

## MINUTES

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING

#### Federal/State Partnerships for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program Mobility 2050: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas Community Noise Mitigation Program Grant 2025 Strategic Transportation Funding Program

#### Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2024, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone or view the live stream at [www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25](http://www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25). Dan Lamers, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting attended by 121 people.

#### Public Meeting Purpose and Topics

The public meeting was held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the metropolitan planning organization, and amended on November 8, 2018. Staff presented information about:

- Federal/State Partnerships for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program – **presented by Valerie Alvarado**
- Mobility 2050: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas – **presented by Gwen Dorko**
- Community Noise Mitigation Program Grant – **presented by Amanda Wilson**
- 2025 Strategic Transportation Funding Program – **presented by Cody Derrick**

The public meeting was held to educate, inform and seek comments from the public. Comments were solicited from those attending who wished to speak for the record. The presentations made during the meeting as well as a video recording were posted online at: [www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25](http://www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25).

#### Summary of Presentations

***Federal/State Partnerships for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program presentation:***  
<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/00df0569-a4d4-4ab9-8e36-79fea9b3b4f4/Federal-State-Partnership-Program-Presentation.pdf>

The Intercity Passenger Rail Program aims to improve American passenger rail assets by funding projects that improve performance or expand and establish new intercity passenger rail service, including privately operated intercity passenger rail. The proposed project for the grant application is the planning and development of double tracking the remaining single-track sections of the Trinity Railway Express (TRE), including the IH 35 Stemmons Freeway and SH 360 bridges.

***Mobility 2050: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas presentation:***

<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/ec1c415b-1a60-4b66-90da-34314e45eae8/Mobility-2050-Presentation.pdf>

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) defines a long-term vision for the region's transportation system and guides spending of federal and State transportation funds. This includes funding for highways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other programs that reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Mobility 2050 replaces the current MTP, Mobility 2045-2022 Update, and includes population and employment forecasts, goals, a financial plan and an air quality analysis. The financial plan will include new financial forecasts, comprehensive updates to policies and will build on the performance measures framework from the current plan. The Plan will also undergo a baseline analysis, financial assessment and non-discrimination analysis to ensure it meets targets.

Public comment periods will occur throughout the development process, and the draft Plan will be posted online in early 2025. To take part in the Plan's survey and assist planning staff in understanding how the transportation system works for the public, visit: [www.publicinput.com/Mobility2050](http://www.publicinput.com/Mobility2050).

***Community Noise Mitigation Program Grant presentation:***

<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/d2d4b32c-04f9-4045-bbca-fbbb27acfd21/Community-Noise-Mitigation-Program-Grant-Presentation.pdf>

NCTCOG was awarded grant funding through the U.S. Department of Defense Community Noise Mitigation Program. This funding will be used to install noise mitigating insulation at six school district facilities near Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth (NAS JRB Fort Worth).

The purpose of NAS JRB Fort Worth is to train and deploy combat forces. It is home to over 10,000 personnel and provides runway and air traffic control services for Lockheed Martin.

***2025 Strategic Transportation Funding Program presentation:***

<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/5bcbb841-7e31-499b-9273-1183fd79bdb1/2025-Strategic-Transportation-Funding-Program-Presentation.pdf>

Over the past few months, NCTCOG staff have been evaluating funding requests from agencies in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The 2025 Strategic Transportation Funding Program is a culmination of these efforts and proposes to award both federal and local funding for transportation projects across the region.

Major projects being recommended to receive funding include the following:

- State Loop 12 Safety Improvements
- Maintenance Pilot Program for Safety
- Laud Howell Parkway
- Panther Island Bridges
- Johnson County Bond Program Partnership
- FIFA World Cup Transportation Needs

## **Summary of Online Review and Comment Topics**

### ***Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects handout:***

<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/cce62ecf-603c-41ce-ae24-14db3d479983/February-2025-TIP-Modifications.pdf>

A comprehensive list of funded transportation projects through 2026 is maintained in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with committed funds from federal, State and local sources. To maintain an accurate project listing, this document is updated on a regular basis.

The current modification cycle includes project updates and funding adjustments for transportation initiatives in Dallas, Denton, Tarrant and Wise Counties. Additionally, financial adjustments related to public transportation services managed by the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) are also included.

### ***Modifications to the FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program handout:***

<https://nctcog.org/getmedia/90065c8a-2b7e-4acf-a9c1-aa83cfac4d60/UPWP-Mod-4-February-Online-Outreach-Posting-021125.docx>

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Regional Transportation Planning provides a summary of transportation and related air quality planning activities to be conducted in North Central Texas. For more information on the FY2024 and FY2025 UPWP, visit [www.nctcog.org/upwp](http://www.nctcog.org/upwp).

## **COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING**

### **Federal/State Partnerships for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program**

#### **Phyllis Silver, Citizen**

##### **A. Trinity Railway Express (TRE) service**

*Comment:* You mentioned the TRE is being double tracked, and I'm very glad it's being worked on. It's my understanding, the reason why there is usually no Sunday service is because that day is reserved for maintenance because it's single tracked in certain areas. I'd be interested to know the tentative completion date of the double-tracking. would be.

