward/>

Hillwood And Bell demonstrates autonomous package delivery

By Fort Worth Business Press Staff

Hillwood and Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, demonstrated a point-to-point unmanned aircraft system package delivery in North Texas at the Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone.

The Bell Autonomous Pod Transport flew across the Mobility Innovation Zone and delivered a package to a landing area, demonstrating its future commercial capabilities.

The Mobility Innovation Zone, unlike anywhere else in the nation, provides the scale, infrastructure and perfect backdrop for the commercialization of budding technologies in air mobility.

Launching from the Mobility Innovation Zone Flight Test Center, flying in complex airspace and landing in Pecan Square, Hillwood Communities' tech-forward, master-planned community in Northlake, the pod transport, which is designed to be capable of various missions from package delivery to critical medical transport and disaster relief, flew a preprogrammed four-mile route. The successful test of Bell's Autonomous Pod Transport highlights the potential for complex missions, moving the needle closer to connecting logistics operations directly to consumers, said Ross Perot Jr., chairman of Hillwood.

"Together, we are carving a path forward for future commercial operations to solve the supply chain challenges our world currently faces," Perot said.

The Bell transport took off vertically, rotated to fly on its wing, becoming nearly silent to the ground below, a news release said. The craft reached a maximum altitude of 300 feet above ground level.

Its route included flying near I-35W and miles of unpopulated fields as the aircraft transitioned in and out of Class D and Class G airspace, demonstrating the types of airspace it could encounter during a commercial flight.

"Bell is proud to play a role in the first North Texas (unmanned aircraft system) package delivery, and this demonstration showcases the future application of the APT 70 as a logistics carrier," said Mitch Snyder, president and CEO of Bell. "Testing at the MIZ (Mobility Innovation Zone) showcases how Bell's autonomous vehicles could seamlessly integrate into logistics operations and unlock new opportunities for businesses."

The delivery craft tested is the electric vertical takeoff and landing family of vehicles Bell is developing and can reach speeds of more than 100 miles per hour and has a baseline payload capability of 70 pounds, recently demonstrating carrying payloads over 100 pounds.

Data collected during the demonstration will be used to support future standards development and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification guidelines.

Bell and Hillwood have joined forces with the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition, a public-private partnership focused on advancing mobility innovation within the western portion of North Texas, to create a regional ecosystem supported by leaders in government and the private sector.

“Our region is uniquely positioned to support companies engaged in the commercialization of new technologies in air mobility,” said Jeff Williams, mayor of Arlington, Texas and chairman of the coalition TRTC. “We’re proud to support Bell and Hillwood in launching North Texas’ first point-to-point package delivery at the MIZ and look forward to their continued leadership in making our region an epicenter for mobility innovation.”

The Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone ([MIZ](#)) is a unique landscape built on collaboration and opportunity that works to connect people, places and ideas that push innovation in surface and air mobility forward.

<https://fortworthbusiness.com/technology/hillwood-and-bell-textron-inc-a-textron-inc-nyse-txt-company-demonstrated-a-point-to-point-unmanned/>

You thought it would never happen: With a new boss, Dallas' Trinity park aims to break ground next year

By all accounts, Tulsa's riverfront project is a smashing success. Can Tony Moore work that same magic between the levees here?

By Sharon Grigsby, Dallas Morning News

Does anyone out there remember the plan to build a park between the Trinity levees?

No, not the long-running joke-of-a-proposal that claimed a toll road was a signature greenspace amenity. I'm talking about the vision for a genuinely grand urban park that was [unveiled in 2018](#).

Two years and a pandemic later, the Trinity Park Conservancy has just closed two consequential deals that deserve your attention -- and even a bit of cautious praise.

Days after nailing down the location of the new park's four-acre East Overlook -- the first spot where dirt will fly in this massive project -- the conservancy made an inspired choice for its new boss.

Tony Moore, who has overseen Tulsa's riverfront project since 2016, will become the conservancy's president and CEO, the job that local architect Brent Brown vacated last March.

Known as the Gathering Place, the 70-acre Tulsa park opened in 2018 to critical acclaim and rave reviews from those who matter most -- the users.

The Gathering Place and the Dallas park planned for the Trinity River floodplain have more than a little in common. Both rely on an equal mix of play and landscape; the same Massachusetts-based designer, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, is at the center of each.

Most important, Dallas and Tulsa leaders have voiced the same goal for their parks: Greenspaces that bring families of all kinds together and bridge divides in cities whose residents have suffered under historic segregation and contemporary racial disparities.

I talked Friday with Moore, and he struck me as clear-eyed about what he'll walk into when his new job starts April 5.

"Certainly, I've heard and sensed the consumer fatigue," he said. "This has been a project that for a long while has been coming and coming and coming,"

The death of the toll road was a big step forward for the park's future, but Moore knows that distrust and bitterness still waft from the project's contentious years-long debates. His job is a big one: Continue to build credibility for the park while navigating complex technical and financial hurdles.

"Where are you going to trick us next?" concerns can only be met effectively with trustworthy actions, Moore said. "We can only move forward with transparency."

But these lifelong parks guy also believes in moving forward with excitement, and that's the story he's raring to get to Dallas to tell. "We want to get it right. We won't get twice to tell this narrative."

Yes, it's been an arduous process, he said, but this is the right project at the right moment. "What we would have gotten before wasn't as transformational, as impactful."

Moore, who is Black, also believes that Dallas, like Tulsa, has developed an equity lens that was missing even five or 10 years ago. "It's critical we have a park of unity that all communities embrace," he said.

In May, Tulsa will commemorate the 100-year anniversary of a race massacre in which white rioters killed hundreds of Black residents. Moore recalled that as that centennial crept closer and the Gathering Place prepared to open, many underserved communities were skeptical of the park's purpose.

Moore recalled residents who asked, "How is this fancy \$465 million park going to benefit me?"

Through intentional programming and communication, Moore said, the largely privately funded Tulsa park has done a good job attracting users who reflect the city's diverse demographics.

Moore stumbled into what's now his passion when as a young man he worked in Florida theme parks after growing up in Jamaica. Eventually his career blossomed into leadership roles in zoo and aquarium operations before he moved into public greenspaces.

The 30-year parks veteran appreciates design, but he's most often the practical voice in the room who speaks for the regular folks who will use the amenities.

"How is this truly going to work for consumers?" he said. "That perspective is greatly needed -- and needed early in the process."

Moore acknowledged that the chance to work again alongside Michael Van Valkenburgh's team factored into his desire to come to Dallas. "They are absolutely the best when it comes to park design."

Deedie Rose, the conservancy's board chair, said the same about Moore. "In the world of parks, I don't know how we could have gotten who I believe is the very best person," she told me a few days ago.

His focus will be "how the park should be used for real people," Rose said, and how-to bring people together from all over the city to get to know one another and find common ground.

"We are building a park -- and we are building a city as we do that," Rose said. "Our city is good, but now there are many things we wish were different. ... This project can help accomplish some of those bridging goals."

Nothing short of a rock star is required to lead the conservancy in the next few years. Building any major urban park would be a heavy lift, but creating a 200-acre one in a floodplain -- a space where the Corps of Engineers continues to work to manage risks and improve levees -- is not for the faint of heart.

Dallas City Hall created the Trinity River Corridor Local Government Corporation in 2017 to deliver recreational improvements in the 2,000-acre Trinity River Floodway. The LGC, in turn, contracted with the conservancy for the design, construction, operation and fundraising for the park.

The current park plan, unveiled in December 2018, stretches from the Ron Kirk and Margaret Hunt Hill bridges to the Margaret McDermott Bridge. Just beyond the levees, two overlook parks sit above each side of the floodway

The conservancy also bought the decommissioned Dawson State Jail, across from Lew Sterrett on Commerce Street, in 2019 and plans to transform that site into a gateway to the park.

The park team spent the last part of 2020 securing the land for the 4.5-acre East Overlook, which will run roughly from the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge to the Union Pacific Railroad line next to the Dallas County justice complex. A slender corridor of gardens will connect the overlook to Riverfront Boulevard.

“It feels like for decades nothing has happened,” Rose said. “Now we can go full speed ahead on design for that and then break ground in mid-2022.”

The East Overlook will include playgrounds, cafes and performance spaces; ditto for the West Overlook, which will run between Beckley Avenue and the levee in the Commerce Street area. But because of the Corps’ ongoing work, no groundbreaking dates can yet be set for the west side or floodplain area.

As designs emerge for the East Overlook, naming opportunities -- and fund-raising momentum - - likely will follow. Of the \$200 million needed for the overall project, the conservancy has raised \$110 million, including a \$50 million donation from Annette Simmons. The park will be named for her late husband, Harold Simmons.

Moore is proud of the Gathering Place’s success, but he said that’s no guarantee that things will be a cinch in Dallas.

He’s right. From all I’ve read about the Tulsa project, the politics there were a walk in the park compared to what could be in store in Dallas.

But none of that scares Moore. “It had to take something very, very compelling for me to leave an awesome park at an awesome time,” he said. “This was that project.”

A different kind of surge Why Texas and D-FW are poised to lead a strong recovery when the pandemic fades

Unlike many rivals, Texas added residents and workers last year, and one firm ranks Dallas-Fort Worth's labor market No. 1 among 150 metros.

By Mitchell Schnurman, Dallas Morning News

We're still in the throes of the pandemic economy with over 1 million Texans looking for work and an unemployment rate twice as high as a year ago.

But there are encouraging signs, including strong interest from outsiders, which has always been crucial to Texas' growth story.

Last year, Texas' population grew by almost 374,000, far more than any state and more than the year before COVID-19 emerged. That strongly suggests Texas continued to draw migrants from elsewhere.

Texas also added to its civilian labor force in 2020, a notable achievement. Over 4 million Americans dropped out of the workforce last year, often because of public health concerns or caregiving duties. Among the 10 most populous states, only Texas posted a gain in the labor force, [according to data](#) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition, the pipeline of potential relocations and expansions has grown since COVID. And by one assessment, Dallas-Fort Worth currently ranks as the strongest labor market in the country.

"Texas is the shining example that the pandemic has not hit every place the same," said [Jay Denton](#), chief innovation officer at [ThinkWhy](#), a Dallas-based software services company whose products compare top talent and salaries in the U.S.

The positive perceptions stem from fewer restrictions on business, he said, along with a history of strong growth. In the past decade, Texas added more people than the bottom 37 states combined, he said, and he believes the pandemic will create more separation with rivals.

"Because of how jobs have been disrupted and how companies' balance sheets have been disrupted, the gap is going to grow even wider in the coming years," Denton said.

His firm compared 150 metros on 10 economic measures, including growth in jobs, wages and college graduation. By its LaborIQ index, Dallas-Fort Worth ranked No. 1, ahead of Boise, Idaho, and Charlotte, N.C. Houston ranked ninth and Austin, 11th.

No other state was close to putting three metros in the top 15.

"The underlying health of the economy [in Texas] is much, much stronger than we're seeing in most other locations across the country," Denton said.

D-FW easily leads the top-ranked metros in net migration, a key metric. For many years, Texas has been growing jobs at roughly twice the rate of the nation, and about half the advantage has come from net gains in domestic and international migration.

While migration statistics for 2020 have not been released, Texas' population gains for the year ended last July 1 are a strong indicator that the state continued to be attractive. California, New York and Illinois, which lost many residents to Texas in the past, posted big declines in population last year.

After the Great Recession, Texas' economy recovered much faster, in part because it was a magnet for residents from other states. The net inflow boosted population and job growth, and the same dynamics could be in place when the pandemic fades, said [Christopher Slijk](#), an associate economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

"We tend to do better, in part from having a lower cost of living and a lower cost of doing business," Slijk said. "Depending on the course of the pandemic, it looks like we'll have some of that growth premium going into this year as well."

The Dallas Fed projected a gain of over half a million jobs in Texas this year. That would be the largest annual increase ever, but it would still be short of replacing the 580,000 jobs lost in 2020, according to the Dallas Fed.

At least Texas ended 2020 with a slightly larger labor force. That increases the talent pool and prospects for a faster recovery, especially when other big states are shrinking.

"Momentum is a pretty powerful thing," Slijk said. "Looking out to the medium- and long-term, I think the relative attractiveness of Texas has increased" since the pandemic.

So does [Scott Shepard](#), a real estate agent who started [ExitCalifornia.org](#), a website to help people leave the state. In the past year, his firm handled over 1,800 exits from California, and nearly 1 in 4 moved to Texas, he said. That was three times more than runner-up Arizona.

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The Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce had been talking with Incora, a California-based supply chain management company, since 2018. In September, the company decided to consolidate offices and [move its global headquarters](#) to a new location in Fort Worth.

"In the middle of a pandemic, they said, 'We gotta do this,'" said [Chris Strayer](#), who leads economic development for the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.

Last week, Strayer was talking with another California company still waiting to announce a move. He said the CEO was ready to come to Texas first and bring other employees later.

The CEO of a California bank, First Foundation, has a similar plan. Last month, Scott Kavanaugh told analysts that [he'd already bought a home](#) in D-FW and was scouting for a location for the holding company headquarters.

Said one analyst on the call: "It makes a ton of strategic sense."

Last year, the Fort Worth Chamber submitted 121 requests for proposals for potential relocations and expansions, up from 85 the year before COVID, Strayer said. At the [Dallas Regional Chamber](#), trends are similar with almost twice as many projects being tracked, said [Mike Rosa](#), who leads economic development for the organization.

The pandemic is exposing strengths and weaknesses, Rosa said, "And Texas' light has been shining brighter over the past many months."

He pointed to the diversification and depth of the regional and state economy, from corporate headquarters to logistics companies to defense contractors to technology players. The business mix attracts more employers and workers.

Cities in North Texas also have invested heavily in parks, transit, downtown living and other amenities. When the pandemic ends, he expects a surge in activity.

“Sometimes I pinch myself thinking about next year and a couple of years from now — and where we might end up after all this is through,” Rosa said.

Collin County to begin purchasing land for US 380 alignment

County commissioners on Feb. 1 granted city staff the authority to purchase parcels along County Road 164 and Bloomdale Road for a future alignment for the US 380 bypass.

By Matt Payne, Community Impact Newspaper

Collin County has begun the process of purchasing land for the future of US 380.

County commissioners on Feb. 1 granted city staff the authority to purchase parcels along County Road 164 and Bloomdale Road for a future alignment of the US 380 bypass. Collin County will seek to buy land from willing sellers, opting out of implementing eminent domain.

The decision comes as the Texas Department of Transportation is in the midst of conducting an environmental impact study for US 380, which commissioners say could take years. Consensus among county staff and commissioners is that it is ideal to act as soon as possible, before developers construct new homes on needed land.

TxDOT held a public scope meeting Jan. 21 regarding US 380. Collin County Engineering Director Clarence Daugherty said TxDOT's stance of running the project through the Bloomdale corridor aligns with that of Collin County.

When asked by the court whether action taken by the county would force TxDOT's hand, Daugherty said, "TxDOT is already in this path, so [county] action is not going to force anything."

Collin County officials also want to make accommodations for the North Texas Municipal Water District, which Daugherty said needs to soon install a large water supply line to the city of McKinney. Easements required for this project fall within the US 380 alignment, according to Daugherty.

Commissioner Duncan Webb underscored the importance of prioritizing land purchases for future infrastructure.

"If we don't start acquiring this right-of-way or at least attempt to acquire this right-of-way, I'm very concerned that the developers are going to close the corridor and make it next to impossible for the freeway ... [to run] through the center portion of our county," Webb said. "So I'm very supportive of it."

County Judge Chris Hill, who cast the only vote against the measure, said he would prefer to let TxDOT lead the way. Hill was in support of purchasing parcels of land now but wanted to omit some of the more declarative language in the resolution.

Hill said action taken Feb. 1 may be contrary to what the commissioners court has told residents.

"My fear is that we've told the folks of Collin County we're going to put this on hold for the next two years while TxDOT does what they're going to do," Hill said. "If we jump in and say, 'Well, this is the route that we want,' then we have short-circuited that process."

Action taken Feb. 1 does not affect any plans for construction through Prosper, county staff said.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit requests delay for public hearings and other planning and zoning news

By Liesbeth Powers, Community Impact Newspaper

The public hearings for Dallas Area Rapid Transit's special use permit requests in Plano have been delayed until Feb. 15.

The two requests apply to the land around the downtown DART station, where the Silver Line will connect with the current Red Line station. The existing station will be redesigned, and an elevated station will be built across 12th Street and the railroad tracks, with zoning approval.

DART staff is still working with engineering staff to resolve a few issues, a letter to the commission said, causing the request to be delayed.

The Plano Planning and Zoning Commission approved this delay for the public hearings unanimously.

Parker Road request for smaller lot sizes abandoned by developer

The planning and zoning consulting company behind a 16.8-acre housing development along Parker Road withdrew its requested zoning change.

This request, which would have allowed for smaller lot sizes on the property, was tabled until Feb. 1 for discussions with neighboring residents. But at the Feb. 1 meeting, the group shared that it had chosen to withdraw these requests.

The applicants, Chen You-Hong and Hong Zhuang, are not expected to return with similar requests, city staff said.

American First National Bank receives renewed approval for expired plans

American First National Bank received approval Feb. 1 for a replat, revised preliminary site plan and revised site plan in one go.

The bank first submitted and received approval to separate the bank's property along K Avenue and 19th Street into two plats in 2012 and received approval. However, the plat was never filed and expired, along with associated concept plans.

With renewed approval, the bank aims to subdivide the property into two lots, sell one lot with an existing office building and relocate to a new building on the undeveloped lot, a letter to commissioners said.

To prepare the land for sale, the bank will create easements for the existing office and create a public way access point from K Avenue into the property, submitted paperwork said.

These requests were approved by commissioners in an 8-0 vote.

Dallas has plenty of strip malls. Give us more ‘mini Klyde Warren’ parks

We urge cities to reexamine their parking requirements.

By Dallas Morning News

Perhaps you’ve never been to the strip mall near the corner of Hillcrest and Arapaho roads in Far North Dallas. Still, the old Hillcrest Village would be familiar.

The dull 1980s retail strip — with its beige, rectangular cookie-cutter buildings and an ocean of mostly empty parking spots — is a staple of the American suburban landscape. You might care to go to one only when you’re craving a drink from Starbucks.

But the new Hillcrest Village makes an impression. A moribund mall just a few years ago, now the development has been nicknamed “[a mini Klyde Warren Park](#),” as our colleague [Sarah Blaskovich](#) reported in December. That’s because the city of Dallas partnered with retail developer Shop Cos. to revive the mall with snazzy restaurants and to strip out the central parking lot and a two-story building to create a 1.5-acre park with a playground.

This dense corner of Dallas bordering Richardson is short on open space, and it has been difficult for the city to buy parkland there because land is scarce and valuable, Dallas Park Board President Calvert Collins-Bratton said. Shop Cos. bought the mall in 2018, razed one of the buildings and flipped that land and the central parking lot to the city for \$1.4 million.

The city-owned park, called Hillcrest Village Green, cost another \$4.2 million to build and debuted Saturday to a lot of buzz. This open space should be a template for others in the commercial real estate game, and we hope more developers will take note.

We recognize that getting this park built took a confluence of favorable factors. Shop Cos. co-founder David Sacher has an emotional connection to the mall because he grew up in the area. He and Shop’s lead developer, Daniel Fuller, approached the city with their idea for the mall. The city paid for the green space with money from a \$262 million bond package for parks that voters passed in 2017. Dallas also kicked in \$1.5 million in economic development funds to give the shopping center a facelift. Wide patios, trees and benches have replaced pavement and old, narrow walkways.

“It’s like a unicorn,” Collins-Bratton told us. “It took a private developer who saw the value of park space working with the city to make that happen.”

Sacher said he and his colleagues drew inspiration from Malibu Country Mart in California, a Mediterranean-style outdoor mall with trendy stores and restaurants lining manicured lawns, inviting picnic areas and a colorful playground. He told us that the reason we don’t see more projects like the Hillcrest Village renovation is that developers aren’t typically willing to tear down revenue-generating buildings to replace them with open space. He said eliminating parking lots can also put developers at odds with municipal parking requirements.

The pandemic has been catastrophic for retailers and restaurants, but spaces like Hillcrest Village Green should be good for business, spurring families and friends to dine and spend time outdoors. Shop Cos. has signed nearly 30 leases. We urge cities to reexamine their parking requirements, and we encourage developers to be better neighbors. Even a small playground or a pocket park can make a world of difference to families.

A different kind of surge: Why Texas and D-FW are poised to lead a strong recovery when the pandemic fades

Unlike many rivals, Texas added residents and workers last year, and one firm ranks Dallas-Fort Worth's labor market No. 1 among 150 metros.

By Mitchell Schnurman, Dallas Morning News

Is it too soon to talk about green shoots?

We're still in the throes of the pandemic economy with over 1 million Texans looking for work and an unemployment rate twice as high as a year ago.

But there are encouraging signs, including strong interest from outsiders, which has always been crucial to Texas' growth story.

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Texas leads in population growth

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Migration projected to drive Texas' growth

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City of Arlington Continues Coupling Vehicle-To-Infrastructure, Connected Vehicle Technologies to Enhance Regional Mobility

"Arlington joins six other cities in the greater Dallas metro supporting our services for connected vehicles."

By Susan Schrock, City of Arlington

A data sharing agreement with Traffic Technology Services, Inc. (TTS) is the latest example of how the City of Arlington is collaborating with private companies to [Enhance Regional Mobility](#) through vehicle-to-infrastructure and connected vehicle technologies.

As part of this collaboration, [TTS](#) provides real-time information from the City's 360 traffic signals directly to automotive original equipment manufacturers and app developers to help drivers adjust their speed for optimal travel time, safety and fuel economy. This information service allows applications to inform the driver a recommended reduced speed to avoid stopping at the intersection ahead, or how many seconds remain until a red light will turn green.

Currently all newer Audi vehicles, and other select Volkswagen Group model vehicles, sold in North America support the feature Traffic Light Information. In addition, on Apple and Android stores is a mobile app, Sygic GPS Navigation, which provides an add-on feature utilizing the TTS service for red light countdowns.

"Arlington joins six other cities in the greater Dallas metro supporting our services for connected vehicles. While this is still an emerging technology, we have been providing this service since 2016 supporting thousands of drivers in the Dallas region. When multiplying the potential benefits when not stopping at red lights, that equates to thousands of gallons of fuel saved," said Kiel Ova with TTS.

The benefits to the City of Arlington are in the form of reports about the City's signalized operations and anonymized drivers' experiences, such as arrivals on red. These reports can then lead to timing or other improvements at trouble intersections which can benefit all drivers. The TTS system is free to the City.

TTS has similar data sharing agreements across the country and the state, including several in the Dallas and Houston metro areas.

The City of Arlington's Public Works and Transportation Department has also implemented smart technologies on 31 traffic signals and two school zone flashers to enhance traffic safety along Cooper Street between Lamar Boulevard and Harris Road. The innovative project, which aims to improve travel time and reduce traffic collisions, delays at signals and emergency vehicle response time, was recognized nationally last year as a [2020 Smart 50 Awards winner](#).

- [Enhance Regional Mobility](#)
- [Put Technology To Work](#)
- [District 1](#)
- [District 2](#)
- [District 3](#)
- [District 4](#)
- [District 5](#)
- [News](#)
- [Streets](#)

Dallas Cowboys, Arlington want another Super Bowl run. Here's what stands in the way.

By Mac Engel, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

When AT&T Stadium opened in 2009, no one could have predicted that by 2021 DFW would have hosted the same number of [Rose Bowls](#) as Super Bowls.

By the time 2022 ends DFW will have hosted more [WrestleManias](#) than Super Bowls.

Not long before the stadium opened, Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said he was in the "business of hosting Super Bowls." But the Cowboys hosting Super Bowls is going almost as well as reaching them.

Ten years since hosting one of the most unfortunate, problem-laden Super Bowls ever, Arlington is not on the docket for another.

"(The Cowboys) have asked us (Arlington) if we want to go back after the Super Bowl and absolutely, we do. We stand ready to mobilize for it," Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams said in a phone interview. "It's one of the most frequent questions I get is when are we going to get another Super Bowl. I think North Texas is ready to get it back.

"We've hosted every other major event. We've risen to be the entertainment and sports capital of the nation. We can handle the big events. We want another chance to show we can do it, because we can."

Despite this convincing sales pitch, the NFL awarding Arlington another Super Bowl is not a given.

AT&T Stadium isn't the issue.

This is between Jerry and the NFL. There is nothing Arlington, Dallas or Fort Worth can do. "We are always going to be involved in the process of trying to bring the Super Bowl back to North Texas. Over the course of the past 12 years, AT&T Stadium, the NFL's largest venue, has shown its worthiness in hosting the very biggest and best events that the sports and entertainment worlds have to offer," Cowboys vice president Stephen Jones said in a statement to the Star-Telegram.

Other than the Republican National Convention, AT&T Stadium has hosted nearly every major event on America's sports calendar (don't think the Democrats are coming here).

"We know the NFL has a process and a current queue in place for future sites, but we will remain active participants in presenting our stadium and our region as a future host," Stephen Jones said. "We understand and embrace the fact that the NFL maximizes the interest in the Super Bowl by moving the game around to so many of our league's great markets as that only serves to make the game more valuable and appealing and gives fans in places all over the country a taste of the Super Bowl experience."

Previously, one of the obstacles to hosting another Super Bowl has been that the NFL wants Jerry and the Cowboys to give up a home game to play in the [NFL's London series](#).

Jerry has no problem with the Cowboys playing across the pond, provided they are the “visiting” team.

He’s not giving up a home game, for the obvious reasons: That’s one less game of guaranteed revenue. That’s one less game of 90-plus thousand fans who pay for tickets, parking, hot dogs, beer and merchandise.

The DFW area may make millions by hosting a Super Bowl, whereas the Cowboys won’t make much.

If he agreed to give up a home game, and the NFL could showcase its most valuable franchise in Europe for a few days, Arlington may magically move ahead of the Super Bowl line.

Right now, DFW is not scheduled to host another Super Bowl. The [NFL has sites selected](#) for Super Bowl 56 in ‘22 (LA), Super Bowl 57 in ‘23 (Glendale, Ariz.), and Super Bowl 58 in ‘24 (New Orleans).

Since Arlington hosted the game on Feb. 6, 2011, no city has hosted the Super Bowl twice. [That’s going to change soon](#): Glendale hosted it in 2015, and New Orleans in ‘13. Miami hosted it in ‘10 and ‘20.

Expect Los Angeles and now Las Vegas to receive preferential treatment, like Miami, New Orleans and Glendale. More reliable February weather plus locales that are built for tourism make all of those cities more attractive.

The hope was when AT&T Stadium opened in 2012 it would join the NFL unofficial rotation.

As many are unable to forget, when we hosted the Super Bowl in ‘11, between the Packers and Steelers, we were hit with Green Bay like weather.

Snow. Frigid temperatures. Wind. Ice.

Typically, this stuff melts in about day. But a “Canadian summer” arrived seven days before kickoff and didn’t melt and thaw until the afternoon before the game.

“I’ve lived here all my life and we’ve never had weather like we had that time,” Williams said. “That is not normal at all.”

AT&T Stadium also had major issues with its infamous seat fiasco that resulted in a [class action lawsuit, and a \\$76,000 settlement](#).

Since that Super Bowl came and went Arlington has added new hotels, a new baseball facility and an entertainment district, Texas Live! a few hundred yards from AT&T Stadium’s east end zone.

“We are building a lot around it that makes Arlington an even better Super Bowl destination,” Williams said.

Arlington has spent/built whatever necessary to lure the Super Bowl back, and now the rest is between Jerry and the NFL.

Environmental groups allege Texas rubber-stamped industrial plants' pollution — and that the EPA looked the other way

The groups are suing the EPA, saying it failed to address concerns that air permits issued to big industrial facilities didn't meet federal standards.

By Erin Douglas, Texas Tribune

A group of Texas environmental groups say the federal Environmental Protection Agency looked the other way when Texas didn't require tough enough rules on air pollution for several refineries, gas plants and chemical plants.

The Environmental Integrity Project, along with other Texas environmental groups, [filed a lawsuit](#) against EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Monday after he did not respond to a petition by the groups to correct what they say is a violation of federal law in Texas.

"For too long, EPA has turned a blind eye as Texas has routinely violated the federal Clean Air Act by rubber-stamping weak permits for the state's biggest polluters," said Gabriel Clark-Leach, senior attorney for the Environmental Integrity Project, which filed the action.

A spokesperson for the EPA, Angela Hackel, declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Environmental groups are concerned about eight air pollution permits issued to facilities in Texas including, for example, a [Phillips 66 refinery](#) in North Texas. Phillips 66 did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Environmental groups say the permits issued by the state to curb smog pollution from the facilities are not as strong as the Clean Air Act requires, potentially hurting the health of those who live nearby — including one plaintiff in the lawsuit, Neta Rhyne, who lives in West Texas' Reeves County.

"This is a problem that's getting worse, not better and, as a lung cancer survivor, I fear for my health and well-being every time I walk outside and breathe the polluted air," Rhyne said in a statement on the lawsuit.

Neighborhoods near industrial facilities are often majority Black and Latino in Texas due to the legacy of government-imposed segregation and wealth inequality, which in turn has resulted in disproportionate health impacts from air pollution for Black and Latino residents. One study by [University of Washington and University of Minnesota researchers](#) found that Black and Hispanic populations experience over 50% more pollution than they generate, while white populations experience 17% less pollution than they generate.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issues permits for air pollution from equipment at large industrial facilities, such as refineries and chemical plants, that should adhere to the Clean Air Act. But Clark-Leach said the permits Texas issues to limit major equipment pollution are unclear about what the pollution limits are and lack necessary monitoring requirements to ensure compliance. That makes it impossible for the public to know whether facilities near them are following the rules, he said.

The groups petitioned the EPA to step in and require the TCEQ to strengthen its permits, a legal process to force states into compliance with federal regulations. The EPA allegedly did not respond to the petitions within the required time, prompting the lawsuit.

The TCEQ, the state's environmental agency, said it could not comment on the lawsuit at this time because it has only had a day to review it.

The Environmental Integrity Project [filed a similar suit over Texas permits in 2017](#) — Clark-Leach said the problem is “pervasive” throughout Texas. The group was successful at that time in getting the EPA to negotiate the permits with the state, but as long as Texas keeps issuing what the groups say are weak permits, Clark-Leach said the EPA will need to step in.

“Texas’ process is flawed and doesn’t ensure compliance,” Clark-Leach said. “We were able to get some good decisions on those issues under Trump, and we are hopeful the Biden Administration will squarely take on the problem.”

How Dallas can protect its forests from the destructive emerald ash borer

Dallas has a plan to mitigate the invasion, if only the city would implement it.

By Steve Houser, Dallas Morning News

The emerald ash borer is a destructive pest that has made its way to Fort Worth and Denton and now threatens the forest areas of Dallas. Fortunately, Dallas already has a plan to mitigate the problem, if only the city would implement it.

The ash borer was first found in Michigan in 2002 and by 2018 had spread to 33 states, killing millions of ash trees. Chemical treatments can protect a tree for up to two years, but the treatment is costly. There is no organic treatment that is proven to be effective.

The responsible approach is the advice in the Great Trinity Forest and Wildlife Management Plan, approved by the Dallas City Council in 2008. The plan was completed by forest and wildlife experts at Stephen F. Austin University and supported by the city of Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee. The plan calls for the slow removal and replacement of selective ash trees, which comprised over 40% of the tree population at the time. Dallas would not be facing as big a problem if the plan had been implemented.

Forestry experts know that diversity of tree and plant species within a forest is critical to establishing and maintaining a healthy ecological balance. The more diverse the forest species, the better the forest can endure insect, disease or weather-related problems, and the more kinds of wildlife there will be.

Out of 4,667 acres included in the management plan, 2,257 acres were mixed ash (or mostly ash) and 121 acres were stands of all ash. Research shows that within a few years of the ash borers reaching the Great Trinity Forest, the ash could be lost, creating a high potential for fire, even in a relatively wet river bottom.

Our area has been in nonattainment with federal air quality standards for over 26 years. Trees capture and hold air pollution such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and low-level ozone. Trees also reduce particulate matter in the air from vehicle exhaust and other sources. As the ash trees die and decay, they will release these materials back into the air, further reducing our air quality.

If we selectively remove some of the ash trees and use them to make products such as flooring or furniture, they hold the materials for a long time, making it an environmentally responsible solution to consider.

In addition, as the ash trees die, they will eventually fall and damage other nearby plants and trees, the same as if they were cut for timber. However, the trees cut for timber are removed from the site, which reduces the potential for fire and may improve the ability for new trees and other plants to grow. Eventually, ash trees in public areas that are not given the costly chemical treatment will likely die and may require removal to protect people and property from falling limbs and trunks.

The Nature Conservancy owns the Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Preserve in Pennsylvania, which was previously threatened with the ash borer. The conservancy decided to log trees that may pose a threat to public safety. They also noted the pest is difficult to locate and the value of the timber is lower after a tree is infested.

The Dallas Environment and Sustainability Committee recently agreed to establish an emerald ash borer task force, which is a good start. The management plan from 2008 should be updated and implemented instead of delayed again. Responsible action now to implement a borer action plan will head off larger problems later.

What's planned for the former Texas Stadium site in Irving? Curious Texas investigates

The stadium, which opened in October 1971, was known as the home of the Dallas Cowboys.

By Nataly Keomoungkhoun, Dallas Morning News

After nearly four decades of sporting events and concerts, more than 20,000 people gathered in April 2010 to watch as an implosion leveled Texas Stadium in Irving.

The stadium, which opened in October 1971, was known as the home of the Dallas Cowboys. It was also recognized for its gaping hole at the top of the stadium, a result of abandoned plans for a retractable roof. In the 1980s and 1990s, The Jacksons, Madonna and Willie Nelson performed at the stadium to crowds of 65,000 people.

After the Cowboys moved to AT&T Stadium in Arlington, the site of the former Texas Stadium has remained vacant. That's why reader Don Walther asked Curious Texas: "What is being planned for the former Texas Stadium site in Irving?"

The city of Irving leased the site to the Texas Department of Transportation to be used as a staging area for a construction project, said Philip Sanders, assistant city manager for the city of Irving. *The News* reported in July that the site will be part of a major construction project called the Diamond Interchange.

The \$355 million project [started late 2020](#) and will interconnect Highway 114, State Highway 183 and Loop 12. The diamond interchange will be constructed by TxDOT and is expected to be completed in 2025, according to a news release.

"After it's complete, what will happen is it will provide much better access to the properties in and around the convergence of those three highways," Sanders said.

Another piece of infrastructure being added to the site of the former stadium is a 500-foot ["Signature Bridge"](#) that will span SH 114. The bridge, slated to be finished by the end of the year, will connect from the site to a new Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Orange Line Station and more developable land.

Sanders said he expects the city to be in a position to develop that land for residential, retail and office space after the projects are complete.

"We do have a vision and a plan, and we're implementing that plan," Sanders said. "And one of the major implementation pieces is getting the roadway improvements made, and we're pretty excited about it."

