

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE Friday, August 23, 2024

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, August 23, 2024, 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 July 26, 2024, Minutes:** The minutes of the July 26, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Kelly Porter (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 2.1. **Transportation Paid Education Campaigns for Fiscal Year 2025:** Whitney Vandiver, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), sought the Committee's support for the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) recommendation to the NCTCOG's Executive Board for the approval of funding up to \$1,779,750 for Transportation Paid Education Campaigns that will initiate in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Since 2014, the NCTCOG Executive Board has been authorizing annual large-scale advertising purchase and placement initiatives for the Transportation Department. The education campaigns are for Public Involvement for multiple projects including safety campaigns of Drive Aware North Texas, Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety (Look Out Texans), Unmanned Aircraft Safety, and Freight North Texas; the Congestion Management Program (Try Parking It); air quality campaigns of Car Care Awareness and Ozone Season Emissions Reduction (Air North Texas), and Flexible Funding for Public Involvement/Notifications is for possible unanticipated costs that may arise, such as a specialized public meeting series that may need notifications posted. Efforts will be supported by a combination of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds, Transportation Planning Funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Toll Revenue, RTC Local funds, Private funds, RTC Transportation Development Credits, and Federal Highway Administration in lieu of cash match. Education campaigns will be in multiple languages and may be presented through out-of-home advertising, print, screen, social media, digital, and audio platforms. Electronic Item 2.1 provided more detail.
 - 2.2. **November 2024 Transportation Improvement Program Modification Cycle:** Charles Marsh, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. November 2024 revisions to the 2025-2028 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 2.2 for the Committee's consideration. These modifications have been reviewed for consistency with the mobility plan, the air quality conformity determination, and financial constraint of the TIP.

2.3. **North Texas Advanced Air Mobility and Uncrewed Aviation Systems Funding:**

Ernest Huffman, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to increase RTC Local funding to continue efforts related to Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) deployment in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Since 2017, staff have been collaborating with the region's cities and other relevant stakeholders to integrate AAM Technologies. Work in this area continues to increase as regional partners have implemented pilot projects with private-sector partners. To continue support with these efforts, staff requested an increase of \$1,700,000 in RTC Local funding to work with regional airports, local jurisdictions, and other partners to continue efforts within the region to deploy AAM operations. This funding increase includes funding to support staffing resources, Phase 2 of the North Texas Airspace Awareness Pilot, infrastructure, and other costs associated with AAM operations. Electronic Item 2.3 provided additional information on this item.

A motion was made to recommend the Regional Transportation Council's approval of Items 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 on the Consent Agenda. Robert Woodbury (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Endorsement of Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Submission:**

Karla Windsor, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested Committee endorsement of the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval for the submittal of a regional planning grant application and local match funds for the Fiscal Year (FY2024) 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program. The United States Department of Transportation has announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the solicitation of applications for FY2024 SS4A funding. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new SS4A discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over the next five years. A maximum of one grant application of any type may be submitted per agency. Staff provided an overview of the proposed regional planning grant that will be submitted by the NCTCOG. Total project cost is \$2 million. The grant application requested \$1.6 million in federal funds, supported by \$400,000 of RTC Local funds for the required 20 percent local match. If awarded, the planning grant will advance the regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan by conducting a feasibility study and in-depth planning for regional trail and on-street bikeway connections through the cities of Fort Worth, Haltom City, North Richland Hills, and Richland Hills to passenger rail stations in northeast Tarrant County, including various Trinity Metro TEXRail stations and the Trinity Railway Express Trinity Lakes station. This supplemental safety planning will include the future Cotton Belt Trail alignment between Fort Worth and North Richland Hills and numerous necessary safe trail crossings of major arterial roadways, highways, freight railroads, and waterways. On August 8, 2024, the RTC approved the requested funding to support the grant application due on August 29, 2024. An overview of the proposed project was contained in Electronic Item 3.

