

## MINUTES

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITY

#### **COVID-19 Transportation Response: Information System & Economic Opportunities**

#### **Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act: Public Transportation Funding**

#### **Southeast Dallas County Funding Partnerships**

#### **Local Government Energy Reporting**

#### **Work Program Modifications**

#### **Online Public Input Opportunity Dates**

Monday, June 8, 2020 - Tuesday, July 7, 2020 – The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) posted information at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://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. COVID-19 Transportation Response: Information System & Economic Opportunities
2. Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act: Public Transportation Funding
3. Southeast Dallas County Funding Partnerships
4. Local Government Energy Reporting
5. Work Program Modifications

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](mailto:transinfo@nctcog.org), online at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://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 [cbaylor@nctcog.org](mailto:cbaylor@nctcog.org).

#### **Summary of Presentations**

##### ***COVID-19 Transportation Response: Information System & Economic Opportunities presentation:***

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/06/Info-Eco-Opps.pdf>

This presentation includes information related to what NCTCOG is doing to help assist transportation projects and programs during these challenging economic times. Four policy

metrics entitled RTC4U have been developed to help guide NCTCOG staff in alleviating the negative impacts of COVID-19:

- Travel behavior response to COVID-19
- Financial implications to traditional revenue sources
- Benefits of travel behavior responses to areas of RTC responsibility such as the ozone standard and congestion management system
- Prioritization of infrastructure improvements that offset unemployment increases

Since the pandemic has affected various transportation funding resources, it will be important to take advantage of lower construction inflation costs and leverage innovative funding. For example, per prior RTC direction, staff continues to work with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and private sector partners to complete additional phases of the North Tarrant Express and other public/private partnership projects. Other candidate projects continuing to move forward include the Dallas to Houston high-speed rail, the Dallas to Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study, the Y Connector, freeway induction loops and autonomous transit. NCTCOG staff are also working on the Transportation Improvement Program to see how other transportation projects can advance during these challenging times.

Members of the public are encouraged to provide feedback on the NCTCOG strategies and policy metrics for managing the impacts of COVID-19 on the transportation system.

***Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act: Public Transportation Funding presentation:***

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/06/Public-TR-Funding.pdf>

Public transportation is part of a comprehensive system and includes various types of services, such as fixed route, commuter, demand response and rail. Investing in these modes has a positive economic impact within communities, provides access for people with mobility impairments, reduces roadway congestion and improves air quality.

President Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act into law on March 27, 2020. The Act provides emergency assistance and emergency appropriations to support agency operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was provided with \$25 billion in supplemental funding to allocate to transit agencies and is available to support capital, operating and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. CARES Act funds will be available until they are expended. There is no lapse date.

NCTCOG is a designated recipient of FTA Urbanized Area (UZA) Formula funds for North Texas and will receive the following funding amounts through the CARES Act:

- DFW-Arlington UZA: \$318,629,129
- Denton-Lewisville UZA: \$23,461,86

***Southeast Dallas County Funding Partnerships presentation:***

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/06/Dallas-Co-Partner.pdf>

In collaboration with TxDOT, NCTCOG staff has developed funding partnerships with several cities in southeast Dallas County.

The City of Balch Springs requested funding assistance for improvements to Hickory Tree Road from Elam Road to Lake June Road. NCTCOG staff proposed the RTC fund the design of the project with \$500,000 of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds. Additionally, the Town of Sunnyvale requested assistance with funding the reconstructions of Collins Road from Tripp Road to Town East Blvd, and Tripp Road from The Falls Drive to Belt Line Road. NCTCOG staff proposed \$450,000 in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds for Collins Road as well as \$800,000 RTR funds for Tripp Road.

Lastly, the City of Hutchins requested funding assistance for improvements at the intersection of IH 45 and Dowdy Ferry Road. NCTCOG staff proposed funding the project through a partnership with the TxDOT Dallas District. The RTC will fund the project with \$3,700,000 of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds, and TxDOT will fund the project's design.