North Texans encouraged to comment online about regional transportation initiatives

Innovative technologies being considered that could link region to other parts of Texas

By Blue Ribbon News

February 8, 2021 — The North Central Texas Council of Governments welcomes public input on transportation planning initiatives, during an online input opportunity beginning Feb. 8. Comments can be made by visiting www.nctcog.org/input.

NCTCOG staff will provide information regarding the DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study, including a project description, results of corridor analyses, public involvement opportunities and next steps.

NCTCOG conducted virtual public meetings in January to discuss the study, which is examining the potential addition of high-speed technology to both complement the region's existing transportation system and contribute to a future high-speed network. The resulting technology would connect passengers to the high-speed rail line planned to link Dallas and Houston, as well as potential high-speed service from Fort Worth to South Texas in the future.

Additionally, modifications to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 will be posted for review and comment. The UPWP provides a summary of transportation and related air quality planning tasks to be conducted by NCTCOG.

Administrative revisions to the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mobility 2045, information on the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP) and vehicle incentive opportunities will also be highlighted.

To request printed copies of the information, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org.

Southlake rounds up 146 gallons of cooking oil and grease in holiday collection

The 2020 Holiday Grease Roundup, a region-wide initiative, is designed to keep oil and grease out of city sewers.

By Anna Caplan, Dallas Morning News

What does 146 gallons of cooking oil and grease look like? Success for Southlake.

The city was one of a handful in the area that participated in the Holiday Grease Roundup, a partnership of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, the Wastewater and Treatment Education Roundtable and American BioSource.

The initiative's mission was to help protect sewer systems and the environment by providing locations for area residents to hand off their used cooking oil and grease.

According to city officials, in Southlake, around 40 people participated in the program, with an average of 3.66 gallons of cooking oil and grease recycled per person.

This was a 28% increase in participation from last year's event, [organizers say](#).

The program provided a collection station accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the holiday season, as well as free collection containers for residents to utilize.

Texas should turn to private capital for critical infrastructure needs

As private investors build out telecom networks, they can also help build transportation and water infrastructure.

By Ron Simmons and Florence Shapiro, Dallas Morning News

The Texas economic miracle is magnetic, but it is not magic. A key component of Texas prosperity is infrastructure.

Vision, ambition and leadership have been key in developing our current infrastructure systems; transportation, telecommunications, energy and water all rely on underlying infrastructure that requires ongoing modernization to support Texas' economic and population growth. Modern infrastructure, in turn, has delivered the competitive foundation of our Texas economy. Other states have watched and learned, and now use our own tools to compete with us.

The Texas economy cannot hold its competitive ground without its historically robust overall infrastructure networks. Yet in recent years, Texas leaders have adopted a split-screen view of financing for critical infrastructure upgrades — with private or public funding — depending on the type of infrastructure.

For example, telecommunications infrastructure is built with private capital. Certain economic incentives aside, telecom companies are responsible for the ongoing build-out and upgrade of their networks, from seeking appropriate regulatory approvals to developing technology. Telecom companies also employ thousands of workers to install new digital lines and equipment, as to make ongoing updates and repairs. The expansive rollout of 5G is just the latest iteration of this ongoing modernization.

Yet, telecom companies do not rely on state tax revenue to pay for the systems that connect us. There is simply no need. State funding of telecom development would limit available funding of other critical statewide needs — especially in the wake of COVID-19. The telecommunications system represents critical public infrastructure financed with private capital. Texans come out winners.

Roads, bridges, ports, airports and just about all other large-scale transportation facilities are key to Texas' thriving economy and continued growth. But unlike telecom, Texas chooses not to tap the billions of dollars of available private capital to fund even its largest, often multibillion-dollar projects. An approach more valuable to all regions of the state would be to use private capital for our most expensive infrastructure projects (often located in major metro areas), reserving more tax dollars for less expensive but no less important infrastructure development.

A central purpose for this approach — often referred to as public-private partnerships or P3s — is a more equitable distribution of limited state funds for key projects throughout our state.

London's Heathrow Airport has long been privately redeveloped, owned and operated, as are other airports in Europe. Many major road projects — including those in other states — are funded by companies that earn a return through optional toll or managed lanes that offload traffic from free lanes for the benefit of non-toll drivers. Private capital has also been used to fund small water treatment plants and massive flood infrastructure. When private capital is used to develop infrastructure projects, they are owned by Texas, operated by the sponsor at its cost and under state oversight, and revert to Texas operation under certain key conditions.

Ideally, a company that builds infrastructure for public use and benefit should have a significant state presence to help preserve and improve our communities. Back to the telecom example.

AT&T is one of our local corporate citizens, employing Texas residents, sponsoring charitable events and giving back in myriad ways, all while earning income from a valuable network of critical infrastructure.

Texas should lead again by utilizing the P3 model for infrastructure development because it is the most efficient and equitable approach to financing critical infrastructure and protecting our historic competitive advantage.

Air pollution caused 1 out of 5 deaths in 2018 — that's more than 8 million, study says

By Katie Camero, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Microscopic, and sometimes larger, particles of soot, smoke and dust that spew out of gas-guzzling factories, ships, cars and aircraft were responsible for 18% of total global deaths in 2018 — that equals more than 8 million people, a new [study](#) found.

That number far surpasses previous estimates of the amount of people killed globally by all types of air pollution, including dust and smoke from wildfires and agricultural burns. The most widely accepted estimate stands at 4.2 million, according to a Harvard University [news release](#).

But the researchers from Harvard and several other institutions in England wanted to learn how many global deaths could be tied to pollution from the burning of fossil fuels alone.

So, they collected pollution emissions and meteorology data from 2012 — a year not influenced by a climate phenomenon called El Niño that can naturally worsen air pollution in some regions — and dropped that into a global 3D model.

A study on the findings was published Tuesday in the journal Environmental Research.

“Often, when we discuss the dangers of fossil fuel combustion, it’s in the context of CO₂ and climate change and overlook the potential health impact of the pollutants co-emitted with greenhouse gases,” study co-author Joel Schwartz, a professor of environmental epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, said in a news release.

“We hope that by quantifying the health consequences of fossil fuel combustion, we can send a clear message to policymakers and stakeholders of the benefits of a transition to alternative energy sources.”

Past research on global deaths due to air pollution has relied on satellite and surface observations that cannot differentiate where particles came from, such as from fossil fuels or wildfires. “With satellite data, you’re seeing only pieces of the puzzle,” said study co-author Loretta Mickley, a senior research fellow in the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

The researchers attempted to overcome this issue by integrating data on atmospheric chemistry driven by everyday weather and climate patterns with estimates of emissions from multiple sources such as power plants, ships, aircraft and ground transportation.

This model, called GEOS-Chem, also allowed the scientists to divide the world into grid-like boxes to accurately map pollution levels in individual regions, “so we could know more exactly what people are breathing,” study first author Karn Vohra, a graduate student at the University of Birmingham in England, said in the release.

The team then developed a separate “risk assessment” model to understand how these pollution levels affect people’s health across the globe.

They found that more than 8 million people died in 2018 from fossil fuel pollution, or a little less than one out of five people. Regions with the most greenhouse gas emissions were Eastern North America, Europe and South-East Asia, the release said.

Particulate matter from fossil fuel pollution can lead to [significant health problems](#) such as nonfatal heart attacks, irregular heartbeat, asthma and premature death in people with heart or lung disease, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

And the smaller the particles, the more danger they pose “because they can get deep into your lungs, and some may even get into your bloodstream,” the EPA said.

How bad are Texas' roads and highways? Engineers have given their grades.

By Gordon Dickson, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Texas' roads, levees, wastewater lines and other infrastructure need billions of dollars of improvements to handle the state's growing population, a civil engineering group warned.

The Texas section of the American Society of Civil Engineers on Wednesday released a [report card on Texas infrastructure](#). Overall, the state's physical structures received a grade of C, and several categories showed improvement from the group's 2017 report card.

But a few areas were slapped with near-failing grades. The state's highways, roads and dams received grades of D-plus, with engineering experts saying \$15 billion needs to be invested in road projects alone.

Texas' levees and wastewater facilities received grades of D. About 100 miles of the state's 567 miles of levees are at risk of failure, which endangers \$127 billion worth of property, according to the report.

The Biden administration is working on a [\\$2 trillion infrastructure improvement plan](#) that could include \$50 billion for highways. The engineers' group urged Texas legislators to push hard to ensure the state receives its share of the funding.

"Now is the time to expand, and not cut, funding for infrastructure," Sean Merrell, ASCE Texas section president, said in a news conference at which the report card was unveiled. "Now is the time to secure funding through a variety of methods."

Merrell noted that state and federal motor fuels taxes, which are the most common way that roads and bridges are funded, have not been raised in about three decades. Those taxes — which are paid by motorists at the gas pumps — also are not indexed for inflation, which means their buying power generally declines as the cost of construction goes up.

Members of the engineering group also noted that Texas leaders aren't taking steps to ensure the state's infrastructure keeps up with population growth. The state's population is estimated to be more than 29 million people, nearly double what it was in 1990.

"Too often," Merrell said of the state's infrastructure, "we take it for granted it's simply expected to work."

Wastewater and levees are among the areas that need the quickest attention, those who worked on the report card said. The number of sanitary sewer overflows has more than doubled during the past four years, and the state's wastewater networks — which are typically controlled by local governments — face a funding shortfall of more than \$200 million.

Texas' flood risk mitigation received a grade of C-minus, up from a D received four years ago, after new funding sources were found following Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Every dollar invested in infrastructure generates \$3.70 in economic activity, said Mark Boyd, who chaired the group's report card committee.

"Neglecting this will leave us mired in 20th century infrastructure," Boyd said.

Among the highlights of the Texas report card was the energy industry, whose infrastructure received the highest grade of all categories with a B-plus. Texas' oil production increased to 5.4 million barrels a day in 2019, up from 1 million barrels per day in 2011, and the state is also a leader in wind power generation, the report says.

Other infrastructure that received high marks included aviation, bridge maintenance and transit.

A national infrastructure report card will be unveiled March 3, officials said.

Texas House Democrats launch climate, environment caucus with one goal: Talk about climate change in the Legislature

The climate, environment and energy caucus aim to start a conversation in the Legislature on how Texas can prepare for climate change and take advantage of the transition to cleaner energy sources.

By Erin Douglas, The Texas Tribune

Seventeen Democrats in the Texas House launched a climate, environment and energy caucus this week with one simple goal: to talk about climate change at the Texas Capitol, where conversations on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases have been sidelined for years.

Led by state Rep. Erin Zwiener, D-Driftwood, the caucus includes Democrats from major cities across the state. During a press conference Wednesday, each spoke about a host of greenhouse gas-reducing strategies they'd like to accomplish — from removing barriers to widespread adoption of electric vehicles, to focusing state environmental cleanup efforts in communities of color to preventing chemical explosions.

But the overarching objective of the caucus this year is more basic.

“We are in violent agreement about the end goal,” said state Rep. [Rafael Anchía](#), D-Dallas, who said he wanted lawmakers to acknowledge the scientific and international consensus on climate change. “We want the Legislature to be led by science on this issue.”

[Rep. Ron Reynolds](#), D-Missouri City, pointed to recent action by the Biden Administration making climate change a national priority and said he wants Texas to be part of that initiative, which [could have federal dollars attached](#).

Caucus members acknowledged that getting Texas Republicans to discuss climate change, which has become a fiercely partisan issue in a state where the oil and gas industry wields huge political clout, remains an uphill battle for Democrats. Zwiener said some Republicans were invited to join the caucus but declined.

Members pointed out that the Legislature didn't hold a single hearing on any bill related to climate change during the last session.

The new caucus won't formally endorse any legislation this session, members said. Instead, they have their sights set on a more modest goal they hope is achievable — holding at least one hearing on climate change.

“We're not asking for anything other than to allow for a discussion [on climate change] and to have scientific experts come in and educate the members,” said Reynolds, who sits on the House Environmental Regulation Committee. “We can, at minimum, have a hearing on these issues.”

Caucus members pointed to emerging trends in the energy and transportation sectors as evidence that Texas needs to encourage the energy transition to cleaner sources or risk falling behind.

Several oil and gas companies have announced plans to invest in carbon capture technology, including Houston-based Occidental Petroleum, [which announced it will build](#) a commercial-

scale carbon storage site and facility to remove carbon dioxide directly from the air by 2025. Tesla is constructing a [massive automotive manufacturing facility](#) near Austin to build electric vehicles.

“Whether we like it or not, energy markets are shifting, and we need to adapt to that or be left behind,” said state Rep. [Jon Rosenthal](#), D-Houston, an engineer who has worked in the oil and gas industry. “I’m going to be looking for ways to partner with industry.”

Local governments in the state have already taken steps to address climate change. Both Houston and Austin have joined “C40 Cities,” a group of cities committed to adhering to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, an international agreement to limit global heating to 2 degrees Celsius this century and pursue limiting it to 1.5 degrees.

The physical effects of climate change, too, are already being felt in Texas. On the Gulf Coast, [stronger hurricanes energized by a warming ocean](#) have cost the state billions of dollars due to increased wind damage and greater precipitation during mega-storms like Hurricane Harvey, [according to a climate assessment](#) commissioned by the city of Houston. [The Environmental Protection Agency projects](#) Texas will experience longer and hotter summers and more water scarcity, which will result in a variety of economic, environmental and health concerns, including heat strokes becoming more common among people who work outdoors and declining crop yields.

The impacts of climate change and environmental contamination are more acute in predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods in Texas due to the legacy of government-imposed housing segregation, which historically pushed people of color into areas with more polluting industries and higher flood risks. Members of the caucus said this disproportionate burden bore by communities of color will be a key point of their advocacy at the Capitol.

“Minority communities are facing the brunt of these injustices,” said state Rep. [Jasmine Crockett](#), D-Dallas, a civil rights attorney. “Civil rights doesn't just include police brutality, it includes environmental injustices and environmental equity issues.”

Caucus members said they see potential areas of compromise with the Republican majority, including bringing more wind and solar power to market, lowering regulatory barriers to electric vehicles and creating incentives for carbon capture, utilization and storage, an already a fast-emerging trend in the energy industry.

The challenges posed by climate change transcend political parties, Reynolds said.

“We believe these should be nonpartisan issues,” Reynolds said. “We can all fundamentally agree that we should have clean air, water and an environment. We’re not a partisan caucus.”

The Feds Might Nudge Cities Toward Highway Removals

Whether it will pass congress remains to be seen, but a new bill funds a significant pilot program that would help pay for removing freeways like I-345.

By Matt Goodman, D Magazine

Good news for the I-345 removal proponents: the federal government is speaking the same language. In December before Congress recessed, more than two dozen Democratic senators signed onto then minority leader Chuck Schumer's [Economic Justice Act](#), a \$435 billion spending bill that included a pilot project for removing highways that decimated communities of color in many major American cities.

The bill, if it's passed, allots \$10 billion over five years to tearing out the freeways and creating community land trusts to help manage land use after the structures are gone. The bill refers to these highways as "infrastructural barriers." And I-345 is certainly that: an elevated mile-plus of concrete connective tissue between two freeways that divides downtown from Deep Ellum and the Farmers Market. Removing it would free up about the same total acreage as Fair Park, creating opportunity for housing, jobs, and other resources if the city can get the land use right.

The bill anticipates that challenge. As it's written, local governments would be prioritized if they enter into an agreement with nearby residents to establish an anti-displacement policy or a land trust to help ensure that the removal of the highway won't re-traumatize the community. That's a significant inclusion because it would help communities have greater control over how the land around the highway removal is developed.

"Every highway teardown project will be a little different, have different political and market conditions, and these federal tools will have to be evaluated for whether they are appropriate," says Patrick Kennedy, the DART board member and urban planner who first raised the possibility of removing I-345 about a decade ago.

The federal grants created by the bill would help pay for outright removal or a retrofit as long as it "enhances community connectivity and is sensitive to the context of the surrounding community." The grants could help pay for replacing existing highways with a new facility or "other transportation improvements that address the mobility needs of the community." The bill allows for the feds to pay for up to 80 percent of the project. For I-345, burying it below grade is also an option being explored.

It's not the first time the federal government has considered funding at least some highway teardown efforts. In 2010 and in 2014, the Obama administration's TIGER grant program—which was a major funding source for public transit, including the Oak Cliff Streetcar—[allowed applications for projects](#) that would "reconnect neighborhoods that are unnaturally divided by physical barriers such as highways and railroads." New Haven and the South Bronx in 2010 [both](#) got a little federal money to help turn a couple expressways into boulevards.

In 2017, President Donald Trump [renamed the program and began steering money](#) from those grants instead to highway projects in mostly rural areas.

Two years later, Congress considered the reauthorization of the FAST Act, the federal transportation infrastructure spending bill that largely paid for highway work. It was expiring after its five-year lifespan. [Inside the updated version of that \\$287 billion spending bill](#) was a pilot program to help cover the cost of studying, planning, and removing highways. However,

because of the pandemic, Congress passed a one-year extension of the bill that left out the highway removal pilot program.

Unlike the FAST Act, the Economic Justice Act isn't a transportation bill; it includes money for public health initiatives, job creation, childcare, and many other items. The bill is meant to "address systemic racism and historic underinvestment in communities of color." Putting highway tear-outs in this bucket represents a significant acknowledgement by the federal government of the harm freeways caused many American cities and the potential their removal—or burial—could have in creating new opportunities for jobs and housing.

But that new desire to deal with the impact urban highways have on American cities doesn't mean urban highway expansion projects aren't still happening. Look to Houston, where both the city and Harris County have voiced concerns, or outright decried, TxDOT's plan to expand Interstate 45.

The *Houston Chronicle* [reported last week](#) that the state transportation agency plans to move forward on the \$7.5 billion widening of the freeway near downtown, a project that will affect or displace about 1,100 homes and over 340 businesses. The *Chronicle* notes that those homes are mostly apartments and public housing and describes the job as a "near-total redesign of the freeway system around the central business district." TxDOT will now begin more detailed design phase, during which it will "have the opportunity to fully explore many of the project refinements requested."

This disconnect reflects the long lag in how shifts in transportation policy make their way into the nuts and bolts of planning and implementation. Just last week, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg [tweeted](#) about "highways that literally tore through Black neighborhoods" as part of the "inequity ... deep within our transportation system." But TxDOT follows the direction of a number of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs. Here, that's the North Central Texas Council of Governments. In Houston, that's the Houston-Galveston Area Council. And as *Chronicle* writer Dug Begley noted, the widening of I-45 is what Houston's MPO wanted and it appears that is what TxDOT is trying to deliver.

All of this is to say: the desire to build roads remains entrenched, but federal policymakers at least seem to be moving toward reckoning with what that means and has meant. The future of I-345 is unclear. It is nearing the end of its life cycle. TxDOT is still in the process of finalizing a feasibility study, which will explore what to do with the highway: leave it as is, bury it, or tear it out. Nearly 900 people participated in community meetings before the pandemic, and the three options were just about equally split. The City Council has turned over since this was a hot-button issue at City Hall and will almost surely cycle through again by the time a solution is presented. That feasibility study [is now expected by the end of the year](#).

The bill's future, meanwhile, is up in the air. It's a lot of money, so much so that it will likely require reconciliation to get it funded. But the language is there: "The Secretary shall establish a program to help communities identify infrastructural barriers within the community that create obstacles to mobility or economic development; or expose the community to high levels of particulate matter, noise pollution, and other public health and safety risks."

"Federal dollars with federal strings are a tool, but not the only tool," Kennedy said. "But it is still a critical step for the highest levels of government are speaking the language."

To Meet Climate Goals, Think Outside the Electric Car

The Biden administration is plugging EV adoption to help the U.S. meet its climate goals, but electrification alone won't do the job: We need to reduce vehicle use, period.

By Beth Osborne and Ben Holland, City Lab

When President Biden recommitted the U.S. to the Paris Climate Accord on his first day in office, he set into motion what will undoubtedly be an ambitious climate strategy. Already, with his executive order to replace the federal government's massive vehicle fleet with U.S.-made electric vehicles — quickly followed by a ground-shifting pledge by General Motors to sell EVs only by 2035 — we are witnessing a flurry of actions aimed at reducing emissions across various industries and sectors. After four years of backtracking, the U.S. is on the cusp of a meaningful policy response to climate change.

Unfortunately, the electric vehicles and charging stations that Biden has signaled will take center stage in his transportation climate strategy are not nearly enough to solve the problem we face. Transportation contributes the largest (and still growing) share of carbon emissions in the U.S., and electrification is a critical requisite to a carbon-free future. But in order to achieve climate targets, the U.S. must significantly reduce its use of cars, period.

The good news is, with new leadership in the White House and the Department of Transportation, we can make much-needed changes to expand transit, biking and walking options, and to bring people closer to the places they need to go.

The truth is very simple: If we continue to design our communities and transportation systems to require more driving alone, even if it's in an electric car, it makes decarbonization far harder. According to Rocky Mountain Institute's analysis, the U.S. transportation sector needs to reduce carbon emissions 43% by 2030 in order to align with 1.5oC climate goals — requiring that we put 70 million EVs on the road and reduce per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 20% in the next nine years. Even under the most ambitious EV adoption scenarios, we must still reduce driving. And while 2020 saw a Covid-induced drop in VMT, SUV sales continue to climb, and so too will VMT.

Enhancing transit, biking and walking — as well as building more housing closer to jobs, schools, groceries and other necessities — will reduce car dependency and make decarbonization far easier. And, unlike electrification, these strategies could be implemented without having to rely on the whims of the American car buyer, the compliance of reluctant automakers or the long timeframe required to overhaul the national fleet. They also bring meaningful co-benefits, like saving people money on transportation, improving safety and public health, and reducing barriers to economic mobility to those who can't afford to drive.

What we lack is the necessary political will or understanding.

The situation facing California is a perfect example. At the same time that California is seeking sales of all new passenger vehicles to be zero-emission by 2035, the state legislature continues to prevent much-needed housing reform that would put more housing closer to the things people need. As a result, California has 3.4 million fewer homes than it needs to meet demand.

This pushes affordable housing farther from jobs and basic needs, forcing people to spend more on transportation and increasing overall carbon emissions. This approach, which is standard

across the country, also pushes more affordable homes into fire-prone areas rather than more climate-resilient locations.

As the Golden State is demonstrating, trying to solve emissions with electric vehicles alone will leave current inequities in place, with millions of Americans struggling to afford their car payments, living in places where they can't even safely walk across the street, or relying on underfunded transit systems with sporadic and infrequent service.

While it will take major acts of political courage, curbing emissions through sweeping changes to land-use patterns and infrastructure is possible, especially now. The Biden administration may be emphasizing electrification, but it is also signaling that it wants an all-of-the-above strategy against climate change. The president's choice for secretary of transportation, Pete Buttigieg, is another optimistic signal. As mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Buttigieg's policies around street design, traffic safety, and parking demonstrated the power of investing in alternatives to automotive infrastructure.

Expanding the approach that Buttigieg took in South Bend to the federal level could have far-reaching effects. As a playbook for how the country could do it, here's what we propose.

1. If we are serious about curbing emissions, we must end the practice of allowing states to build new fossil-fuel-intensive highways or expansions while ignoring the backlog of maintenance needs for our deteriorating existing roads and bridges. Repair must be the first priority.
2. Policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels should immediately prioritize funding to encourage more trips taken by walking, biking or other non-automotive means, as we argue in a recent Transportation For America report. Prioritizing safety for people instead of speed for vehicles is one way to get there. In California, Governor Newsom could issue another executive order to mandate Complete Streets and eliminate the ban on converting vehicle travel lanes to transit-only lanes on state roads. Congress could pass a federal Complete Streets policy, which was introduced but not advanced in the last Congress. And the U.S. Department of Transportation could make such a policy easier to implement by adopting a Complete Streets policy of their own and removing the numerous procedural federal hurdles to transit- and pedestrian-friendly designs. They could also incentivize states to do the same.
3. Struggling public transportation systems are particularly in need of emergency operating funding given the impacts of the pandemic on ridership. The Biden administration has proposed providing \$20 billion in the next recovery bill to preserve transit service through the rest of the pandemic. But both the states and the federal government could also invest in transit as the economy recovers, with the same commitment that the country made to constructing a national highway system in the 1950s. There is currently an effort in the U.S. House of Representatives to bring transit funding up to the level of highway funding. That would be a good start. States could take the same action to make it possible for most people to reach jobs and essential services without a car.
4. Cities and states could enable more location-efficient, mixed-use, infill, and inclusive housing by legalizing more types and sizes of housing. Portland and Minneapolis have recently modeled how to end the restriction on duplexes, triplexes and other types of in-demand housing across vast swaths of their cities. This would involve removing

discretionary reviews to make it easier to build “missing middle” housing, which can help address affordability while putting more homes closer to key destinations. It would also mean eliminating minimum parking requirements, which drive up the cost of housing by requiring all residents to pay for the cost of parking, whether needed or not. The federal government can support this by also considering the location efficiency of its own buildings and all federally funded development, including affordable housing and economic development programs from the Economic Development Administration to the Rural Development Administration.

The good news is that the transportation system is almost completely within government control and can be changed with relative speed with the government's own investments. By making that system more climate friendly, we can also make it more supportive of public health and broaden access to economic opportunity — whether you own an internal combustion engine vehicle, an electric vehicle, or no car at all.

Help Arlington name its new self-driving vehicle service

The new fleet of five vehicles is set to hit Arlington's streets in March.

By Brayden Garcia, Dallas Morning News

Arlington is calling for the community's help to name the city's new fleet of self-driving vehicles.

In March, five autonomous shuttles will be cruising through the city in partnership with May Mobility, Via Rideshare and UT Arlington, in a service called RAPID (rideshare, automation, and payment integration demonstration).

The shuttles are self-driving and will operate in downtown Arlington and on UT Arlington's campus.

Anyone can submit ideas for the local name for the RAPID service and have until Feb. 17 to do so, [according to the city](#). Submissions have to begin with the letter M and cannot be longer than 20 characters, including spaces. [Visit the city's website to submit a name.](#)

The winning name will be announced on March 23, and the person behind the winning name will receive a special preview of the self-driving service.

The service will be fully on-demand, meaning the vehicles will pick-up and drop off passengers wherever they're aiming to go in its service area. UT Arlington students will receive a few free rides, but will eventually be charged the same rate as every other passenger, [per the fare price of the city's other transportation service, Via.](#)

That fare system charges riders by mileage, with a maximum charge of \$5.

- 0-to-1.5-mile ride: \$3
- 1.5-to-3-mile ride: \$3.50
- 3-to-4.5-mile ride: \$4
- 4.5-to-6-mile ride: \$4.50
- 6 mile and up ride: \$5

Lewisville approves \$9M to preserve land for Northern Gateway

Thousands of residential units are either planned or under construction in the Northern Gateway area of Lewisville, where the city is moving to secure land for a future master developer off Justin Road.

By Daniel Houston, Community Impact Newspaper

The city of Lewisville intends to buy a large piece of undeveloped land off I-35E to prevent warehouse developers from deviating from the city's Northern Gateway vision for the area.

Lewisville City Council on Feb. 1 authorized the city manager to purchase the land southwest of where I-35E meets Justin Road for a cost of nearly \$9.3 million. The city intends to sell the property to a master developer at a later date, which would help it recoup the costs of the purchase, according to a staff memo.

Officials described the land purchase as “critical” for the success of the Northern Gateway, a city development plan that outlines preferred uses for a collection of properties bounded on three sides by I-35E, McGee Lane and the rail tracks to the south.

“The purchase of the property will accommodate and secure the city’s long-term vision for the Northern Gateway and provide the city the opportunity to work with developers to implement that vision,” City Manager Donna Barron wrote in a letter to council members before their vote.

The property’s current zoning allows for warehouse construction, which is not one of the city’s preferred uses for the land long-term, according to the plan. Developers have already expressed interest in purchasing the property, city officials said, prompting them to move forward with the purchase.

Much of the area around this land is already being developed, or will soon be developed, in accordance with the Northern Gateway plan, the city said. These projects are expected to bring more than 2,000 residential units within a half-mile radius of the property, according to Barron’s memo.

The city expects to sell the land within a year and a half of buying it, Barron said.

After Trump ignored Panther Island, will Biden be friendly to the Fort Worth project?

By Luke Ranker, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Though former President Donald Trump ignored [Fort Worth's Panther Island](#), the change in administration represents an opportunity for local officials who believe President Joe Biden will see the project more favorably.

The effort to cut a channel between the two forks of the Trinity River north of downtown was again left out of the [\\$7.3 billion 2021 Work Plan for the Army Corps of Engineers](#), which spells out what the Corps will work on in a given year. It was delivered to Congress in January. That's traditionally how major projects are funded, but that has not been the case for Panther Island in recent years, and it's not surprising it was not included in 2021.

The Trump administration was unwilling to prioritize Fort Worth's \$1.17 billion project because it said a cost-benefit analysis was needed. In 2018, the administration declared Panther Island "not policy compliant." Locals have pointed to an economic study from the University of North Texas, which was used when Congress authorized up to \$526 million for Panther Island in 2016.

The local office of the Army Corps requested nearly \$39 million for this year. Officials hope to discuss funding with the Biden administration soon.

Jim Oliver, general manager of the Tarrant Regional Water District, blamed "Washington politics" and the White House Office of Management and Budget, noting the Corps has kept Panther Island authorized. The water district is the local partner with the Corps and in January the agencies renewed their project agreement.

"It's really pitiful the way it's been working," Oliver said. "You have an agency, the experts in the field, recommending a project, and a bunch of bureaucrats in another agency just arbitrarily knocking it out."

U.S. Rep. Kay Granger has championed the project in Washington as a key member of the House Appropriations Committee, securing just under \$62 million for it since 2006. The Star-Telegram attempted to reach Granger for comment about whether she hoped to work with the new administration or if she was looking for other ways to fund the project. Through a spokesperson she declined to comment.

A year ago, Granger told the Star-Telegram she believed [Mick Mulvaney was the key hold up to the project receiving necessary funding](#). At the time Mulvaney was the director of the Office of Management and Budget under Trump.

"The Office of Management and Budget, the person who runs that is one of the most powerful people in Washington," she said a year ago. "It was never ever used for how it's been used today."

Biden has nominated Neera Tanden, president of the liberal think tank Center for American Progress, to lead his Office of Management and Budget, but the Senate has not confirmed her.

Her nomination is off to a rocky start as Republican senators chastised her for personal attacks on GOP members. She apologized this week for tweets attacking Republicans, including a comment that [“vampires have more heart than Ted Cruz.”](#)

Though it's early in the Biden administration, a change in leadership could bring a fresh start to efforts to prioritize Panther Island, said Matt Angle, a political strategist with the Democratic supporting The Lone Star Project. Angle is originally from Tarrant County and has tracked the project since its inception.

The project is viable and needed, he said, noting that it has remained authorized under multiple administrations. Granger has made all the right moves to prioritize the project over the years, he said, saying she is “the only Republican who can get it done,” but politically, convincing the Trump administration to fund a large infrastructure project was an uphill battle.

“The administration was not only partisan, but hostile and personal,” he said.

[Biden has shown signs of wanting to invest in infrastructure.](#) Angle said, which is a good sign for Panther Island, especially if there's a bipartisan push for the project.

“I don't want to pretend to know what their position is, but I think this is a real opportunity,” Angle said. “Tarrant County is really lucky that you have Marc Veasey who can work with the administration and make a case. There are no Republicans, other than Kay Granger, with credibility.”

A spokesperson for Veasey, Fort Worth's Democratic congressman, acknowledged a request, but did not immediately return comments.

G.K. Maenius, Tarrant County Administrator, said in an email that local officials will be reaching out to the Biden administration in the coming weeks to discuss future funding. He is the chairman of the Trinity River Vision Authority board, which oversees the project locally.

“With the change in administration, we believe this presents a new opportunity for Panther Island,” he said.

FUTURE FUNDING

Panther Island, called the Central City Flood Control Project by the Corps, has not received money from Washington since a 2017 allocation of \$6 million.

It consistently received funding until 2011, when Congress banned earmarks, the practice of appropriating funds to a specific project. The project received just \$18,000 between 2011 and 2014. In 2015 nearly \$17.5 million was provided.

There has been support from [Republicans and Democrats to bring back earmarks.](#)

Oliver, the water district general manager, said he thought a return to the practice would benefit Panther Island and other Texas projects that have languished without funds.

“We're not the only one,” he said.

In 2020 the local Corps office requested about \$38 million but received \$1.5 million for a feasibility study. The funding stumped local officials who have maintained such a study is not

needed. Another \$1.5 million would have been needed from the Tarrant Regional Water District, but Panther Island's board of directors, [the Trinity River Vision Authority, voted to ignore the federal allocation](#) last fall.

There remains a chance the project could receive funding later this year, said Mark Mazzanti, a former Corps official who now works as a consultant for the Trinity River project.

Mazzanti said he's keeping an eye out for supplemental funding that Congress approves outside of the annual Work Plan. In 2018, several billion dollars were allocated to dozens of states for various flood control projects following a devastating year of hurricanes.

When a project has unused funds, either because it is under budget or unable to use the money, the Corps reallocates the funding to projects that are "shovel ready." A spokesperson for the local Corps office said work can be done on Panther Island as soon as funding is available. Mazzanti wouldn't speculate on if he thought the project would receive those funds.

"There is always a possibility because the project remains eligible," he said.

Community with a rural atmosphere sees more growth and mixed-use development

By Elizabeth Campbell, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

[Mayor Todd Flippo](#) can look out of his window at home and still see cattle roaming on undeveloped land.

But Flippo is seeing changes that are coming to Saginaw, and he's taking on the challenge of managing growth while maintaining Saginaw's small-town atmosphere.

Saginaw, with its roots in agriculture and railroads, is seeing several developments taking shape with new homes, apartments, restaurants and retail throughout the community with a population of around 25,000.

"I view this (development) as a crucial time for us," Flippo said.

"We are going over the crest of the hill. The developments will increase our population and some really cool stuff and amenities are coming to Saginaw," he said.

Work will start this year on four developments throughout the city.

Land is being cleared for apartments in the [UCD development at Bailey Boswell and Blue Mound Road](#), said city manager Gabe Reaume. The development will feature retail and restaurants along with multi-family housing, he said.

Work will start this spring on the northeast corner of Bailey-Boswell Road and Saginaw Boulevard, on the Beltmill, a mixed-use walkable development with townhomes, apartments, age-restricted senior living, and smaller lot single-family homes. The development will also feature commercial, retail and open space, said Don Allen, a development partner at Lackland Holdings LLC.

The 115-acre development is on the site of the former Cranz Family Farm which was recently sold. Most of the land is in Fort Worth, but 115 acres are in Saginaw.

Allen said work will likely start this spring on utilities and other infrastructure for the Beltmill development.

Saginaw is an appealing location, Allen said.

When Saginaw began construction on an overpass over the railroad tracks and Business 287, "that really attracted our attention," Allen said.