There were no questions or comments on this item.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) endorsement of the North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) planning grant application for the Fiscal Year 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant program; the use of \$400,000 in RTC Local funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for

funding; and approve staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide TIP, along with other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes should the project be selected for funding. Tanya Brooks (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Federal Performance Measures Update: System Performance, Freight, Air Quality:**

Jenny Narvaez and James McLane, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval on a proposed reaffirmation of 2026 targets for federally required performance measures related to excessive delay, non-single-occupant-vehicle travel, and emissions reductions. In 2022, the RTC adopted 2024 and 2026 targets for the set of federally required performance measures commonly known as PM3. This includes measures broadly related to roadway system performance, freight, and air quality. The RTC now has an opportunity to adjust or reaffirm 2026 targets for a subset of these measures, if appropriate, based on new data and analysis methodologies. Staff will present results and recommendations to the RTC for action on September 12, 2024. Action on the remainder of the PM3 performance measures is anticipated in early 2025. Refer to Electronic Item 4 for more details.

A question was asked by Gus Khankarli about the numbers still being influenced by COVID, and if the presenters could review the data excluding the last three years versus the full five years and examine the difference.? Jenny Narvaez responded that the numbers are fluctuating. James McLane responded with some of these measures have been pretty much a full recovery from the pandemic, but still trying to ascertain what kind of a new normal will be for some of these measures. It was noted that North Central Texas Council of Governments doesn't have enough post pandemic data to really make an educated or informed decision about what that new normal is and should look like. Michael Morris also responded that we are still in the shadow of COVID, the data isn't as clean, and the transit ridership will come back with the return of workers along with all of the things transit agencies are doing. He noted that we don't know what the new normal will be yet. He suggested that between now and the next Regional Transportation Council meeting, the trend of the most recent data will have good enough quality to present.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of reaffirming the existing 2026 targets for the following PM3 measures: Peak-hour excessive delay for the Dallas-Fort-Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney-Frisco Urban Areas; Non-Single Occupant Vehicle travel for the Dallas-Fort-Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney-Frisco Urban Areas; and On-road mobile source emissions reductions (Cumulative) for the following pollutants: Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Application Partnership for the Cotton Belt**

Trail: Karla Windsor, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval for a partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) for a capital construction grant application and associated federal and local match funds for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program for portions of Phase 3 of the Cotton Belt Trail along the Silver Line rail project. The action also included a request for additional Surface Transportation Block Grant/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds and Regional Toll Revenue funding to support this leveraging of requested federal funds. The application would include a new section of the Cotton Belt Trail and repackage the trail sections from the pending federal Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment

Program (ATIIP) grant that has been submitted but no awards made. Staff requested to reapply the local match that was authorized for that application to this project if ATTIP is not selected for funding and the RCP project is selected for funding. The United States Department of Transportation has announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the solicitation of applications for FY2024 RCP funding. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the RCP program, with \$457 million allocated for capital construction grant funding in FY2024. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for a project that removes, retrofits, or mitigates transportation facilities which create mobility, accessibility, and/or economic development barriers to community connectivity and vitality. Funds are available for up to 50% of the cost of the project and a 50% match is required. 30% of the 50% match can be other federal funds. Staff provided an overview of the DART partnership and funding recommendations for the proposed capital construction grant to construct Phase 3 sections of the Cotton Belt Trail located in Addison, Carrollton, Coppell, and Dallas. If awarded funding, DART will procure a contractor and manage construction of the trail which is primarily located within rail right-of-way. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 5.

Michael Morris reaffirmed in order to maximize the 50-50 deal being integrated into both of the applications together into a new application as part of the particular process in order to hit the \$25 million target, the \$4.3 million that was previously approved for the other section would be moved into this particular section. Karla Windsor noted that the funding for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot program is closer to \$450 million, and the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program had less than \$50M nationwide so the odds of being selected for funding were slim.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of the partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to submit the United States Department of Transportation 2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program capital construction grant application for the Cotton Belt Trail Phase 3a construction requesting \$24.5 million in federal funding; the additional contribution of \$6,602,881 federal Surface Transportation Block Grant/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds and \$1.6 million Regional Toll Revenue funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding award; to direct staff to keep the previously approved match funding for the pending Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program application available to be used with the RCP application, if awarded funding, and direct staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Statewide TIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes, if awarded funding. Tom Hammons (M); Mark Nelson (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. Work Zone Data Exchange Implementation Call for Projects:

Vickie Morris, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the eligibility, criteria and schedule for the Work Zone Data Exchange 2024 Call for Projects. In March 2022, a procurement was issued to secure vendors through the NCTCOG's TXSHARE Cooperative Purchase for Work Zone Data Exchange (WZDx). Five vendors are under contract to perform work in three areas related to WZDx including the conversion of raw work zone data into WZDx format, establishment of a WZDx-compliant reporting system, and general WZDx services. In June 2023, the RTC directed staff to engage regional partners on project scoping and execution to continue this effort. In addition, the RTC has set aside \$2.5 million to award local governments to implement WZDx services to continue to make progress in this area. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 6.

