

## MINUTES

### **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL September 12, 2024**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following RTC members or representatives were present: Daniel Alemán, Bruce Arfsten, Steve Babick, Rick Bailey, Adam Bazaldua, Elizabeth Beck, Alan Blaylock, Ceason Clemens, Michael Crain, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Pat Deen, Andy Eads, Michael Evans, Raul Gonzalez, Lane Grayson, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Ron Jensen, Brandon Jones, Ben Leal (representing Vernon Evans), Marcus E. Ray (representing Tammy Meinershagen), Stephen Mason, Cara Mendelsohn, Cesar Molina, Ed Moore, Jesse Moreno, John Muns, Matthew Porter, Paul Ridley (representing Omar Narvaez), Tito Rodriguez, Jim Ross, David Salazar, Gary Slagel, Bobby Stovall, Jeremy Tompkins, William Tsao, Duncan Webb, and Chad West.

Others present at the meeting were: Vickie Alexander, Jake Anderson, Renee Arnold, Micah Baker, Jay Barksdale, Kenneth Bergstrom, Mark Bielamowicz, Jon Blackmon, Todd Buckingham, Farhan Butt, Jack Carr, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Nancy Cline, Chris Collier, Paul Cristina, Clarence Daugherty, Jennifer DeWitt, Shawn Dintino, David Dryden, Chad Edwards, Kevin Feldt, Janel Forte, Andrew Fortune, Analisa Garcia, Jillian Giles, Bobby Gomez, Maya Govindarajan, Scott Hall, Tony Hartzel, Robert Hinkle, Amy Hodges, Mark Holliday, James Hotopp, Joseph Jackson, Lorena Jacobs, Joel James, Travis Kelly, Dan Kessler, Frances Key, Gus Khankarli, Ken Kirkpatrick, Andy Kissig, Chris Klaus, Dan Lamers, Dee Leggett, Michael Linesman, Eron Linn, Aaron Long, Paul Luedtke, Clem Maddox, Blake Margolis, Dillon Maroney, Kit Marshall, Gregory Masota, Rich Matyiku, Jon McKenzie, Brian Moen, William Mohamed, Michael Morris, Jonah Murray, Jeff Neal, Mark Nelson, Cintia Ortiz, Brinton Payne, Aaron Peck, Michael Peters, John Polster, Kelly Porter, Nathan Potz, James Powell, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Andrei Radu, Abbas Rastandeh, Randy Richardson, Kyle Roy, Jesse Salazar, Sidney Sanchez, Gwen Schaulis, Toni Stehling, Stephen Tanner, Steve Templer, Hannah Thesing, Kimberlyn To, Whitney Vandiver, Dan Vedral, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, and Jared Wright.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda**: Clay Lewis Jenkins, Regional Transportation Council Chair and Dallas County Judge asked if there were any public comments. Mark Bielamowicz spoke on Agenda Item 10. Written comments were provided and can be found in the Public Comments Report under the Director's Report agenda item.
2. **Approval of August 8, 2024, Minutes**: The minutes of the August 8, 2024, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Adam Bazaldua (M); Daniel Alemán (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda**:
  - 3.1. **Transportation Paid Education Campaigns for Fiscal Year 2025**: This item contained a request for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) support of a recommendation to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) 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 authorized annual large-scale advertising purchase and

placement initiatives for the Transportation Department. The education campaigns are for public involvement for multiple projects, 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 for possible unanticipated costs that may arise. Efforts will be supported by a combination of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funds, Transportation Planning Funds (TPF), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds, Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds, RTC Local funds, private funds, and RTC Transportation Development Credits (TDC) in lieu of cash match. This program has been evaluated through a new screening process that includes legal risk. 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 3.1 provided more detail.

- 3.2. **November 2024 Transportation Improvement Program Modification Cycle:** This item contained a request 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 (UPWP) and other planning and administrative documents with TIP-related changes. November 2024 revisions to the 2025-2028 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 3.2 for the Council's consideration. These modifications have been reviewed for consistency with the Mobility Plan, the air quality conformity determination, and financial constraint of the TIP.
- 3.3. **North Texas Advanced Air Mobility and Uncrewed Aviation Systems Funding:** This item contained a request 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 has been collaborating with the region's cities and other relevant stakeholders in integrating Advanced Air Mobility Technologies. Work in this area continues to increase as regional partners have implemented pilot projects with private sector partners. For continued support with these efforts, 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 on the deployment of AAM operations was requested. If approved, this funding increase will support staffing resources, Phase 2 of the North Texas Airspace Awareness Pilot, development of infrastructure, and other costs associated with AAM operations. Electronic Item 3.3 provided additional information on this item.