"The stars sort of aligned, so to speak," he said. Allen said there is a lot of interest from builders for the single-family and multi-family homes.

Another development called The Square, which will also include apartments and restaurants, will be located north of the Walmart near Saginaw Boulevard and Old Decatur Road, Reaume said. The development will be on a street connecting Old Decatur and Saginaw Blvd., he said.

Saginaw is waiting for final approval from the Texas Department of Transportation for a traffic signal at Old Decatur Road before work can begin on The Square, Reaume said.

Reaume said the city created the Western Center Public Improvement District where another mixed-use development will be located. The development will have single and multi-family housing with restaurants and retail and will be on Western Center near Blue Mound Road.

The development will cater to younger professionals and families that want to downsize, he said.

Another development called [The Edition of Saginaw](#) will offer a retirement community, assisted living and skilled nursing for senior citizens.

Reaume said the city met with residents in 2018, and senior living and sit-down restaurants were important priorities to them.

“There is a lot of excitement in Saginaw right now,” Reaume said. “It just kind of happened that these projects are coming together soon.”

Saginaw’s growth is indicative of the growth taking place in north Fort Worth, Reaume said.

Meanwhile, Flippo said he tells people to move to Saginaw because of the low taxes and close-knit community.

“But we are growing, and my job is to manage this growth and make it positive,” Flippo said. He added that the city has been “picky” when it comes to development.

“We don’t want just houses; we don’t want just apartments. Give me a park with a beautiful pond next to walking trails,” Flippo said.

Denton City Council members approve economic development plan

By Paul Bryant, Denton Record-Chronicle

Denton City Council members on Tuesday adopted an economic development plan that focuses on regional collaboration, growth, infrastructure, technology and sustainability.

“We began this process in February 2019,” said Jessica Rogers, director of the city’s economic development department. “We’ve had lots of roundtables, interviews and discussions. We’re really happy about where we’ve ended up.”

How to grow Denton through economic development has been an issue for years with the Denton City Council, particularly because this city is one of the fastest growing in America, according to research.

City Manager Todd Hileman said Denton has to compete with other cities that have economic development corporations.

“There are cities out there with 4Bs that are very desperate,” Hileman said. “They make decisions for different reasons than we do.”

What Denton can offer hinges on its revenue sources for economic development. It does not have a Type A or Type B economic development corporation, meaning it does not receive sales tax revenue to fund certain types of business projects. It is considered an important distinction in economic development because those corporations receive a portion of a city’s sales tax revenue to help fund business attraction.

According to the state comptroller’s office, Type A corporation’s fund industrial development projects such as business infrastructure, manufacturing and research and development. They also may fund military base realignment, public transportation and job-training classes. Type B corporations can do the same, in addition to spending money on parks, sports facilities, museums and affordable housing.

“Do we have a deal that we can support?” Hileman said. “It’s not quite as linear as you would think. It may be completely irrational to you, but to [the prospective business] it’s completely normal. We play those up as best we can. We don’t often know what we’re negotiating against.” City Council member Paul Meltzer asked about the process of determining what Denton’s competitors are doing.

“Our goal is to move away from that concept,” Rogers said. “It’s really about making sure the projects we are incentivizing match” the policies of the city.

In Denton, the half-cent sales tax that state law allows to be used for economic development was appropriated by residents in 2004 for the Denton County Transportation Authority. That leaves the city with few options for funding projects.

The state sales tax rate is 6.25%. In Denton, the local rate is 2%, for a total sales tax paid by consumers of 8.25%. Of the city’s portion of 2 cents per taxable dollar, a half-cent of the revenue is allocated for DCTA. One cent goes into the general fund for operations, and the other half-cent is used for property tax relief.

According to city consultant TPI, the neighboring cities of Allen, Coppell, Flower Mound, Frisco, Grapevine, Lewisville, McKinney and Southlake have 4A or 4B corporations, totaling \$187 million in revenue.

In Denton, officials may also use the city's revenue from return on investment (ROI) from the utility fund and the general fund. According to the city, the ROI for the Electric Fund was increased from 3.5% to 6% through 2021-22.

The city's 2020-21 budget projects more than \$4.2 million in economic development revenue. Its total budget is about \$1.4 billion, which includes a projection of more than \$36.4 million in sales tax revenue in 2020-21.

Sales tax revenue accounts for 30% of the city's budget.

In municipal government, incentives offered to a business could be anything from sales tax rebates afforded through Chapter 380 agreements to land acquisition. And in economic development, incentives are a competitive proposition.

In Denton, incentives include reducing property taxes for a set period if recipients meet criteria; sales tax rebates and job grants (Chapter 380 agreements) based on performance, job creation and city policy; infrastructure assistance to lessen the cost of water or wastewater improvements, and reinvestment and improvement zones.

According to the TPI study, the biggest threats to Denton are growth in neighboring cities, higher wages in other parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth area and outmigration of talent.

Nearmap Strikes Partnership With North Central Texas Council of Governments To Provide Recurring Oblique and Orthophotography Aerial Imagery

Nearmap provides NCTCOG more frequently updated imagery, faster delivery times at a reduced cost

By Globe News Wire

SALT LAKE CITY, Feb. 16, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Leading aerial imagery company **Nearmap**, announced today a partnership with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) enabling its 16 counties in North Texas around Dallas and Fort Worth to gain access to recurring orthophotography and oblique imagery.

“We had several cities and counties that wanted recurring flights that could deliver aerial imagery more frequently and faster,” said Shelley Broyles, GIS Project Coordinator at NCTCOG. “Many of our cities and counties were familiar with Nearmap’s innovative approach to collecting data 2-3 times a year and this partnership will provide our members access to a subscription to more frequently updated images and a valuable resource for planning and executing a wide range of projects that help improve our cities, towns and the communities we serve.”

The NCTCOG is a regional agency designed to facilitate region-wide cooperation between different city and county government agencies, assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperate for mutual benefit, and coordinate for regional development in areas such as transportation, research, environmental, and emergency management. The NCTCOG comprises more than 230 member governments including 16 counties, cities, school districts, and special districts all driving towards strengthening the individual and collective power of local governments.

“Our partnership with NCTCOG is evidence that we are offering something unique that many government agencies never thought possible,” said Brett Clark, director of Nearmap’s North American public sector. “Aerial imaging technology is evolving rapidly and we’re at the forefront of capturing and providing aerial imagery more frequently which enables us to significantly reduce the cost of acquisition. Our customers recognize the value of multiple captures and are looking for ways to acquire and incorporate these more frequent images into their planning and day-to-day operations to increase success and differentiate themselves.”

The NCTCOG facilitates the purchase of aerial imagery for North Central Texas as a cost-sharing objective for local governments and other interested entities. Each year, NCTCOG coordinates with local public agencies and other entities to determine the need for spatial data projects ranging in size from a few cities to the entire 12,800-sq. mile region and beyond.

For more information about Nearmap or to schedule a demo, visit <https://www.nearmap.com/us/en>.

NTSB investigating 133-car pileup that left six people dead in Texas

North Texas Toll Authority said roads were treated with brine, 'a heavily salted liquid solution'

By Paul Best, Fox News

The National Transportation Safety Board announced it is launching an investigation into the [133-car pileup](#) that left six people dead and dozens injured in [Fort Worth, Texas](#) Thursday.

The investigation will look into the [snow and ice](#) treatment procedures for the roads, the board said.

The agency responsible for treating Interstate 35W, the North Tarrant Express, said last week that the roads were treated throughout the week.

"NTE & NTE35W maintenance crews started pre-treating the corridors on Tuesday morning in anticipation of inclement weather, and have been treating continuously as they monitor the roadway," North Tarrant Express said in a [statement to WFAA, the ABC affiliated TV station in Dallas](#), last week.

"We will continue treating the highways through the weekend and into next week, as long as the storm is active. Our crews treat the entire corridor, managed lanes, general purpose lanes, frontage roads and ramps."

The North Texas Toll Authority said that Texas roads are [treated with brine](#), "a heavily salted liquid solution that dries and helps treat roads prior to inclement winter weather."

Texas lawmakers are calling for an investigation into when and how the roads were treated.

"I have spoken to state legislators from the region, and they expressed concerns that this roadway may not have been sufficiently pre-treated for icy weather prior to the event," Texas state Rep. Terry Canales, the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, [told Nexstar](#).

"If this is true, regardless if it is the responsibility of a private entity to treat the North Tarrant Express, it is wholly unacceptable, and I'm calling on the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Department of Public Safety to conduct a complete investigation into the circumstances surrounding Thursday morning's traffic disaster."

The 133-car pileup started around 6:15 a.m. Thursday morning as cars lost control on a thin sheet of ice that covered the road. A video posted by Dallas Texas TV, a local social media company, showed an 18-wheeler unable to stop as it crashes into multiple cars.

"The roadway was so treacherous from the ice that several of the first responders were falling on the scene," Matt Zavadsky, a spokesman for MedStar Mobile Healthcare - which sent multiple ambulances to the crash -- [told the Associated Press](#) last week.

Smaller pileups happened throughout Texas last week, and drivers should stay on high alert now as a winter storm barrels through Texas.

Is This High-Speed Train the First Megaproject of the Biden Era?

The president promised to go big on infrastructure. The \$105 billion North Atlantic Rail plan between Boston and New York City definitely fits the bill.

By Anthony Flint, City Lab

It is an audacious vision for high-speed rail in the Northeast: new tunnels out of New York City and under the Long Island Sound, routing trains up through Hartford, Providence and Boston. With electric locomotives that top 200 miles per hour, travel time between New York and Boston would be slashed to 100 minutes — two hours quicker than current Acela service, the fastest train that Amtrak now runs. Construction would consume 20 years and require building the largest underwater tunnel in North America. The price tag: \$105 billion.

Conceived more than a decade ago and launched as a private initiative in 2017, the North Atlantic Rail project looks a lot like the high-speed rail networks that other parts of the world, such as Japan and France, have had for decades. Its backers hope it's the kind of U.S. megaproject that the federal government is finally ready to pursue.

While politicians on both sides of the aisle have long urged action on America's aging infrastructure, the administration of President Joe Biden has emphasized important new criteria — that shovel-ready projects also have to be “shovel worthy,” fulfilling equity, environmental justice and climate resilience goals. That means less emphasis on highways and more for projects deemed sustainable in the long term, like rail transit.

The president known as “Amtrak Joe,” who campaigned on a promise to invest up to \$2 trillion on 21st-century infrastructure and “spark the second great railroad revolution,” has long been convinced of the virtues of rail. As vice president, Biden was aboard the federal government's last major effort to bring faster trains to the U.S., a 2009 strategic plan that was a feature of the Obama administration's stimulus plan. His new transportation secretary, Pete Buttigieg, appears similarly enthusiastic: He recently proclaimed that “I want the U.S. to be leading the world when it comes to access to high-speed rail.”

And so the jockeying has begun among backers of a range of rail projects to demonstrate just how worthy they are. Supporters of the Gateway Program under the Hudson River — a \$30 billion plan to repair and upgrade a critical rail link to New York City that was derailed during the Trump administration — expect that this long-planned project will reemerge as a priority. High-speed rail projects in Texas, California, Las Vegas, Cascadia and Florida are also in the mix, and more will surely emerge. But backers of North Atlantic Rail are preparing to make the case that their megaproject “checks all the boxes for a multi-benefit recovery strategy,” according to Scott Wolf, executive director of Grow Smart Rhode Island, another NAR partner.

The pitch is that NAR would benefit not only New York City and Boston, but the places in between — the left-behind, post-industrial legacy cities scattered across New England. Faster, climate-friendly intercity rail could transform cities such as Hartford, for example, into more attractive options for post-Covid Boston- or New York-based office workers required to be at headquarters less often. The same is true for the ancillary improvements that are part of the envisioned NAR network: The project's third and final phase would add or upgrade passenger service to smaller cities in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, turning much of New England into one giant, rail-based commuter shed.

“It would unlock economic opportunity and spur growth for dozens of mid-sized cities throughout New England, connecting the entire region in one integrated market for ideas, labor and innovation,” said Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, who co-chairs the North Atlantic Rail initiative.

“And it would be a meaningful piece of a serious climate agenda.”

A modernized rail network would benefit business travelers making the Boston-New York trip, “but also low-income minority workers in Chelsea and Lynn, or along the Fairmont corridor in Dorchester, or folks in rural Rhode Island,” said Jarred Johnson, from the Boston-based advocacy group TransitMatters. The project could include Brownfields remediation and other clean-up efforts, new stations with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to improve access, affordable housing near the stations, and requirements that operators offer low-income fares, he said.

NAR is also seen as a climate resilience measure, its backers say: Stretches of the current Northeast Corridor route will face chronic flooding from rising oceans in the coming years, according to a 2017 study. Building an inland alternative to the shoreline tracks would provide much-needed redundancy.

And yet, the sticker shock remains. Even among other U.S. high-speed rail projects, the \$105 billion cost estimate for NAR stands out. The Texas high-speed rail network from Dallas to Houston, a public-private partnership using the same technology as the Shinkansen trains in Japan, is estimated to be \$20 billion. The Cascadia project in the Pacific Northwest, which would link Portland, Seattle and Vancouver with high-speed trains, could cost up to \$42 billion.

Estimated costs for California’s embattled L.A.-to-S.F. bullet train — the lone U.S. high-speed rail project that is under construction — have risen to \$80 billion, but the service is a long way from reaching either city.

The best comparison for North Atlantic Rail may be the plan on which it is partially modeled: the HS2 project in the U.K., which involves extending high-speed rail to post-industrial cities in the north as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative. Now pegged at \$138 billion, that effort is moving ahead despite resistance from foes worried about environmental impacts, who predict that demand for post-pandemic travel will decline overall anyway.

Part of the reason North Atlantic Rail is estimated to cost \$105 billion is the engineering feats that will have to be accomplished in a densely developed area: a new tunnel from Pennsylvania Station under the East River, more tunneling and cut-and-cover construction through Queens and Long Island, and then a 16-mile tunnel bored beneath the Long Island Sound. The project makes use of existing rights-of-way from the New Haven area to Hartford, but then requires yet another tunnel under Hartford, new tracks through environmentally sensitive areas in eastern Connecticut, and still another tunnel — the North-South Rail Link — under the “Big Dig” in Boston, to connect to modernized tracks heading to Boston’s northern suburbs, New Hampshire and Maine. Other branches of the network will require track modifications, straightening and electrification.

“People shiver and roll their eyes when we talk about the Long Island Sound tunnel, but around the world there are a hundred of these kinds of projects over the last 20 years or so, using tunnel-boring technology,” said Robert D. Yaro, president emeritus of the Regional Plan Association and a member of the NAR steering committee. “We fill potholes,” said Yaro, who

first worked on the North Atlantic Rail proposal 10 years ago in a studio at the University of Pennsylvania. “The rest of the world is building tunnels.”

NAR will surely face skeptics — and not only the usual critics of high-speed rail who decry the per-mile cost as absurdly exorbitant. Last week, Democratic U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut told CBS/AP the project was both potentially environmentally damaging and very likely lowballed, even with its fulsome 12-figure sum.

Such dissent notwithstanding, the NAR coalition is banking on support from lawmakers and business leaders in the New York-New England megaregion, a \$3 trillion economy that represents 14% of overall U.S. GDP, on par with California, and 11% of the U.S. population.

Yaro argues that NAR’s costs aren’t out of line with the economic returns the rail network will deliver throughout downstate New York and New England, both through construction jobs and increased economic activity. Comparing this moment to the New Deal of the 1930s, he also points out that even building out all three phases of the network is a mere 5% of Biden’s \$2 trillion commitment. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do big things.”

Bronin, the Hartford mayor, has a similarly sweeping pitch. “In this country, which built the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highway system, we’ve forgotten what it means to think big and be bold when it comes to infrastructure investment,” he said. “Projects like this might have seemed futuristic or pie-in-the-sky 30 years ago, but at this point, dozens of industrialized nations have completed projects as ambitious if not more ambitious than this.”

It’s an open question whether that argument — making major infrastructure investments for future economic growth and competitiveness — will be convincing enough to overcome concerns about spending, especially after the extensive federal outlays to respond to the pandemic. In some quarters there will be little appetite for spending so much on the Northeast.

The weeks and months ahead will reveal just how much inclination there is to go this big.

‘They were not prepared’: After winter crisis, Texas will have to confront its energy, politics and culture

The historic storm and cascading disasters — power and water shortages — are forcing the state to take a hard look at its ideals and principles.

By Nic Garcia, Dallas Morning News

Like so many Texans, LaShonda McGrew spent most of Sunday [dazzled by the rare blanket of snow](#) that covered her suburban Fort Worth home. It was beautiful, she told her husband, as they spent the day listening to sermons, sitting next to the fire and preparing for the workweek.

As the evening approached, the warnings of a more serious weather event started to pop up. McGrew paid attention. She audited her food and water. She placed candles and flashlights with fresh batteries throughout the house. The family charged extra cellphone batteries.

At about 1:30 a.m. Monday, the power went out.

“We were prepared for a few hours,” she said on Friday, recalling the historic and catastrophic events of the week. “But we weren’t thinking that it would never come back.”

McGrew, her family and more than 3 million other Texans would spend the next several days enveloped in the horrendous winter storm that crippled the infrastructure of the nation’s second-largest state. For more than 48 hours, the family huddled around a fire in their living room, rationing food and cellphone batteries to stay connected with other kin and monitor the news.

To pass the time, McGrew — whose nickname is Sunshine — and her family looked at photo albums. They played cards and imagined their vacation to somewhere warm. “It’s gonna get better,” they told each other.

It didn’t.

In the same week: The McGrew family would join half the state’s population — about 13 million — as residents ran out of water or were forced to boil whatever dripped from faucets to ensure it was safe to drink.

“It’s like a bad dream,” she said. “It’s hard to keep a good spirit when you don’t know when things are going to end.”

The cascading catastrophes not only tested McGrew’s disposition but also the wherewithal of all Texans.

Parents kept their children warm, bundled in layers inside running cars. Friends offered up couches. Families mopped up flooded apartments. People lived off cookies and cooked on ice-covered grills. They melted snow to flush toilets. Texans jammed phone lines of energy companies and broke websites reporting outages. Politicians — if they didn’t flee the state — pointed fingers rather than offer solutions.

As the snow and ice melts, the Lone Star State faces a host of questions — technical, political and cultural. What went wrong? Who is responsible? How do we avoid another crisis? And perhaps the most heady: Is the era of Texas exceptionalism — and the long tradition of individualism and *carpe diem* — over?

“They told us to be prepared,” McGrew said, referring to local and state leaders and energy companies. “But they were not prepared. We’re suffering because they weren’t. Where’s y’all’s accountability? We’re gonna have to pay for their screw-up.”

The long, cold week

The Feb. 11, [133-car pileup on Interstate 35W that killed at least six people](#) was prologue to a chain of events that, all told, likely will add up to more than \$20 billion — [the most costly weather crisis in the state’s history](#).

The winter freeze — [punctuated by two snowstorms](#) — marked the first time all 254 counties were under a winter weather warning. The Dallas-Fort Worth area spent 139 consecutive hours at or below 32 degrees, tying the seventh-longest streak first set in 1942, [the National Weather Service said Friday](#).

As several inches of snow began to accumulate throughout last Sunday, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the agency that manages the state’s power grid, warned of rolling blackouts if residents didn’t turn down the heat.

Shortly after 4 p.m. on Feb. 14, Valentine’s Day, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and a chorus of other local leaders [began urging on social media](#) for North Texans to conserve power.

The warnings were too late.

By 11 p.m., the Electric Reliability Council faced a stark choice: initiate short, controlled power outages or suffer a statewide blackout that could have lasted more than a month, [officials said this week](#).

Local power distributors, such as Oncor Electric Delivery in North Texas, followed the directive and powered down neighborhoods with the goal of rotating outages.

It was suggested the rolling blackouts would last no more than 45 minutes. But a menacing mix of freezing temperatures, an unstable power grid, broken equipment, increased demand and diminished raw energy supplies prevented the rotation from happening as planned.

Many thousands of Texans were left without power for days. Oncor and the council, known as ERCOT, provided few details. Instead of powering people’s homes, these organizations fueled mass confusion with mystifying tweets from [their social media](#) accounts and jargon-filled news conferences. Clogged phone lines and crashed websites where people were told to report outages provided no help.

Texans did what they could in the dark. They filled hotels to capacity. Others found refuge in warming stations, sleeping on buses. Some who stayed home lit small fires to huddle around. Too many had no choice but to layer up and pray.

Adriana Godines and her family in East Dallas went 40 hours without power. Her 10-year-old daughter, Andrea, woke up at night crying because she was cold.

“We were some of the lucky ones,” she said.

By Friday, power had been restored to nearly every Texan. But the state and its people were already facing the next disasters. Grocery store shelves are barren. Water, if it's running, must be boiled in half the state. Homes, apartments and businesses are deluged.

Four feet of water flooded Friendship West Baptist Church's resource center in southern Dallas, said the Rev. Frederick Haynes. The 30,000-square-foot building includes a food pantry and gently used clothing store.

"We're trying to save as much as possible," he said. "People are literally dying and suffering, who did not have to die and who did not have to suffer, if Texas had been responsible to regulate institutions that are supposed to keep us safe."

Rethinking Texas

As the power crisis unfolded, multiple news outlets reported that it hadn't been more than a decade since Texas faced a similar crisis — a 2011 snowstorm that collided with the Super Bowl.

Lessons were supposed to be learned. [Changes were supposed to be made](#). But Texas kept being Texas.

"There is a strong strain of individualism and risk-taking in Texas," said H.W. Brands, a historian at the University of Texas at Austin. "We'll do what we want to now and worry about the future later. This is a case in which the future blew in and hit the whole state."

Energy and infrastructure experts this week noted changes are necessary but cautioned against rushing to conclusions. It will be important to examine the entire system, they said. Unanticipated problems are likely to surface.

While Texas became the poster child for failed infrastructure this week, it's not an uncommon phenomenon, said DJ Gribbin, a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institute and former adviser to President Donald Trump.

"Everyone ignores infrastructure until there is a huge failure," he said.

As part of the forthcoming investigation into what happened, Gribbin said, the state should not simply focus on broken equipment but think about its future as it deals with growth and new challenges.

Both Gribbin and Bruce Bullock, director of the Maguire Energy Institute at Southern Methodist University, said Texas' deregulated system could work in its favor to innovate solutions and rebuild quickly.

Bullock warned that those proposing reforms must be apolitical — even after Texas' power shortage became fodder for Democrats and Republicans.

"The more politicalized this gets, the less likely we are going to have meaningful solutions," he said. "That's directed at all sides."

Time is of the essence since state lawmakers are in session until later this spring and won't return until 2023, unless the governor calls a special session. If there was ever political will to

get something meaningfully done, now would be the time, said UT political scientist Victoria DeFrancesco Soto.

“We don’t need another study or a committee,” she said. “We need something that’s passed and signed by the governor.”

Fort Worth native Chequan Lewis said it will take more than updated infrastructure and new laws to fix the state.

“It’s important the rhetoric shift in our state,” he said. “I want leaders to be talking about solving problems together rather than pretend Texans would rather freeze to death than live in a regulated environment.”

Lewis — now a Dallas-based lawyer, business executive and civic leader focused on equity — said the state doesn’t have to abandon its “Texas exceptionalism” myth entirely. But the culture must evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century, which are greater than any state can tackle.

“Texas has the capacity for even more greatness as a state,” he said. “But we have to set that as the intention.”

U.S. Rep. Beth Van Duyne, an Irving Republican, is ready to help rebuild the state’s grid — and reputation.

It’s personal for Van Duyne, [who lost power for about three days](#) and is now fixing broken pipes. As the temperature sunk to 42 degrees inside her home, she circled her fireplace with blankets and pillows, and played cards in between conference calls, checking on neighbors and constituents.

At one point, she also reread ERCOT’s warnings prior to the Arctic blast. They “clearly showed an overconfidence or profound misunderstanding of what we were facing,” she said.

Van Duyne, who sits on the House’s infrastructure committee, pledged federal resources and a Lone Star comeback.

“Texas will prove its exceptionalism in how well we respond, rebuild and create more secure energy generation and power infrastructure in the months ahead.”

SoGood project would transform Dallas' near south side

Construction set to start on first phase of mixed-use project near downtown.

By Steve Brown, Dallas Morning News

More than three years after making a first investment in the neighborhood, businessman Mike Hoque is ready to kick off one of the most ambitious redevelopment projects in Dallas.

Construction is set to start on the first phase of the SoGood mixed-use development along South Good Latimer Expressway and Cesar Chavez Boulevard just south of downtown. Hoque Global has bought up about nine blocks of land in the area south of Interstate 30 and plans to build apartments, retail, offices and townhomes.

The first phase of construction will be a 266-unit apartment community next to the former Pilgrim's Pride plant on Cesar Chavez.

Called the Chloe at SoGood, the rental community is being built with Corsair Ventures, a Dallas apartment builder.

"Hoque Global partnered with Corsair Ventures in 2020, as both groups share a passion for bringing significant investment to the city's southern sector and building projects that can ignite growth in an underserved community," Hoque said.

The \$45 million apartment project is just the first phase of construction at the SoGood development that will include repurposing parts of the former Pilgrim's Pride chicken processing plant.

Hoque Global bought the vacant plant and about 15 acres on Corinth Street at Cesar Chavez Boulevard in 2017 for redevelopment. The plant closed in 2011.

The rental community will include a rooftop pool deck with views of downtown, a community clubroom and courtyards. Commercial space is planned on the ground floor of the apartment block.

"The Chloe will bring a significant investment to this area that is ready for new development," David Gunderson, CEO of Corsair Ventures, said in a statement. "We are enthusiastic about the project's location at SoGood, as The Cedars' Opportunity Zone proximity to the urban core is critical in launching Dallas' next urban development hub."

The Opportunity Zone just south of downtown was established in 2018 as part of a federal program to help stimulate economic development, job creation and investments in underserved neighborhoods. Developers receive preferential federal tax treatment for projects in these areas.

"The Chloe will launch building as we continue to expand with a unique district that the entire community has sought in southern Dallas," Hoque said. "SoGood will be the catalyst that connects Farmers Market, Deep Ellum and downtown Dallas to communities to the south in authentically beneficial ways.

"We are looking forward to announcing more about SoGood in 2021."

The developers hope to open the first of the new SoGood apartments next year. Architect Domus Studio and Ink+Oro designed the Chloe at SoGood apartments, and TBG is the landscape architect.

Hoque Global is planning a linear park running south from downtown through the middle of the SoGood project. The developer has proposed repurposing old rail bridges to connect the development to the nearby Farmers Market.

“SoGood is in an area that we see as ripe for redevelopment,” said Kourtney Garrett, president of the economic development group Downtown Dallas Inc. “It’s closely connected to downtown and Deep Ellum and the Farmers Market.”

Garrett said that with the planned rebuilding of the I-30 freeway between downtown, the Cedars neighborhood and SoGood, Downtown Dallas Inc. is working with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Texas Transportation Department to come up with designs that would better connect the areas — including a potential deck park.

“It’s an exciting time to be looking south,” said Garrett, who lived in the Cedars neighborhood for more than a decade. “As a former resident of that area until we moved to the Farmers Market, I’ve seen firsthand the incredible transformation.

“I appreciate their vision for the SoGood project and building that neighborhood as an area for innovators and creators.”

The SoGood development is one of two huge properties Hoque Global is making plans for on the south side of downtown.

Hoque and Omaha, Neb.-based Lanoha Real Estate also are working on a 20-acre mixed-use development called Newpark, to be built on Canton Street near City Hall.

State agencies work to solve transportation, resource issues as winter storms leave Texas

By Maggie Glynn, KXAN

AUSTIN (Nexstar) — On Friday, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas said it's [officially out of emergency operations](#), but that doesn't mean Texans are out of the woods yet.

"We are completely back to normal operations," ERCOT CEO Bill Magnus said in a virtual press conference Friday morning. "There may still be some outages that have to do with fallen trees or broken equipment that are out there in the electric company systems."

Even as power slowly returns and temperatures begin to rise, some issues linger.

Michael Lee with the Texas Department of Transportation said crews are working to clear roads as quickly as possible, but it will still be a couple days until all major roads are safe.

"Hopefully coming out Monday, where the system would be back to operating normally," Lee said.

During that clearing process, Lee said TxDOT noticed the same problem many Texans have been facing: [gas stations short on fuel](#) with no recent deliveries.

But, since TxDOT has its own supply, it's been able to assist other state agencies during the crisis.

"We have supplied fuel out of those tanks to different parts of the state to keep generators running in hospitals," Lee explained, but that supply is limited. "It's been a challenge."

During a [news conference Friday from the State Operations Center](#), Gov. Greg Abbott said help is on the way to keep all delivery trucks moving.

"I'm allowing the use of off-road diesel on Texas roads. I'm also working with comptroller Glenn Hegar, and we have requested a fuel waiver from the EPA to allow for the use of all forms of diesel on Texas road," Abbott said Friday.

Off-road diesel isn't less safe, it's just diesel fuel dyed red to show it is untaxed and available only for off-road fuel uses.

More water deliveries are also coming, to help the 14 million Texans currently facing issues with their water systems.

"Since yesterday, we've delivered and transported about 1.7 million bottles of water," Chief Nim Kidd with the Texas Division of Emergency Management said at Friday's briefing.

"We will continue to deliver water by bottles for as long as it takes," Chief Kidd said.

For more details about the governor's briefing on Friday, [click here](#).

Developer shares update on massive Deep Ellum office project in the works

By Ryan Salchert, Dallas Business Journal

While developers have waited for prospective tenants to emerge back into the office market, developer Sterling Bay has been quietly preparing its proposed project in Deep Ellum for the post-COVID-19 world.

Formerly known as 301 N. Crowdus, The Assembly will stand 13 stories tall and feature 400,000 square feet of office space, 23,000 square feet of ground floor retail and 40,000 square feet of amenity space. The project will mark the Texas debut of Chicago-based developer Sterling Bay, which has built several other office projects in Chicago, Washington, D.C., Miami and Portland.

The Assembly will be located at the northwest corner of Indiana Street and N. Malcolm X Boulevard and will feature an array of new amenities aimed at tenant health and wellness.

"We've absolutely thought about ways that we can improve this building to meet tenant demands as people return to work, and that can take a number of forms," said Ryan Walsh, managing director of acquisitions for Sterling Bay. "It's with indoor air quality improvements, it's with touchless, smart technology; it's allowing space for social distancing and it's with indoor and outdoor amenities. It's things we were ultra-focused on pre-COVID, and now they're at the forefront of tenant's minds."

Improved air quality systems, indoor air quality monitors, UV light HVAC equipment, hands-free entry points and destination dispatch elevators are among The Assembly's new features. These will join numerous other amenities that were already being planned.

"In Chicago, we're very well-known for our amenity space. At The Assembly, we're going to have a 23,000-square-foot outdoor rooftop with green landscaping, indoor-outdoor fitness center, event spaces, conference spaces, and private exterior terraces offered on every level," said Walsh. "Amenities are one of our greatest currencies as a firm and we've always been a trendsetter within the amenity creation space."

Large outdoor spaces are featured throughout Sterling Bay's portfolio and they're popular among tenants, Walsh says.

"They're incredibly well utilized. It's not just a check the box item. If you tour any of our buildings, from Google's Midwest Headquarters to McDonald's World Headquarters, you will see people out there nine months a year using their laptops, connecting to Wi-Fi and working away from their desks," said Walsh. "It's a huge differentiator for companies because it allows them to give something to their employees that they wouldn't otherwise find in a traditional building."

One of The Assembly's other features is a 77,100-square-foot "super floor", which will span the entire length of the building and will connect both towers. Also included in many of Sterling Bay's other properties, these floors were used before the pandemic to create ultra-dense work environments. Now, as companies consider social distancing, Walsh says these floors could also meet those needs.

"Ironically, as companies think about how much space they'll want per employee in a post-COVID world, these big floor plates still allow them more space to effectively social distance while still being in an office environment," Walsh said. "What was originally intended as a tool for densification is now a tool for people to socially distance and spread out as opposed to being spread across four floors."

While urban office markets have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic, Walsh says Deep Ellum is still an area his company feels confident about building in.

"If anything, the post-COVID world further emboldens our investment thesis. We don't think urbanization is going away. We know that the millennial workforce that creative firms and the Fortune 500 are targeting still want to live, work and play in an urban setting. This is absolutely the right location for that," he said.

Another thing that has Sterling Bay confident about Dallas is the continued influx of companies wanting to relocate to North Texas. Walsh says he expects this migration to accelerate post-COVID-19, even admitting that current tenants of Sterling Bay have begun traveling with the company.

"We certainly have tenants that are starting to travel with us. We have Google in three buildings across two different cities today. We're hoping that that relationship continues to grow in various markets," Walsh said. "There are absolutely tenants that like our product, like our way of doing business, like that we say yes, and want to look at Sterling Bay projects in other cities."

Besides Google and McDonald's, Sterling Bay's projects have attracted other high-profile tenants like Twitter, Uber, eBay, SAP, Tyson Foods, Dyson, Starbucks and Glassdoor. The Assembly has been designed by HKS and is being marketed by CBRE.

Deadly Texas blackout shows our vulnerability to coming climate extremes

The event provides a glimpse of a 'hellscape' future if we don't build resilience

By Andrew Freedman

The cold snap that gripped the central and southern United States last week has ended, giving way to more seasonable temperatures. However, extensive damage to lives and property has been done, with at least 58 lives lost, the majority in Texas, as a result of the extreme cold, snow and ice.

In a country already reeling from the [coronavirus](#) pandemic, the extreme weather served to further heighten the misery and disruption to daily life for millions.

Experts in the insurance industry can't yet say with certainty how much damage this event caused, but it is possible that it will be among the top tier of costliest natural disasters in the United States, and perhaps even globally, for 2021.

Yet for all that's been written about this event, the key lesson it vividly demonstrates has not been emphasized enough.

While there may be a climate change connection to this cold outbreak, in the form of the potential tie between a wavier jet stream in the Northern Hemisphere and rapid Arctic warming, what makes the blackout in Texas and other states so baffling and foreboding is that the grid failed during an extreme event that was largely within the boundaries of a "normal" climate.

This was not a cold event unlike any Texas has experienced before. In fact, in some ways it fell short of past records, but broke some new ground by some other measures.

The cold was notable especially for its duration, with Oklahoma City setting a record of 210 hours for the longest straight run of temperatures at or below 20 degrees, beating its previous record set in 1983. Yet relatively few all-time low temperature records were set during the outbreak, as Texas and the central United States tend to experience these influxes of harsh Arctic air every few decades.

Temperature departures from average across the United States on Feb. 18.

In the Lone Star State, there were similar events in 2011, 1989 and 1983. The previous cold snaps, including the one in 2011, were accompanied by problems with the Texas electrical grid, and [investigations into them](#) led to recommendations to weatherize the state's energy infrastructure to prevent a similar situation in the future.

Those recommendations were deemed to be too costly and were largely ignored.

