

LOCAL MOTION

December 2022

Welcome to Local Motion, a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department.

RTC approves priorities for 88th Texas Legislature

The Regional Transportation Council in November approved its 2023 Legislative Program for the 88th Session of the Texas Legislature, which begins January 10. Priorities focus on ensuring funding is available to support transportation infrastructure in a growing region of 8 million people, while expanding support for roadway safety.

The Legislative Program details support for current funding mechanisms and identifies additional revenue sources. Developing innovative funding methods to expand passenger rail and transit, and the creation of an alternative fuel vehicle fee are listed as methods to support. The ability to use tolling, managed lanes, debt financing and public-private partnerships is also included.

Improving the safety of the statewide transportation system for all users is another priority for the RTC. Safety measures to support include controlling texting while driving using hands-free phone technology, eliminating driving under the influence, lowering excessive speeds, reducing aggressive driving, reducing the number of fraudulent temporary tags, and improving bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Support for the development of innovative transportation technologies and improving air quality are also elements highlighted in the Legislative Program. Specifically, a proposal to modernize the Local Initiative Projects (LIP) program to focus more on transportation projects with an air quality benefit and appropriate the residual balance of the program's previously collected funds is endorsed by the RTC.

Learn more about additional topics the RTC will support during the 140-day session at www.nctcog.org/legislative.





Fort Worth gains seat as RTC increases to 45 members

Fort Worth will gain a seat on the Regional Transportation Council, pushing membership on the transportation policymaking body to 45, following the revision of the group's bylaws in November. Fort Worth will now have four seats on the

RTC, second in representation to Dallas' six seats. The additional seat is a result of population and employment in the region's second-largest city.

Other significant changes to the bylaws include the addition of 13 new cities with a population over 5,000, mandatory rotation of seats shared by counties and confirming the ability of members of the nominating subcommittee to be officers. Seats shared by Johnson and Hood counties and Parker and Wise counties would be rotated on a 70/30 basis over a 10-year period, with the more populous county in each case being allowed a member 70% of that period. Seats shared by Ellis and Kaufman counties, and Rockwall and Hunt Counties would be rotated on a 50/50 basis. Cities with more than 30,000 residents would also be eligible to hold these seats if appointed by the county.

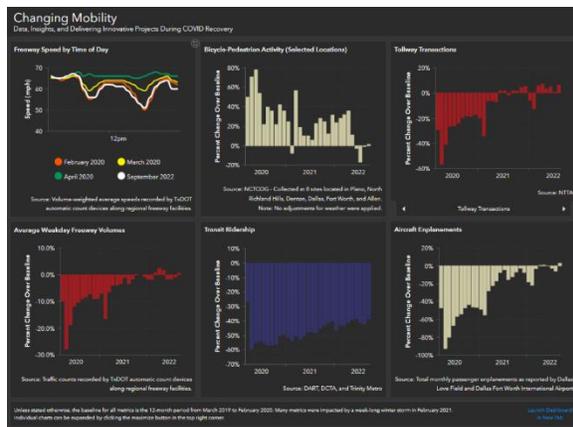
In addition to approving the bylaws, the RTC provided direction to NCTCOG staff to work with the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth on a weighted voting mechanism to determine if membership could be reduced to 40.

Made up of local elected and appointed officials, and representatives from the region's transportation providers, the RTC oversees the metropolitan transportation planning process for the 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth area. For more information, visit www.nctcog.org/rtc.

By the Numbers

45

Membership of the Regional Transportation Council after a member was added to account for Fort Worth's population and employment.



Spotlight on Changing Mobility

The transportation system continues to recover from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data collected by NCTCOG and reported quarterly to the RTC. Freeway volumes, airport passengers and bicycle-pedestrian activity were all above the baseline in September, according to Changing Mobility, which tracks transportation trends and funding impacts of the pandemic.

Highway speeds were close to their pre-pandemic average, while transit ridership continued to show progress. After being down

nearly 60% early in the pandemic, ridership on the region's buses and trains was down 39% in September. NCTCOG is coordinating with the region's public transportation agencies to encourage people to return to transit. Public transportation will also likely benefit from the pattern of employers continuing to welcome workers back to their offices.

For more information on how the transportation system is recovering from the pandemic, visit www.nctcog.org/pm/covid-19.

Fact Sheet: Learn more about NCTCOG's efforts to attract emerging technologies



NCTCOG has published a fact sheet explaining the new Certification of Emerging and Reliable Transportation Technology (CERTT) program. Approved by the RTC earlier this fall, CERTT allows the opportunity for local governments to partner with technology providers to meet transportation challenges in innovative ways.

CERTT seeks to help developers of new transportation technologies by creating partnerships with the public sector to identify where an innovative and capital-intensive transportation technology can be proven and certified for public use before undertaking widespread implementation.

This new initiative creates a level playing field for transportation providers to test and implement technologies that could enhance the transportation system and improve quality of life as the region continues to grow rapidly. Read more about the new program at www.nctcog.org/factsheets.



NCTCOG welcomes public comments on transportation planning at hybrid meeting

NCTCOG is hosting a hybrid public meeting at noon on December 12 at its Arlington offices, 616 Six Flags Drive. Topics to be discussed at the meeting include the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed

Transportation Connections Study, the Map Your Experience 2022 Insights Report, Transportation Conformity and the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Fleet Recognition Awards. Attend in person, watch the presentations live at www.publicinput.com/nctcogDec22, or participate via phone by dialing 855-925-2801 then code 3711.

Phase 1 of the DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study is complete. Staff will review the recommended alignments and high-speed mode selected in Phase 1, and provide details for Phase 2, including the preliminary engineering and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation process.

Map Your Experience gathers input on transportation from members of the public. Public comments help identify transportation issues across the region so NCTCOG can work with partner agencies to find solutions. Staff will provide a report summarizing comments received since May 2020.

The Clean Air Act requires metropolitan planning organizations to perform a transportation conformity analysis when a Metropolitan Transportation Plan is developed or updated. The Federal Highway Administration confirmed the determination deadline could not be met for the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update and initiated a transportation conformity lapse grace period for the Dallas-Fort Worth nonattainment area. Staff will discuss details of the grace period and its effect on the conformity determination process.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition's Fleet Recognition Awards were recently presented to local fleets that are using alternative fuels to help reduce energy impacts on regional transportation. An overview of the 2021 annual survey information about the use of alternative fuels around the region will also be presented to the public.

Additionally, a comprehensive list of funded transportation projects through 2026 is available to review online. Known as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), this document includes committed funds from federal, state, and local sources and is updated on a regular basis.

Staff will also highlight resources such as Map Your Experience, the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program, vehicle incentive opportunities, the Saving Money and Reducing Truck Emissions program and Engine Off North Texas.

For those who want to take transit to the meeting, \$6 roundtrip rides from the Centreport/DFW Airport Station to NCTCOG are available on VIA, through the rideshare provider's app. For special accommodations due to disabilities or language interpretation, contact 817-695-9255 or email jcastillo@nctcog.org.

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.

--Imagery provided by NCTCOG and Getty Images.
