

## MINUTES

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL September 8, 2016

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, September 8, 2016, at 1 pm in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following members or representatives were present: Monica R. Alonzo, Bruce Arfsten, Douglas Athas, Brian Barth, Mike Cantrell, David L. Cook, Charlotte Wilcox (representing Rudy Durham), Andy Eads, Charles Emery, Gary Fickes, Sandy Greyson, Moji Haddad, Roger Harmon, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Ron Jensen, Jungus Jordan, Lee M. Kleinman, Brian Loughmiller, David Magness, Scott Mahaffey, Maher Maso, Cary Moon, Greg Noschese (representing Stan Pickett), Mark Riley, Sara Bagheri (representing Kevin Roden), Kelly Selman, Gary Slagel, Lissa Smith, Mike Taylor, Joey Herald (representing Stephen Terrell), T. Oscar Trevino Jr., Oscar Ward, Bernice J. Washington, Duncan Webb, B. Glen Whitley, Kathryn Wilemon, W. Jeff Williams, and W.B. "Zim" Zimmerman.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Gustavo Baez, Melissa Baker, Tom Bamonte, Berrien Barks, Bryan Beck, Adam Beckom, Natalie Bettger, Brandi Bird, Jesse Brown, Ron Brown, John Brunk, Ken Bunkley, Mo Bur, David Cain, Marrk Callier, Jack Carr, Angie Carson, Dave Carter, Dixie Cawthorne, Sarah Chadderdon, Ying Cheng, Michael Copeland, John Crew, Mike Curtis, Gordon Dickson, Kim Diederich, Jory Dille, Jerry Dittman, Nathan Drozd, Chris Dyser, Mike Eastland, Chad Edwards, Traci Enna, Brittney Farr, Kevin Feldt, Keineth Fuller, Bob Golden, Rick Grady, Christine Graygor, Clifton Hall, Laura Hanna, Tony Hartzel, Jeff Hathcock, Rebekah Hernandez, Jesse Herrera, Axel Herrmann, Jodi Hodges, Dan Kessler, Karen Khan, Tony Kimmey, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Paul Knippel, Dan Lamers, Michael Leavitt, Tom LeBeau, April Leger, Eron Linn, Sonny Loper, Stanford Lynch, Barbara Maley, Chad McKeown, Keith Melton, Michael Morris, Jenny Narvaez, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, Than Nguyen, Brinton Payne, John Polster, James Powell, Jeff Price, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Chris Reed, Molly Rendon, Bill Riley, Tito Rodriguez, Kyle Roy, Moosa Saghian, Steve Sanders, Russell Schaffner, Lori Shelton, Walter Shumac, Randy Skinner, Rick Stopfer, Jahnae Stout, Dean Stuller, Gerald Sturdivant, Vic Suhm, Gary Thomas, Christopher Tolar, Mitzi Ward, Sandy Wesch, Elizabeth Whitaker, Gregory White, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, Bruce Wood, Mykol Woodruff, Ed Wueste, Scott Young, and Ann Zadeh.

During the meeting, Michael Morris introduced Gary Thomas, President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit. Gary Slagel noted that Mr. Thomas was named Outstanding Public Transportation Manager of the Year by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Mr. Thomas will be honored by APTA at a September 13 award ceremony and luncheon in Los Angeles.

1. **Approval of August 11, 2016, Minutes:** The minutes of the August 11, 2016, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 1. Glen Whitley (M); Mike Cantrell (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
  - 2.1. **Advertising for Transportation Initiatives:** A motion was made to approve up to \$1,400,000 in new funding for Fiscal Year 2017 advertising for transportation initiatives, detailed in Reference Item 2.1.2. Electronic Item 2.1.1 provided additional information.

- 2.2. \$50,000 Smart State Grant: A motion was made to approve the expenditure of up to \$50,000 in Regional Transportation Council Local funds to support Smart State transportation technology initiatives.