The result is that some of the complex systems our society depends upon for basic necessities and economic growth, such as electricity, are unprepared even for the climate extremes of today, let alone more severe extremes climate scientists warn are coming. The same is true for flood protection, as illustrated by Hurricanes Katrina in New Orleans and Harvey in Houston.

"We're living in a society that's not designed for the weather that we're living with and the weather to come," said Ernst Rauch, chief climate scientist at the reinsurance company Munich

Re, in an interview. He said his firm has documented an increasing trend of instances in which critical infrastructure, such as electrical grids, have failed during extreme weather events.

Climate resilience is not just a mere buzzword in policy and activism circles. It's a necessity to manage the risks associated with a warming world as well as the weather events we already face, Rauch and other experts say. However, building more resilient infrastructure raises thorny questions about funding, considering that the marketplace often leaves it up to customers to pay for costly improvements, rather than companies themselves.

"It's up to Texans to decide how much resilience do they want after shivering in the dark for a week," Rauch said in an interview, pointing out that the costs of weatherizing the electrical grid are likely to be passed to ratepayers because of the way the marketplace is designed.

The likely costs of the Texas blackout demonstrate what economists have been saying for years: It is far cheaper to act now to adapt to climate change and cut greenhouse gas emissions than it is to carry on with business as usual and reap the whirlwind that lies ahead.

"The history books are going to look back at the last week of winter weather as one of the most consequential from a humanitarian perspective that we've seen in the United States," Steve Bowen, head of catastrophe insight at the insurance company Aon, said in an email. "There will undoubtedly be a volume of insurance claims filed that will rival some of the bigger hurricane events seen in Texas, and this will translate to direct economic losses well into the billions of dollars."

"It's going to take several weeks of assessments to know how high the tally will go, but unless the rest of the year really goes off the rails, it's safe to say that this will end up as one of 2021's costliest U.S. disasters," he added.

According to Rich Sorkin, founder and chief executive of Jupiter Intelligence, a company that helps governments and companies manage climate change risks, the power industry is not well-prepared for the extremes it faces and therefore has a lot of work to do to be more resilient to what climate change could bring.

The power sector is better prepared for extreme events in parts of Europe, New York, Florida and Hawaii, Sorkin said, "and very, very far behind where it needs to be pretty much everywhere [else]."

"It's the same dynamic whether we're talking about fire in California and Spain, heat in Dubai and Phoenix, flooding in Florida and Tokyo, cold, wind and flooding in Texas, etc., etc. The vast majority of these places are livable with sufficient planning and investment for quite some time," Sorkin said via email.

"Without that planning and investment, a hellscape will be upon us."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/02/22/texas-blackout-climate-change-resilience/>

For Dallas apartment developer, it's all about trails and open spaces

Mill Creek Residential is building three rental communities that connect to the outdoors.

By Steve Brown, Dallas Morning News

Apartment builder Mill Creek Residential's new Dallas projects are all over the map — North Dallas, Oak Cliff and near White Rock Lake.

But they all have something in common: They're located on popular pedestrian trails and green spaces.

The Dallas-based developer is making a big bet on the outdoors with its new rental communities.

"We think development oriented to trails and adjacent to open space will be the new trend in the post-COVID world," said Michael Blackwell, Mill Creek's senior managing director. "While I had a lot of faith pre-COVID that this was a unique way to source sites, it has gone from an inclination to a full-on conviction in the post-COVID world."

Since the pandemic emerged a year ago, real estate developers and their clients have more highly valued access to outdoor space, which can reduce the likelihood of infection transmissions.

"The value of open space has become more apparent than it has ever been," Blackwell said.

Mill Creek's largest Dallas project is a 14-story high-rise on North Central Expressway that backs up to the Katy Trail.

"The Katy Trail is the cat's meow of the trails," Blackwell said. "We are oriented to the trail, and we are working with the Friends of the Katy Trail and making a contribution to them."

The 217-unit Modera Katy Trail building will open early next year.

Mill Creek recently won zoning approvals for another rental community focused on the great outdoors. The apartment project is planned on the banks of the Trinity River along Beckley Avenue. The developer wants to connect the community with the planned Trinity River park.

"We see an opportunity to lead this idea of trails and open space by building a project that truly engages the river," Blackwell said.

The developer hopes to start construction late this year.

"With the zoning, the site got entitled for up to 280 units," Blackwell said. "We are toying with substantially reducing the unit count and building much larger units."

A third apartment community that's early in design would be built near the south end of White Rock Lake on Grand Avenue.

The property is next to the Santa Fe Trail, which runs from Deep Ellum to the lake. Plans under consideration would someday link that trail system with the Great Trinity Forest.

"It's high time — particularly in a city like ours — to have a really connected mobility plan that takes things to a higher level," Blackwell said. "It's a shift away from saying everything has got to be about the car."

The Council Nearly Killed the Oak Cliff Streetcar, Then They Realized They Can't

The modern streetcar remains a strain on the city's budget, but it won't become sustainable until the network expands beyond Oak Cliff

By Peter Simek, Dallas Morning News

For the first hour or so of Tuesday's meeting of the Dallas City Council's transportation committee, council members listened as the region's top transportation official and the assistant city manager who oversees transportation discussed the need for a more integrated approach to long-range planning. They proposed an approach to transportation planning that allowed for other city investments and services – like improved traffic signals, reconstituted streetscapes, and expanded access to high-speed internet – to be incrementally built into the system. The idea was to design each transportation project not as a single, standalone investment, but as a component of a broader network of iterative improvements.

Then, the council pivoted and nearly killed the Oak Cliff Streetcar, a pilot trolley line that the city has long hoped will someday evolve into a modern streetcar network covering downtown and the surrounding inner-city neighborhoods. It was a paradoxical juxtaposition of planning philosophies and something of a case study in what works – and what doesn't work – with city planning in Dallas.

Council members are understandably frustrated that the Oak Cliff Streetcar is leaking money.

The streetcar connects the far southwest corner of downtown at the Eddie Bernice Johnson Union Station with the Bishop Arts District. It is short nearly \$1 million of its \$2.3 million annual operating budget. Staff proposed the council draw from the city's general fund to cover the gap, but only North Oak Cliff representative Chad West was vocal in supporting that idea; the streetcar is in West's district. In the end, the council voted to delay action – but not before the committee kicked the tires on giving up on the streetcar altogether. The streetcar has been something of a nuisance for City Hall since before it was even built. The idea originated not at council or among city staff, but from a neighborhood organization that dreamed of returning old streetcars that once crisscrossed Oak Cliff.

In 2010, the group applied for a federal TIGER grant and won it, somewhat surprisingly, forcing the city to take over the project with help from the North Central Texas Council of Governments, the region's municipal planning organization. When the Oak Cliff Streetcar opened in 2016, the city handed operations over to Dallas Area Rapid Transit, though the city of Dallas is responsible for paying for most of the operational expenses.

For the first four years of its existence, the council begrudgingly contributed money from the general fund to help support the fledgling streetcar; it was free for residents to ride. In 2020, the council had enough, and they voted to cease general fund support after instituting a \$1 one-way fare to ride the streetcar in 2018. The city hired a consultant to come up with new ways to support the public transit line. Their findings, which were presented to the council committee at Tuesday's meeting, were underwhelming, to say the least.

After reviewing several options – ranging from a “transportation utility fee” paid by residents living along the streetcar line, to selling off city property – the consultant determined the only realistic short-term option was selling advertising and naming rights in and around the streetcar

and stops. That might produce around \$50,000 for the 2022 budget and another \$100,000 to \$200,000 the following year. Even with that new revenue, however, the city projected the streetcar would require more than \$1 million in general fund support in 2022 and 2023.

Council members weren't having it.

For a few minutes during the meeting, it looked like West would move to approve the funding for the streetcar and drag the rest of the council quietly, if begrudgingly along with him. But then North Dallas council member Cara Mendelsohn began to question the value of spending \$1 million on a line that, during the COVID-19 lockdown, only carried around 375 passengers a day.

Mendelsohn is not exactly a strident public transit advocate. She was a fierce opponent to DART's expansion of the Cotton Belt line through her district. She said during today's meeting it was only fair that the city provides parking in places like downtown and Deep Ellum because people from her part of Dallas were never going to take transit.

But Mendelsohn's comments resonated, particularly during a meeting that also saw staff tell council members that the city will need to spend \$100 million a year for the next 5 years to avoid an "F-grade" in street pavement quality and an additional \$20 million a year for the next 15 years to adequately modernize traffic signals.

But spending \$1 million for a streetcar so a few hundred Oak Cliff hipsters could cruise downtown? That wasn't flying.

"This is a vanity project for D1," said Councilman Lee Kleinman, the North Dallas representative. "It is great for District 1, it is great for that part of town, but we can't use this kind of taxpayer dollars so a few hundred people a day can use it."

However, as soon as the council began asking staff tough questions about their options, they discovered, somewhat awkwardly, how wedded Dallas is to its little Oak Cliff trolley. Because the project was funded through a federal TIGER grant, the city is obligated to operate the streetcar for 30 years. If the city reneges on that commitment, operation of the streetcar would be handed over to the Council of Governments. That wouldn't be good for the city's relationship with the COG or with DART, staff said, not to mention it could damage the city's future chances at federal grants.

With trashing the streetcar off the table, council members tried to hunt for couch change. Southern Dallas Council member Tennell Atkins saw that staff had managed to secure 2021 funding commitments of \$475,000 from the Oak Cliff Gateway Tax Increment Financing District and another \$100,000 from Downtown Dallas Inc. He introduced a resolution that would force the Oak Cliff TIF to pick up the rest of the bill, but after that motion passed, staff informed the committee that the TIF didn't have enough money in the bank to cover the bill. The council committee was forced to vote to rescind Atkins' motion before opting to delay any further action on the item until their next meeting.

And so, we wait, but not before another messy day at the city's digital office. It was one that wound up revealing much about what Dallas does right – and what it does wrong – when it comes to transportation planning. I get the council's frustration over the streetcar. When the streetcar was first proposed, [I criticized it](#) for many of the same reasons raised by council members today. It was expensive, served a limited geographical area, and the same money

could more effectively improve public transportation if invested in upgrading the city's bus network.

In the years since, I've changed my mind. DART eventually came around on the bus idea, and the streetcar has proven incredibly effective in achieving its real intended goal: driving economic development. The tracks that run down Zang have catalyzed an incredible rush of development, bringing the kind of density that could, eventually, support public transit.

But the city has also gotten two things wrong with the project. The first is the long delay in expanding the line – particularly a new loop through downtown – that would expand the streetcar's reach and usability.

Dallas won't realize the real value of the streetcar investment, to see it as anything but an Oak Cliff "vanity project," until connects through downtown to the McKinney Ave. Trolley and, eventually, branches out into West Dallas, the Cedars, South Dallas, and up Ross Ave. into East Dallas. What I underestimated in my opposition years ago, but what was made so clear today, is that a streetcar line plants an unmovable flag in the ground. Now that it is built, Dallas can't get out of its commitment to the streetcar. Rather than starve it for funds, the only way to realize the full value of that investment is to go all-in on its expansion.

The other thing the city got wrong was not putting adequate value-capture mechanisms in place from the start so that areas most primed for redevelopment catalyzed by the streetcar could support its operations. Council members are right to be frustrated that they are being asked to cough up \$1 million in precious city funds to prop up a streetcar whose prime advantage to the city so far is helping to stimulate millions in North Oak Cliff real estate investment.

It makes sense that the first place Atkins might look for funding support is in the Oak Cliff Gateway TIF. But that TIF pre-dates the idea of the streetcar, and it wasn't designed to support it. No new TIFs or Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) have been created specifically to capture the value generated by the streetcar. This is the same grave mistake DART has made time and time again with its light rail expansion.

Now it's too late. The consultants hired by the city dismissed the idea of a transportation utility fee because it would be perceived as a new tax. PIDs have failed to pass, and staff said that trying to convince property owners to opt into a self-tax in the midst of a pandemic and economic shutdown is politically far-fetched.

That leaves few options. The council can continue to prop up the streetcar, or they can starve it, reducing operation to the bare minimum required by the TIGER grant terms, which would essentially mean returning to running the car infrequently between Union Station and Methodist Hospital.

There is, however, one more option that wasn't raised at today's meeting. Fiscal sustainability can be achieved not by shrinking the streetcars' budget, but by expanding it. Accelerating plans to connect the current line to downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods would simultaneously create opportunities to institute the kinds of value capture tools that can generate additional funding for future operations. The streetcar will remain a financial burden on the city's coffers as long as it remains an Oak Cliff vanity project. The only way to fix that is to make it something more.

Meet AECOM's Dev Rastogi, the Local Exec Spearheading Infrastructure Projects That Could Redefine Transportation

To Rastogi, a high-speed rail and the Texas Hyperloop aren't the only exciting transportation technologies on the horizon. The VP at AECOM is part of game-changing ideas—like electrifying roadways and automated/connected vehicles—that could soon transform our day-to-day lives.

By Sandra Engelland, Dallas Innovates

As the vice president at AECOM, a multinational engineering firm that has a large presence in North Texas with 230 employees, Rastogi is armed with innovation, determination, and ingenuity. The Dallas executive uses her more than three decades of experience to continue laying the foundation for AECOM to be a premier infrastructure firm, leading two major infrastructure game changers—the Texas Hyperloop and Automated Bus Consortium—that could redefine transportation.

To her colleagues, Rastogi is known for her unparalleled leadership and expertise within the public and private sectors. She keeps innovation at the forefront—by sticking to practical solutions geared toward positive change, the infrastructure expert is able to spearhead complex projects that could impact Dallas and beyond.

Those initiatives include wastewater epidemiology and transportation electrification, securing the DART light rail vehicle procurement, and providing consulting services for the Perot Museum of Nature and Science and Transit-Oriented Development in Plano. Locally, she has a number of long-standing client relationships, including DFW Airport and TXDOT.

Rastogi also oversees the company's Dallas Cities program, [which addresses issues such as climate adaptation and sustainable economic development](#).

And, she recently won the North Dallas Chamber of Commerce's Paul Hanson Award for her significant community impact. She is the current public policy council chair for the North Dallas Chamber of Commerce and is vice chair of the Dallas Friday Group, a nonprofit focused on public affairs and business issues.

In her spare time, she mentors fellow female engineers who are working to pave their own way in a male-dominated industry.

In honor of Engineers Week, which runs from Feb. 21–27, you can learn more about Rastogi below.

Meet the infrastructure innovator

AECOM's Dev Rastogi, who leads the Dallas Cities program, was featured in [Dallas Innovates' Future 50 in Dallas-Fort Worth](#) in the 2021 edition of our annual magazine. We talked with Rastogi about AECOM's future tech-based projects, impact on industry trends, and experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's what she had to say.

On innovation or development at AECOM:

“The pandemic clearly showed AECOM's innovation and resiliency. We responded to many challenges, including developing a virtual studio room for public meetings, providing a safe platform for simulated in-person engagement. Its vital community engagement continues

through the development of infrastructure projects. I'm also proud of AECOM's work with Dallas' first Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP). It brings the best of our global expertise in sustainable design, planning and policy and allows us to show off Dallas as a global leader."

On the biggest challenge in the past year:

"A critical part of my role as Dallas executive is getting to know and staying connected with my hard-working team. Normally, we would hold meetings in our office, but due to the pandemic, we launched 'Donuts with Dev' (sans donuts). We used the Teams calls just to chat. I'm going to owe my team A LOT of donuts when we get back to meetings in the office."

On what's next for AECOM:

"I am excited about the prospect of infrastructure stimulus funding to help with economic recovery and expedite big-idea projects. It will be great to see our transit agencies and airports 'get back to normal' and continue their hard work of creating our better normal. High Speed Rail and Texas Hyperloop aren't the only exciting technologies on the horizon. Electrifying roadways and automated/connected vehicles will soon transform our day-to-day lives."

On industry trends:

"There is a growing awareness of the role that infrastructure plays in historical inequities and growth policies of our cities, and Dallas is no exception. We are embracing not only AECOM's role, but the broader architectural engineering industry's role in being active agents for positive change. AECOM is exploring measures that will help cities break down systemic obstacles by applying an equity lens to enhance planning processes. Every engineer owes it to the communities we love to follow through."

On supporting other female leaders and engineers in the industry:

"Supporting women, minorities, and young engineers grow and develop in their careers is very important to me, and at AECOM, I'm fortunate to call many trailblazing female engineers my coworkers. I try to empower every engineer to believe in themselves and to teach them the importance of making connections and building networks within and beyond the AE industry. It is these relationships that make for a remarkable career."

Draft for DART network redesign shows increase in shuttle service, access in areas of Plano, Richardson

In the northeast quadrant of DART's coverage area—which includes Plano, Richardson, northeast Dallas, Rowlett and Garland—current plans show new and expanded GoLink zones, with current bus routes being replaced by shuttle service.

By Liesbeth Powers, Community Impact Newspaper

A first draft for Dallas Area Rapid Transit's bus network redesign includes changes to GoLink shuttle service in Plano and Richardson.

In the northeast quadrant of DART's coverage area—which includes Plano, Richardson, northeast Dallas, Rowlett and Garland—current plans show new and expanded GoLink zones, with current bus routes being replaced by shuttle service.

In Plano, there is the possibility of adding three GoLink zones and expanding at least one other into Richardson, DART staff shared in a presentation Feb. 23. One additional GoLink zone is also planned for Richardson. Parts of the Spring Valley bus route in Richardson will also become more frequent.

Thirty- and 40-minute service are more common in this quadrant, due to less density and lower ridership levels overall, Rob Smith, DART's interim vice president of service planning said.

"Generally here, the routes are running between some of these GoLink zones," Smith said.

The draft overlaid on the current service map showed no loss in overall physical GoLink coverage, although route frequency may differ. Across all of DART's network, the draft drops the number of bus routes from 121 to 77, while nearly doubling the number of GoLink shuttle zones.

Close to half of the zones would offer Saturday service under the proposed plan, which is significantly more than the one zone offering weekend rides currently.

With this redesign, roughly 74% of service-area residents would have access to bus or shuttle service within a half-mile at midday on a weekday, according to the presentation. This is an increase over the current 68%.

In the northeast quadrant, the number of areas reachable within 60 minutes would improve under this plan.

"Overall, for the vast majority of parts of the service area we see ... vast improvements," Smith said.

Maps of the new draft will be uploaded to the DART website, Smith said. Viewers will have the ability to zoom in on specific areas to see how changes might affect their commute, Smith said. What the redesign will mean for individual cities and areas will also be reviewed during meetings with DART board members and city representatives, said Todd Plesko, vice president of Service planning and scheduling.

Community outreach and other opportunities for public involvement, such as public hearings, will begin this spring. Implementation of a network redesign by January 2022 would require approval of the plan in August, Smith said.

Census data, employment information and other data is used to analyze effects of the proposed redesign by outside consultants, according to Smith.

Both the DART Committee-of-the-Whole and DART board [approved the use of a hybrid concept for the redesign](#) Nov. 10, which balances the need to maintain high-ridership routes with providing adequate coverage. Staff was directed to focus the design on 70% to 75% ridership and 25% to 30% coverage.

About 55% of DART's bus service currently focuses on high-ridership routes, while the rest is used to provide coverage, as [previously reported](#) by *Community Impact Newspaper*.

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$908 Million Loan for the Silver Line Regional Rail Project in Dallas

The refinancing is projected to save Dallas Area Rapid Transit \$190 million

By NBC DFW

U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced Thursday that USDOT's Build America Bureau has provided a \$908 million loan under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit for the Silver Line Regional Rail Project.

This is the first Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing loan to close under the Biden Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation said.

The loan is a refinancing of the RRIF loan provided to DART for the same project by the Bureau in December 2018.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the department has received interest from existing borrowers to refinance their loans to help mitigate pandemic-related revenue loss and to take advantage of low interest rates.

This transaction is estimated to save DART approximately \$190 million in interest costs, the U.S. Department of Transportation said.

"The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to investing in clean transportation while improving access to good-paying jobs, and this loan is the latest example of that," Secretary Buttigieg said. "There's no question that transit access to the rapidly growing Dallas suburbs needs to be expanded, and ensuring the new stations are accessible by walking, biking and wheelchairs will provide more options for residents and make it easier for people to choose more affordable and sustainable ways to get around. It is prudent to take advantage of historically low interest rates to help DART refinance this loan at a time when they, like many transit agencies around the country, continue to deal with the impacts of COVID-19."

The loan proceeds will finance part of the construction costs of the project, which is a 26-mile double-track commuter rail alignment extending from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport eastward to Shiloh Road in Plano, Texas.

The commuter line will connect with three existing DART transit lines, contain 10 stations, and travel through three counties and seven cities.

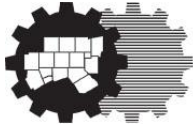
"The Department's assistance helps DART deliver this ambitious project which will extend service across the DART service area from the eastern edge across the northern suburbs and includes several infrastructure additions such as hike and bike trails, separated grade improvements, and full double-tracking across the entire segment," David Leininger, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of DART, said. "The ten platforms will also stimulate transit-oriented development across a broad swath of the region. Reducing interest costs on the loan will also play a crucial part in restoring DART's long-term capital development capacity, which was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Since the current loan closed in December 2018, DART has made significant progress on project design and construction, DART said.

All key project contracts have been awarded, project design has significantly advanced, and construction is under way and on budget, DART said. The savings from the new loan will address a funding gap for other projects in the future.

DART said it expects to open the Silver Line Rail Regional Project to the public by March 2023.

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/u-s-department-of-transportation-announces-908-million-loan-for-the-silver-line-regional-rail-project-in-dallas/2563685/>



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE
Contact: Brian Wilson
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North Texans Encouraged to Comment Online About Regional Transportation Initiatives

Innovative technologies being considered that could link region to other parts of Texas

Feb. 8, 2021 (Arlington, Texas) — The North Central Texas Council of Governments welcomes public input on transportation planning initiatives, during an online input opportunity beginning Feb. 8. Comments can be made by visiting www.nctcog.org/input.

NCTCOG staff will provide information regarding the DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study, including a project description, results of corridor analyses, public involvement opportunities and next steps.

NCTCOG conducted virtual public meetings in January to discuss the study, which is examining the potential addition of high-speed technology to both complement the region's existing transportation system and contribute to a future high-speed network. The resulting technology would connect passengers to the high-speed rail line planned to link Dallas and Houston, as well as potential high-speed service from Fort Worth to South Texas in the future.

Additionally, modifications to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 will be posted for review and comment. The UPWP provides a summary of transportation and related air quality planning tasks to be conducted by NCTCOG.

Administrative revisions to the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mobility 2045, information on the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP) and vehicle incentive opportunities will also be highlighted.

To request printed copies of the information, call 817-608-2365 or email cbaylor@nctcog.org.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered in the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 238 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 22 school districts and 31 special districts. For more information on the NCTCOG Transportation Department, visit www.nctcog.org/trans.

About the Regional Transportation Council:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for regional transportation

planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974. The MPO works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties.

The RTC's 44 members include local elected or appointed officials from the metropolitan area and representatives from each of the area's transportation providers. More information can be found at www.nctcog.org.

#

**COVID-19 Infrastructure Program: Transit Partnership
Funding Recommendations**

Implementing Agency	City	Project/ Facility	Limits	Project Scope	Fiscal Year	Phase	Proposed Funding			Comments
							Federal STBG (CAT 7)	Transportation Development Credits	Total Proposed Funding	
NCTCOG	Various	Regional Transit Education Campaign Program	Regionwide	Coordinate with the three major transit agencies to implement a two-phased campaign to increase transit ridership throughout the region; Program will focus on education and outreach to help with consumer confidence and providing incentives to increase ridership	2021	I	\$1,000,000	200,000	\$1,000,000	Regional TDCs to be utilized in lieu of a cash match
							\$1,000,000	200,000	\$1,000,000	
NCTCOG	Various	Insurance for Passenger Rail Integration onto Freight Lines	Regionwide	Purchase insurance for passenger operations on freight rail lines to allow passenger rail agencies to utilize existing freight corridors for future passenger lines and operations	2022	I	\$5,000,000	1,000,000	\$5,000,000	Regional TDCs to be utilized in lieu of a cash match
							\$5,000,000	1,000,000	\$5,000,000	
NCTCOG	Various	Engineering for Passenger Rail/Roadway Interfaces	Regionwide	Establish engineering agreements with railroads, allowing for streamlined design and review of design plans for regionally significant transportation projects	2021	I	\$7,000,000	1,400,000	\$7,000,000	Regional TDCs to be utilized in lieu of a cash match; Funding would be used to establish agreements with railroads, including Union Pacific, BNSF Railway, and Fort Worth and Western Railroad; Funding may be used for agreements with other railroads if deemed necessary
							\$7,000,000	1,400,000	\$7,000,000	
Trinity Metro	Various	VA	Various locations in the Trinity Metro service area	Planning work to identify bus stops lacking concrete pads and overhead shelters; Construction of identified bus stop accommodations	2022	E, C	\$1,000,000	200,000	\$1,000,000	Regional TDCs to be utilized in lieu of a cash match
							\$1,000,000	200,000	\$1,000,000	
							\$14,000,000	2,800,000	\$14,000,000	

ELECTRONIC ITEM 5.1



COVID-19
Infrastructure
Program #015:
Transit Partnership

Regional Transportation Council

March 11, 2021

BACKGROUND

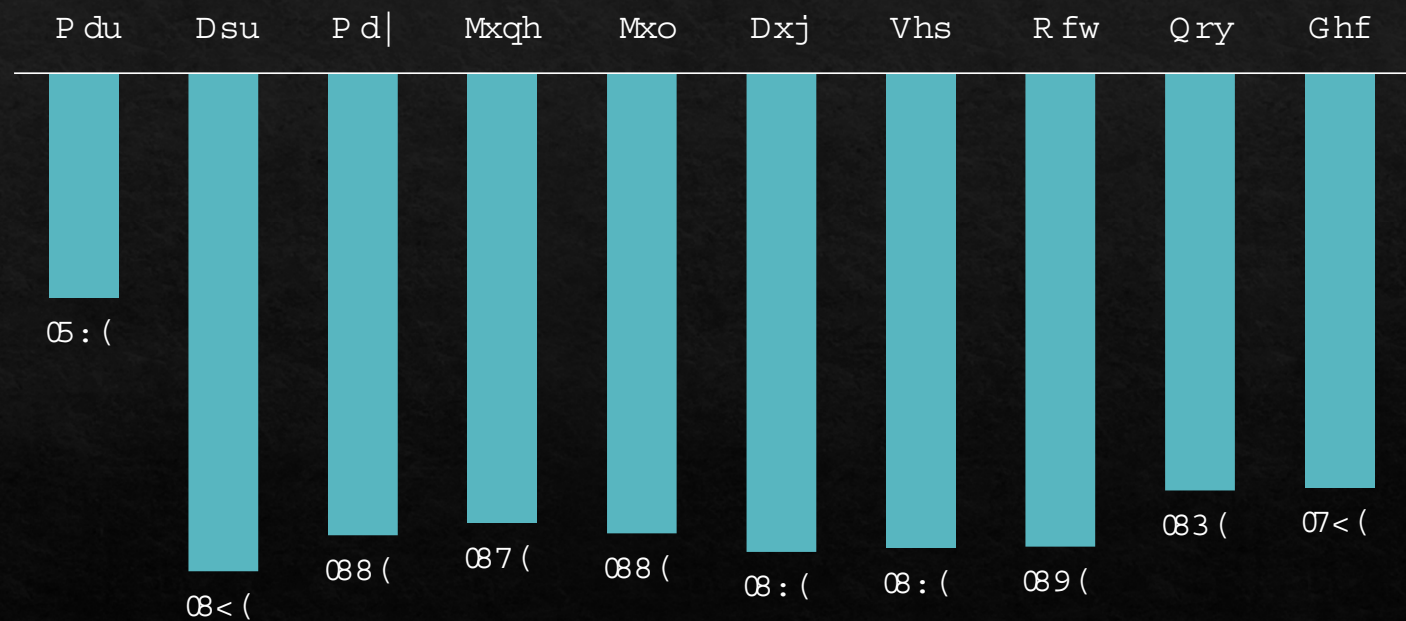
- Due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak, transit ridership has declined significantly.
- In response, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved \$25,000,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for investments in transit in the COVID-19 Round 3 Infrastructure Program in November 2020.
- Since then, discussions have occurred regarding how the funding should be allocated at the project level.

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ORIGINALLY IDENTIFIED PROJECT CATEGORIES

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 - Sduqhwk ls +v, #z lk #F olvv#4 #J d lurdgv#r q#s dvvhqj hu#dl#frulgrw
- UWF #S r d f hv 2I hghud#Shuirp dqfh#P hdvxuhv#Dgguhvhg=#Wudqv lw#D l# T x d d w | #U h l j k w

REGIONAL TRANSIT EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership has remained approximately 50% of what it was for the same period in 2019.
- Bringing riders back to the system will require targeted outreach.
- A two-phased education campaign is proposed:
 - Phase 1 - focus on growing consumer confidence
 - Phase 2 - focus on increasing ridership
- Program involves seeking out partnerships in the business community and local news networks.
- \$1,000,000 CMAQ/STBG funds proposed for the program (to be matched with Regional Transportation Development Credits (TDC))
- In order to expedite funding, this program may be implemented by a funding exchange with the transit agencies.



DCTA DENTON COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY

RIDE SAFE, STAY SAFE.

- Mask Required
- Enhanced Cleaning
- Stay Updated

COMMUTE WITH CONFIDENCE WHEN YOU #RIDEDCTA
We're taking the necessary precautions to make sure our vehicles are safe so that when you're ready, you can hop back on board.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

Vrxufh-#3 FWD

INSURANCE FOR PASSENGER RAIL INTEGRATION

- Transit authorities are required to have insurance for passenger operations on freight rail lines.
- Agencies in our region have previously had sufficient revenue for annual premiums, but revenue decreases have presented an issue.
- Additionally, premiums in the industry have increased dramatically.
- \$5,000,000 STBG funds are proposed to assist transit authorities in securing insurance until premiums level out.
- The funds would be matched with Regional TDCs.



REGIONAL RAILROAD DESIGN REVIEW

- In recent months, a need has been identified to facilitate the review of engineering plans for transportation projects crossing or utilizing Class 1 railroad lines.
- Proposed project/program involves:
 - Funding professional engineering agreements with railroads (e.g., Union Pacific, BNSF Railway, Fort Worth and Western Railroad, Kansas City Southern Railroad)
 - Agreements to expedite the design review of regionally significant projects throughout the region
 - \$7,000,000 of STBG funds (to be matched with Regional TDCs)



REGIONAL BUS STOPS

- Many bus stops leave transit riders waiting in the grass and dirt.
- Proposed project involves:
 - Funding concrete foundations and/or overhead shelters
 - \$1,000,000 STBG funds (to be matched with Regional TDCs) for bus stops in the Trinity Metro service area with specific locations to be identified by NCTCOG and Trinity Metro
- Stops in the DCTA and DART service areas to be identified for future improvement



NEXT STEPS

- Add projects to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide TIP
- Identify potential projects for the remaining \$11,000,000 of funding
- Bring proposals back to STTC and RTC for consideration

REQUESTED ACTION

- RTC approval of:
 - The proposed COVID-19 Infrastructure Program: Transit Partnership investments
 - Administratively amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and amending other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these projects.

CONTACT/QUESTIONS?

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FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FUNDING ALLOCATIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID RELIEF 2.0 FUNDING AUTHORIZATION

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

MARCH 11, 2021

SHANNON STEVENSON, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER

TRANSIT MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (CRRSAA) OF 2021

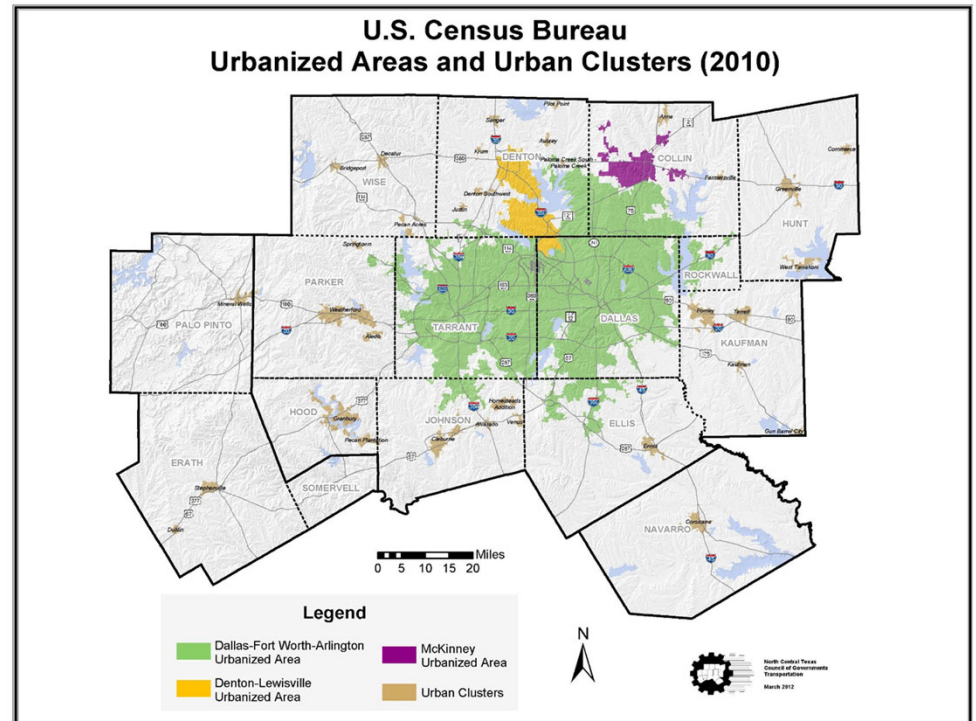
- Provides \$14 billion nationwide in additional emergency funds to help alleviate funding shortfalls for the largest public transportation systems due to the COVID-19 health emergency through the Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307) with a small amount of funding for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)
- Second round of COVID-19 relief funding provided to the transit industry following the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), which was signed at the end of March 2020 and provided \$25 billion nationwide to the industry
- Primary objective is to ensure public transit agencies receive sufficient funding; under this bill, when combined with their CARES Act apportionments, to equal at least 75% of urbanized areas' public transit operating costs based on 2018 expenses
- The Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Urbanized Area is receiving Urbanized Area Formula Program funding (Section 5307) because only DART falls below the 75% threshold
- Amount provided under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310) will be awarded to qualifying projects and must be included or be consistent with the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan ([Access North Texas](#))
- NCTCOG will not retain any funds for administrative purposes

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF FUNDING FOR THE REGION

NCTCOG: Designated Recipient of FTA
Urbanized Area (UZA) Formula funds for
North Texas¹

Available Funding for North Texas

UZA	Section 5307	Section 5310	TOTAL
DFW-Arlington	\$128,511,228	\$661,250	\$129,172,478
Denton-Lewisville	\$0	\$41,938	\$41,938



¹McKinney UZA was not allocated any funding by the FTA

5307 ALLOCATION METHODOLOGY

DFW-Arlington UZA	2018 Operating Expenses	75% of 2018 Operating Expenses	CARES Act Allocation	Recommended for CRRSAA Funding?
City of Arlington	\$3,291,878	\$2,468,909	\$10,955,694	No
City of Grand Prairie	\$801,084	\$600,813	\$3,852,375	No
City of Mesquite	Reported to NTD by STAR Transit	N/A	\$3,442,401	No
City/County Transportation	\$310,255	\$232,692	\$899,600	No
Community Transit Services	\$193,513	\$145,135	\$1,781,036	No
Dallas Area Rapid Transit	\$527,011,156	\$395,258,367	\$229,627,520	Yes
Trinity Metro/ Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA)	\$54,709,434	\$41,032,076	\$55,161,034	No
North Central Texas Council of Governments	N/A	N/A	\$796,572	No
Northeast Transportation Services (NETS)	Reported to NTD by FWTA	N/A	\$4,813,723	No
Public Transit Services	\$472,239	\$354,180	\$396,081	No
Span, Inc.	\$1,026,700	\$770,025	\$2,204,136	No
STAR Transit	\$3,869,114	\$2,901,836	\$4,698,957	No
Denton-Lewisville UZA	2018 Operating Expenses	75% of 2018 Operating Expenses	CARES Act Allocation	Recommended for CRRSAA Funding?
Denton County Transportation Authority	\$28,350,849	\$21,263,137	\$23,461,867	Not Available

METHODICAL REVIEW OF FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

STEP 1: FORMULA ALLOCATIONS

Are annual formula allocations correct and accurately account for TRE?