A motion was made to approve Items 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 on the Consent Agenda. Duncan Webb (M); Ed Moore (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** The following topics were listed on the agenda:
  1. Member Orientation – October 17, 2024; Prior to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Meeting; RTC meeting for October 17 was discussed.
  2. Feedback on Regional Transportation Council 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
  3. Feedback on Attendance at Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
  4. Safety Review of Older Freeway Sections

5. Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District Correspondence to the Texas Department of Transportation (Electronic Item 4.1)
6. United States Department of Transportation Correspondence on Federal Aviation Administration Funding (Electronic Item 4.2)
7. Current Hold on Regional Transportation Council Policy – Temporary Suspension of Dynamic Pricing
8. Ozone Season Update (Electronic Item 4.3)
9. Air Quality Funding Opportunities ([www.nctcog.org/aqfunding](http://www.nctcog.org/aqfunding))
10. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events ([www.dfwcleancities.org/events](http://www.dfwcleancities.org/events))
11. July – August Public Comment Report (Electronic Item 4.4)
12. September Public Meeting Notice (Electronic Item 4.5)
13. August Public Meeting Minutes (Electronic Item 4.6)
14. Recent News Articles (Electronic Item 4.7)
15. Recent Correspondence (Electronic Item 4.8)
16. Recent Press Releases (Electronic Item 4.9)

Michael Morris briefly highlighted Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

5. **Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program**: Jeff Neal provided information on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP), an update on coordinating efforts and technical assistance given to regional partners on candidate projects and requested approval for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to be the submitting agency for one of those projects. In July 2024, the USDOT announced a FY 2023-2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to solicit applications for approximately \$1.15 billion in RCEP discretionary grant funds. The program includes certain funding amounts set aside for the following purposes: (1) Planning - \$38.2 million; (2) Rural/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 were due to United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) 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 pertaining to above project types; and (4) innovative solutions via technology, education, and/or other means. Available at <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/railroad-crossing-elimination-grant-program> is the FY2023-2024 RCEP NOFO that describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, applicable program and federal requirements, and available technical assistance during the grant solicitation period. A presentation specifying key RCEP details, as well as those of the proposed RTC action, was included in Electronic Item 5.

A motion was made to approve the submittal of the Ennis Avenue/Union Pacific Railroad Grade Separation Project for funding consideration through the FY 2023/24 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP), including a \$5 million NCTCOG loan to be repaid by the City of Ennis; the addition of \$9 million in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds to support Tarrant County's RCEP submittal of the Bonds Ranch Road/Burlington Northern Sante Fe /Union Pacific Rail Road Grade Separation Project; and to administratively amend NCTCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed projects if selected for FY 2023/2024 RCEP Grant awards. Michael Evans (M); Adam Bazaldua (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Application Partnership for the Cotton Belt Trail**: Karla Windsor presented information on a proposed partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit and requested action for the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to approve the partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to submit a capital construction grant application and associated federal and local match funds for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant program for portions of Phase 3 of the Cotton Belt Trail along the Silver Line rail project. The RTC was also requested to approve additional Surface Transportation Block Grant Program/ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds and Regional Toll Revenue funds to support the leveraging of requested federal funds. 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. 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 6.

Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas, noted her support for this agenda item and asked for an explanation of the disconnected trail on a map for Dallas and if it is the intent of the Regional Transportation Council to fund. Karla Windsor responded that for funding, staff has removed all of the north-south connections to the trail, and the parallel projects or the perpendicular projects that are happening in all of the different communities. This reflects the true East/West connection of the trail and not any of the Spurs are tied to this portion, where there's still conversations regarding the trees, the final alignment, and what needs to be done. There's a small gap that still remains that may require supplemental dollars over time. Karla added that the intent of the map is to show the full connections, and staff will review the maps to make sure there was nothing unintentionally left out.

A motion was made to approve the partnership with Dallas Area Rapid Transit 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 \$23 million in federal funding; the additional contribution of \$6,519,323 in federal Surface Transportation Block Grant/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds and \$1.6 million in Regional Toll Revenue funds for non-federal match should the project be selected for funding award; 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 to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Statewide TIP and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes, if awarded funding. Cara Mendelsohn (M); Theresa Daniel (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Fiscal Year 2024 Public Transportation Funding: Programs of Projects**: Christie Gotti requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 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, NCTCOG has developed several Programs of Projects to suballocate approximately \$190.2 million in FY2024 Section 5307, Section 5339, and Section 5337 federal funding to public transit providers in the region. Approximately \$17.1 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.

A motion was made to approve the proposed funding for the Fiscal Year 2024 Programs of Projects, and to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) along with other planning/administrative documents as needed to incorporate this funding on these projects. Pat Deen (M); Elizabeth Beck (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Work Zone Data Exchange Implementation Call for Projects:** Natalie Bettger requested Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval on the eligibility, criteria, and schedule for the Work Zone Data Exchange (WZDx) 2024 Call for Projects. In March 2022, a procurement was issued to secure vendors through the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) TXSHARE Cooperative Purchase for WZDx. Five vendors are under contract to perform work in three areas related to WZDx including converting raw work zone data into WZDx format, establishing 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 8.