Douglas Athas (M); Charles Emery (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report**: Chris Klaus noted since Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of Mobility 2040 and subsequent air quality conformity in March 2016, staff has been working with interagency consultation partners to secure a United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) conformity determination. On September 7, the US DOT provided correspondence approving the 2016 Transportation Conformity. A copy of the correspondence was distributed at the meeting in Reference Item 3.13. Mr. Morris noted Molly McFadden, Director of Emergency Preparedness, will present information about the upcoming BigX events at the October 13, 2016, RTC meeting. He also noted that the City of McKinney has decided to move ahead with efforts to become the direct recipient to receive Federal Transit Administration funds for the McKinney Urbanized Area. Brian Loughmiller added that once direct recipient status is received, the City will begin negotiating with providers to determine what types of services can be provided and who would provide those services. Mr. Morris also discussed the potential lapse of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding. The Federal Highway Administration has extended the deadline for projects to be obligated to December 2016. Staff is working with the Texas Department of Transportation to advance the projects to letting by December. A list of the impacted TAP projects was available in Electronic Item 3.1. The National Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations conference will be held in Fort Worth October 25-28. Details were provided in Electronic Item 3.2. Members interested in presenting at the conference were asked to contact staff. Information regarding Clean Air Action Day results and the current ozone season was available in Electronic Item 3.3, and details about the upcoming Compressed Natural Gas Fuel System Inspector Training on October 4-5 was provided in Electronic Item 3.4. Air quality funding opportunities for vehicles was provided in Electronic Item 3.5. An electronic survey on regional idling efforts was provided in Electronic Item 3.6, and Fleets for the Future Cooperative Procurement Grant information was provided in Electronic Item 3.7. National Drive Electric Week begins September 17 and additional information was provided in Electronic Item 3.8. A September public meeting notice was provided in Electronic Item 3.9, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 3.10, recent new articles in Electronic Item 3.11, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 3.12. Transportation partners progress reports were distributed at the meeting.
4. **Hemphill/Lamar Connector Project and Partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation and Tarrant County**: Michael Morris presented a partnership with the City of Fort Worth, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and Tarrant County regarding the Hemphill/Lamar Connector project in Downtown Fort Worth. The project is a thoroughfare street in the western side of the region from IH 20 north, and currently terminates just before downtown. The proposed partnership will allow the City of Fort Worth to move forward to connect Hemphill to Lamar in downtown. Electronic Item 4.3 contained a photo of the future connection, reviewed at the meeting. He discussed the history of the project, including the reconstruction of IH 30 through Downtown Fort Worth. As part of the reconstruction, Hemphill was intended to have a direct connection to Lamar under the IH 30 project in Downtown near the historic warehouse west of the post office. The connection was restricted due to the Union Pacific Railroad, so the roadway makes a fishhook-type turn. TxDOT built three bridges over Hemphill/Lamar to enable the future Hemphill/Lamar Connector to be built. At the time, the Regional Transportation Council

(RTC) funded the connection and the railroad built a temporary "shoo fly" so the thoroughfare street could be built over to Lancaster and connect at Lamar. Reference Item 4.2 included a funding table outlining each agency's commitment to the Hemphill/Lamar Connector project. The project cost has risen to a total of \$50 million, but staff believes this cost estimate may be high. The Union Pacific Railroad has been asked to review its related portion of the project cost to see if it can be lowered, and utility costs are also being reviewed. The proposed partnership includes \$3 million from Tarrant County, approximately \$16.6 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (formerly known as Surface Transportation Program-Metropolitan Mobility) funding from the RTC, approximately \$4 million in State match, and approximately \$26 million in Fort Worth local funds. The partnership also includes discussions with Tarrant County to participate in a local/federal funding exchange with the RTC. In addition, Tarrant County has requested improvements at the intersection of SH 199 and IH 280, shown in Electronic Item 4.1. Staff is supportive, but believes that a series of intersection improvements may be needed. This effort will be discussed as part of a future agenda item. Jungus Jordan asked about the transit funding for a pilot transit project in Everman, Crowley, and Forest Hill and whether action at the meeting included approval of this pilot project. Mr. Morris noted this partnership will be brought back as part of a separate proposal. A motion was made to approve the funding partnership with the City of Fort Worth, the Texas Department of Transportation, and Tarrant County regarding the Hemphill/Lamar Connector project as outlined in Reference Item 4.2. Glen Whitley (M); Mike Cantrell (S). The motion passed unanimously.