Yes

STEP 2: CARES ACT ALLOCATIONS

Did the RTC correctly allocate CARES Act funding and account for TRE?

Yes

STEP 3: CONGRESSIONAL EVALUATION

Did Congress allocate any CRRSAA funding to North Texas because any agencies were below the 75% threshold?

Yes

STEP 4: AGENCIES BELOW 75% THRESHOLD

Was DART the only transit agency in North Texas below the 75% threshold?

Yes

STEP 5: RTC DISCRETION

Does the RTC have discretion on how to distribute CRRSAA funds?

Yes

Other than 2018 NTD
Authorities with Disparate Tools
Federal Awareness of TRE

STEP 5: RTC DISCRETION CONTINUED

Agency	2018 Operating Expenses*	75% of 2018 Operating Expenses	CARES Act Allocation	Percent of 2018 Operating Expenses (CARES Act Only)	Recommended CRRSAA Allocation	Total Recommended COVID-19 Relief Funding (CARES Act + CRRSAA)	Percent of 2018 Operating Expenses (Total COVID-19 Relief Funding)
DART	\$527,011,156 - \$16,742,596 = \$510,268,560	\$382,701,420 \$395,258,367	\$229,627,520	45%	\$128,511,228	\$358,138,748	70%
Trinity Metro	\$54,709,434 + \$16,742,596 = \$71,452,030	\$53,589,023 \$41,032,076	\$55,161,034	77%	<i>Not Recommended</i>	\$55,161,034	77%

*Adjustment for Trinity Metro's TRE operating expenses (\$16,742,596) shown in green, which are reported by DART to NTD

CONTACT INFORMATION

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Department of Transportation's Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Program for Fiscal Year 2021

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary of Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity

Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Program FY 2021 Notice of Funding Opportunity

SUMMARY: The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program provides Federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national or regional significance. This notice solicits applications for awards under the program's fiscal year (FY) 2021 funding, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

DATES: Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 19, 2021. The Grants.gov "Apply" function will open by February 17, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted through www.Grants.gov. Only applicants who comply with all submission requirements described in this notice and submit applications through www.Grants.gov will be eligible for award.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information regarding this notice, please contact the Office of the Secretary via email at INFRAgrants@dot.gov, or call Paul Baumer at (202) 366-1092. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993. In addition, up to the application deadline, the Department will post

answers to common questions and requests for clarifications on USDOT’s website at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/INFRAgrants>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The organization of this notice is based on an outline set in 2 CFR Part 200 to ensure consistency across Federal financial assistance programs. However, that format is designed for locating specific information, not for linear reading. For readers seeking to familiarize themselves with the INFRA program, the Department encourages them to begin with Section A (Program Description), which describes the Department’s goals for the INFRA program and purpose in making awards, and Section E (Application Review Information), which describes how the Department will select among eligible applications. Those two sections will provide appropriate context for the remainder of the notice: Section B (Federal Award Information) describes information about the size and nature of awards; Section C (Eligibility Information) describes eligibility requirements for applicants and projects; Section D (Application and Submission Information) describes in detail how to apply for an award; Section F (Federal Award Administration Information) describes administrative requirements that will accompany awards; and Sections G (Federal Awarding Agency Contacts) and H (Other Information) provide additional administrative information.

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A. Program Description

1. Overview

The INFRA program provides Federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national or regional significance. To maximize the value of FY 2021 INFRA funds for all Americans, the Department is focusing the competition on transportation infrastructure projects that support six key objectives, each of which is discussed in greater detail in section A.2:

- (1) Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- (2) Addressing climate change and environmental justice impacts;
- (3) Advancing racial equity and Reducing barriers to opportunity;
- (4) Leveraging Federal funding to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- (5) Deploying innovative technology, encouraging innovative approaches to project delivery, and incentivizing the use of innovative financing; and
- (6) Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance.

This notice's focus on the six key objectives does not supplant the Department's focus on safety as our top priority. Consistent with the R.O.U.T.E.S. initiative, the Department seeks rural projects that address deteriorating conditions and disproportionately high fatality rates on rural transportation infrastructure.

2. *Key Program Objectives*

This section of the notice describes the six key program objectives that the Department intends to advance with FY 2021 INFRA funds. Section E.1 describes how the Department will evaluate applications to advance these objectives, and section D.2.b describes how applicants should address the six objectives in their applications.

a. Key Program Objective #1: Supporting Economic Vitality

A strong transportation network is critical to the functioning and growth of the American economy. The nation's industry depends on the transportation network to move the goods that it produces, and facilitate the movements of the workers who are responsible for that production. When the nation's highways, railways, and ports function well, that infrastructure connects people to jobs, increases the efficiency of delivering goods and thereby cuts the costs of doing business, reduces the burden of commuting, and improves overall well-being.

Infrastructure investment also provides opportunities for workers to find good-paying jobs with the choice to join a union and supports American industry through the application of domestic preference requirements. Projects that use project labor agreements and deploy local hiring provisions also contribute to economic vitality.

This objective aligns with the Department's strategic goals² of (1) investing in infrastructure to ensure mobility accessibility and to stimulate economic growth, productivity, and competitiveness for American workers and businesses and (2) reducing transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries across the transportation system.

² The U.S. Department of Transportation Strategic Plan for FY 2018–2022 (Feb. 2018) is available at <https://www.transportation.gov/dot-strategic-plan>.

b. Key Program Objective #2: Climate Change and Environmental Justice Impacts

The Department seeks to select projects that have considered climate change and environmental justice in the planning stage and were designed with specific elements to address climate change impacts. Projects should directly support Climate Action Plans or apply environmental justice screening tools in the planning stage. Projects should include components that reduce emissions, promote energy efficiency, incorporate electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase resiliency, and recycle or redevelop existing infrastructure. A list of planning activities and project components that address this objective and the Department will consider during application evaluations is in Section E.1.a (Criterion #2). This objective aligns with the Department's Infrastructure Objective #1: Project Delivery, Planning, Environment, Funding, and Finance Partnerships and Infrastructure Objective #2: Life Cycle and Preventative Maintenance.

c. Key Program Objective #3: Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

The Department seeks to use the INFRA program to encourage racial equity in two areas: (1) planning and policies related to racial equity and barriers to opportunity; and (2) project investments that either proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunity, including automobile dependence as a form of barrier, or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity. This objective supports the Department's strategic goal related to infrastructure, with the potential for significantly enhancing environmental stewardship and community partnerships, and reflects Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (86 FR 7009). See section E.1.a (Criterion #3) for additional information. This objective aligns with the Department's

Infrastructure Objective #1: Project Delivery, Planning, Environment, Funding, and Finance
Partnerships and Innovation Strategic Objective #2: Deployment of Innovation.

d. Key Program Objective #4: Leveraging of Federal Funding

The Department is committed to supporting increased investment in infrastructure from all levels of government. The Department recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated infrastructure funding challenges faced by State and local governments. However, the Department continues to seek to maximize all available Federal and non-Federal funding for investment in infrastructure as a critical contribution to the economy. This objective aligns with the Department's Infrastructure Strategic Objective #1: Project Delivery, Planning, Environment, Funding, and Finance.

e. Key Program Objective #5: Innovation

The Department seeks to use the INFRA program to encourage innovation in three areas, to build transformative projects: (1) the deployment of innovative technology and expanded access to broadband; (2) use of innovative permitting, contracting, and other project delivery practices; and (3) innovative financing. This objective supports the Department's strategic goal of innovation, with the potential for significantly enhancing the safety, efficiency, and performance of the transportation network. The USDOT anticipates INFRA projects will support the integration of new technology and practices and demonstrate how those technologies and practices will contribute to the goals of the program as described in 23 U.S.C. § 117. In section E.1.a (Criterion #5), the Department provides many examples of innovative technologies, practices, and financing. It encourages applicants to identify those that are suitable for their projects and local constraints. This objective aligns with the Department's strategic goal to lead

in the development and deployment of innovative practices and technologies that improve the safety and performance of the nation's transportation system.

f. Key Program Objective #6: Performance and Accountability

The Department seeks to increase project sponsor accountability and performance by evaluating each INFRA applicant's plans to address the full lifecycle costs of their project and willingness to condition award funding on achieving specific Departmental goals.

To maximize public benefits from INFRA funds and promote local activity that will provide benefits beyond the INFRA-funded projects, the Department seeks projects that allow it to condition funding on specific, measurable outcomes. For appropriate projects, the Department may use one or more of the following types of events to trigger availability of some or all INFRA funds: (1) reaching construction and project completion in a timely manner; or (2) achieving transportation performance targets that support economic vitality or improve safety. This objective aligns with the Department's Infrastructure Strategic Objective #2: Life Cycle and Preventative Maintenance, and Infrastructure Strategic Objective #3: System Operations and Performance.

In section E.1.d (Criterion #6), the Department provides a framework for accountability measures and encourages applicants to voluntarily identify those that are most appropriate for their projects and local constraints.

3. Changes from the FY 2020 NOFO

The FY2021 INFRA Notice is updated to reflect priorities around creating good-paying jobs, ensuring safety, advancing racial equity, addressing climate change, and building innovative, transformative projects. There are also two new program objectives that are incorporated into the merit evaluation process as described in Section E. These are Climate

Change and Environmental Justice Impacts, and Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity. The NOFO reflects the importance of creating good-paying jobs. Innovative project delivery contracting and procurement related to project labor agreements and inclusive local participation goals will be considered to the extent permitted by Federal law and DOT regulations.³

Section D.2.b.vii of this notice provides additional information explaining how the Department will evaluate whether applications meet the statutory Large Project Requirements.

Section H of this Notice provides additional detail on the INFRA Extra initiative. The INFRA Extra initiative provides certain INFRA applicants the opportunity to apply for TIFIA credit assistance for up to 49% of eligible project costs. The INFRA Extra initiative does not impact how applications will be considered for an INFRA grant nor how applications for TIFIA credit assistance will be evaluated (other than in respect of eligibility to apply for credit assistance for up to 49% of eligible project costs).

Applicants who are planning to re-apply using materials prepared for prior competitions should ensure that their FY 2021 application fully addresses the criteria and considerations described in this Notice and that all relevant information is up to date.

Section H of this NOFO provides additional detail on the INFRA Extra initiative. The INFRA Extra initiative provides certain INFRA applicants the opportunity to apply for TIFIA credit assistance for up to 49% of eligible project costs. The INFRA Extra initiative does not impact how applications will be considered for an INFRA grant nor how applications for TIFIA credit assistance will be evaluated (other than in respect of eligibility to apply for credit assistance for up to 49% of eligible project costs).

³ Contracts awarded with geographic hiring preferences are eligible for assistance under DOT financial assistance programs only if the recipient makes the certifications required under section 199B of division L of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260.

4. Additional Information

The INFRA program is authorized at 23 U.S.C. § 117. It is described in the Federal Assistance Listings under the assistance listing program title “Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects” and assistance listing number 20.934.

B. Federal Award Information

1. Amount Available

The FAST Act authorizes the INFRA program at \$4.5 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2016 through 2020, and the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act authorizes \$1 billion for FY 2021, to be awarded by USDOT on a competitive basis to projects of national or regional significance that meet statutory requirements. This notice solicits applications for the \$889 million in FY 2021 INFRA funds available for awards. In addition to the FY 2021 INFRA funds, amounts from prior year authorizations, presently estimated at up to \$150 million, may be made available and awarded under this solicitation. Any award under this notice will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

2. Restrictions on Award Portfolio

The Department will make awards under the INFRA program to both large and small projects (refer to section C.3.c for a definition of large and small projects). For a large project, the FAST Act specifies that an INFRA grant must be at least \$25 million. For a small project, including both construction awards and project development awards, the grant must be at least \$5 million. For each fiscal year of INFRA funds, 10 percent of available funds are reserved for small projects, and 90 percent of funds are reserved for large projects.

The program statute specifies that not more than \$600 million in aggregate of the \$5.5 billion authorized for INFRA grants over fiscal years 2016 to 2021 may be used for grants to

freight rail, water (including ports), or other freight intermodal projects that make significant improvements to freight movement on the National Highway Freight Network. After accounting for FY 2016-2020 INFRA selections, as much as \$146 million may be available within this constraint. Only the non-highway portion(s) of multimodal projects count toward this limit. Grade crossing and grade separation projects do not count toward the limit for freight rail, port, and intermodal projects. The Department's awards may not exhaust this limitation.

The program statute requires that at least 25 percent of the funds provided for INFRA grants must be used for projects located in rural areas, as defined in Section C.3.e. The Department may elect to go above that threshold. The USDOT must consider geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the need for a balance in addressing the needs of urban and rural areas.

C. Eligibility Information

To be selected for an INFRA grant, an applicant must be an Eligible Applicant and the project must be an Eligible Project that meets the Minimum Project Size Requirement.

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for INFRA grants are: (1) a State or group of States; (2) a metropolitan planning organization that serves an Urbanized Area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) with a population of more than 200,000 individuals; (3) a unit of local government or group of local governments; (4) a political subdivision of a State or local government; (5) a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority; (6) a Federal land management agency that applies jointly with a State or group of States; (7) a tribal government or a consortium of tribal governments; or (8) a multi-State or multijurisdictional group of public entities.

Multiple States or jurisdictions that submit a joint application should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and should be signed by each applicant. The applicant that will be responsible for financial administration of the project must be an eligible applicant.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

This section describes the statutory cost share requirements for an INFRA award. Cost share will also be evaluated according to the “Leveraging of Federal Funding” evaluation criterion described in Section E.1.a (Criterion #4). That section clarifies that the Department seeks applications for projects that exceed the minimum non-Federal cost share requirement described here.

INFRA grants may be used for up to 60 percent of future eligible project costs. Other Federal assistance may satisfy the non-Federal share requirement for an INFRA grant, but total Federal assistance for a project receiving an INFRA grant may not exceed 80 percent of future eligible project costs. Non-Federal sources include State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue, local funds originating from State or local revenue-funded programs, private funds or other funding sources of non-Federal origins. If a Federal land management agency applies jointly with a State or group of States, and that agency carries out the project, then Federal funds that were not made available under titles 23 or 49 of the United States Code may be used for the non-Federal share. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, local cost-share may not be counted as non-Federal share for both the INFRA and another Federal program. For any project, the Department cannot consider previously incurred costs or previously expended or encumbered funds towards the matching requirement. Matching funds are subject to the same

Federal requirements described in Section F.2.b as awarded funds. See Sections D.2.b.iv, D.2.b.vii.5a, and E.1.b.v.5 for information about documenting cost sharing in the application.

For the purpose of evaluating eligibility under the statutory limit on total Federal assistance, funds from TIFIA and Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) credit assistance programs are considered Federal assistance and, combined with other Federal assistance, may not exceed 80 percent of the future eligible project costs.

3. Other

a. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects for INFRA grants are: highway freight projects carried out on the National Highway Freight Network (23 U.S.C. § 167); highway or bridge projects carried out on the National Highway System (NHS), including projects that add capacity on the Interstate System to improve mobility or projects in a national scenic area; railway-highway grade crossing or grade separation projects; or a freight project that is 1) an intermodal or rail project, or 2) within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility. A project within the boundaries of a freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility must be a surface transportation infrastructure project necessary to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, or access into or out of the facility and must significantly improve freight movement on the National Highway Freight Network. Improving freight movement on the National Highway Freight Network may include shifting freight transportation to other modes, thereby reducing congestion and bottlenecks on the National Highway Freight Network. For a freight project within the boundaries of a freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility, Federal funds can only support project elements that provide public benefits.

b. Eligible Project Costs

INFRA grants may be used for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, equipment acquisition, and operational improvements directly related to system performance. Statutorily, INFRA grants may also fund development phase activities, including planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, preliminary engineering, design, and other preconstruction activities, provided the project meets statutory requirements. However, the Department is seeking to use INFRA funding on projects that result in construction meaning development phase activities are less competitive by nature of the evaluation structure described in Section E. Public-private partnership assessments for projects in the development phase are also eligible costs.

INFRA grant recipients may use INFRA funds to pay the subsidy and administrative costs necessary to receive TIFIA credit assistance.

All INFRA projects are subject to the Buy America requirement at 23 U.S.C. § 313. The Department expects all INFRA applicants to comply with that requirement without needing a waiver. To obtain a waiver, a recipient must be prepared to demonstrate how they will maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing their project. If you anticipate requiring a waiver, you must state so in your application.

c. Minimum Project Size Requirement

For the purposes of determining whether a project meets the minimum project size requirement, the Department will count all future eligible project costs under the award and some related costs incurred before selection for an INFRA grant. Previously incurred costs will be counted toward the minimum project size requirement only if they were eligible project costs

under Section C.3.b. and were expended as part of the project for which the applicant seeks funds. Although those previously incurred costs may be used for meeting the minimum project size thresholds described in this Section, they cannot be reimbursed with INFRA grant funds, nor will they count toward the project’s required non-Federal share.

i. Large Projects

The minimum project size for large projects is the lesser of \$100 million; 30 percent of a State’s FY 2020 Federal-aid apportionment if the project is located in one State; or 50 percent of the larger participating State’s FY 2020 apportionment for projects located in more than one State. The following chart identifies the minimum total project cost, rounded up to the nearest million, for projects for FY 2021 for both single and multi-State projects.

State	FY21 NSFHP (30% of FY20 apportionment) One-State Minimum (millions)	FY21 NSFHP (50% of FY20 apportionment) Multi-State Minimum* (millions)
	Alabama	\$100
Alaska	\$100	\$100
Arizona	\$100	\$100
Arkansas	\$100	\$100
California	\$100	\$100
Colorado	\$100	\$100
Connecticut	\$100	\$100

Delaware	\$56	\$94
Dist. of Col.	\$53	\$88
Florida	\$100	\$100
Georgia	\$100	\$100
Hawaii	\$56	\$94
Idaho	\$95	\$100
Illinois	\$100	\$100
Indiana	\$100	\$100
Iowa	\$100	\$100
Kansas	\$100	\$100
Kentucky	\$100	\$100
Louisiana	\$100	\$100
Maine	\$62	\$100
Maryland	\$100	\$100
Massachusetts	\$100	\$100
Michigan	\$100	\$100
Minnesota	\$100	\$100
Mississippi	\$100	\$100
Missouri	\$100	\$100
Montana	\$100	\$100
Nebraska	\$96	\$100
Nevada	\$100	\$100

New Hampshire	\$55	\$92
New Jersey	\$100	\$100
New Mexico	\$100	\$100
New York	\$100	\$100
North Carolina	\$100	\$100
North Dakota	\$83	\$100
Ohio	\$100	\$100
Oklahoma	\$100	\$100
Oregon	\$100	\$100
Pennsylvania	\$100	\$100
Rhode Island	\$73	\$100
South Carolina	\$100	\$100
South Dakota	\$94	\$100
Tennessee	\$100	\$100
Texas	\$100	\$100
Utah	\$100	\$100
Vermont	\$68	\$100
Virginia	\$100	\$100
Washington	\$100	\$100
West Virginia	\$100	\$100
Wisconsin	\$100	\$100
Wyoming	\$85	\$100

* For multi-State projects, the minimum project size is the largest of the multi-State minimums from the participating States.

ii. Small Projects

A small project is an eligible project that does not meet the minimum project size described in Section C.3.c.i.

d. Large/Small Project Requirements

For a large project to be selected, the Department must determine that the project meets seven requirements described in 23 U.S.C. § 117(g) and below. If your project consists of multiple components with independent utility, the Department must determine that each component meets each requirement, to select it for an award. The requirements are listed below and further described in Section E.1.b.v and Section D.2.b.vii:

Large Project Requirement #1: The project will generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

Large Project Requirement #2: The project will be cost effective.

Large Project Requirement #3: The project will contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the goals described in 23 U.S.C § 150.

Large Project Requirement #4: The project is based on the results of preliminary engineering.

Large Project Requirement #5: With respect to related non-Federal financial commitments, one or more stable and dependable funding or financing sources are available to construct, maintain, and operate the project, and contingency amounts are available to cover unanticipated cost increases.

Large Project Requirement #6: The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without other Federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor.

Large Project Requirement #7 The project is reasonably expected to begin construction no later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project.

For a small project to be selected, the Department must consider the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project and the effect of the proposed project on mobility in the State and region in which the project is carried out.

e. Rural/Urban Area

This section describes the statutory definition of urban and rural areas and the minimum statutory requirements for projects that meet those definitions. For more information on how the Department consider projects in urban, rural, and low population areas as part of the selection process, see Section E.1.b.i.

The INFRA statute defines a rural area as an area outside an Urbanized Area⁴ with a population of over 200,000. In this notice, urban area is defined as inside an Urbanized Area, as a designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of 200,000 or more.⁵ Rural and urban definitions differ in some other USDOT programs, including TIFIA. Cost share requirements and minimum grant awards are the same for projects located in rural and urban areas. The Department will consider a project to be in a rural area if the majority of the project (determined by geographic location(s) where the majority of the money is to be spent) is located in a rural area. However, if a project consists of multiple components, as described under section C.3.f or

⁴ For Census 2010, the Census Bureau defined an Urbanized Area (UA) as an area that consists of densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people. Updated lists of UAs are available on the Census Bureau website at http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/. For the purposes of the INFRA program, Urbanized Areas with populations fewer than 200,000 will be considered rural.

⁵ See www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/InfRAgrants for a list of Urbanized Areas with a population of 200,000 or more.

C.3.g., then for each separate component the Department will determine whether that component is rural or urban. In some circumstances, including networks of projects under section C.3.g that cover wide geographic regions, this component-by-component determination may result in INFRA awards that include urban and rural funds.

f. Project Components

An application may describe a project that contains more than one component. The USDOT may award funds for a component, instead of the larger project, if that component (1) independently meets minimum award amounts described in Section B and all eligibility requirements described in Section C, including the requirements for large projects described in Sections C.3.d and D.2.b.vii; (2) independently aligns well with the selection criteria specified in Section E; and (3) meets National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements with respect to independent utility. Independent utility means that the component will represent a transportation improvement that is usable and represents a reasonable expenditure of USDOT funds even if no other improvements are made in the area, and will be ready for intended use upon completion of that component's construction. If an application describes multiple components, the application should demonstrate how the components collectively advance the purposes of the INFRA program. An applicant should not add multiple components to a single application merely to aggregate costs or avoid submitting multiple applications.

Applicants should be aware that, depending upon applicable Federal law and the relationship among project components, an award funding only some project components may make other project components subject to Federal requirements as described in Section F.2.b. For example, under 40 CFR § 1508.25, the NEPA review for the funded project component may need to include evaluation of all project components as connected, similar, or cumulative actions.

The Department strongly encourages applicants to identify in their applications the project components that meet independent utility standards and separately detail the costs and INFRA funding requested for each component. If the application identifies one or more independent project components, the application should clearly identify how each independent component addresses selection criteria and produces benefits on its own, in addition to describing how the full proposal of which the independent component is a part addresses selection criteria.

g. Network of Projects

An application may describe and request funding for a network of projects. A network of projects is one INFRA award that consists of multiple projects addressing the same transportation problem. For example, if an applicant seeks to improve efficiency along a rail corridor, then their application might propose one award for four grade separation projects at four different railway-highway crossings. Each of the four projects would independently reduce congestion but the overall benefits would be greater if the projects were completed together under a single award.

The USDOT will evaluate applications that describe networks of projects similar to how it evaluates projects with multiple components. Because of their similarities, the guidance in Section C.3.f is applicable to networks of projects, and applicants should follow that guidance on how to present information in their application. As with project components, depending upon applicable Federal law and the relationship among projects within a network of projects, an award that funds only some projects in a network may make other projects subject to Federal requirements as described in Section F.2.

h. Application Limit

To encourage applicants to prioritize their INFRA submissions, each eligible applicant may submit no more than three applications. The three-application limit applies only to applications where the applicant is the lead applicant. There is no limit on applications for which an applicant can be listed as a partnering agency. If a lead applicant submits more than three applications as the lead applicant, only the first three received will be considered.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address

Applications must be submitted through www.Grants.gov. Instructions for submitting applications can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/INFRAgrants>.

2. Content and Form of Application

The application must include the Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance), Standard Form 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs), cover page, and the Project Narrative. More detailed information about the cover pages and Project Narrative follows.

a. Cover Page

Each application should contain a cover page with the following chart:

Basic Project Information	
What is the Project Name?	
Who is the Project Sponsor?	

Was an INFRA application for this project submitted previously? (If Yes, please include title)	
Project Costs	
<i>INFRA Request Amount</i>	Exact Amount in year-of-expenditure dollars.
<i>Estimated Federal funding (excl. INFRA), anticipated to be used in INFRA funded future project.</i>	Estimate in year-of-expenditure dollars.
<i>Estimated non-Federal funding anticipated to be used in INFRA funded future project.</i>	Estimate in year-of-expenditure dollars.
<i>Future Eligible Project Cost (Sum</i>	Estimate in year-of-expenditure dollars.

<i>of previous three rows)</i>	
<i>Previously incurred project costs (if applicable)</i>	Estimate in year-of-expenditure dollars.
<i>Total Project Cost (Sum of 'previous incurred' and 'future eligible')</i>	Estimate in year-of-expenditure dollars.
Are matching funds restricted to a specific project component? If so, which one?	
Project Eligibility To be eligible, all future eligible project costs must fall into at least one of the following four categories:	
Approximately how much of the	Please provide an estimate, in year-of-expenditure dollars, of the costs that meet this definition

<p>estimated future eligible project costs will be spent on components of the project currently located on National Highway Freight Network (NHFN)?</p>	
<p>Approximately how much of the estimated future eligible project costs will be spent on components of the project currently located on the National Highway System (NHS)?</p>	<p>Please provide an estimate, in year-of-expenditure dollars, of the costs that meet this definition. Maps can be found here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/national_highway_system/nhs_maps/</p>
<p>Approximately how much of the estimated future</p>	<p>Please provide an estimate, in year-of-expenditure dollars, of the costs that meet this definition</p>

<p>eligible project costs will be spent on components constituting railway-highway grade crossing or grade separation projects?</p>	
<p>Approximately how much of the estimated future eligible project costs will be spent on components constituting intermodal or freight rail projects, or freight projects within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail, water</p>	<p>Please provide an estimate, in year-of-expenditure dollars, of the costs that meet this definition</p>

(including ports), or intermodal facility?	
Project Location	
State(s) in which project is located	
Small or large project	Small/Large
Urbanized Area in which project is located, if applicable	
Population of Urbanized Area (According to 2010 Census)	
Is the project located (entirely or partially) in Federally designated community development zones	<p>Yes/No. If yes, please describe which of the four Federally designated community development zones in which your project is located.</p> <p>Opportunity Zones: (https://opportunityzones.hud.gov/)</p> <p>Empowerment Zones: (https://www.hud.gov/hudprograms/empowerment_zones)</p> <p>Promise Zones: (https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/field_policy_mgt/fieldpolicymgt_pz)</p>

	<p>Choice Neighborhoods:</p> <p>https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn</p>
<p>Is the project currently programmed in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP • STIP • MPO Long Range Transportation Plan • State Long Range Transportation Plan • State Freight Plan? 	<p>Yes/no</p> <p><u>(please specify in which plans the project is currently programmed, and provide the identifying number if applicable)</u></p>

b. Project Narrative

The Department recommends that the project narrative follow the basic outline below to address the program requirements and assist evaluators in locating relevant information.

I. Project Description	See D.2.b.i
II. Project Location	See D.2.b.ii
III. Project Parties	See D.2.b.iii.
IV. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of all Project Funding	See D.2.b.iv
V. Merit Criteria	See D.2.b.v
VI. Project Readiness	See D.2.b.vi and E.1.c.ii
VII. Large/Small Project Requirements	See D.2.b.vii and C.3.d.

The project narrative should include the information necessary for the Department to determine that the project satisfies project requirements described in Sections B and C and to assess the selection criteria specified in Section E.1. To the extent practicable, applicants should provide supporting data and documentation in a form that is directly verifiable by the Department. The Department may ask any applicant to supplement data in its application, but expects applications to be complete upon submission.

In addition to a detailed statement of work, detailed project schedule, and detailed project budget, the project narrative should include a table of contents, maps, and graphics, as appropriate, to make the information easier to review. The Department recommends that the project narrative be prepared with standard formatting preferences (i.e., a single-spaced document, using a standard 12-point font such as Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins). The

project narrative may not exceed 25 pages in length, excluding cover pages and table of contents. The only substantive portions that may exceed the 25-page limit are documents supporting assertions or conclusions made in the 25-page project narrative. If possible, website links to supporting documentation should be provided rather than copies of these supporting materials. If supporting documents are submitted, applicants should clearly identify within the project narrative the relevant portion of the project narrative that each supporting document supports. At the applicant's discretion, relevant materials provided previously to a modal administration in support of a different USDOT financial assistance program may be referenced and described as unchanged. The Department recommends using appropriately descriptive final names (e.g., "Project Narrative," "Maps," "Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Support," etc.) for all attachments. The USDOT recommends applications include the following sections:

i. Project Summary

The first section of the application should provide a concise description of the project, the transportation challenges that it is intended to address, and how it will address those challenges. This section should discuss the project's history, including a description of any previously incurred costs. The applicant may use this section to place the project into a broader context of other infrastructure investments being pursued by the project sponsor.

ii. Project Location

This section of the application should describe the project location, including a detailed geographical description of the proposed project, a map of the project's location and connections to existing transportation infrastructure, and geospatial data describing the project location. If

the project is located within the boundary of a 2010 Census-designated Urbanized Area, the application should identify the Urbanized Area.⁶

iii. Project Parties

This section of the application should list all project parties, including details about the proposed grant recipient and other public and private parties who are involved in delivering the project, such as port authorities, terminal operators, freight railroads, shippers, carriers, freight-related associations, third-party logistics providers, and freight industry workforce organizations.

iv. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

This section of the application should describe the project's budget. At a minimum, it should include:

- (A) Previously incurred expenses, as defined in Section C.3.c.
- (B) Future eligible costs, as defined in Section C.3.c.
- (C) For all funds to be used for future eligible project costs, the source and amount of those funds.
 - For non-Federal funds to be used for future eligible project costs, documentation of funding commitments should be referenced here and included as an appendix to the application.
 - For Federal funds to be used for future eligible project costs, the amount, nature, and source of any required non-Federal match for those funds.

⁶ Lists of Urbanized Areas are available on the Census Bureau website at http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ and maps are available at <https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerweb/>. For the purposes of the INFRA program, Urbanized Areas with populations fewer than 200,000 will be considered rural.

(D) A budget showing how each source of funds will be spent. The budget should show how each funding source will share in each major construction activity, and present that data in dollars and percentages. Funding sources should be grouped into three categories: non-Federal; INFRA; and other Federal. If the project contains components, the budget should separate the costs of each project component. If the project will be completed in phases, the budget should separate the costs of each phase. The budget should be detailed enough to demonstrate that the project satisfies the statutory cost-sharing requirements described in Section C.2.

(E) Information showing that the applicant has budgeted sufficient contingency amounts to cover unanticipated cost increases.

(F) The amount of the requested INFRA funds that would be subject to the limit on freight rail, port, and intermodal infrastructure described in Section B.2.

In addition to the information enumerated above, this section should provide complete information on how all project funds may be used. For example, if a source of funds is available only after a condition is satisfied, the application should identify that condition and describe the applicant's control over whether it is satisfied. Similarly, if a source of funds is available for expenditure only during a fixed period, the application should describe that restriction.

Complete information about project funds will ensure that the Department's expectations for award execution align with any funding restrictions unrelated to the Department, even if an award differs from the applicant's request.

v. Merit Criteria

This section of the application should demonstrate how the project aligns with the Merit Criteria described in Section E.1 of this notice. The Department encourages applicants to

address each criterion or expressly state that the project does not address the criterion.

Applicants are not required to follow a specific format, but the following organization, which addresses each criterion separately, promotes a clear discussion that assists project evaluators.

To minimize redundant information in the application, the Department encourages applicants to cross-reference from this section of their application to relevant substantive information in other sections of the application.

The guidance here is about how the applicant should organize their application.

Guidance describing how the Department will evaluate projects against the Merit Criteria is in Section E.1 of this notice. Applicants also should review that section before considering how to organize their application.

Criterion #1: Support for National or Regional Economic Vitality

This section of the application should describe the anticipated outcomes of the project that support the Economic Vitality criterion (described in Section E.1.a of this notice). The applicant should summarize the conclusions of the project's benefit-cost analysis, including estimates of the project's benefit-cost ratio and net benefits. The applicant should also describe economic impacts and other data-supported benefits that are not included in the benefit-cost analysis, such as how their project creates good-paying jobs with the choice to join a union and will support American industry by complying with domestic preference laws without need for a waiver. If you are pursuing innovative project delivery strategies related to economic vitality, such as using project labor agreements to local hiring requirements, include that information in the Innovation section. For the purposes of considering whether the project primarily serves freight and goods movement, the application should include estimates of the volume and share of

freight (trucks, rail carloads, TEUs, tonnage, or other relevant measure) that travels through the project area and identify the sources for those estimates.

Consistent with the Department's ROUTES Initiative, the Department encourages applicants to describe how the project would address the unique challenges of rural transportation networks in safety, infrastructure condition, and passenger and freight usage, should the project serve a rural location.

The benefit-cost analysis calculation file(s) should be provided as an appendix to the project narrative, as described in Section D.2.c. of this notice.