*Summary of response by Dan Lamers:* There are maintenance needs that must occur, and TRE does triple duty with passenger service, Amtrak service and freight rail service. With all of that, there are very few windows that are long enough to do significant maintenance activities on the corridor because there does have to be time allotted for that. It also comes down to funding. Operating a rail line is not cheap and DART and Trinity Metro do a good job of understanding what the ridership characteristics are to know when service is needed. Double tracking the TRE will help with the capacity side. For example, if maintenance occurs or a track has to be shut down for a period of time, there's at least another track that goes the entire length that will be able to be used.

### **Mobility 2050: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas**

#### **Phyllis Silver, Citizen**

## A. Definition of off-street pathways

*Comment by Phyllis Silver:* Gwen talked about off-street pathways, and I wanted to get a better feel for what that means. I'm not a bicyclist, but I am very much a pedestrian and sometimes the streets and sidewalks are not conducive for walking.

*Summary of response by Gwen Dorko:* An off-street pathway does not share the road with a vehicle. We'll coordinate with our bicycle and pedestrian staff to give you a full definition, but off-street pathways are generally more protected than on-street ones are.

*Summary of response by Dan Lamers:* Twenty-five or 30 years ago, the region developed the Veloweb, which is an interconnected system of off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Knowing this region is very automobile centric and that roadways are at maximum capacity in fast growing communities, the safest way of accommodating bicycles and pedestrians is to encourage off-street pathways. Some of the worst incidents we see on our roadway system have to do with pedestrians and vehicles. We take this very, very seriously and try to make sure incidents don't occur at all, if we can help it. But that's not to say there is no room for on-street facilities. We also encourage cities to implement roadway designs that safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. It is not a "one size fits" all. It's kind of both.

## **Community Noise Mitigation Program Grant**

### **Chuck Ozemeke, DCCM/ATG**

#### A. Funding requirements

*Question:* If there are situations where local governments cannot pay 10 percent, can the federal government cover 100 percent of the cost for this kind of program?

*Summary of response by Amanda Wilson:* For this program, the Department of Defense is required to have a 10 percent local match, which is why you see the Regional Transportation Council trying to help school districts like Lake Worth and White Settlement come up with that 10 percent match. Providing \$400,000 for the project would've been a pretty heavy lift, and splitting the cost between the two districts is much more manageable. It's not easy. It's great you get 90 cents on the dollar, but you still need to come up with that 10 cents.

## **Other**

### **Frank Wise, The Burrell Group**

#### A. Impact of Executive Orders

*Comment:* Everything we've talked about this morning is related to federal funding. Do you have any sense of whether we need to be concerned about any funding withdrawals?

*Summary of response by Dan Lamers:* We're currently reviewing all of our programs and projects to determine what type of funding source they've been allocated. The way our staff understands it, if funds are formula driven and obligated, they're probably going to be able to move forward. If funding is discretionary, they may or may not be able to move forward, depending on what the federal review shows regarding those grants. In his presentation, Cody mentioned both Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion, Mitigation and Air

Quality (CMAQ) funds, which are both federal formula funds that come to the State and then get allocated to our region. The Regional Transportation Council has the authority to select the projects that receive those types of funding. We are very cognizant of the funding sources, and we are reviewing everything, so we can work with our elected officials not only here but in Austin and Washington to determine how to best proceed.

**Zubin Segal, Shell Recharge**

A. Impact of Executive Orders

*Comment:* Is there any concern by the NCTCOG about federal grant funding, as related to the Executive Orders pausing federal grants? We are aware of the number of grants that are either on pause or cancelled. Any clarity would be appreciated.

*Summary of response by Dan Lamers:* Yes, there is a lot of uncertainty. We understand it will take some time to achieve clarity. If grants are eventually canceled, and it is the desire of the region and the community to move forward with specific initiatives, we will work with our local partners to try and make sure we can either move forward with them or find alternate sources of revenue or find alternate projects that serve similar purposes.

**Steve Babick, Citizen**

A. Hybrid meeting format

*Comment:* Thanks for accommodating virtual attendance.

**COMMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD VIA  
EMAIL, WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA & MAIL**

**Email**

**Thomas Wall Simons, Citizen**

Why do you have this meeting in a town that doesn't have mass transit?

***Summary of response by NCTCOG Transportation Staff***

Thank you for reaching out to the NCTCOG Transportation Department with your question. In years prior, we hosted several in-person public meetings each month around the DFW Metroplex. Due to various factors, including attendance numbers and impacts from the pandemic, we began hosting these meetings in a hybrid format at our Arlington headquarters to provide better accessibility for the public. Citizens can now attend our monthly public meetings in person or participate via phone, email or website.

The February meeting will be accessible online at [publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25](http://publicinput.com/nctcogFeb25). A live recording will also be available after the meeting, and the comment period is open until Wednesday, March 12. If patrons would like to participate in person and need a ride, they can request a \$6 roundtrip ride from the DFW CentrePort Station to NCTCOG with the Arlington Transportation app, which can be downloaded at: [www.arlingtontx.gov/ondemand](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/ondemand). If you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to reach back out to us. We would be happy to address them.