The RTC approved the aforementioned funding partnerships on June 11, 2020.

***Local Government Energy Reporting presentation:***

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/06/Energy-Reporting.pdf>

The Regional Energy Management Project is a partnership between the NCTCOG Transportation and Environment & Development Departments. It's purpose is to expand local government capabilities in energy management, increase compliance with state mandated energy reporting requirements and to improve the accuracy of emissions reduction data associated with reduced energy use.

Beginning September 1, 2019, The Texas Health and Safety Code requires all political subdivisions, institutes of higher education and state agencies in the 42 ozone nonattainment and near attainment counties to establish a goal of reducing electric consumption by at least 5 percent each state fiscal year for seven years and to submit an annual report to the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO). The reports are used by Texas A&M Energy Systems Laboratory (ESL) to estimate nitrogen oxide reductions associated with energy conservation. ESL submits the reports to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

In Fiscal Year 2018, 28 cities in North Central Texas submitted energy reports to SECO. Due to issues with lack of awareness and inconsistency in reporting from year to year, NCTCOG staff began assisting with outreach efforts for the project by developing a toolkit and providing workshops and webinars. In turn, 58 cities and 8 counties submitted a Fiscal Year 2019 energy report.

NCTCOG staff continue to assist in regional energy management work and 2020 webinars have been recorded and posted online for those interested in learning more about this initiative.

For more information, visit <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/natural-resources/energy-efficiency>

***Work Program Modifications handout:***

<https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Involve/InputMeetings/2020/06/UPWPMModification-3-va-06082020.docx>

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 included in this round of amendments address funding adjustments for demographic data and forecasting, public transportation planning and Environmental Justice program activities, among others.

The RTC will take action on the FY2020 and FY2021 UPWP modifications in July 2020.

### **WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, MAIL, EMAIL and SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act: Public Transportation Funding**

##### **Email**

##### **Nate Bramble**

As a user of the DART Light Rail line to get back and forth to work (pre-COVID-19 anyway) I wish the DART Rail line extended into Allen. Are there any plans for Allen to join DART so that we can extend the rail north of Parker Road Station or to get DART buses into Allen?

##### **Response by Carli Baylor, NCTCOG**

Mr. Bramble

Thank you for contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department

The DART LRT Red Line Extension through Allen north to McKinney is a part of our Mobility 2045 plan. However, no timeline or funding for this project has been identified. We just initiated the Collin County Transit Study (a 12-month study), which is taking a look at all transit options in the county, including regional rail corridors like the DART LRT Red Line Extension.

If you would like to receive updates throughout this study, please visit: <https://nctcog-cms.ae-admin.com/trans/plan/transit/transit-planning/collin-county-study-area> and click "Sign up for email updates to stay current with the latest project developments." Additionally, I've copied Todd Plesko from DART on this email in case you have any further questions.

##### **Mail**

Please see attachment for comment submitted via mail.

July 2, 2020

Ms. Carli Baylor

Communications Specialist

North Central Texas Council of Governments  
Transportation Dept.  
PO Box 5888

Arlington, TX 76005-5888

Dear Carli:

I was pleased that two topics in particular were addressed in your June 15 mailing that is due on July 7, 2020. The topics are: Federal aid to Public transportation through the CARES Act and maintaining high air quality standards.

Public transportation funding through the CARES Act - it is encouraging that the Federal Government understands the importance of public transportation & the need to assist financially during the current COVID-19 financial crisis.

Air quality - Although it appears that federal air quality standards are less stringent than they had been, the North Central Texas Council of Governments continues to maintain high air quality standards and seeks to improve them. Two examples that I noticed in the material

that was sent to me over:

- Modification #3 to the FY2020 & FY2021

Unified Planning Work Program for Regional Transportation  
Planning, Item 3.03 regarding air quality management  
and operations and

- Local Government Energy Reporting - Page 2 -

Purpose: improve accuracy of emissions reduction  
data associated with reduced energy use.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Phyllis Silver

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JUL -7 2020

TRANSPORTATION