- 5. Section 214/United States Army Corps of Engineers Update:** Sandy Wesch provided an update on efforts to expedite environmental permitting for regionally significant transportation projects through the Section 214 program with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Section 214 program allows the USACE to receive funds from nonfederal public entities to give priority to the evaluation of Section 404 and Section 408 permits. A Section 404 permit is required for projects impacting the waters of the United States, and a Section 408 permit is required for projects that alter flood control structures. The timeframe to obtain these permits varies by type, magnitude of impacts, and complexity of the project. In 2008, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the USACE for a three-year pilot program using approximately \$500,000 in Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Local funds to help expedite projects. Due to its success, another MOA was signed in 2011 to extend the program until December 2016 and the RTC allocated another \$1.2 million. Additionally, in August 2015 another \$500,000 was allocated by the RTC for the program. Allocated funds pay a USACE staff person dedicated to reviewing permits for regionally significant transportation projects. Ms. Wesch highlighted the success of the program. Site visits and coordination with external agencies has greatly increased due to the additional time a dedicated USACE staff person has to review projects. One of the most notable successes is completion timeframes for processing project permits, which takes about 36.8 days for the branch but only 2.3 days through the USACE dedicated staff person who can be brought into the process early and who is familiar with large and complex projects. A map was highlighted showing projects that have benefited from the program. Program successes have occurred in several areas. Partner agencies have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program and performance measures under the MOA have exceeded expectations. From a permitting perspective, unnecessary permits have been withdrawn and there has been a reduction in permitting type and processing time for permitting decisions. In addition, a Regional General Permit has been developed that merges the Section 404 and Section 408 permit process so they are not occurring independently. Related to mitigation, there has been a reduction in mitigation requirements which leads to cost savings and

reduces impacts to the natural environment. Based on the remaining \$500,000 allocated for the program, staff is moving forward with an extension of the existing MOA into FY2018, and hope to include an option to extend to FY2021 if funding becomes available.

6. **High-Occupancy Vehicle/Managed Lane Report:** Dan Lamers presented the latest managed lane high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) subsidy and performance status. A map of the near-term managed lane system was highlighted showing currently opened facilities, as well as those expected to open in the next five years. The current Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Managed Lane Policy allows for HOV users to travel on tolled managed lanes at a 50 percent discount during the peak periods. As part of the policy, staff reports to the RTC on a quarterly basis regarding the subsidy. The RTC originally allocated \$17 million dollars to cover the subsidy for approximately 15 years. As of June 2016, the HOV subsidy is approximately \$700,000. In addition, the policy also allows for RTC-sponsored vanpool users to receive a 50 percent discount during the peak periods through a reimbursement request. Approximately \$1,600 in requests for reimbursement have been received since June 2016. As a result, staff believes there is no need to make occupancy adjustments at this time. The North Texas Tollway Authority continues to be the billing agent for all tolled managed lanes in the region and has not reported any customer service impacts or concerns to date. Lastly, the RTC policy indicates rebates may be issued to users when average minimum corridor speeds drop below 35 miles per hour (mph). To date, there have been no qualifying instances in which the speeds dropped below 35 mph due to the fault of the operator. A slide showing the subsidy cost by corridor was shown. Mr. Lamers noted that last month a workshop was held to discuss an initiative to increase TollTag penetration rates in the DFW Connector corridor. Staff continues to work with the North Texas Tollway Authority and Texas Department of Transportation on the marketing efforts for this initiative. In addition, efforts continue regarding occupancy verification technology procurement that will prevent users from being required to pre-declare when they wish to use a facility and take advantage of the occupancy subsidy. Staff will continue to provide updates on a quarterly basis.
  