Criterion #2: Climate Change and Environmental Justice Impacts

This section of the application should demonstrate whether the project has incorporated climate change and environmental justice in terms of a) planning and policy or b) design components with outcomes that address climate change. To address the planning and policies element of this criterion, the application should describe what specific climate change or environmental justice activities have been completed for this project. The application should state whether a project is incorporated in a climate action plan, whether an equitable development plan has been prepared, and whether tools such as EPA's EJSCREEN have been applied in project planning.⁷ To address the design components element of this criterion, the application should describe specific and direct ways that the project will mitigate or reduce climate change impacts. This may include a description of how the project encourages modal shift, temporal changes in asset utilization to reduce congestion, or incorporates multimodal infrastructure to reduce vehicle miles traveled, other ways that the project reduces emissions or uses technology to increase energy efficiency, incorporates resiliency measures for disaster

⁷ The EJSCREEN tool can be referenced on the EPA site: <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

preparedness, or recycles and enhances existing idle or dilapidated infrastructure. See Section E.1.a for additional information related to evaluation of Climate Change and Environmental Justice.

Criterion #3: Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

This section of the application should include sufficient information to evaluate how the applicant will advance the Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity program objective. The applicant should indicate which (if any) planning and policies related to racial equity and barriers to opportunity they are implementing or have implemented, along with the specific project investment details necessary for the Department to evaluate if the investments are being made to either proactively advance racial equity and barriers to opportunity or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity. All project investment costs for the project that are related to racial equity and barriers to opportunity should be summarized here, even if those project costs are ineligible for the INFRA grant. See Section E.1.a for additional information.

Any relevant racial equity and barriers to opportunity related policies, plans and outreach documentation as described in Section E.1.a, should be provided as an appendix to the project narrative.

Criterion #4: Leveraging of Federal Funding

The Leveraging Criterion will be assessed according to the methodology described in Section E.1.a., referencing information provided in the application's Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds section. Please describe the source of all non-INFRA funds in the project's financial plan. Please state the share of non-INFRA funds coming from Federal funds, including Federal formula funds that may be passed through a State entity. Please provide evidence that funding is stable, dependable, and will be available to complete the project.

Criterion #5: Potential for Innovation

This section of the application should contain sufficient information to evaluate how the project can be transformative in achieving program goals, and includes or enables innovation in: (1) the accelerated deployment of innovative technology, including expanded access to broadband; (2) use of innovative permitting, contracting, and other project delivery practices; and (3) innovative financing. If the project does not address a particular innovation area, the application should state this fact. Please see Section E.1.a for additional information.

Criterion #6: Performance and Accountability

This section of the application should include sufficient information to evaluate how the applicant will advance the Performance and Accountability program objective. In general, the applicant should indicate which (if any) accountability measures they are willing to implement or have implemented, along with the specific details necessary for the Department to evaluate their accountability measure. The applicant should also address the lifecycle cost component of this criterion in this section. See Section E.1.a for additional information.

vi. Project Readiness

This section of the application should include information that, when considered with the project budget information presented elsewhere in the application, is sufficient for the Department to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin construction in a timely manner. To assist the Department's project readiness assessment, the applicant should provide the information requested on technical feasibility, project schedule, project approvals, and project risks, each of which is described in greater detail in the following sections. Applicants are not required to follow the specific format described here, but this organization, which addresses each relevant aspect of project readiness, promotes a clear discussion that assists

project evaluators. To minimize redundant information in the application, the Department encourages applicants to cross-reference from this section of their application to relevant substantive information in other sections of the application.

The guidance here is about what information applicants should provide and how the applicant should organize their application. Guidance describing how the Department will evaluate a project's readiness is described in section E.1 of this notice. Applicants also should review that section before considering how to organize their application.

(A) Technical Feasibility. The applicant should demonstrate the technical feasibility of the project with engineering and design studies and activities; the development of design criteria and/or a basis of design; the basis for the cost estimate presented in the INFRA application, including the identification of contingency levels appropriate to its level of design; and any scope, schedule, and budget risk-mitigation measures. Applicants should include a detailed statement of work that focuses on the technical and engineering aspects of the project and describes in detail the project to be constructed.

(B) Project Schedule. The applicant should include a detailed project schedule that identifies all major project milestones. Examples of such milestones include State and local planning approvals (programming on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program), start and completion of NEPA and other Federal environmental reviews and approvals including permitting; design completion; right of way acquisition; approval of plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E); procurement; State and local approvals; project partnership and implementation agreements including agreements with railroads; and construction. The project schedule should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that:

(1) all necessary activities will be complete to allow INFRA funds to be obligated sufficiently in advance of the statutory deadline (September 30, 2024 for FY 2021 funds), and that any unexpected delays will not put the funds at risk of expiring before they are obligated;

(2) the project can begin construction quickly upon obligation of INFRA funds, and that the grant funds will be spent expeditiously once construction starts; and

(3) all real property and right-of-way acquisition will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and other applicable legal requirements or a statement that no acquisition is necessary.

(C) Required Approvals.

(1) Environmental Permits and Reviews. The application should demonstrate receipt (or reasonably anticipated receipt) of all environmental approvals and permits necessary for the project to proceed to construction on the timeline specified in the project schedule and necessary to meet the statutory obligation deadline, including satisfaction of all Federal, State, and local requirements and completion of the NEPA process. Specifically, the application should include:

(a) Information about the NEPA status of the project. If the NEPA process is complete, an applicant should indicate the date of completion, and provide a website link or other reference to the final Categorical Exclusion, Finding of No Significant Impact, Record of Decision, and any other NEPA documents prepared. If the NEPA process

is underway, but not complete, the application should detail the type of NEPA review underway, where the project is in the process, and indicate the anticipated date of completion of all milestones and of the final NEPA determination. If the last agency action with respect to NEPA documents occurred more than three years before the application date, the applicant should describe why the project has been delayed and include a proposed approach for verifying and, if necessary, updating this material in accordance with applicable NEPA requirements.

(b) Information on reviews, approvals, and permits by other agencies. An application should indicate whether the proposed project requires reviews or approval actions by other agencies⁸, indicate the status of such actions, and provide detailed information about the status of those reviews or approvals and should demonstrate compliance with any other applicable Federal, State, or local requirements, and when such approvals are expected. Applicants should provide a website link or other reference to copies of any reviews, approvals, and permits prepared.

(c) Environmental studies or other documents—preferably through a website link—that describe in detail known project impacts, and possible mitigation for those impacts.

(d) A description of discussions with the appropriate USDOT modal administration field or headquarters office regarding the project's

⁸ Projects that may impact protected resources such as wetlands, species habitat, cultural or historic resources require review and approval by Federal and State agencies with jurisdiction over those resources.

compliance with NEPA and other applicable Federal environmental reviews and approvals.

(e) A description of public engagement about the project that has occurred, including details on the degree to which public comments and commitments have been integrated into project development and design.

(2) State and Local Approvals. The applicant should demonstrate receipt of State and local approvals on which the project depends, such as State and local environmental and planning approvals and STIP or TIP funding. Additional support from relevant State and local officials is not required; however, an applicant should demonstrate that the project has broad public support.

(3) Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning. The planning requirements applicable to the Federal-aid highway program apply to all INFRA projects, but for port, freight, and rail projects, planning requirements of the operating administration that will administer the INFRA project will also apply,⁹ including intermodal projects located at airport

⁹ In accordance with 23 U.S.C. § 134 and § 135, all projects requiring an action by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must be in the applicable plan and programming documents (e.g., metropolitan transportation plan, transportation improvement program (TIP) and statewide transportation improvement program (STIP)). Further, in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, all regionally significant projects, regardless of the funding source, must be included in the conforming metropolitan transportation plan and TIP. Inclusion in the STIP is required under certain circumstances. To the extent a project is required to be on a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and/or STIP, it will not receive an INFRA grant until it is included in such plans. Projects not currently included in these plans can be amended by the State and metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Projects that are not required to be in long range transportation plans, STIPs, and TIPs will not need to be included in such plans to receive an INFRA grant. Port, freight rail, and intermodal projects are not required to be on the State Rail Plans called for in the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. However, applicants seeking funding for freight projects are encouraged to demonstrate that they have done sufficient planning to ensure

facilities.¹⁰ Applicants should demonstrate that a project that is required to be included in the relevant State, metropolitan, and local planning documents has been or will be included in such documents. If the project is not included in a relevant planning document at the time the application is submitted, the applicant should submit a statement from the appropriate planning agency that actions are underway to include the project in the relevant planning document.

To the extent possible, freight projects should be included in a State Freight Plan and supported by a State Freight Advisory Committee (49 U.S.C. § 70201, 70202). Applicants should provide links or other documentation supporting this consideration.

Because projects have different schedules, the construction start date for each INFRA grant will be specified in the project-specific agreements signed by relevant modal administration and the grant recipients, based on critical path items that applicants identify in the application and will be consistent with relevant State and local plans.

(D) Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies. Project risks, such as procurement delays, environmental uncertainties, increases in real estate acquisition costs, uncommitted local match, or lack of legislative approval, affect the likelihood of successful project start and completion. The applicant should identify all material risks to the project and the strategies that the lead applicant and any project partners have undertaken or will undertake

that projects fit into a prioritized list of capital needs and are consistent with long-range goals. Means of demonstrating this consistency would include whether the project is in a TIP or a State Freight Plan that conforms to the requirements Section 70202 of Title 49 prior to the start of construction. Port planning guidelines are available at StrongPorts.gov.

¹⁰ Projects at grant obligated airports must be compatible with the FAA-approved Airport Layout Plan (ALP), as well as aeronautical surfaces associated with the landing and takeoff of aircraft at the airport. Additionally, projects at an airport: must comply with established Sponsor Grant Assurances, including (but not limited to) requirements for non-exclusive use facilities, consultation with users, consistency with local plans including development of the area surrounding the airport, and consideration of the interest of nearby communities, among others; and must not adversely affect the continued and unhindered access of passengers to the terminal.

to mitigate those risks. The applicant should assess the greatest risks to the project and identify how the project parties will mitigate those risks.

To the extent it is unfamiliar with the Federal program, the applicant should contact USDOT modal field or headquarters offices as found at www.transportation.gov/infragrants for information on what steps are pre-requisite to the obligation of Federal funds to ensure that their project schedule is reasonable and that there are no risks of delays in satisfying Federal requirements.

vii. Large/Small Project Requirements

To select a large project for award, the Department must determine that the project—as a whole, as well as each independent component of the project—satisfies several statutory requirements enumerated at 23 U.S.C. § 117(g) and restated in the table below. The application must include sufficient information for the Department to make these determinations for both the project as a whole and for each independent component of the project. Applicants should use this section of the application to summarize how their project and, if present, each independent project component, meets each of the following requirements. Applicants are not required to reproduce the table below in their application, but following this format will help evaluators identify the relevant information that supports each large project determination. Supporting information provided in appendices may be referenced.

Large Project Determination	Guidance
1. Does the project generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits?	Summarize the economic, mobility, and safety benefits of the project and independent project components, and describe the scale of their impact in national or regional terms.

	<p>The Department will base its determination on the project’s benefits as assessed according to the Economic Vitality criterion.</p>
<p>2. Is the project cost effective?</p>	<p>Highlight the results of the benefit cost analysis, as well as the analyses of independent project components if applicable.</p> <p>The Department will base its determination on the ratio of project benefits to project costs as assessed according to the Economic Vitality criterion.</p>
<p>3. Does the project contribute to one or more of the Goals listed under 23 U.S.C. § 150 (and shown below)?</p> <p>(1) National Goals.—It is in the interest of the United States to focus the Federal-aid highway program on the following national goals:</p> <p>(2) Safety.—To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.</p>	<p>Specify the Goal(s) and summarize how the project and independent project components contributes to that goal(s).</p> <p>The Department will base its determination on the project’s benefits as assessed according to the Economic Vitality criterion.</p>

- (3) Infrastructure condition.—To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- (4) Congestion reduction.—To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- (5) System reliability.—To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- (6) Freight movement and economic vitality.—To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- (7) Environmental sustainability.—To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- (8) Reduced project delivery delays.—To reduce project costs, promote jobs

<p>and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.</p>	
<p>4. Is the project based on the results of preliminary engineering?</p>	<p>For a project or independent project component to be based on the results of preliminary engineering, please indicate which of the following activities have been <i>completed</i> as of the date of application submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Assessments • Topographic Surveys • Metes and Bounds Surveys • Geotechnical Investigations • Hydrologic Analysis • Utility Engineering • Traffic Studies • Financial Plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Estimates • Hazardous Materials Assessments • General estimates of the types and quantities of materials • Other work needed to establish parameters for the final design <p>If one or more of these studies was included in a larger plan or document not described above, please explicitly state that and reference the document. The Department will base its determination on an assessment of this information by the INFRA program evaluators.</p>
<p>5a. With respect to non-Federal financial commitments, does the project have one or more stable and dependable funding or financing sources to construct, maintain, and operate the project?</p>	<p>Please indicate funding source(s) and amounts that will account for all project costs, broken down by independent project component, if applicable. Demonstrate that the funding is stable, dependable, and dedicated to this specific project by referencing the STIP/TIP, a letter of commitment, a local government resolution, memorandum of understanding, or similar documentation. The Department will base its</p>

	<p>determination on an assessment of this information by INFRA program evaluators.</p>
<p>5b. Are contingency amounts available to cover unanticipated cost increases?</p>	<p>Please state the contingency amount available for the project. The Department will base its determination on an assessment of this information by INFRA program evaluators.</p>
<p>6. Is it the case that the project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without other Federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor?</p>	<p>Describe the potential negative impacts on the proposed project if the INFRA grant (or other Federal funding) was not awarded. Respond to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.How would the project scope be affected if INFRA (or other Federal funds) were not received? 2.How would the project schedule be affected if INFRA (or other Federal funds) were not received? 3.How would the project cost be affected if INFRA (or other Federal funds) were not received? <p>If there are no negative impacts to the project scope, schedule, or budget if INFRA funds are not received, state that explicitly. Impacts to a portfolio of projects will not satisfy this</p>

	<p>requirement; please describe only project-specific impacts. Re-stating the project’s importance for national or regional economic, mobility, or safety will not satisfy this requirement. The Department will base its determination on an assessment of this information by INFRA program evaluators.</p>
<p>7. Is the project reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project?</p>	<p>Please provide expected obligation date¹¹ and construction start date, referencing project budget and schedule as needed. If the project has multiple independent components, or will be obligated and constructed in multiple phases, please provide sufficient information to show that each component meets this requirement.</p> <p>The Department will base its determination on the project risk rating as assessed according to the Project Readiness consideration. The Department will base its determination on the project risk rating as</p>

¹¹ Obligation occurs when a selected applicant enters a written, project-specific agreement with the Department and is generally after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements.

	assessed according to the Project Readiness consideration.
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For a small project to be selected, the Department must consider the cost effectiveness of the proposed project and the effect of the proposed project on mobility in the State and region in which the project is carried out. If an applicant seeks an award for a small project, it should use this section to provide information on the project’s cost effectiveness and the project’s effect on the mobility in its State and region, or refer to where else the information can be found in the application.

c. Guidance for Benefit-Cost Analysis

This section describes the recommended approach for the completion and submission of a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) as an appendix to the Project Narrative. The results of the analysis should be summarized in the Project Narrative directly, as described in Section D.2.b.v.

Applicants should delineate each of their project’s expected outcomes in the form of a complete BCA to enable the Department to consider cost-effectiveness (small projects), determine whether the project will be cost effective (large projects), estimate a benefit-cost ratio and calculate the magnitude of net benefits and costs for the project. In support of each project for which an applicant seeks funding, the applicant should submit a BCA that quantifies the expected benefits and costs of the project against a no-build baseline. Applicants should use a real discount rate (i.e., the discount rate net of the inflation rate) of 7 percent per year to discount streams of benefits and costs to their present value in their BCA.

The primary economic benefits from projects eligible for INFRA grants are likely to include savings in travel time costs, vehicle operating costs, and safety costs for both existing

users of the improved facility and new users who may be attracted to it as a result of the project. Reduced damages from vehicle emissions and savings in maintenance costs to public agencies may also be quantified. Applicants may describe other categories of benefits in the BCA that are more difficult to quantify and value in economic terms, such as improving the reliability of travel times or improvements to the existing human and natural environments (such as increased connectivity, improved public health, storm water runoff mitigation, and noise reduction), while also providing numerical estimates of the magnitude and timing of each of these additional impacts wherever possible. Any benefits claimed for the project, both quantified and unquantified, should be clearly tied to the expected outcomes of the project.

The BCA should include the full costs of developing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed project (including both previously incurred and future costs), as well as the expected timing or schedule for costs in each of these categories. The BCA may also consider the present discounted value of any remaining service life of the asset at the end of the analysis period (net of future maintenance and rehabilitation costs) as a deduction from the estimated costs. The costs and benefits that are compared in the BCA should also cover the same project scope.

The BCA should carefully document the assumptions and methodology used to produce the analysis, including a description of the baseline, the sources of data used to project the outcomes of the project, and the values of key input parameters. Applicants should provide all relevant files used for their BCA, including any spreadsheet files and technical memos describing the analysis (whether created in-house or by a contractor). The spreadsheets and technical memos should present the calculations in sufficient detail and transparency to allow the analysis to be reproduced by USDOT evaluators. Detailed guidance for estimating some types of

quantitative benefits and costs, together with recommended economic values for converting them to dollar terms and discounting to their present values, are available in the Department's guidance for conducting BCAs for projects seeking funding under the INFRA program (see <https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance>).

Applicants for freight projects within the boundaries of a freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility should also quantify the benefits of their proposed projects for freight movements on the National Highway Freight Network, and should demonstrate that the Federal share of the project funds only elements of the project that provide public benefits.

3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant must: 1) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; 2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and 3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Department may not make an INFRA grant to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Department is ready to make an INFRA grant, the Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an INFRA grant and use that determination as a basis for making an INFRA grant to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Timelines

a. Deadline

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST March 19, 2021. The Grants.gov "Apply" function will open by February 17, 2021.

To submit an application through Grants.gov, applicants must:

- (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
- (2) Register with the System Award for Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov; and
- (3) Create a Grants.gov username and password;
- (4) The E-business Point of Contact (POC) at the applicant's organization must also

respond to the registration email from Grants.gov and login at Grants.gov to authorize the POC as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Please note that there can only be one AOR per organization.

Please note that the Grants.gov registration process usually takes 2-4 weeks to complete and that the Department will not consider late applications that are the result of failure to register or comply with Grants.gov applicant requirements in a timely manner. For information and instruction on each of these processes, please see instructions at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>. If interested parties experience difficulties at any point during the registration or application process, please call the Grants.gov Customer Service Support Hotline at 1(800) 518-4726, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST.

b. Consideration of Application

Only applicants who comply with all submission deadlines described in this notice and submit applications through Grants.gov will be eligible for award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to make submissions in advance of the deadline.

c. Late Applications

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered except in the case of unforeseen technical difficulties outlined in Section D.4.d.

d. Late Application Policy

Applicants experiencing technical issues with Grants.gov that are beyond the applicant's control must contact INFRAgrants@dot.gov prior to the application deadline with the user name of the registrant and details of the technical issue experienced. The applicant must provide:

- (1) Details of the technical issue experienced;
- (2) Screen capture(s) of the technical issues experienced along with corresponding Grants.gov "Grant tracking number";
- (3) The "Legal Business Name" for the applicant that was provided in the SF-424;
- (4) The AOR name submitted in the SF-424;
- (5) The DUNS number associated with the application; and
- (6) The Grants.gov Help Desk Tracking Number.

To ensure a fair competition of limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: 1) failure to complete the registration process before the deadline; 2) failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website; 3) failure to follow all the instructions in this notice of funding opportunity; and 4) technical issues experienced with the applicant's computer or information technology environment. After the Department reviews all information submitted and contacts the Grants.gov Help Desk to validate reported technical issues, USDOT staff will contact late applicants to approve or deny a request to submit a late application through Grants.gov. If the reported technical issues cannot be validated, late applications will be rejected as untimely.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

a. Merit Criteria

The Department will consider the extent to which the project addresses the following criteria, which are explained in greater detail below and reflect the key program objectives described in Section A.2: (1) support for national or regional economic vitality; (2) climate change and environmental justice impacts; (3) racial equity and barriers to opportunity; (4) leveraging of Federal funding; (5) potential for innovation; and (6) performance and accountability. The Department is neither weighting these criteria nor requiring that each application address every criterion, but the Department expects that competitive applications will substantively address all six criteria.

Criterion #1: Support for National or Regional Economic Vitality.

The Department will consider the extent to which a project would support the economic vitality of either the nation or a region. For 2021, the Department is relying on the Benefit Cost Analysis to assess this criterion. Other factors important to economic vitality, including how a project contributes to the creation of jobs with a choice to join a union, support for American industry through compliance with domestic preference laws, the use of project labor agreements and local hiring requirements, will be considered in other ways. To the extent possible, the Department will rely on quantitative, data-supported analysis to assess how well a project addresses this criterion, including an assessment of the applicant-supplied benefit-cost analysis described in Section D.2.c., The Department will consider estimates of the project's benefit-cost ratio.

Based on the Department's assessment, the Department will group projects into ranges based on their estimated benefit costs ratio (BCR) and assign a level of confidence associated with each project's assigned BCR. The Department will use these ranges for BCR: Less than 1; 1–1.5; 1.5–3; and greater than 3. The confidence levels are high, medium, and low.

Criterion #2: Climate Change and Environmental Justice Impacts

The Department encourages applicants to (1) consider climate change and environmental justice in project planning efforts and (2) to incorporate project elements dedicated to mitigating or reducing impacts of climate change, as described in Section A.2.b of this NOFO. The project will be assigned a Climate Change and Environmental Justice rating based on how it addresses these areas. Applications that incorporate climate change or environmental justice in both planning activities and specific project elements will receive a high rating. Applications that incorporate climate change or environmental justice in planning activities or project elements, but not both, will receive a medium rating. Applications that address this criterion in neither planning activities nor project elements will receive a low rating.

Applicants intending to address the planning portion of the climate change and environmental justice criterion should describe in detail, provide supporting documentation, or otherwise demonstrate how they meet at least one of the options below:

- (1) A Local/Regional/State Climate Action Plan which results in lower greenhouse gas emissions has been prepared and the project directly supports that Climate Action Plan;
- (2) A Local/Regional/State Equitable Development Plan has been prepared and the project directly supports that Equitable Development Plan;
- (3) The project sponsor has used environmental justice tools such as the EJSCREEN to minimize impacts to environmental justice communities (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>); or

(4) A Local/Regional/State Energy Baseline Study has been prepared and the project directly supports that study.

Applicants intending to address the project components portion of the climate change and environmental justice criterion should describe how they meet at least one of the options below:

(1) The project supports a modal shift in freight or passenger movement to reduce vehicle miles traveled;

(2) The project incorporates electrification infrastructure, zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, or both;

(3) The project utilizes one or more demand management strategies to reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions,

(4) The project supports the installation of electric vehicle charging stations along the NHS;

(5) The project promotes energy efficiency, for example through reduction in vessel dwell time or use of cold ironing technology at ports;

(6) The project serves the renewable energy supply chain;

(7) The project improves disaster preparedness and resiliency;

(8) The project supports bringing existing idle or dilapidated infrastructure that is currently causing environmental harm into a state of good repair (e.g. brownfield redevelopment);

(9) The project supports or incorporates the construction of energy- and location-efficient buildings;

(10) The project includes new or improved pedestrian/cycling connections or multi-modalism as part of a highway or grade separation project; or

(11) The project proposes recycling of materials, use of materials known to reduce or reverse carbon emissions, or both.

Criterion #3: Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

The Department encourages applicants to describe credible planning and actions to address potential inequities and barriers to equal opportunity in the project as reflected in Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, and Section A.2.c of this NOFO.

The application will be assigned a Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity rating based on how it addresses racial equity and barriers to equal opportunity in (1) planning and policies and (2) project investments. Applications that address both planning and policies and project investments will receive a high rating. Applications that address either planning and policies or project investment receive a medium rating. Applications that do not address racial equity and barriers to opportunity in either their sponsors' planning and policies or project investment will receive a low rating.

In Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity #1: Planning and Policies, the application will be determined to have addressed this area if the INFRA application incorporates any of the following, but these are not the only bases that the Department may use to determine an application addresses this area:

- A racial equity impact analysis for the project;
- Documentation of equity-focused community outreach and public engagement in the project's planning in underserved communities;
- The project's sponsor has adopted an equity and inclusion program/plan or has otherwise instituted equity-focused policies related to project procurement, material sourcing,

construction, inspection, or other activities designed to ensure racial equity in the overall project delivery and implementation.

In Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity #2: Project Investment, the Department will assess if the project investments either proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunity or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity, and whether those investments are documented by previously incurred and/or future costs of the project. Examples of Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity Project Investment include, but are not limited to:

- Project investments that improve or newly connect underserved communities to proactively address barriers to opportunity or redress past inequities and barriers to opportunity. For example:
 - *Physical-barrier-mitigating land bridges, caps, lids, linear parks, and multimodal mobility investments that are directly related to the project and either redress past barriers to opportunity or that proactively create new connections and opportunities for underserved communities;*
 - *New or improved walking, biking, and rolling access for the disabled to reverse the disproportional impacts of crashes on people of color, and mitigate neighborhood bifurcation; and*
 - *New or improved freight access to underserved communities to increase access to goods and job opportunities for those underserved communities.*
- Project investments that directly partner with underserved communities to proactively address barriers to opportunity or redress past inequities and barriers to opportunity. For example:

- *Project sponsor partnerships with land banks or land trusts for equitable and fair transfer of excess right-of-way, and other properties directly related to the project;*
- *Project sponsor partnerships with, or investments in, multimodal mobility providers to proactively address potential racial equity and barriers to opportunity or redress past inequities and barriers to opportunity directly related to the project;*
- *Project that result in hiring from local communities.*

Definitions for “racial equity” and “underserved communities” are found in Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, Sections 2 (a) and (b).

Criterion #4: Leveraging of Federal Funding.

To maximize the impact of INFRA awards, the Department seeks to leverage INFRA funding with non-Federal contributions. To evaluate this criterion, the Department will assign a rating to each project based on how the calculated non-Federal share of the project’s future eligible project costs compares with other projects proposed for INFRA funding. The Department will sort large and small project applications’ non-Federal leverage percentage from high to low, and the assigned ratings will be based on quintile: projects in the 80th percentile and above receive the highest rating; the 60th -79th percentile receive the second highest rating; 40th - 59th, the third highest; 20th - 39th, the fourth highest; and 0-19th, the lowest rating.

USDOT recognizes that applicants have varying abilities and resources to contribute non-Federal contributions. To help applicants gauge competitiveness of proposed non-Federal contributions, the Department has published information about the non-Federal leverage

proposed in applications from the prior INFRA round at this link:

<https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/financing/infra-grants/additional-resources> .

This evaluation criterion is separate from the statutory cost share requirements for INFRA grants, which are described in Section C.2. Those statutory requirements establish the minimum permissible non-Federal share; they do not define a competitive INFRA project. For the purposes of evaluating leverage as a competitive selection criterion, the Department will consider the proceeds of Federal assistance under chapter 6 of Title 23, United States Code or sections 501 through 504 of the Railroad and Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (Pub. L. 94–210), as amended, to be part of the Federal share of project costs. Applications that require other discretionary funding from the Department to complete the project’s funding package will be considered less competitive.

Criterion #5: Potential for Innovation.

The Department seeks to use the INFRA program to encourage innovation and be transformative in achieving program goals in three areas: (1) the accelerated deployment of innovative technology and expanded access to broadband; (2) use of innovative permitting, contracting, and other project delivery practices; and (3) innovative financing. The Department expects these innovations to contribute to the goals for the program established in 23 USC 117 § (a)(2) or align with one of the key objectives of (1) Supporting economic vitality, (5) Addressing climate change and environmental justice impacts, or (6) Advancing racial equity and reducing barriers to opportunity:

- Improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of the movement of freight and people
- Generate national or regional economic benefits and an increase in the global economic competitiveness of the United States

- Reduce highway congestion and bottlenecks
- Improve connectivity between modes of transportation
- Enhance the resiliency critical highway infrastructure and help protect the environment
- Improve roadways vital to national energy security
- Address the impact of population growth on the movement of people and freight

The project will be assigned an innovation rating based on how it cumulatively addresses these areas. For an application to receive credit for addressing an Innovation area, it must demonstrate both that the project incorporates an innovative technology or approach and that said technology or approach addresses one of the goals above. Applications that satisfy at least two of these three areas will be assigned a high rating. Applications that address one of these areas will be assigned a medium rating. Applications that address none of these areas will be assigned a low rating.

In Innovation Area #1: Technology, the application will be determined to have addressed the Technology Innovation Area if the INFRA project incorporates any of the following technologies and demonstrates how such technologies will improve transportation outcomes described above:

- Conflict detection and mitigation technologies (e.g., intersection alerts, signal prioritization, or smart traffic signals),
- Automated enforcement;
- Dynamic signaling or pricing systems to reduce congestion;
- Signage and design features that facilitate autonomous or semi-autonomous vehicle technologies, provided users outside of autonomous vehicles have also been considered;

- Applications to automatically capture and report safety-related issues (e.g., identifying and documenting near-miss incidents);
- Vehicle-to-Everything V2X Technologies (e.g. technology that facilitates passing of information between a vehicle and any entity that may affect the vehicle);
- Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) Technologies (e.g., digital, physical, coordination, and other infrastructure technologies and systems that allow vehicles to interact with transportation infrastructure in ways that improve their mutual performance);
- Vehicle-to-Grid Technologies (e.g., technologies and infrastructure that encourage electric vehicle charging, and broader sustainability of the power grid);
- Cybersecurity elements to protect safety-critical systems;
- Technology at land and sea ports of entry that reduces congestion, wait times, and delays, while maintaining or enhancing the integrity of our border;
- Work Zone data exchanges or related data exchanges
- Other Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) that directly benefit the project's users.

The application will also address the Technology Innovation Area if the project facilitates broadband deployment and the installation of high-speed networks concurrent with project construction, including broadband deployment in rural areas, per Executive Order 13821 *Streamlining and Expediting Requests to Locate Broadband Facilities in Rural America*.

In Innovation Area #2: Project Delivery, the Department will assess whether the applicant intends to pursue an innovative strategy to improve project design and delivery and demonstrates how such strategy will improve transportation outcomes described above and will result in more efficient project implementation. Innovative project delivery contracting and procurement will be considered to the extent permitted by DOT regulations. Some of these

strategies may require the use of a SEP-14 or SEP-15 waiver, but many do not: an application can address this innovation area without requiring a waiver. Examples of innovative project delivery include:

- Planning and Engagement
 - *Scenario Planning*
 - *Access to Destinations Analysis*
 - *Robust Community Engagement*
- Contracting/Procurement:
 - *Indefinite Quantity/Indefinite Delivery Contracting*
 - *Alternative Pavement Type Bidding*
 - *No Excuse Bonuses*
 - *Lump Sum Bidding*
 - *Best Value Procurement*
 - *System Integrator Contracts*
 - *Progressive Design-Build*
 - *P3 DBFOM Procurements*
 - *Pay-for-Performance and/or Outcomes-based Procurement*
 - *P3 with Minority-owned Business Participation*
 - *Local Contracting Plans*
 - *Local and Inclusive Participation Goals*
 - *Project Labor Agreements*
 - *Construction Inclusion Plans*
- Environmental Requirements

- *NEPA/Section 404 Merger*
- *Use of Permitting/Authorization Agency Liaisons*
- *Establishment of State/Local “One-Stop-Shop” for Permitting*
- *Programmatic Agreements*
- *Every Day Counts Initiative*
 - *Use of proven technologies and innovations to shorten and enhance project delivery listed at*

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_innovation.cfm
- *Environmentally Friendly Design*
 - *Recycling and reuse of construction debris, especially if processed on site to reduce transport VMT.*
 - *Green street treatments, including the treatment of stormwater run-off and localized flooding within the transportation project, especially considering methods of carbon capture*
 - *Innovative, regenerative, or permeable pavement*
 - *Adaptive Lighting Installation*
- *Safety-Oriented Design*
 - *Improving DOT and Railroad Coordination, specifically at-grade crossings to reduce death and injury*
 - *Data-Driven Safety Analysis*
 - *Demonstration of Vision Zero. Towards Zero Deaths, and Road to Zero crash reduction outcomes*

- *Use of high visibility/durability pavement treatments for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure*
- *High Friction Surface Treatment*
- *Intersection and Interchange Geometrics that improve safety for all users*
- *Road Diets, lane conversions, or other geometric safety modifications*
- *Pedestrian push-button automation, recall*
- *Application of bicycle specific signal systems*
- *ADA enhancements to intersections*
- *Pedestrian-scale lighting and/or adaptive lighting systems*
- *Safety EdgeSM*
- *Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian (STEP)*

Finally, in Innovation Area #3, Innovative Financing, the Department will consider if the project financial plan incorporates funding or financing from innovative sources, if the applicant describes recent or pending efforts to raise significant new revenue for transportation investment across its program, and if the innovative financing approach improves the transportation outcomes described in the beginning of this section.

Examples of innovative sources in a financial plan include:

- *Private Sector contributions, excluding donated right-of-way, amounting to at least \$5 million,*
- *Revenue from the competitive sale or lease of publicly owned or operated asset, or*
- *Financing supported by direct project user fees*

Examples of significant new revenue—provided it is dedicated to transportation investment across an applicant’s program—include:

- *Revenue resulting from recent or pending increases to sales or fuel taxes*
- *Revenue resulting from the recent or pending implementation of tolling*
- *Revenue resulting from the recent or pending adoption of value capture strategies such as tax-increment financing*

Criterion #6: Performance and Accountability.

The Department encourages applicants to describe a credible plan to address the full lifecycle costs associated with the project and implement an accountability measure as described in Section A.2.f of this NOFO.

A credible plan to address full lifecycle costs should include, at a minimum, (1) an estimate of the lifecycle costs of the project; (2) an identified source of funding that will be sufficient to pay for operation and maintenance of the project; and (3) a description of controls in place to ensure the identified funding will not be diverted away from operation and maintenance. Examples of such controls include if a private sector entity is contractually obligated to maintain the project, if a project sponsor has a demonstrated history of fully funding maintenance on its assets, or if the sponsor describes an asset management plan or strategy. For a plan to be considered credible, the applicant should show that they have considered the impact of climate change on their plan.

Applicants intending to address the accountability measure portion of this criterion should describe how they meet at least one of the three options below:

- (1) The applicant should state in the application that it agrees to meet a specific construction start and completion date and state those dates in the application. If the

project sponsor does not meet these deadlines, the project will be subject to forfeit or return of up to 10% of the awarded funds, or \$10 million, whichever is lower.