A motion was made to approve the eligibility, criteria and schedule for the Work Zone Data Exchange 2024 Call for Projects. Matthew Porter (M); Michael Evans (S). The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Federal Performance Measures Update: System Performance, Freight, Air Quality:** Jenny Narvaez and James McLane requested 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 (Non-SOV) travel, and emissions reductions. In 2022, the RTC adopted 2024 and 2026 targets for these and other measures in the set of federal performance measures commonly known as PM3. At the midpoint of the four-year performance period cycle, the RTC has an opportunity to adjust or reaffirm 2026 targets for these measures, if appropriate, based on new data and analysis methodologies. Action on the remainder of the PM3 performance measures that were not included with this action is anticipated in early 2025. See Electronic Item 9 for more details.

Michael Morris stated that staff need more time to sort out what transportation systems are currently in place. He further suggested that we should reaffirm what was originally done and not overreact at this time.

A motion was made to reaffirm existing 2026 targets for the following PM3 measures: Non-SOV Travel for the following Urban Areas: Dallas-Fort-Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney-Frisco; Peak-Hour Excessive Delay for the following Urban Areas: Dallas-Fort-Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney-Frisco; and On-Road Mobile Source Emissions Reductions (Cumulative) for the following pollutants: NOx and VOC. Matthew Porter (M); Michael Evans (S). The motion passed unanimously.

10. **Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Council Legislative Program and Status of Transit 2.0 – Workshop Discussion:** Rebekah Gongora and Michael Morris provided an overview of the draft Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Legislative Program for the 89th Texas Legislature and presented Transit 2.0 Task 2 legislative recommendations. An RTC workshop on Transit 2.0 and the RTC Legislative Program was held prior to the RTC meeting. The 89th Session of the Texas Legislature will convene on January 14, 2025. In advance of the legislative session, RTC members were provided with an overview of the draft RTC Legislative Program in Electronic Item 10.1 and the Transit 2.0 Task 2 Report in Electronic Item 10.2.

John Muns, Mayor, City of Plano, noted regarding Transit 2.0, the legislative recommendations presented are really not reflective of the original request submitted to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), when Mayor Steve Babick, City of Carrollton and Mayor Pete Stopfer, City of Irving talked about proposing this. Mayor Muns added that he and Mayors Babick and Stopfer believe the two recommendations related to Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) should be removed, and the RTC should remain neutral in relation to the ongoing discussions between DART and its member cities. Mayor Muns mentioned the two that should be removed include: protect existing transportation authority dedicated funding and advance Transit 2.0 recommendations. He also noted they're concerned that many of the recommendations regarding State funding do not take into account the political climate and the realities in Austin. He suggested that the consultant spend more time on the recommendations. Michael Morris responded that it's best to continue the dialogue and for local governments to be aware that there are some elements that could have significant consequences on programs and projects in the region. As an example, the transit agencies serve as our agents with regard to air quality improvements associated in the mobility plan and in air quality conformity. While we don't know the implications of what it is the local governments would do, if the local governments end up creating a situation where we no longer can meet our air quality requirements that we previously committed to in the State Implementation Plan several years ago, we could open ourselves up to sanctions on the roadway side. Michael added that he understands the politics of staying out of it, but if we stay out of it, there could be huge consequences that may not be fully understood by the locals. Jim Ross, Mayor, City of Arlington, stated Arlington will be opposed to any attempt to diminish local control by either trying to force a non-subscribing transit city, like Arlington or Grand Prairie, into a position where we'd have to join a transit authority to try to keep a business and amending the local sales tax cap to exempt the portion used for transit (up to a half cent). Gary Slagel, Chair, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) mentioned he was a mayor for a long time and worked with DART for years, and now being a DART Board member and Chairman of the Board finds it troublesome to be put in a position of being the enemy, when for years we were all good guys trying to work together to do the best for the region. He suggested working together to try to get there and let's use these as a starting point to see what the consultant comes up with. Mayor Babick reiterated Mayor Ross' point by suggesting that that last task is problematic. It's probably not a DART transit issue, it's probably more of a sales tax legislation issue that needs reform. Michael Morris mentioned the data was critical to develop largely because of the commitments to the legislature. Cara Mendelsohn, Councilmember, City of Dallas, noted that the item about changing the sales tax, there should not be an increase in sales tax as it's a regressive, unnecessary tax. She highlighted the RTC has a very important role in the regional aspect of transportation that is essential. Michael Morris stated that it's too early advance to our legislative program when we aren't clear on what it is we are asking for. Many RTC members commented they did not support restricting non-transit member cities from relocating businesses from transit member cities in the same region.

11. **Vision Zero for Human Health Policy**: Agenda Item was not presented due to time constraints.
12. **Progress Reports**: Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 12.1 and Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes were provided in Electronic Item 12.2.
13. **Other Business (Old or New)**: There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Future Agenda Items**: There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting**: The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is scheduled for 2:00 pm on October 17, 2024, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments. A Member Orientation will be held prior to the RTC meeting at 12:00 pm.