7. **Unified Transportation Program Action by the Texas Transportation Commission:** Michael Morris highlighted recent action taken by the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) on the 2017 Unified Transportation Program. Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Chair Ron Jensen, Secretary Gary Fickes, Michael Morris, and others attended the TTC meeting on August 25, 2016, where the Chair presented the RTC position to the Commission. The Texas Transportation Commission approved \$21.2 billion over the next 10 years for mobility improvements. Staff will be working with the State to remind everyone that not all of this money will go to additional mobility because when a major corridor is built the pavements are rehabilitated as well, so some funds are actually used for maintenance. Commissioner Victor Vandergriff has included in the TxDOT minute order that allocations will be tested through performance measures to determine if the allocations are correct. He believes the urban mobility portion should be higher and other allocations lower. As a result, \$21.2 billion may be the minimum as evaluation of allocations continue. The allocation for Metropolitan Planning Organization Partnerships (Category 2) is formula allocated and selected by the RTC in partnership with TxDOT district engineers. The TTC agrees that the region should not be penalized for its use of toll projects, and has decided to formula allocate Connectivity Corridor Congestion (Category 4) funds, and TxDOT districts engineers will select projects. Strategic Congestion Initiative (Category 12) funds will be selected by the Texas Transportation Commission. Staff and the TxDOT district engineers will be busy over the next three months determining the best method to assign a project to either Category 2 or Category 4. Mr. Morris also highlighted the structure of future project selection which was the source of the 10 questions asked of the Commission during the

public comment period. Category 2, Category 4, and Category 12 funding options were discussed for both statewide connectivity and urban congestion, as well as options for selecting tolled or non-tolled projects for each type of funding. Coordination with the TxDOT districts, who will coordinate with TxDOT Austin, will occur to develop a system of projects. Some refinement may be necessary regarding which category to use for which project. Staff has begun reviewing data for the selection of projects, and Mr. Morris highlighted a map showing RTC priorities from 2004, 2008, 2010, and 2012. Staff will review where RTC commitments have been in the past and the next set of projects for selection. He noted that a letter will be prepared thanking the Texas Transportation Commission for its action on the 2017 Unified Transportation Program.

8. **Performance Measures Related to HB 20: Regional 10-Year Plan Process for Informing the Unified Transportation Program:** Michael Morris discussed the Dallas-Fort Worth region's response to the House Bill (HB) 20 10-year planning requirement. A map showing unrestrained traffic patterns for the Dallas-Fort Worth region in the year 2040 was reviewed and provided in Electronic Item 8. He noted this map is an example of the type of performance measures proposed in project identification. Data shows what is referred to as "all or nothing" and is helpful in ensuring that project efforts are not being placed on corridors that are the user's second, third, or fourth choices because their first choice is not an option. An example is increased usage of Matlock in the city of Arlington because SH 360 has not been fully constructed. Mr. Morris discussed the magnitude of traffic on various roadways, noting this type of tool will be instrumental in meetings with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and is one of four or five performance measures staff will review to determine demand. Others include observed traffic today, volume-to-capacity ratio in the future, and safety and bridge conditions. Many of these performance measures are included in Mobility 2040. Staff will begin with what entities have requested in the last 10 years and work with TxDOT district engineers to develop a system of projects. Performance data will guide the process for the selection of projects over the next 60 days. Mr. Morris noted Representative Ron Simmons of Carrollton authored HB 20. His hope is that TxDOT Austin and metropolitan planning organizations across the State have a transparent process and can explain why they are building the system of transportation projects they have chosen.
9. **High-Speed Rail Status: Executive Summary:** Kevin Feldt discussed recent progress regarding high-speed rail initiatives for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. He noted coordination efforts with local governments regarding a governance entity and project planning efforts, as well as coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) as it works through the environmental process for the DFW Core Express Service and the Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study. In addition, staff is coordinating with Texas Central Partners on its project from Dallas to Houston and working with consultants to refine ridership estimates. Mr. Feldt also noted the development of a Request for Information and Requests for Proposals, and recent meetings with prospective implementers. He highlighted the two potential alignments of the DFW Core Express Service. Staff is focused on the hybrid alignment that goes from Fort Worth through Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Irving to Downtown Dallas. TxDOT staff and its consultants are revising their alternative analysis report, completing ridership estimates, and developing cost estimates. Mr. Feldt provided additional details regarding the Request for Proposals for alignment refinement and station-area planning. There will be three distinct projects, one for each segment. Multidisciplinary teams are desired that can focus on planning, architecture, and engineering. Project components include alignment refinement, station design, and station-area planning. The Fort Worth segment extends from downtown Fort Worth to IH 820, the Arlington segment from IH 820 to Loop 12, and the Dallas segment east of Loop 12. The Dallas segment poses