- (2) The applicant should propose a specific indicator of project success that will be evident within 12 months of project completion. The indicator should relate to a benefit estimated in the BCA (e.g., travel time savings), and the level of performance should be consistent with the estimates in the BCA. If the project fails to produce this specific outcome in the time allotted, it will be subject to forfeit or return of up to 10% of the awarded funds, or \$10 million, whichever is lower.
- (3) The applicant should show that they will meet a negotiated Community Benefit Agreement or have completed an Equitable Project Assessment and will be monitoring compliance.

The project will be assigned a Performance and Accountability rating based on how it addresses these areas. Applications that address both lifecycle costs and accountability measures will receive a high rating. Applications that address either lifecycle costs or accountability measures, but not both, will receive a medium rating. Applications that address neither area will receive a low rating.

b. Additional Considerations

i. Geographic Diversity

By statute, when selecting INFRA projects, the Department must consider contributions to geographic diversity among recipients, including the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities.

The Department will also consider whether the project is located in a Federally designated community development zones such as a qualified opportunity zone, Empowerment

Zone, Promise Zone, or Choice Neighborhood. Applicants can find additional information about each of the designated zones at the sites below:

- Opportunity Zones: (<https://opportunityzones.hud.gov/>)
- Empowerment Zones: (https://www.hud.gov/hudprograms/empowerment_zones)
- Promise Zones:
(https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/field_policy_mgt/fieldpolicymgtpz)
- Choice Neighborhoods:
(https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn)

A project located in a Federally designated community development zone is more competitive than a similar project that is not located in a Federally designated community development zone. The Department will rely on applicant-supplied information to make this determination and will only consider this if the applicant expressly identifies the designation in their application.

ii. Project Readiness

During application evaluation, the Department considers project readiness in two ways: to assess the likelihood of successful project delivery and to confirm that a project will satisfy statutory readiness requirements.

First, the Department will consider significant risks to successful obligation of funding for a project, including risks associated with environmental review, permitting, technical feasibility, funding, and the applicant's capacity to manage project delivery. Risks do not disqualify projects from award, but competitive applications clearly and directly describe achievable risk mitigation strategies. A project with mitigated risks is more competitive than a comparable project with unaddressed risks. The Department will assign each application one of

three risk ratings based on the likelihood of the project meeting the statutory obligation deadline: (1) high risk; (2) moderate risk; and (3) low risk. A project is assigned high risk if, based on the available information, there is a high likelihood that project will not be able to reach obligation within the statutory timeframe. It is moderate risk if, based on the available information, there is some possibility that the project will not be able to reach obligation within the statutory timeframe. It is low risk if, based on the available information, it is highly likely that the project will be able to reach obligation within the statutory timeframe.

Second, by statute, the Department cannot award a large project unless that project is reasonably expected to begin construction within 18 months of obligation of funds for the project. Obligation occurs when a selected applicant enters a written, project-specific agreement with the Department and is generally after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements. Depending on the nature of pre-construction activities included in the awarded project, the Department may obligate funds in phases. Preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition activities, such as environmental review, design work, and other preconstruction activities, do not fulfill the requirement to begin construction within 18 months of obligation for large projects. By statute, INFRA funds must be obligated within three years of the end of the fiscal year for which they are authorized. Therefore, for awards with FY 2021 funds, the Department will determine that large projects with an anticipated obligation date beyond September 30, 2024 are not reasonably expected to begin construction within 18 months of obligation.

iii. Freight Rating

Projects that primarily serve freight and goods movement play an important role in supporting economic vitality. Accordingly, the significance of freight benefits for a project will

be rated. The rating will be three tiered, based on the share of quantifiable benefits which are attributable project impacts to freight movement. A project for which 20% or more of the quantifiable benefits are attributable to project impacts on freight movement will be designated as having substantial freight benefits; for projects in which those benefits within a 5-20% range will be designated as a project with moderate freight benefits; leaving projects for which less than 5% of the quantifiable benefits fall into this category to be designated as having incidental freight benefits.

iv. Non-Motorized Multimodal Rating

Projects that expand or maintain options for non-motorized users are important to ensuring an equitable transportation system. The Department will determine, for each application, whether the project includes improvements for multimodal non-motorized users. Accordingly, the Department anticipates awarding some INFRA funding to projects that include improvements for non-motorized multimodal users to advance the objective of Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity.

v. Evaluation of Large Project Requirements

The following describes how the Department will evaluate the statutory Large Project requirements.

1. The project will generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

A project meets this determination if the Economic Vitality review documents national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

2. The project will be cost effective.

The Department's determination will be based on its estimate of the project's benefit-cost ratio: a project is determined to be cost effective if the Department estimates that the project's benefit-cost ratio is equal to or greater than one.

3. The project will contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the goals described in 23 U.S.C § 150.

A project meets this requirement if the Economic Vitality review documents benefits related to one of the following:

(1) National Goals.—It is in the interest of the United States to focus the Federal-aid highway program on the following national goals:

(2) Safety.—To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.

(3) Infrastructure condition.—To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.

(4) Congestion reduction.—To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.

(5) System reliability.—To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.

(6) Freight movement and economic vitality.—To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.

(7) Environmental sustainability.—To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

(8) Reduced project delivery delays.—To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project

completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

4. The project is based on the results of preliminary engineering.

A project meets this requirement if the application provides evidence that at least one of the following activities has been completed at the time of application submission: environmental assessments, topographic surveys, metes and bounds surveys, geotechnical investigations, hydrologic analysis, hydraulic analysis, utility engineering, traffic studies, financial plans, revenue estimates, hazardous materials assessments, general estimates of the types and quantities of materials, or other work needed to establish parameters for the final design.

5. With respect to related non-Federal financial commitments, one or more stable and dependable funding or financing sources are available to construct, maintain, and operate the project, and contingency amounts are available to cover unanticipated cost increases.

A project meets this requirement if the application demonstrates that financing sources are dedicated to the proposed project and are highly likely to be available within the proposed project schedule, and if it provides evidence of contingency funding in the project budget.

6. The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without other Federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor.

A project meets this requirement if the application demonstrates one or more of the following:

- (1) The project scope would be negatively affected if INFRA or other Federal funds were not received.
- (2) The project schedule would be negatively affected if INFRA or other Federal funds were not received.

(3) The project cost would materially increase if INFRA or other Federal funds were not received.

7. The project is reasonably expected to begin construction no later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project.

A project meets this requirement if the proposed project schedule and the evaluation of the project readiness evaluation team indicate that it is reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after obligation.

vi. Previous Awards

The Department may consider whether the project has previously received an award from the BUILD, INFRA, or other departmental discretionary grant programs.

2. Review and Selection Process

The USDOT will review all eligible applications received before the application deadline. The INFRA process consists of a Technical Evaluation phase and Senior Review. In the Technical Evaluation phase, teams will, for each project, determine whether the project satisfies statutory requirements and rate how well it addresses the selection criteria. The Senior Review Team will consider the applications and the technical evaluations to determine which projects to advance to the Secretary for consideration. The Secretary will ultimately select the projects for award. The selections identify the applications that best address program requirements and are most worthy of funding. A Quality Control and Oversight Team will ensure consistency across project evaluations and appropriate documentation throughout the review and selection process.

3. Additional Information

Prior to award, each selected applicant will be subject to a risk assessment as required by 2 CFR § 200.206. The Department must review and consider any information about the

applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)). An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Department will consider comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices

Following the evaluation outlined in Section E, the Secretary will announce awarded projects by posting a list of selected projects at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/INFRAgrants>. Following the announcement, the Department will contact the point of contact listed in the SF 424 to initiate negotiation of a project-specific agreement.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Safety Requirements

The Department will require INFRA projects to meet two general requirements related to safety. First, INFRA projects must be part of a thoughtful, data-driven approach to safety. Each State maintains a strategic highway safety plan.¹² INFRA projects will be required to incorporate appropriate elements that respond to priority areas identified in that plan and are likely to yield safety benefits. Second, INFRA projects will incorporate appropriate safety-

¹² Information on State-specific strategic highway safety plans is available at https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/shsp/other_resources.cfm.

related activities that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified as “proven safety countermeasures” due to their history of demonstrated effectiveness.¹³

After selecting INFRA recipients, the Department will work with those recipients on a project-by-project basis to determine the specific safety requirements that are appropriate for each award.

b. Other Administrative and Policy Requirements

All INFRA awards will be administered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted by USDOT at 2 CFR part 1201. A project carried out under the INFRA program will be treated as if the project is located on a Federal-aid highway. Additionally, applicable Federal laws, rules and regulations of the relevant operating administration administering the project will apply to the projects that receive INFRA grants, including planning requirements, Stakeholder Agreements, and other requirements under the Department’s other highway, transit, rail, and port grant programs. For an illustrative list of the applicable laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, policies, guidelines, and requirements as they relate to an INFRA grant, please see http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Freight/infrastructure/nsfhp/fy2016_gr_exhbt_c/index.htm.

As expressed in Executive Order 14005, *Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers* (86 FR 7475), it is the policy of the executive branch to maximize, consistent with law, the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States. All INFRA projects are subject to the Buy America requirement at 23 U.S.C. § 313. The Department expects all INFRA applicants to comply with that requirement without needing a waiver. To obtain a waiver, a recipient must be prepared to demonstrate how

¹³ Information on FHWA proven safety countermeasures is available at: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>.

they will maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing their project.

The applicability of Federal requirements to a project may be affected by the scope of the NEPA reviews for that project. For example, under 23 U.S.C. § 313(g), Buy America requirements apply to all contracts that are eligible for assistance under title 23, United States Code, and are carried out within the scope of the NEPA finding, determination, or decision regardless of the funding source of such contracts if at least one contract is funded with Title 23 funds.

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this notice, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; the conditions of performance, nondiscrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of the Department of Transportation; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget. In complying with these requirements, recipients, in particular, must ensure that no concession agreements are denied or other contracting decisions made on the basis of speech or other activities protected by the First Amendment. If the Department determines that a recipient has failed to comply with applicable Federal requirements, the Department may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

INFRA projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations, or vehicles that are exempt from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards or Federal

Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

3. Reporting

a. Progress Reporting on Grant Activity

Each applicant selected for an INFRA grant must submit the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) on the financial condition of the project and the project's progress, as well as an Annual Budget Review and Program Plan to monitor the use of Federal funds and ensure accountability and financial transparency in the INFRA program.

b. Reporting of Matters Related to Integrity and Performance

If the total value of a selected applicant's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then the applicant during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of this award term and condition. This is a statutory requirement under section 872 of Public Law 110-417, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 2313). As required by section 3010 of Public Law 111-212, all information posted in the designated integrity and performance system on or after April 15, 2011, except past performance reviews required for Federal procurement contracts, will be publicly available.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice, please contact the Office of the Secretary via email at INFRAgrants@dot.gov. For other INFRA program questions, please contact Paul

Baumer at (202) 366-1092. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993. In addition, up to the application deadline, the Department will post answers to common questions and requests for clarifications on USDOT's website at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/INFRAgrants>. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to contact USDOT directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions. DOT staff may also conduct briefings on the INFRA Transportation grant selection and award process upon request.

H. Other Information

1. Protection of Confidential Business Information

All information submitted as part of, or in support of, any application shall use publicly available data or data that can be made public and methodologies that are accepted by industry practice and standards, to the extent possible. If the application includes information the applicant considers to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information, the applicant should do the following: (1) note on the front cover that the submission "Contains Confidential Business Information (CBI)"; (2) mark each affected page "CBI"; and (3) highlight or otherwise denote the CBI portions.

The Department protects such information from disclosure to the extent allowed under applicable law. In the event the Department receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information, USDOT will follow the procedures described in its FOIA regulations at 49 CFR § 7.17. Only information that is ultimately determined to be confidential under that procedure will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

2. Publication of Application Information

Following the completion of the selection process and announcement of awards, the Department intends to publish a list of all applications received along with the names of the applicant organizations and funding amounts requested. Except for the information properly marked as described in Section H.1., the Department may make application narratives publicly available or share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

3. Department Feedback on Applications

The Department strives to provide as much information as possible to assist applicants with the application process. The Department will not review applications in advance, but Department staff are available for technical questions and assistance. To efficiently use Department resources, the Department will prioritize interactions with applicants who have not already received a debrief on their FY 2020 INFRA application. Program staff will address questions to INFRAgrants@dot.gov throughout the application period.

4. INFRA Extra, Eligibility and Designation

Due to overwhelming demand, the Department is unable to provide an INFRA award to every competitive project that applies. The INFRA Extra initiative is aimed at encouraging sponsors with competitive projects that do not receive an INFRA award to consider applying for TIFIA credit assistance.

Projects for which an INFRA application is advanced by the Senior Review Team on the List of Projects for Consideration, but that are not awarded, are automatically designated *INFRA Extra Projects*, unless the Department determines that they are not reasonably likely to satisfy the TIFIA project type (23 U.S.C. § 601(a)(12)) and project size (23 U.S.C. § 602(a)(5))

eligibilities. This is a novel designation that provides the sponsors of these projects the opportunity to apply for TIFIA credit assistance for up to 49% of eligible project costs. Under current policy, TIFIA credit assistance is limited to 33% of eligible project costs unless the applicant provides strong rationale for requiring additional assistance. Projects for which an INFRA application is advanced by the Senior Review Team on the List of Projects for Consideration, but that are not awarded, are automatically deemed to have demonstrated a strong rationale for such additional assistance.

Projects designated as INFRA Extra Projects will be announced by the Secretary after INFRA award announcements are made.

For further information about the TIFIA program in general, including details about the types of credit assistance available, eligibility requirements and the creditworthiness review process, please refer to the Build America Bureau Credit Programs Guide, available on the Build America Bureau website: <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/financing/program-guide>.

DISCLAIMER: An INFRA Extra Project designation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive TIFIA credit assistance nor does it guarantee that any award of TIFIA credit assistance will be equal to 49% of eligible project costs. Receipt of TIFIA credit assistance is contingent on the applicant's ability to satisfy applicable creditworthiness standards and other Federal requirements.

Issued in Washington, DC, on 17 February 2021



Secretary of Transportation

Status of Federal Discretionary Grant Program Project Proposals – Not Awarded (2016-20)

YEAR	EAST/ WEST	GRANT TYPE	PROJECT	TOTAL COST	GRANT FUNDS	UPDATED STATUS (VIA OTHER MEANS)		
						NEPA	FUNDING	DELIVERY
2020	EAST	BUILD	Enhancing Mobility Within the Southern Dallas Inland Port	\$12.0M	\$9.3M	NO	YES (partial)	COVID-19 #00X Round 3 (partial)
2020	WEST	BUILD	DFW Airport East-West Connector	\$48.9M	\$13.3M	PENDING	YES (partial)	COVID-19 #00X Round 4
2020	WEST	INFRA	N. Texas Hyperloop Certification Center	\$350.0M	\$30.0M	NO	NO	Not selected by VHO RFP
2019	EAST	BUILD	US 80/IH 635 Reconstruction	\$255.0M	\$25.0M	FONSI	YES (partial)	2021 UTP (FY 2025-30 Let Date)
2019	WEST	BUILD	SH 114 Frontage Road Gap	\$46.1M	\$25.0M	FONSI	YES	Under Construction
2019	EAST	INFRA	IH 30 Rockwall County – Lake Ray Hubbard Bridge	\$214.0M	\$100.0M	FONSI	YES	2021 UTP (FY 2021-24 Let Date)
2019	BOTH	INFRA	N. Texas Strategic National Highway System (NHS) Bridge Program	\$228.7M	\$113.1M	PENDING	YES (partial)	Partial INFRA (\$8.8M) for partial program (\$28.5M – 4 bridges)
2018	EAST	BUILD	IH 633 LBJ East	\$1.56B	\$25.0M	FONSI	YES	Under Construction
2017/8	EAST	INFRA	IH 635 LBJ East	\$1.80B	\$165.0M	FONSI	YES	Under Construction
2017/8	WEST	INFRA	IH 20 Y-Connection Upgrade	\$1.23B	\$100.0M	FONSI	YES	2021 UTP (FY 2021-24 Let Date)
2017/8	WEST	INFRA	DFW Connector N. Airport Interchange	\$122.7M	\$65.0M	FONSI	NO	Future (Mobility 2045 Plan)
2016/7	EAST	FASTLANE	IH 35E/35W Merge Interchange	\$210.2M	\$126.0M	FONSI	YES	2021 UTP (FY 2021-24 Let Date)
2016/7	WEST	FASTLANE	DFW Connector N. Airport Interchange	\$106.9M	\$64.0M	FONSI	NO	Future (Mobility 2045 Plan)
2016	EAST	TIGER	Park Lane/Vickery Meadow Complete Streets	\$20.6M	\$13.0M	PENDING	YES	Under Design (NCTCOG/City of Dallas Partnership)
2016	WEST	TIGER	East Lancaster Ave. Complete Streets	\$107.0M	\$25.0M	NO	YES (partial)	2021 UTP (FY 2021-24 Let Date)

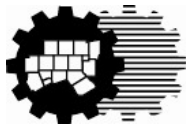
Proposed Projects for Submittal in the FY2021 INFRA Grant Program

YEAR	EAST/ WEST	GRANT TYPE	PROJECT	TOTAL COST	GRANT FUNDS	UPDATED STATUS (VIA OTHER MEANS)		
						NEPA	FUNDING	DELIVERY
2016	WEST	TIGER	East Lancaster Ave. Complete Streets & Transit Technology	\$125.0M	\$50.0M	NO	YES (partial)	2021 UTP (FY2021-24 Let Date)
2020	EAST	BUILD	Enhancing Mobility Within the Southern Dallas Inland Port	\$12.0M	\$7.2M	NO	YES (partial)	COVID-19 #00X Round 3 (partial)
2021 (NEW)	EAST	INFRA	IH 30 Downtown (Co-Sponsor)	TBD	TBD	FONSI	YES (partial)	2021 UTP (FY2021-24 Let Date)

Air Quality Calls for Projects Recommendations

**Regional Transportation Council Meeting
March 11, 2021**

**Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager**



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



Available Funding

Funding Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program

Calls for Projects	Project Types	Available Funding
Clean Fleets North Texas (CFNT) 2020 – Bucket 1	Replace Heavy-Duty Diesel Vehicles and Equipment	\$659,820*
North Texas Emissions Reduction Project (NTERP) 2020 – Bucket 2	Replace High-Use Diesel Vehicles/Equipment, Rail/Switch Yard Idle Reduction Technologies	\$2,350,000
North Texas Freight Terminal Electrification (NTFTE) 2020 – Bucket 3	Installation of Transport Refrigerated Unit Electrified Parking Spaces, Connection Kits, Power Monitoring	\$960,225

* Available from a prior EPA award. Some funding was previously awarded through CFNT 2018 and CFNT 2019 Calls for Projects.

Eligibility and Selection

	Bucket 1	Bucket 2	Bucket 3
Eligibility	Operate in Required Geographic Area		
	Clean Fleet Policy Adoption Purpose: Reserve Funding for Fleets that are Engaged Beyond Grant Opportunities; Consistent with RTC Adoption of Clean Fleet Policy		
Scoring Criteria	Cost Per Ton NO _x Emissions Reduced 75% Purpose: Maximize Emissions Reductions		
	Subrecipient Oversight Criteria 25% Purpose: Balance Project Benefits with Administrative Burden		Location and Oversight Criteria 25% Purpose: Balance Project Benefits with Administrative Burden

Bucket 1 - Summary of Applications

Applicant	Activities Requested	Applicant Eligible	Activities Eligible	Funds Requested	Recommended	
					Activities	Funds
City of Kennedale	1	Yes	1	\$165,000	1	\$165,000
City of Dallas*	6	Yes	0	\$689,786	0	0
Funds Remaining after Recommended Subaward**						\$494,820

Refer to Electronic Item 8.2 for more details.

*** City of Dallas May Submit a New Application in Next Round**

**** Next Round of Calls for Projects Currently Open for Remaining Balances**

Bucket 2 and Bucket 3 - Summary of Applications

Bucket 2

Applicant	Activities Requested	Applicant Eligible	Activities Eligible	Funds Requested	Recommended	
					Activities	Funds
Alliance Aviation Services	2	Yes	2	\$108,770	2	\$108,770
Paccar Leasing	1	Yes	1	\$161,555	1	\$161,555
Funds Remaining after Recommended Subaward*					\$2,079,675	

Bucket 3

No Applications Received; EPA Funds Remaining \$960,225

Refer to Electronic Item 8.3 for more details.

*Next Round of Calls for Projects Currently Open for Remaining Balances

Schedule

Milestone	Estimated Timeframe
STTC Action to Recommend Subaward and Rebate	February 26, 2021
RTC Approval of Recommended Subaward and Rebate	March 11, 2021
Executive Board Authorization	March 25, 2021
Next Interim Application Deadline (Rolling 90-Day Deadline until All Funds Awarded or Final Application Deadline Reached)	April 9, 2021
Final Application Deadline	October 8, 2021
Project Implementation Deadline	February 26, 2023*

*Deadline has been extended per EPA no cost time extension.

Action Requested

Request RTC Approval of Subaward and Rebate Recommended Awards:

Bucket 1 - Clean Fleets North Texas 2020

\$165,000 to the City of Kennedale to Replace One Firetruck

Any Funds Released From Prior Awards to be Applied to Balance Available to Future Awards

Bucket 2 - North Texas Emissions Reduction Project 2020

\$108,770 to Alliance Aviation Services to Replace Two Airport Support Equipment;

\$161,555 to Paccar Leasing to Replace One Class 7 Service Truck

For More Information

Amy Hodges

Senior Air Quality Planner

817-704-2508

AHodges@nctcog.org

Jason Brown

Principal Air Quality Planner

817-704-2514

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Lori Clark

Program Manager

DFW Clean Cities Coordinator

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Chris Klaus

Senior Program Manager

817-695-9286

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Website

www.nctcog.org/aqfunding

North Texas Emissions Reduction Project Call For Projects Funding Recommendations

Projects Recommended for Funding - NTERP																										
Applicant	Activity	Old Vehicle/Equipment Information							New Vehicle/Equipment Information (Model Year 2019 or Newer)			Maximum Allowed Funding Level	Recommended Grant Amount				NO _x Benefits		Scoring Criteria					Other Environmental Benefits		
		Type	Class/Equipment	Engine Year	Fuel Type	Annual Fuel Usage	Annual Mileage	Annual Usage Hours	Model Year	Fuel Type	Total Cost		Requested Grant Amount	EPA 2019 Funds	Total Grant Award	Local Match	NO _x Tons Reduced Over 6 Years*	Cost Per Ton of NO _x Reduced	Cost per Ton Rank (Max 1 Points)	Cost Per Ton NO _x Tier (Max 64 Points)	Score: Cost Per Ton NO _x Reduced (Max 75 Points)	Score: Subrecipient Oversight (Max 25 Points)	Total Score	HC Reduced Over 6 Years*	CO Reduced Over 6 Years*	CO ₂ Reduced Over 6 Years*
Alliance Aviation Services	1	Nonroad	Airport Support Equipment	2005	Diesel	4354	NA	558	2020	Electric	\$120,856	45%	\$54,385	\$54,385	\$54,385	\$66,471	0.59	\$92,303	1.00	55.00	56	25	81	0.05	0.53	293.90
Alliance Aviation Services	1	Nonroad	Airport Support Equipment	2007	Diesel	4354	NA	500	2020	Electric	\$120,856	45%	\$54,385	\$54,385	\$54,385	\$66,471	0.53	\$103,237	1.00	50.00	51	25	76	0.05	0.46	293.90
Paccar Leasing Company	1	On-Road	Class 6-7 Service Truck	2001	Diesel	1,500	5000	NA	2021	Electric	\$359,011	45%	\$161,555	\$161,555	\$161,555	\$197,456	0.36	\$442,859	1.00	10.00	11	25	36	0.08	0.18	101.25
Total Projects											\$600,723		\$270,325	\$270,325	\$330,398	1.48	\$638,399					0.18	1.17	689.04		

Funds Available for Call for Projects	\$2,350,000
Total Funds Recommended for Award	\$270,325
Balance Available for Future Project Solicitation	\$2,079,675

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
 NO_x = Nitrogen Oxides; PM2.5 = Particulate Matter Less Than 2.5 Micrometers; HC = Hydrocarbons; CO = Carbon Monoxide; CO₂ = Carbon Dioxide
 B5 = 5% Biodiesel blend; B20 = 20% Biodiesel blend; ULSD = Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel; CNG = Compressed Natural Gas

*Emissions Impacts Quantified Using EPA Diesel Emissions Quantifier (DEQ)
 **Default DEQ value used in place of unknown information.
 ***The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) produced cost effectiveness tables for projects funded by Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds. The values used in the tiers reference data related to the low, median, and high cost-effectiveness projects for nitrogen oxide emissions reduction. See https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/reference/cost_effectiveness_tables/.

Cost Effectiveness Tiers Based On Data Produced By FHWA***	Point Scale for Cost per Ton Tier
Tier 1 < \$20,000	64
Tier 2 \$20,001 - \$90,999	55
Tier 3 \$91,000 - \$168,000	50
Tier 4 \$168,001 - \$248,999	40
Tier 5 \$249,000 - \$367,000	30
Tier 6 > \$367,001	10 or less

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
March 2020 - February 2021

RTC MEMBER	Entity	3/12/20	4/9/20	5/14/20	6/11/20	7/9/20	8/13/20	9/10/20	10/8/20	11/12/20	12/10/20	1/14/21	2/11/21
Tennell Atkins (09/17)	Dallas	E	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Richard E. Aubin (06/18)	Garland	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dennis Bailey (02/21)	Rockwall County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P
Mohamed Bur (06/18)	TxDOT, Dallas	P	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)
Dianne Costa (10/19)	DCTA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P
Theresa Daniel (11/18)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeff Davis (11/19)	Trinity Metro	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
Pat Deen (08/19)	Parker County	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Rudy Durham (7/07)	Lewisville	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Andy Eads (1/09)	Denton County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Kevin Falconer (07/17)	Carrollton	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Gary Fickes (12/10)	Tarrant County	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P
George Fuller (07/17)	McKinney	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Barry Gordon (12/20)	Duncanville	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	E(R)	P
Rick Grady (09/18)	Plano	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P
Lane Grayson (01/19)	Ellis County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mojoy Haddad (10/14)	NTTA	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P
Roger Harmon (1/02)	Johnson County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ivan Hughes (09/19)	Addison	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Clay Lewis Jenkins (04/11)	Dallas County	E	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Ron Jensen (06/13)	Grand Prairie	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Carl L. Johnson (09/22)	TxDOT, FW	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P
Jungus Jordan (4/07)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
John Keating (12/19)	Frisco	E(R)	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Mike Leyman (09/19)	Mansfield	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
B. Adam McGough (07/20)	Dallas	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
William Meadows (02/17)	DFW Airport	E(R)	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	E(R)
Allen E. Meagher (12/20)	Irving	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	E(R)	E(R)
Cara Mendelsohn (07/20)	Dallas	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Robert Miklos (12/19)	Mesquite	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Cary Moon (06/15)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P
Ignacio Nuñez (12/20)	Arlington	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P
Philip J. Ritter (07/20)	Dallas	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
John Ryan (05/18)	Denton	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chris Schulmeister (07/20)	Allen	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Casey Thomas II (07/20)	Dallas	--	--	--	--	A	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	E(R)
Jeremy Tompkins (10/19)	Euless	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

**Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
March 2020 - February 2021**

RTC MEMBER	Entity	3/12/20	4/9/20	5/14/20	6/11/20	7/9/20	8/13/20	9/10/20	10/8/20	11/12/20	12/10/20	1/14/21	2/11/21
T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (6/02)	Nrth Rch Hills	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
William Tsao (3/17)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Paul Wageman (10/19)	DART	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Duncan Webb (6/11)	Collin County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
B. Glen Whitley (2/97)	Tarrant County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
W. Jeff Williams (10/15)	Arlington	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)
Ann Zadeh (06/17)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Note: Date in parenthesis indicates when member was 1st eligible to attend RTC meetings

P= Present
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E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment of obligation arising out of elected service)

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
January 2020 - January 2021

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	1/24/20	2/28/20	3/27/20	4/24/20	5/22/20	6/26/20	7/24/20	8/28/20	9/25/20	10/23/20	12/4/20	1/22/21
Joe Atwood	Hood County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Melissa Baker	Irving	P	E	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Micah Baker	Dallas County	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bryan Beck	Grapevine	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Katherine Beck	Fort Worth	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Marc Bentley	Farmers Branch	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
David Boski	Mansfield	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Keith Brooks	Arlington	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shon Brooks	Waxahachie	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tanya Brooks	Fort Worth	P	E	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ceason Clemens	TxDOT Dallas	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Robert Cohen	Southlake	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kent Collins	Coppell	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
John Cordary, Jr.	TxDOT FW	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rick Cortez	Mesquite	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hal Cranor	Eules	A(R)	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fred Crosley	Trinity Metro	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	*
Clarence Daugherty	Collin County	P	A(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Chad Davis	Wise County	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Arturo Del Castillo	Dallas	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Caryl DeVries	Grand Prairie	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Greg Dickens	Hurst	A(R)	A(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
David Disheroon	Johnson County	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Phil Dupler	FWTA	A(R)	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Chad Edwards	Fort Worth	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Claud Elsom	Rockwall County	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Eric Fladager	Fort Worth	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Chris Flanigan	Allen	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ann Foss	Arlington	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mike Galizio	Tarrant County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ricardo Gonzalez	TxDOT FW	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gary Graham	McKinney	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tom Hammons	Carrollton	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ron Hartline	The Colony	P	A(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shannon Hicks	Addison	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*
Matthew Hotelling	Flower Mound	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
John Hudspeth	TxDOT Dallas	--	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Terry Hughes	Weatherford	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jeremy Hutt	Cleburne	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*
Thuan Huynh	McKinney	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tony Irvin	DeSoto	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kelly Johnson	NTTA	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gus Khankarli	Dallas	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

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Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
January 2020 - January 2021

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	1/24/20	2/28/20	3/27/20	4/24/20	5/22/20	6/26/20	7/24/20	8/28/20	9/25/20	10/23/20	12/4/20	1/22/21
Paul Knippel	Frisco	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Chiamin Korngiebel	Dallas	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Alonzo Liñán	Keller	A(R)	E(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Eron Linn	DART	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Clay Lipscomb	Plano	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Paul Luedtke	Garland	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Stanford Lynch	Hunt County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Alberto Mares	Ellis County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wes McClure	Mesquite	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Brian Moen	Frisco	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mark Nelson	Richardson	P	E(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jim O'Connor	Irving	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kenneth Overstreet	Bedford	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kevin Overton	Dallas	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tim Palermo	DCTA	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Dipak Patel	Lancaster	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Todd Plesko	DART	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shawn Poe	Richardson	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
John Polster	Denton County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tim Porter	Wylie	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bryan G. Ramey II	Duncanville	A	A(R)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Greg Royster	DFW Int. Airport	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kathryn Rush	Dallas	--	--	--	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Moosa Saghian	Kaufman County	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
David Salmon	Lewisville	A(R)	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Brian Shewski	Plano	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Walter Shumac, III	Grand Prairie	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ray Silva-Reyes	Colleyville	A	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Randy Skinner	Tarrant County	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Anjelica Solano	NTTA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*
Caleb Thornhill	Plano	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Dave Timbrell	Garland	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Press Tompkins	Greenville	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize	Haltom City	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Daniel Vedral	Irving	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Caroline Waggoner	North Richland Hills	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Robert Woodbury	Cedar Hill	P	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jamie Zech	TCEQ	A	A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

P=Present A=Absent R=Represented E=Excused (personal illness, family emergency, jury duty, business necessity)
-- =Not yet eligible to attend *Meeting held by WebEx/Audio Conference. Individual attendance not taken.

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE January 22, 2021

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, January 22, 2021, at 1:30 pm, by videoconference. The Regional Transportation Council Bylaws establish that the Technical Committee approved membership in attendance at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for action to be taken, therefore individual attendance was not taken for committee members or other attendees.

1. **Approval of December 4, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the December 4, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Jim O'Connor (M); Alonzo Liñán (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 2.1. **Fiscal Year 2021 Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives: Phase 2:** Committee support for the Regional Transportation Council to recommend North Central Texas Council of Governments Executive Board approval of \$1,485,500 in funding for education campaigns for transportation initiatives was requested. The benefits of the initiative and cost savings obtained from bulk education campaign purchasing for the Transportation Department, primarily from Fiscal Year 2019, was provided in Electronic Item 2.1.1. Additional information on Phase 1 and Phase 2 was provided in Electronic Item 2.1.2.
 - 2.2. **Endorsement of Regional Transportation Council Local Contingency for Fiscal Year 2021 Regional Aerial Photography Program:** Endorsement of 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.
 - 2.3. **Grand Prairie Incident Management Vehicles:** Endorsement of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to use \$65,900 in RTC Local funding to fund the Grand Prairie Incident Management Blocking Equipment Pilot Project was requested. Additional information about the request was provided in Electronic Item 2.3.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Daniel Vedral (M); Chad Edwards (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Update on the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Timeline and Changes Resulting from Statewide Financial Constraints:** Rylea Roderick briefed the Committee on the altered 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP (STIP) approval timeline and highlighted proposed revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP/STIP listings. The 2021-2024 TIP/STIP was submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in June 2020. Around the time of the submittal, staff learned the approval of the STIP would be delayed due to issues balancing project programming to available revenues statewide. As a result, the TxDOT Planning and Programming Division requested several changes to project fiscal years for selected projects. Until these changes are made, the 2019-022 TIP/STIP will remain in effect. The primary impact of the delay is on any projects that were newly added or changed substantially in the 2021-2024 TIP since funding agreements or new federal/State actions for these projects cannot be executed until the STIP is approved. Changes to

projects requested through the November 2020 TIP modification cycle have also been delayed, and the February 2021 TIP modification cycle will also be impacted. To resolve these issues, November 2020 and February 2021 TIP revisions as well as TxDOT recommended changes to balance statewide fiscal constraints will be incorporated into the original 2021-2024 TIP/STIP submission. TxDOT approval of the updated 2021-2024 TIP/STIP documents is anticipated in late March 2021 and US Department of Transportation (USDOT) approval in May 2021. This delay and the timeline for approval will have further impacts on the TIP for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2021. Since the May 2021 STIP revision cycle coincides with USDOT review of the new TIP/STIP, TxDOT anticipates cancelling the May 2021 TIP revision cycle meaning the next deadline for TIP modification requests would be the August 2021 cycle, with April 26, 2021, as the deadline for modifications requests to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Resulting STIP revision approval would be anticipated in late September or early October 2021. Because of these delays, new projects in FY2021 will be very limited and more new funding would not be available until FY2022 or later. As a part of the updates that NCTCOG will submit to the State later this month or early February, Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval is needed for 13 projects TxDOT has identified as needing to be moved due to financial constraints. Since the 2021-2024 TIP/STIP project listing was approved by the RTC, 34 projects have obligated and no longer need to be double listed in the new TIP. In addition, three revisions from the November cycle were initially processed administratively but have been amended and now require RTC approval, as well as one project from the original 2021-2024 TIP/STIP project listing that has also changed and requires RTC approval. Resulting revisions to the 2021-2024 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 3.1 and additional information about the effort was provided in Electronic Item 3.2. John Polster asked when projects with pending Advanced Funding Agreements can be executed based on the requested action. Ms. Roderick noted that as currently anticipated, USDOT approval is anticipated by May 2021 and agreements could be executed after approval. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the changes to projects in the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program requiring Regional Transportation Council action, provided in Electronic Item 3.1. Action also included a recommendation for staff to administratively amend other planning and administration documents as needed. Robert Woodbury (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Federal Transit Administration Funding Allocations in Response to COVID Relief 2.0 Funding Authorization:** Edgar Hernandez presented a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding allocations in response to COVID-19. A summary of the first round of emergency funds made available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was provided. The second round of funding is provided through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA). The primary objective of CRRSAA is to ensure that public transit agencies receive sufficient funding under the second bill, when combined with the CARES Act apportionments, to equal at least 75 percent of urbanized areas' public transit operating costs. For North Texas, this means that the largest transit providers in the region will receive additional funding. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will not be retaining any funds for administrative purposes to direct the maximum amount available coming through CRRSAA to transit providers. CRRSAA provides \$14 billion nationwide in additional emergency funds to alleviate funding shortfalls for the nation's largest public transportation systems due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and also provides a small amount of funding under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, Section 5310. Funding is provided at 100 percent federal share, with no local match required, and prioritizes the use of funds for operational and payroll needs and also supports expenses traditionally eligible under the funding

programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Expenses incurred on or after January 20, 2020, are eligible for reimbursement. In seeking RTC action as soon as possible and in line with what the bill prescribes, CRRSAA funding is not required to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) but staff will be adding these funds to the TIP for informational and transparency purposes. Projects awarded under the Section 5310 Program in the region must be included in or be consistent with Access North Texas. As the region's MPO, NCTCOG is the designated recipient of FTA Urbanized Area (UZA) formula funds for North Texas. Available funding for North Texas includes: Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington UZA, \$128,511,228 in Section 5307 and \$661,250 in Section 5310; and Denton Lewisville UZA, \$41,938 in Section 5310. In line with CRRSAA, qualifying recipients will receive Section 5307 funding based on 2018 operating expenses as reported to the National Transit Database. In line with the bill, the FTA allocated funds to address funding shortfalls currently experienced by large public transportation agencies with high operating costs so as such funding is being proposed for allocation per CRRSAA precedence. The bill outlined that any Section 5307 Emergency Assistance funding (CARES Act and CRRSAA apportionments) for urbanized areas cannot exceed 75 percent of the total urbanized area operating expenses as reported to the 2018 National Transit Database. Qualifying recipients will receive Section 5310 funding based on eligibility and overall need. Projects must be included in or consistent with Access North Texas and follow the normal TIP process. The allocation methodology used data from 2018 operating expenses and the CARES Act suballocation tables. Since Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is the only transit provider that has not yet exceeded 75 percent of the 2018 operating expenses, staff recommended the full amount under Section 5307 for the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington UZA be allocated to DART. All other transit providers have exceeded the 75 percent threshold due to CARES Act funding. Mr. Hernandez reviewed the schedule for the effort noting that RTC action would be requested at the February 11, 2021, meeting.