The Chair, Gus Khankarli, drew attention to the vendor workshop on September 17, 2024, requesting an announcement be made with the time and method of the meeting. Vickie Morris responded that after the Regional Transportation Council approves, the vendor workshop will be announced but noted that the meeting will be a hybrid meeting.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of the eligibility, criteria and schedule for the Work Zone Data Exchange 2024 Call for Projects. Brian Moen (M); Clarence Daugherty (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. Fiscal Year 2024 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects:

Shawn Dintino, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024) Public Transportation Funding Programs of Projects. As the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration funds in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney-Frisco Urbanized Areas, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has developed Programs of Projects to suballocate approximately \$194.6 million in FY2024 Section 5307, Section 5339, and Section 5337 federal funding to public transit providers in the region. Approximately \$12.75 million in funding will be programmed in the future, including Section 5310 funding. Electronic Item 7.1 included additional information. Electronic Item 7.2 contained the proposed FY2024 Programs of Projects.

Karina Maldonado, representing Austin Frith, Denton County Transit Authority, asked if there's been an update on the balances for the Transportation Development Credits (TDC) lately? Shawn Dintino responded that they are undergoing that process now, updating where the TDC stands as far as the recent Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) cycles that have happened, and TDC's have been awarded through those. There was general concern and reference made to adjust the numbers based on the meeting with the Federal Transit Administration and has been requested for the numbers to be sent to Brian Moen, City of Frisco in advance of the next Regional Transportation Council meeting. Chair Gus Khankarli, Director of Transportation, City of Dallas, requested amending the motion for the Surface Transportation Technical Committee meeting on August 23, 2024, with some flexibility as needed to adjust those particular numbers.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of the proposed funding for the Fiscal Year 2024 Programs of Projects; and to administratively amend for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) along with other planning/administrative documents with flexibility as needed to incorporate this funding on these projects. Karina Maldonado (representing Austin Frith) (M); Robert Woodbury (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:

Michael Morris with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) highlighted the following narrative at the meeting by mentioning that along with Commissioner Duncan Webb, they met with the Texas Transportation Commission and received \$747 million in Category 12 funds in the Unified Transportation Program. Michael highlighted the updated and corrected data for Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 8.1. He mentioned connecting the Dots: High-Speed Rail, Transit 2.0, and 2050 Demographics Forecast between Dallas, Arlington, and Fort Worth. He noted that NCTCOG was not selected under the environmental protection agency climate pollution reduction grants implementation program. He noted the success of the Regional Transportation Council's 50th

Anniversary Celebration, and there's still a current hold on Regional Transportation Council Policy – temporary suspension of dynamic pricing of managed lanes during reconstruction. Concern was expressed regarding the selected Regionalism: interest and equity from the July Surface Transportation Technical Committee meeting. The Director's Report item on Transit 2.0 Implementation – Next Steps with an Electronic Item 8.2 was not mentioned as it was presented in Agenda Item 10.

John Polster expressed gratitude to Michael Morris for covering his concerns that he brought up with regionalism.

9. Railroad Crossing Elimination Program – Discretionary Grant Funding:

Michael Johnson with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to submit a project in the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP). Applications are due to the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) by September 23, 2024. In July 2024, the USDOT announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to solicit applications for FY24 RCEP funding. This \$1.150 billion program (two funding years) includes certain funding amounts set aside for the following purposes: (1) Planning - \$38.2 million; (2) Rural or Tribal Grade Crossing Improvement Projects - \$229.3 million; and (3) Highway-Rail Grade Crossing safety information and education programs - \$3 million. Applications for each funding category are due to US DOT by September 23, 2024, and eligible entities are limited to a maximum of three applications per solicitation. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for a project (or group of projects) improving the safety/mobility of people and goods through: (1) grade separation or closure; (2) track relocation; (3) improvement/ installation of protective devices, signals, signs, or other measures, provided such activities are related to (1) or (2); and (4) innovative solutions via technology, education, and/or other means. Available at <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/railroad-crossing-elimination-grant-program>, the FY23/24 RCEP NOFO describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, applicable program and federal requirements, and available technical assistance during the grant solicitation period. A presentation included the proposed action in Electronic Item 9.

