

# Interagency Transportation Report RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR June 2018

## Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Mobility 2045 and Air Quality Conformity. The RTC approved the latest update of the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), called Mobility 2045, and the air quality conformity evaluation that supports the Plan. Federal certification that the Plan will not cause any new violations of the ozone air quality standard or delay attainment of the standard is expected by November. Approval of the Plan is needed to continue development and construction of federal and state-funded transportation projects in the region.

The Dallas Morning News reported on the approval of the MTP in their Monday, June 18th edition. The headline highlighted the inclusion of toll lanes in the plan recommendations. While the report was reasonably balanced, it focused on the funding benefit that toll lanes can provide in helping to stretch limited transportation project dollars. It should also be noted that the Plan primarily focuses on the provision of toll lanes in combination with free general-purpose lanes that provide an option for travelers who need a reliable travel time on any given day. Toll managed lanes are also expected to provide an opportunity for the region to efficiently operate transportation in the future with services such as guaranteed transit travel time routes, truck lanes during off-peak periods, and possibly a transition to automated vehicle lanes.

RTC Officers for 2018-2019. The RTC approved officers for the next year. Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes moves into the Chair position. Denton County Commissioner Andy Eads will serve as Vice Chair and Johnson County Judge Roger Harmon will be the Secretary. Adam McGough represented the City of Dallas on the nominating committee.

Bylaws Revision Subcommittee. The RTC Bylaws Subcommittee held its second meeting on June 14th and agreed on some minor modifications regarding representation on the RTC. Although the City of Dallas represents a slightly smaller percentage of the total population of the North Texas Region, the Subcommittee recommended that Dallas maintain its six seats on the RTC as an acknowledgement that the City also owns and operates Love Field Airport. The Bylaws must receive two readings at the RTC before approval.

Clean Fleets Funding. The RTC approved \$1.13 million for diesel vehicle and equipment replacement projects. Funding comes from the EPA's National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. The approval includes \$613,041 for the City of Dallas to replace eleven dump trucks. This level of funding will cover 35% of the total estimated cost of the vehicles.

Ozone Monitoring Update. As of June 4th, there have been 10 ozone exceedance days. There were 24 exceedance days during 2017. The 8-month ozone season runs through the end of October.

## Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

LBJ East Project Approved. The Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) approved the procurement of a design-build contract for the IH 635 LBJ East project at its May 24th meeting. The TTC approved a design that includes continuous frontage roads, ten general-purpose lanes and reconstruction of the two existing toll managed lanes. This design is not consistent with the

region's transportation plan that calls for four toll managed lanes, but does not preclude the eventual implementation of the RTC's plan for the corridor. TxDOT's Dallas District has already released the Request for Qualifications beginning the procurement process.

Southern Gateway Construction. The Southern Gateway project is fully underway now resulting in frequent lane closures and lane changes. During the weekend of June 9th, all the main lanes of I-35E were closed to allow for the demolition of the 8th Street bridge. Up-to-date lane closure information can be found at <https://thesoutherngateway.org/lane-closures/>.

Mo Bur Named Dallas District Engineer. TxDOT announced on Friday, June 1st, that Mo Bur, P.E., has been named the Dallas District Engineer. Mr. Bur joined TxDOT in 1997 in the San Angelo Area Office. He came to work in the Dallas District in 2002 and most recently held the position of Dallas Deputy District Engineer. He was the 2017 recipient of the department's prestigious Dewitt C. Greer Award.

#### North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

NTTA Toll Rates. The NTTA plans for toll rate increases at a rate of 2.75 percent per year and implements the increase in odd numbered years on July 1st. The TollTag toll rate currently averages 18.01 cents per mile. The ZipCash, pay-by-mail rate is 50 percent more than the TollTag rate. The NTTA Board reviews the agency's financial obligations and the need for the biennial toll rate increase during the annual budget approval process. The NTTA depends on toll revenue to repay bonds sold to finance initial toll road construction, maintain and operate their roads, and fund system expansions to accommodate traffic growth.

#### Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Cotton Belt Update. The Board scheduled a special meeting of its Committee-of-the-Whole on June 21st to discuss design options for the Cotton Belt. The Board is working toward a consensus on the specific mitigation and betterment options that will be included in the project. The Board is scheduled to vote on a Service Plan amendment for the Cotton Belt on June 26th.

DART staff has continued to work with two cities regarding their analysis of at-grade crossings at Hillcrest (in Dallas) and Jupiter (in Plano). The latest briefing materials indicate that DART is now recommending that both roads be grade-separated from the rail line based on an upward revision in the estimated traffic growth in the area. This is important because it requires the cost of the grade-separations to be included in the base cost of the project and potentially allows for more improvements to be included as betterments.

Briefing on Service Standards: Amenities. The Board's Operations, Safety and Security Committee was recently briefed June 5th on the agency's service standards related to the provision of amenities such as shelters and benches. There are no amenity standards for shelters at rail stations, free standing solar lighting or customer information. This is the sixth briefing in a series on service standards that is intended to prepare the Board for future discussions and decision-making on bus and rail service modifications to improve the agency's core services.

#### Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Congressman Pete Sessions was the featured speaker the DRMC's June 1st meeting. He stressed the need for continued regional unity on transportation projects and funding, and

indicated that the federal government is working toward streamlining environmental review processes. DRMC members praised Mr. Sessions for his recent letter of support to state officials on the LBJ East project.

Michael Miles, Vice President for Government Relations, provided an expanded report on Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) activities. He was assisted by Brittney Farr, Local and Regional Relations Manager. They highlighted DART's technology innovations that are intended to seamlessly connect public transit services with other first-mile/last-mile services such as transportation network companies (e.g., Uber and Lyft), dynamic ridesharing matching, and shared bicycle services.

#### DFW International Airport (DFW)

Airport Board Approves FY19 Budget. The DFW Board approved a \$1 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2019 at its June meeting. The budget anticipates an increase of 4.3 million passengers (8.9%) next year which will allow for increased investment at the airport. The growth is primarily due to American Airlines' announced plan to increase flights by adding new service to small and midsize markets. It will also move some regional service from the Terminal E satellite and will repurpose a few gates in Terminal B for larger aircraft. The airport budget requires approval of both owner cities, and will be scheduled for Dallas City Council consideration after the July recess.

Runway 17C Rehabilitation Underway. DFW recently began major rehabilitation work on its busiest runway. The project includes a partial closure of the runway for a few months, followed by a full closure beginning in August. During the partial and full closures, DFW's six other runways will be utilized and there will be no impact to the air traffic capacity. The rehabilitation will include the installation of various technologies to create a "smart" runway, including an updated pavement sensor system for measuring weather impacts and updated runway status lights. In some instances, these smart technologies will provide early notice when the runway requires attention which will help minimize the amount of time that the runway is out of service.

The increased use of other runways during the closure, may result in area residents experiencing a change in the frequency of aircraft noise. The airport has taken a proactive approach by forecasting the potential noise levels during the closure and reaching out to neighboring cities to brief them on the work.