a different strategy because of the station location and land uses that are in the control of Texas Central Partners and the City of Dallas. The issue for the Dallas segment is related to exiting the proposed station and going westward due to topography and other transportation infrastructure that must be navigated. Members discussed stations in both Dallas and Fort Worth, the potential requirements if another high-speed rail train provider comes to the station, proprietary equipment and the ability for other providers to work with their equipment, and the impact to costs for the connection. Kevin Feldt discussed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Texas Central Partners in which Texas Central Partners agreed to provide access to the Dallas station so other trains could extend to the western side of the region. Mr. Morris added the MOU discusses full coordination of activities. This is necessary to ensure the ability of high-speed rail to the west, as well as from the Fort Worth station south. Glen Whitley discussed the operation of the high-speed rail line in the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) corridor. Mr. Morris noted since high-speed rail is grade separated, it is proposed to be operated above the TRE corridor in order to remain in public sector right-of-way. In the west, it is proposed to operate in the IH 30 corridor which must already be reconstructed west of the proposed Arlington station. The local high-speed rail initiative is based on a public sector right-of-way which is why the region's project is different from others in the State, and it is a critical component. Oscar Ward noted that the City of Irving will likely pass a resolution at its upcoming Council meeting in opposition of the 40 ft elevated track going through a historical area in the city above the TRE corridor. Mr. Whitley stated the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) should insist upon the ability for other types of trains to come into the station, and if it does not he believes the RTC should be opposed to anything not allowing the flexibility to occur. Mr. Morris noted staff remains hopeful the RTC's vision of a one-seat ride can be implemented and will review the applications to see what has been submitted to the federal government. In the agreement, if a one-seat ride is not possible, a train would come into the same station on a parallel platform. He added that staff was unaware the City of Irving planned to pass a resolution, which would have significant implications since high-speed rail must be grade separated, and staff will need to discuss such a position with Irving so there is full understanding. Jeff Williams noted it is important that the region move forward with the engineering on the section between Dallas and Fort Worth to ensure there are no physical impediments that would make it financially impossible for high-speed rail. Mr. Morris added the region is potentially within months of having the first environmental clearance of high-speed rail in the United States and discussed the economic benefits if high-speed rail is implemented in the region. The region must remain focused and positive, and many questions remain to be answered.

10. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Reference Item 10.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee meeting attendance and minutes in Electronic Item 10.2, and the current Local Motion in Electronic Item 10.3.
11. **Other Business (Old or New):** Andy Eads, on behalf of members representing entities in Denton County, thanked the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for support of the IH 35E project. He noted the bridge over Lake Lewisville has been completed and that this effort would not have been possible without the regionalism promoted by the RTC.
12. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
13. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 2016, 1:00 pm, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.