There were no questions or comments on this item.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) approval of the submittal of Ennis Avenue/Union Pacific Railroad Grade Separation Project for funding consideration through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP); and to administratively amending North Central Texas Council of Governments and State Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP/STIP), as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project if selected for a FY2023/2024 RCEP Grant award. John Polster (M); Kelly Porter (S). The motion passed unanimously.

10. Regional Transportation Council Legislation Program and Status of Transit 2.0:

Rebekah Gongora and Michael Morris, with North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), provided information on the significant progress that's underway. The staff director highlighted the tasks associated with Transit 2.0 and the role of the Regional Transportation Council in the implementation of each task. Rebekah Gongora highlighted the Legislative Program. Electronic Item 10.1 provided additional information on Transit 2.0 and Electronic Item 10.2 provided the schedule for the legislative program.

A comment was noted by Mark Nelson with the City of Richardson, would be interested in receiving copies of the Transit Legislative program. Michael Morris responded that Toni Stehling will send the draft from Ken Kirkpatrick to all of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee members along with the Transit 2.0 contacts. Chad Edwards with Trinity Metro highlighted the comments on the Legislative agenda and Transit 2.0 were due on Monday, August 19, 2024.

11. **Fast Facts:**

Staff provided brief information on the material provided for each of the following topics.

1. Daniela Tower highlighted the 2024 Ozone Season Update with being in the 25th week of the ozone season, as of Friday, August 23, 2024, at a design value of 82. That means we have officially surpassed last year's design value at the monitors in Fort Worth, Northwest, and Eagle Mountain Lake, with ozone exceedance days that summarizes to two purple days for the season six red days and twenty-seven orange days. Details provided in Electronic Item 11.1.
2. Irlenia Hermosillo updated the Committee on the Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants program and the Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program are both accepting applications through October 29, 2024. These programs provide funding to repower or replace older locomotives, marine vessels, stationary equipment or non-node equipment to reduce emissions in Texas. These are both competitive grants with limited funding available, the emissions reduction incentive grants programs funding amount is up to 80 percent of the incremental project cost, and the Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation programs funding amount is up to 100 percent of the incremental project cost for governmental entities, and up to 75 percent for non-governmental entities. More information on both programs can be found on the website for the Air Quality Funding Opportunities: www.nctcog.org/AQfunding.
3. Irlenia Hermosillo provided an update on the Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events by bringing attention to the annual national Drive Electric Week is hosting at the Tanger Outlets in Fort Worth on October the 6, 2024 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. To learn more about this event, please go to the link in the event page: <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>.
4. Jackie Castillo noted for the July Public Meeting Minutes, that a hybrid public meeting was held on Monday, July 8, 2024. Staff presented information related to the regional 10-year Plan Access North Texas Transit Strategic partnerships and Charging Smart. Electronic Item 11.2 is a collection of comments received on the mentioned topics.
5. Jackie Castillo announced North Central Texas Council of Governments will be hosting a public meeting here on Monday, September 9, 2024, at noon. Staff will present information related to transportation planning and air quality initiatives. For more information, please see the September Public Meeting Notice provided in Electronic Item 11.3.
6. Jackie Castillo provided an update on the June – July Public Comments Report. The public comment report is a collection of general comments submitted by members of the public from Thursday, June. 20, 2024, through Friday, July 19, 2024. Comments and questions can be submitted via Facebook, Twitter, fax, e-mail, online and in person at the monthly Regional Transportation Council meeting. Comments related to air quality and roadways were in the majority. For more information, please see Electronic Item 11.4, provided in the packet.
7. Written Progress Reports: Partner Progress Reports were provided in Electronic Item 11.5.

12. **Other Business (Old or New):** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.
13. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for ***1:30 pm on September 27, 2024.***

The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.