Fred Crosley, Trinity Metro, proposed a revised motion for North Central Texas Council of Governments staff to reconsider the allocation methodology for funds and discuss such methodology with all transit authorities prior to Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) and RTC approval. He noted that Trinity Metro has concerns about whether it is appropriate or required by law that the 75 percent funding threshold for urbanized areas should be pushed down to the agency level. Trinity Metro staff would like to consult with its counselors and have more time to understand the allocation methodology. Michael Morris noted that Congress has indicated that entities provided more than 75 percent of their operating costs in the first round of funding are not eligible in the second round of funding. He noted that if members would consider moving ahead with approval assuming that staff's interpretation is correct in order for the item to continue to the RTC, then staff will review the allocation methodology. If staff's interpretation is found to be incorrect and there is flexibility in applying the 75 percent threshold, staff would bring the item back to the Committee previous to requesting RTC action. Discussion continued. Phil Dupler, Trinity Metro, noted that the agency would also like to ensure the number used in staff's chart is correct for 2018 operating expenses and that 2018 was before TEXRAIL operations began. He added that pushing the 75 percent threshold back to the entire urbanized area is maybe more equitable. Chad Edwards asked if the 75 percent threshold was identified in the CARES Act. Mr. Hernandez noted the CARES act allocated funding to individual agencies based on formula and did not include a 75 percent cap. CRRSAA stated that large agencies received less than they should have under the CARES Act. Referencing slide 6 of the presentation, he noted that DART is the only agency that did not receive enough funding to cover its operating expenses as report to the National Transit Database in 2018. CRRSAA states that any urbanized areas that did not received 75 percent of the operating expenses attributable to that urbanized area will receive additional funding. Mr. Edwards asked if Mr. Crosley was open to amending his motion to recommend RTC approval of staff recommendations pending staff review to determine if interpretation of CRRSAA is correct. If CRRSAA does

allow greater flexibility, staff will bring the item back to the Committee prior to requesting RTC approval. Mr. Crosley was agreeable to amending his original motion. Eron Linn noted that DART supported the amended motion. An amended motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the funding allocation proposed in Electronic Item 4 and to revise administrative documents as appropriate to incorporate the additional funds. Presentation to the RTC of the proposed recommendations is contingent on staff review of CRRSAA and coordination with transit authorities to determine if the methodology for funding allocations gives flexibility for MPOs to allocate money within the urbanized region. If staff's recommendation follows the congressional intent of CRRSAA and there is no flexibility, staff recommendations will be presented to the RTC. Fred Crosley (M); Chad Edwards (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **2020 Metropolitan Planning Organization Milestone Policy Implementation (Round 2):** Brian Dell presented proposed recommendations and deadlines for the projects in the second round of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Milestone Policy. The first round of the MPO Milestone Policy was adopted by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in June 2015, reviewed projects selected from 1992 to 2005 that had not been implemented and was successful in getting 51 out of 57 projects to construction. The second MPO Milestone Policy effort began in November 2019. Projects impacted through this round were primarily those funded between 2006 and 2010 that had not let or obligated as of December 2019. The effort also included projects funded prior to 2006 that had let but have had implementation issues, those funded with RTC-selected sources, locally funded projects that were being tracked because of regional significance, and a few projects funded with Congressional earmarks that are subject to rescission. The reapproval process was covered. Agencies with projects on the Milestone Policy list were notified by letter and notified once again when the deadline to provide responses was extended due to COVID-19 impacts. Agencies were required to reconfirm the projects as a priority by providing a realistic and achievable schedule that was vetted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Texas Department of Transportation, providing documentation of policy board support, and documenting that any required local match was still available. A summary of the 41 projects and funding proposed for cancellation, as well as projects under construction/complete or letting in the future was provided. The draft list of proposed recommendations for the projects was provided in Electronic Item 5.1 and details on the MPO Milestone Policy were provided in Electronic Item 5.2. Mr. Dell noted that when presented for information, it was noted now that the program is established and agencies understand the implications of setting their schedules, staff proposed that there would no longer be a one-year grace period and further extensions would not be offered to projects that missed their deadlines. Staff proposed that failure to meet the schedules set forth will result in automatic removal of funding from a project. The schedule for this effort was reviewed and an overview of the requested action was provided which included the cancellation of projects, and the revised Milestone Policy procedures. John Polster noted that he understood the policy and did not suggest that it be changed but noted that it seemed extreme for a project to be automatically canceled. Several members agreed with the intent of the policy and discussed alternatives to funding being automatically removed from a project as part of the policy. NCTCOG staff noted that project delays are understood, and that staff is also aware of the implications of canceling projects. It was also noted that local governments have the ability to build as much extra time into the schedule as they feel is necessary to account for potential delays. NCTCOG staff discussed how the continued delay of projects could put funding at risk. John Polster suggested that between now and the February 11, 2021, Regional Transportation Council meeting, language be crafted that supports enforcement of an established deadline for projects, but that projects are not automatically canceled. In order that a project not be canceled, the implementing agency must make a final appeal to the Committee and RTC with financial consideration given to minimize any impacts to the RTC. A motion was made to recommend Regional

Transportation Council approval of the proposed recommendations outlined in Electronic Item 5.1 as well as the established deadlines for each project (end of the fiscal year in which it is scheduled to let). As part of the motion, North Central Texas Council of Governments staff committed to revise the Milestone Policy procedures before the February 11, 2021, Regional Transportation Council meeting to address the request that projects not be automatically cancelled. Action also included a recommendation for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents as needed. John Polster (M); Bryan Beck (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Section 214/USACE Update:** Jeff Neal provided an overview of the status of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 214. The partnership with the USACE was initiated through a pilot program in 2008 to allow the USACE to receive funds from a nonfederal entity to expedite the development and approval of section 404 and 408 water permits for regionally significant transportation projects. Since inception a total of \$3.1 million has been dedicated to the program. Partner agencies have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program and performance measures have exceeded expectations. The program has allowed for the withdrawal of unnecessary permits, processing of nationwide permits as opposed to individual permits, and development of a Regional General Permit to expedite 404 permits during the 408-permit process. A reduction in mitigation requirements has also been realized, as well as cost savings and reductions of impacts to the ecosystem. An overview of permit decisions under the MOA to date was provided, which have resulted in increases in actions taken by the USACE as well as enhanced processing timeframes, which also results in cost savings. These successes have provided both cost and time savings to several major projects within the region. Mr. Neal noted that all participating partner agencies have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program and performance measures have exceeded expectations and have also expressed interest in continuing the program. The current MOA expires in September 2022 and staff is working to create a new agreement with the USACE. Clarence Daugherty asked if the MOAs allow for other coordination efforts with the USACE such as right-of-way near lakes. Mr. Neal noted that the current MOA with the USACE is to expedite 404/408 permits. Michael Morris added that if an entity believes it would be beneficial to develop a program to advance other work with the USACE that the entity submits a request through the Unified Planning Work Program development process.
7. **Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study Update:** Kevin Feldt presented an update regarding the Dallas to Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation (DFW HST) Connections Study. The objective of the study is to evaluate high-speed transportation alternatives, both alignments and technology, to connect Dallas-Fort Worth to other proposed high-performance passenger systems in the state and enhance and connect the Dallas-Fort Worth regional transportation system, as well as eventually obtain federal environmental approval of the viable alternative. The draft preliminary project purpose is to connect downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth, providing an alternative to travel by automobile, advance the State high-performance trail transportation network, support economic development opportunities and enhance connectivity. The initial set of alignments and corridors was highlighted, as well as the initial modes of transportation to be considered. Evaluation of alternatives includes three levels: 1) Level 1, Purpose and Need; 2) Level 2, Fatal Flaw and Ranking; and 3) Detailed Evaluation. Primary and secondary Level 1 screening results were highlighted, and as a result on IH 30 (12 alignments) and SH 180 (11 alignments) corridors and all technologies other than conventional rail were carried forward into Level 2 screening. From the Level 2 screening, 7 of the 12 IH 30 alignments were recommended for Level 3 screening, as well as 3 of the 11 SH 180 alignments. High-speed rail, maglev, and hyperloop were recommended as technologies for Level 3 screening. He noted Level 2 screening results are preliminary and will be presented

at upcoming public meetings. Also highlighted were public and agency engagement efforts that have included elected official briefing, technical working groups, and public meetings. In addition, a Technology Forum workshop was held as well as one-on-one meetings with technology providers. Mr. Feldt noted staff is approximately two thirds of the way through the Phase 1 schedule and will soon begin to develop initial design options for the corridors advancing to Level 3 screening, develop alignments within each corridor for transportation technology modes advancing through the Level 2 screening, with anticipated completion by the end of March 2021. This work will support Level 3 screening, the detailed evaluation, to determine potential technology and alignment recommendations for Phase 2. The detailed evaluation will look at costs; potential impacts to sensitive social, biological and/or cultural areas; potential community impacts; and constructability/operability. Members were asked to provide comments on the draft Level 3 screening criteria. It was noted the primary reason emerging technologies are not advancing is technology readiness. Clarence Daugherty discussed various criteria and asked if travel time was a weighted category due its relevance to the project. Staff noted that travel time was not weighted, and that a technology either did or did not meet the speed criteria. Chad Edwards thank North Central Texas Council of Governments staff for meeting with the City of Fort Worth about the project.

8. **Automated Vehicle Planning Project 2.1: Kick-Off Briefing:** Thomas Bamonte briefed the Committee on the Automated Vehicle Planning Project 2.1 (AV 2.1), a planning exercise designed to help the region prepare for higher levels of automation in the transportation sector. Through a procurement, a team headed by Kittelson & Associates was selected to assist staff in the planning process. Key tasks will look at how automated vehicle and associated technology can address current and anticipated mobility needs in the region. The planning process is expected to yield useful projects for community and regional planning. Members were encouraged to participate in one of the three opportunities that support the planning process. The first opportunity is the Project Advisory Committee. This committee will help shape the planning process, will meet bi-monthly over an 18-month schedule, and include six half-day virtual training workshops. Participants were encouraged to use this process to involve some of their younger colleagues to inspire the next generation of transportation professionals. Invitations are expected to go out by the end of the month. The second opportunity is broader stakeholder engagement. Members will be asked for recommendations of who should be included in the planning process. The third opportunity is a public engagement component for communities to learn about new technologies and project efforts. Members interested in participating in any of the opportunities were encouraged to contact staff.

9. **Director of Transportation Report Items:** Michael Morris provided an overview of current transportation items, including a summary on performance metrics to help understand the impacts of COVID-19 to the transportation system. He recognized North Central Texas Council of Governments (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. In addition, he noted that comments are being accepted on proposed amendments to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). Members were notified by email, provided in Electronic Item 9.3, that NCTCOG would be providing comments and encouraged agencies to also provide comments. He also provided an overview of recent presentations on the top ten transportation technologies initiatives currently being pursued in the region. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 9.1. The first technology highlighted was 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 opportunities for online job recruiting. Another transportation technology initiative in the region is autonomous people movers. A

procurement is currently underway that includes light-weight vehicle structures and induction loops as a way to recharge the vehicles. This technology is proposed in Tarrant County and in the Midtown area east of the Galleria, and there may be other opportunities in the region such as in Las Colinas. Next, he highlighted next generation freeway design on roadways to be implemented at the time the project is designed in order to build for the use of autonomous vehicles. He also highlighted the use of induction loops in pavement for charging of electric vehicles during travel. Mr. Morris highlighted four major program areas presented in a recent presentation to highlight what the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) does in the region. The first area is partnering with agencies to build mega transportation projects like TEXRail, North Tarrant Express, IH 35 2E, and others. Also of importance, the RTC works with local governments on mixed-use development initiatives such as the General Electric test track, advancing 7th Street in Fort Worth, and Uptown. The third area is traditional transportation projects. The final element is the relationship with the State Legislature. He 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. As a reminder, he noted that Senator Nichols' letter from July 2016 supports formula allocation but added that there is a lot of work yet to be done in order to encourage the Texas Legislature to consider a P3 in the state. Mr. Morris also provided an overview of slides from Electronic Item 9.2, 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, freeways and toll roads remain 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 of the reduced construction costs. In addition, he noted that the next round of COVID-19 Infrastructure Improvement Program projects will be presented soon and that it may be an opportunity to encumber Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds. The deadline for project applications is January 29, 2021. Committee Chair Brian Moen noted that the next Greater Dallas and Fort Worth TexITE Sections meeting is February 12, 2021, and discussion will include a summary of the changes to the MUTCD. He asked if there was any interest by Committee members for NCTCOG to facilitate discussion regarding the proposed amendments. Mr. Morris noted that NCTCOG is happy to play any role the Committee wishes, especially regarding the major elements of the manual but noted that it was not proposing to submit comments on behalf of other entities. Mr. Moen suggested that a NCTCOG summary of amendments and comments may be helpful. Mr. Morris noted the item would be added to the February 26, Committee agenda. John Polster noted he appreciated the overview from the Director on items of interest and that it was beneficial.

10. **Legislative Update:** Nicholas Allen provided a federal legislative update. At the end of December, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Appropriations and a COVID-19 stimulus relief package were approved. 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. The 117th Congressional session began January 3, 2021. Of note, the FAST Act one-year extension expires September 30, 2021, and the Administration has signaled that a new infrastructure bill is an early priority. Pete Buttigieg has been confirmed as the new USDOT Secretary of Transportation and new committee assignments have been made, with new members reflecting turnover. Mr. Allen also provided an update on State legislative actions. The 87th Texas Legislature convened on January 12, 2021, and the new Speaker of the House, Dade Phelan, was elected. In addition, the Comptroller released

biennial revenue estimates and the House and Senate released new safety protocols. Bill filings began in November and continue through March 12. In addition, Senate Transportation Committee assignments have been released, with Senator Robert Nichols named as the Chair and Senator Kel Seliger as the Vice Chair. Mr. Allen provided additional detail on the Comptroller biennial revenue estimate. During the 2022-2023 biennium, the State is expected to have an estimated \$112.5 billion in revenue available for general-purpose spending. The \$946 million shortfall is less than expected considering the events of 2020. 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 Regional Transportation Council are being tracked and include bills related to funding, safety, high-speed rail, and air quality/alternative fuel. In addition, he noted that budget bills filed on January 21 will be examined in greater detail prior to the next Committee update. Staff will continue to provide weekly updates online at www.nctcog.org/legislative.

11. **Unmanned Aircraft Systems Draft Resolution:** Ernest Huffman presented a proposed Regional Transportation Council (RTC) resolution to support the safe and efficient integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the Dallas-Fort Worth transportation system. Elements of the draft resolution, provided in Electronic Item 11, were highlighted and include RTC support for: a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process to integrate land-based and aerial-based transportation systems in a safe and cost-effective fashion to maximize economies of scale and improve mobility; safe and responsible UAS activity within the region including, but not limited to, medical supplies and package delivery, air taxi, public safety use, accident reconstruction, surveying, and other activities as identified in the future; agencies to support their public safety services use of UAS; to encourage agencies to work with the UAS industry to adopt “pilot” programs to demonstrate the technologies properly operated in and around a metropolitan area; educational institutions in North Texas to provide UAS-oriented educational offerings to help prepare the transportation workforce of the future; the development of UAS aircraft pilot certification standards and efforts to position North Texas as a center for UAS aircraft pilot training; and agencies to participate in the North Texas UAS Safety and Integration Task Force. Mr. Huffman noted the working group provides a forum that will allow cities to share their current use cases and policies and learn about other UAS use cases in the region. Involvement is important as UAS operation activities continue to advance in the region. The working group will categorize community concerns, inventory available applications for city use, inventory funding mechanism for city use, inventory training available to cities, identify how small UAS aircraft and other UAS operations can supplement existing transportation methods, and identify how UAS can replace existing transportation methods in emergency situations. The schedule for this effort was reviewed. Members were encouraged to review and provide comments on the resolution prior to requested RTC action on February 11, 2021. Brian Moen asked if cities would be encouraged to adopt a similar resolution as part of programs like the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle. Mr. Huffman noted that the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) would like city engagement but are not asking for individual city approval of the resolution at this time. Michael Morris noted that in the future, NCTCOG may come back to the Committee to determine inclusion of the resolution in other efforts, similar to air quality initiatives.
12. **Safety Performance Targets Update:** Kevin Kroll provided an update on the Roadway Safety Performance regional targets for the 2021-2022 target schedule. The status of the various federally required performance measures the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) tracks and monitors was highlighted. Roadway Safety (PM1) performance measure targets were first approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in December 2017. The established target was a 2 percent reduction by the target

year 2022 across each of the five performance measures: the number of fatalities and the rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, serious injuries, and the rate of serious injuries and the number of non-motorized fatalities plus serious injuries. A Regional Safety Position that even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable was also established at that time. These targets have been affirmed annually and in May 2019, the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) adopted Minute Order 115481 directing the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to work toward the goal of reducing the number of deaths on Texas roadways by half by the year 2035 and to zero by the year 2050. Mr. Kroll provided an overview of both the current trends within the state and region. Data from the past five years shows that both at the state and regional level, there has been an increase in the number of fatalities and in the number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. Performance for the rate of fatalities, number of serious injuries, and rate of serious injuries has trended downward. When compared to established targets for both 2018 and 2019, the region has met targets across each of the performance measure types. Also highlighted was TxDOT and NCTCOG 2020 and 2021 performance targets and projections, with 2021 targets for TxDOT including the new 50 percent reduction by 2035 targets for fatalities and fatality rate. As the MPO, NCTCOG has the ability to either adopt TxDOT targets or establish its own targets. Given the uncertainty of COVID-19 impacts, NCTCOG decided that at this time it would better to continue with the existing 2 percent reduction for 2022 targets. In the coming year, staff will determine if adjustments to the 2022 targets are feasible. Mr. Kroll noted that while targets are a good performance monitoring tool, they do not necessarily inform how the region can reach those targets. NCTCOG has numerous safety-related programs and projects that help the region to meet targets and is seeking feedback from members on what projects and programs have been successful in their respective cities/counties. The schedule for Safety Performance target actions was highlighted which includes updates to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee, Regional Safety Advisory Committee, and the RTC.

13. **Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Fleet Recognition and Annual Survey Results:** Amy Hodges presented an update on the status of the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities (DFWCC) Coalition Annual Survey and the Fleet Recognition awardees. As part of the mission as the Clean Cities Coalition, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) works with fleets in the region to assist in the use of alternative fuels and encourage the implementation of various best practices to make the fleets more efficient and to reduce emissions and fuel consumption. This directly supports the air quality emphasis areas and our regional air quality goals. As part of efforts, each year NCTCOG collects fleet information that is centered around the use of alternative fuel vehicles and equipment and fleet efficiency improvements such as practices that reduce vehicle miles traveled, idling, and save fuel. The information is provided to the United States Department of Energy who produces an annual report available at www.dfwcleancities.org/annualreport. In 2019, 42 fleets reported and through their efforts approximately 26 million gasoline gallon equivalents were reduced as well as a reduction of approximately 420 tons of nitrogen oxides. In addition, energy impacts of fleets in the region were highlighted, as well as the breakdown of impact for greenhouse gas reductions, fine particulate reductions, nitrogen oxides and number of vehicles. Ms. Hodges Three level of awards are given based emissions reduction, fuel consumption reduction, partnering with DFW Clean Cities, and ensuring familiarity with fleet goals. Bronze fleet winners included the cities of Arlington, Frisco, North Richland Hills, and Watauga, Tarrant County and the towns of Addison and Flower Mound, as well as Trinity Metro. Silver fleet winners include the cities of Bedford, Coppell, Irving, and Mesquite, as well as Denton and Prosper Independent School Districts. Gold fleet winners included the cities of Carrollton, Dallas, Denton, Euless, Lewisville and Southlake, as well as Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. She noted that in the past year, NCTCOG introduced a new category of awards, Shining Stars, to recognize fleets that are making the greatest process in three areas: nitrogen oxides reduction, gasoline gallon

equivalent reduction, and transitioning to alternative fuels. Winners for greatest progress in nitrogen oxides reductions included Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and North Richland Hills; greatest progress in gasoline gallon equivalent reductions included City of Denton and SPAN Transit; and greatest progress in transitioning to alternative fuels included Trinity Metro and Denton Independent School District. Ms. Hodges noted that the next annual survey to collect 2020 fleet data will be available soon at www.dfwcleancities.org/annualreport. The deadline for responses is February 26, 2021. In addition, she noted NCTCOG recently celebrated its 25th anniversary as a Clean Cities Coalition and that a celebratory video was available at www.dfwcleancities.org. Details were provided in Electronic Item 13.

14. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.
 1. \$4 Million Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ACTMTD) Grant from the United States Department of Transportation Received for City of Dallas SM Wright Smart Corridor Project in Partnership with the Regional Transportation Council (<https://highways.dot.gov/newsroom/us-department-transportation-awards-496-million-advanced-transportation-and-congestion>)
 2. Upcoming Transit Studies Meetings (www.nctcog.org/transitstudies)
 - 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
 - East Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties Initial Stakeholders Meeting: February 12, 2021, 10:00 AM
 3. Auto Occupancy/High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report (Electronic Item 14.1)
 4. Air North Texas Partner Awards (<https://www.airnorthtexas.org/partnerawards20>)
 5. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>)
 6. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Upcoming Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>)
 7. Status of Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program Funding Programs (Electronic Item 14.2)
 8. East/West Equity Report (Electronic Item 14.3)
 9. Air Quality Fact Sheet (Spanish Translation) (Electronic Item 14.4)
 10. December Online Input Opportunity Minutes (Electronic Item 14.5)
 11. January Online Input Opportunity Notice (Electronic Item 14.6)
 12. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 14.7)
 13. Written Progress Reports:
 - Local Motion (Electronic Item 14.8)
 - Partner Progress Reports (Electronic Item 14.9)
15. **Other Business (Old and New):** There was no discussion on this item.
16. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on February 26, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.



A monthly update on activities of the Regional Transportation Council and the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department

March 2021

INSIDE

Bike parking pilot comes to Bishop Arts

In the Bishop Arts District of Dallas, a bicycle parking parklet has been developed with a focus on accommodating the needs of bicyclist customers of area businesses. The bicycle parking facility, installed at the intersection of North Bishop Avenue and West Eighth Street, is the same dimension as two parallel vehicle parking spaces and will accommodate 13 bicycles. Read more on page 3.

Campaign urges N. Texans to ‘look out’ for safety

As spring approaches, both the trails and streets of North Texas are likely to see increased activity from bicyclists and pedestrians. More people biking and walking puts a greater focus on the importance of safety for all users of the transportation system. Look Out Texans, a regional public safety and education campaign, is once again sharing tips to encourage everyone to help make the region’s roads safer for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Throughout the spring and summer, the campaign will use a variety of outreach tools to reach audiences most at risk for being in a crash, as well as the general public. Look Out Texans features tips to help people bicycling, walking and driving understand how they should interact together to improve safety on area roads.

Look Out Texans campaign efforts enhance the work of local, State and federal transportation partners who are focused on improving reliability and safety for all road users through roadway design solutions and greater awareness of how people can bike, walk and drive safely.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is coordinating Look Out Texans for cities and transportation partners across the region. It comes at a time when motor vehicle crashes that involve people bicycling and walking are increasing in North Texas. Between 2015 and 2019, there were more than 10,500 such crashes reported, resulting in 864 fatalities, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. Consequently, the Federal Highway Administration has designated Dallas and Fort Worth as two of its 35 Pedestrian-Bicycle Focus Cities, which are selected based on high rates of crash fatalities. For more information about Look Out Texans, including tips that can help make the roads safer for all, visit

www.LookOutTexans.org.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

For more information about Local Motion topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or bwilson@nctcog.org. Visit www.nctcog.org/trans for more information on the department.

Help North Texans breathe clean this ozone season

Ozone season in North Texas began March 1 and will run through the end of November.

This is the time of year when ozone is typically at its highest concentration. Ozone forms when nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds combine with sunlight and intense heat.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area is in nonattainment for ozone pollution and continues to pursue attainment of both the 2008 standard of 75 parts per billion and the 2015 standard, which toughened the requirement to 70 ppb. The current design value is 76 ppb.

The air quality index is a tool used to report daily ozone levels and help the public better understand the severity of high ozone levels in the region and their related health impacts. The color-coded chart is an easy way to follow the air quality.

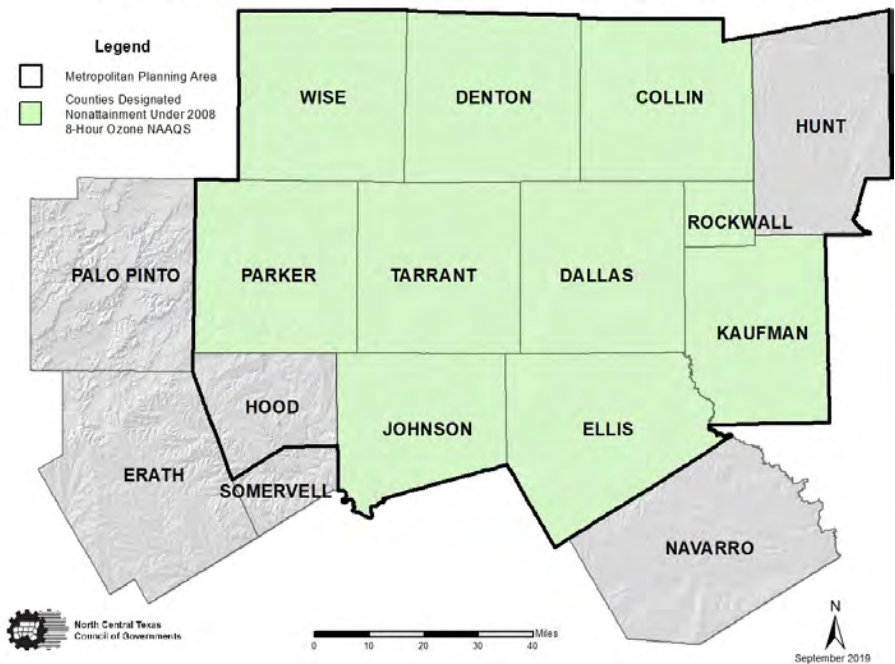
When the level is green or yellow, that indicates the air quality is good or moderate and safe to go outside. When the level is orange or higher, the air quality can be unsafe.

A few simple changes to people's daily routines, such as telecommuting or opting for public transit, could make a difference. High ozone can be combated in other ways also, including reducing idling, taking your lunch to work and conserving water and electricity. For more ways to take action, visit www.airnorthtexas.org/howto. To stay informed about the air quality index, North Texans are encouraged to sign up for air pollution alerts at www.airnorthtexas.org/signup.

Wednesday, August 4, is the annual Air North Texas event, Clean Air Action Day, which encourages involvement from North Texans to make the air cleaner. Residents are asked to consider doing at least one thing on this day to improve air quality. Additionally, they can share their actions on social media by including #CAAD2021 on their posts or tagging @NCTCOGtrans.

But, they don't have to wait until the weather is hot to contribute to the effort. Making small changes throughout the year could help the region in its effort to meet ozone attainment. With the coronavirus pandemic continuing into this year, Air North Texas offers tips on how people can think about their impact to the air while doing their part to keep themselves and those around them healthy. For a list of social distancing clean air strategies, visit www.airnorthtexas.org/socialdistancing.

2008 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS Nonattainment Area



DRONES

Virtual UAS workshop scheduled March 6

The next virtual drone workshop is scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 6.

This FREE monthly session will focus on public safety and its use of UAS technology. In public safety, drones can be used to assist with accident investigations, law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations.

Drones, also called unmanned aircraft systems, have become more common in North Texas and across the nation, as advances in technology have opened new opportunities for businesses, governments and residents who want to enjoy flying them as a hobby.

Recognizing this, the Regional Transportation Council has approved a resolution encouraging agencies to support the use of drones to enhance public safety operations and work with the industry to find opportunities to demonstrate safe drone use in the region.

Educational institutions are encouraged to offer instruction that will help prepare the workforce for the future.

For information and to register for the next workshop, visit www.northtexasuas.com. Links to previous virtual workshops are also available on this site.

REGIONAL News

Study shows how TOD influences transit choices

When people live close to transit stops, they are significantly more likely to ride the bus or train to work, school or other activities.

According to a recent survey of transit-oriented development around 28 Dallas Area Rapid Transit Red and Blue Line stations, 23% of those a quarter-mile from a station are likely to take transit. Conversely, 7% of North Texans who live a mile from transit are likely to use it as a commuting option, according to the survey.

Responses were collected from residents, businesses and employees around the stations before the coronavirus pandemic began. Businesses in denser areas of the region also saw more customers commute by walking or biking.

Active transportation connections influenced more than how residents traveled throughout the region. For example, sidewalks through neighborhoods ranked high on residents' list of reasons for choosing where to live. According to the survey, they were third on the list, behind housing cost and low crime rates. Overall, 52% of residents reported they preferred being able to walk, bike or take transit to restaurants, libraries and other non-commute destinations.

Although people's proximity to transit makes them more likely to choose that option, challenges remain. For example, 81% of residents within a mile of stations commuted by driving alone. NCTCOG can use the results of this survey to inform future planning initiatives. For more information, visit www.nctcog.org/tod.

Bishop Arts project brings more bike parking

In the Bishop Arts District of Dallas, a bicycle parking parklet has been developed with a focus on accommodating the needs of bicyclist customers of area businesses in the area.

The bicycle parking facility, installed at the intersection of North Bishop Avenue and West Eighth Street, is the same dimension as two parallel vehicle parking spaces and will accommodate 13 bicycles. The goal is to facilitate multimodal transportation and to ease the overall demand for vehicle parking in the Bishop Arts District. The parklet design includes buffered wheel stops at each end, and vertical landscape planters, to make the structure visible to traffic. The bicycle parking area also includes a seating area and a shade structure. If it works in the Bishop Arts District, the concept is expected to be replicated across the region.

Transportation Resources

Facebook

Facebook.com/nctcogtrans

Twitter

Twitter.com/nctcogtrans

YouTube

YouTube.com/nctcogtrans

Instagram

Instagram.com/nctcogtrans

Publications

NCTCOG.org/trans/outreach/publications.asp

Partners

Dallas Area Rapid Transit
DART.org

**Denton County
Transportation Authority**
DCTA.net

North Texas Tollway Authority
NTTA.org

**Texas Department
of Transportation**
TxDOT.gov

Trinity Metro
RideTrinityMetro.org

By the Numbers

15%

The annual amount by which the DFW Clean Cities Coalition seeks to increase petroleum reduction.

PUBLIC *Involvement*

NCTCOG online input opportunity starts March 8



Residents can review and comment on several NCTCOG projects and programs during the March online input opportunity, which begins Monday, March 8 and runs through April 7.

One of the primary responsibilities of a Metropolitan Planning Organization is the development and maintenance of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan, a long-range blueprint that lays out transportation system improvements for at least 20 years.

The current MTP for the Dallas-Fort Worth region, directs the spending of federal and State transportation funds through 2045. Staff has initiated an update to Mobility 2045 and will provide an overview and timeline for the Plan.

Additionally, NCTCOG staff will provide an overview of the Look Out Texans campaign, which informs people walking, biking and driving on how to be safe and watch for one another on Texas roadways and trails.

The campaign launches this spring and will run through the fall, focusing on crosswalk safety, biking tips and how drivers should interact with people biking and walking.

Finally, staff will present results from the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities 2019 Annual Survey. NCTCOG is the host organization for DFWCC, a US Department of Energy initiative to reduce total energy impacts in the transportation sector.

DFW Clean Cities has a goal of increasing petroleum reduction by 15% each year and seeks information from local fleets about alternative fuel use and other fuel-saving activities.

The Map Your Experience tool, Regional Smoking Vehicle Program, vehicle incentive opportunities, and NCTCOG's regional trails video series will also be highlighted.

For more information and an audio recording of the presentations, visit www.nctcog.org/input. Comments can be made by emailing transinfo@nctcog.org.