

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

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

IH 635 LBJ East Update. There has been a breakthrough with the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) regarding the LBJ East project. An April 30th letter from TTC Chairman Bruce Bugg to the RTC indicated that the TTC would approve the design-build procurement for the LBJ East project, if the RTC agreed to limit the number of toll lanes to the two existing toll managed lanes and closed the funding gap without the use of Proposition 1 or 7 funds (which cannot be used to fund toll roads). The TTC has opened the door to the inclusion of toll managed lanes on the project because there are already toll managed lanes operating in the corridor – i.e., state officials are willing to “grandfather” an existing situation. The RTC approved a resolution that was aligned with Chairman Bugg’s letter.

Mobility 2045 and Air Quality Conformity. The update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), called Mobility 2045, is almost complete. The RTC was briefed on the public participation comments about the draft plan and an analysis that shows the plan conforms to federal/state air quality requirements. Council member Greyson reiterated her request that the plan include mode share goals. NCTCOG staff indicated that the draft plan includes a policy statement on this topic and that they are preparing a written response. The RTC is scheduled to approve the plan at their June 14th meeting. Federal certification that the plan satisfies air quality conformity is expected by November.

Legislative and Finance Partnership Committee. The RTC Legislative Committee met prior to the RTC business meeting to begin mapping out strategies to guide state and federal legislative action. Areas of interest for the state included the possibility of moving from a gas tax to a vehicle mile traveled (VMT) based collection, addressing the tax revenue impact of electric vehicles that don’t pay gas taxes, use of the state “rainy day fund” as an infrastructure bank for transportation, and continued support for transit and high-speed rail. Federal topics included VMT-based tax collection, addressing Texas’ donor state status, and updating census formulas for allocation of federal transportation funds. Council member Kleinman requested that NCTCOG work with local agencies to align legislative programs so that everyone in the region is able to speak with a consistent voice on issues.

Bylaws Revision Subcommittee. The RTC Bylaws Subcommittee, chaired by Collin County Commissioner Duncan Webb, met for the first time after the RTC business meeting. Lee Kleinman represents Dallas on this committee. In addition to a variety of administrative updates, the committee will examine the most recent population and employment numbers to determine whether the membership structure needs to be updated. The City of Dallas currently has six representatives on the 44-member council – more than any other entity. It is also the owner-operator of Dallas Love Field which is not currently represented on the Council.

Clean Air Action Day. Friday, June 22nd is North Texas Clean Air Action Day. Everyone is invited to do at least one thing to help improve air quality. Examples include carpooling, using transit, biking or walking, combining trips, taking lunch to work, and reduced idling.

Tire Recycling Program. The RTC approved adding a tire recycling program to the Mobility 2045 Plan and authorized NCTCOG staff to work with local governments to create the program.

Local support for the program will be included as one of the elements of the MTP “Policy Bundle” that is used to assess the level of support for regional transportation priorities and allows local governments to qualify for the use of Transportation Development Credits (TDC). City of Dallas representatives have been a driving force behind this initiative.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Commission Action on LBJ East Project? Based on the RTC action to comply with TTC Chairman Bugg’s April 30th letter, it is anticipated that the TTC will place approval of the design-build procurement on their May 24th agenda. This would be a significant milestone that would end a five-month delay on the LBJ East project.

Kelly Selman Retirement. Kelly Selman, District Engineer for TxDOT’s Dallas District, has announced his retirement effective at the end of May. Kelly was praised for his professionalism and creativity at both the DRMC and RTC meetings. He has continued a long line of very capable district engineers in Dallas, including his predecessor, Bill Hale, who now serves as TxDOT’s chief engineer in Austin. TxDOT has not announced a replacement or interim assignment.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Lynn Gravley Appointed to Board. On April 18th, Governor Greg Abbott appointed F. Lynn Gravley to serve on the NTTA Board of Directors. Under NTTA bylaws, the governor appoints one of the nine Board members from a county adjacent to the NTTA’s four-county service area. Mr. Gravley is a resident of Gunter in Grayson County. The other eight Board members are appointed by the counties in the service area – Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton. Mr. Gravley succeeds William “Bill” Elliott, who has served on the NTTA Board since 2012.

DNT Frankford Ramp Concerns. The recently completed Dallas North Tollway project that added a fourth lane in each direction between Belt Line Road and the President George Bush Turnpike has raised some community concerns about the safety of the reconfigured on-ramp from Frankford Road to the northbound main lanes of the DNT. NTTA’s staff has met with residents in the area and is examining options to improve safety for merging traffic.

Briefing and Tour of Safety Operations Center. NTTA’s Government Affairs staff has begun scheduling briefings and tours of their Safety Operations Center (SOC) with local elected officials and staff. The SOC is a state-of-the-art facility where dispatchers continuously monitor the status of North Texas toll roads, using nearly 2,000 cameras to address roadway issues and assist drivers, public safety officers, employees and others in need.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Cotton Belt Update. The Board’s Committee-of-the-Whole continues to be briefed on various elements of the Cotton Belt project at each meeting as it moves toward final approval of the DART Service Plan amendment for the project on June 26th. Their May 8th meeting focused on grade separations including the Hillcrest crossing and introduced a “capital cost evaluation tool.” The evaluation tool will allow Board members to quickly compare the cost impact of choosing different options such as types of betterments, eliminating station locations, and/or adding grade separations.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will hold three public hearings on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cotton Belt:

May 14th at 6:30pm
Renaissance Dallas Addison
Lalique Ballroom
15201 Dallas Parkway
Addison, Texas 75001

May 15th at 6:30pm
Richardson Civic Center
Grand Ballroom
411 W. Arapaho Road
Richardson, Texas 75080

May 16th at 6:30pm
DFW Airport Marriott
8440 Freeport Parkway
Irving, Texas 75063

DART Streetcar Master Plan. The Board directed DART staff to review and consolidate their interlocal agreements (ILA) with the City of Dallas related to streetcars, and to develop a Streetcar Master Plan that would cover policy development, corridor selection criteria, analysis of potential corridors including cost estimates, and identification of funding sources. It is anticipated that the Streetcar Plan would be included in the 2040 Transit System Plan.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

The DRMC Executive Committee met on May 4th. Charles Emory, Board Chairman and Jim Cline, President, provided an expanded report on the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA). The DCTA is enabled by Chapter 460 of the Texas Transportation Code and was approved by Denton County voters in November 2002. In addition to operating bus and paratransit services, the DCTA operates the A-Train commuter rail service from downtown Denton to Carrollton, where it connects to DART's LRT Green Line. DCTA was the third public transportation agency created to serve the North Texas Region. The other two are DART and Trinity Metro (formerly the Fort Worth Transportation Authority).

The DRMC played an active role in working to resolve the impasse on the IH 635 LBJ East project. Mr. Kleinman and other DRMC committee members praised the staff for their efforts over the past few months.

DFW International Airport (DFW)

DFW Launches Pre-Paid Parking. Customers at DFW Airport can save on parking with Prepaid Parking Online, a new system that allows customers to select and prepay for their parking at a discount of up to 50 percent. Through the online system, customers have the option of using either their NTTA TollTag or a QR Code to enter and exit the DFW Parking Plazas. When booking their prepaid parking, customers enter their flight information, any available promotional codes, and their choice of payment method. The system automatically displays all available parking options, as well as potential savings for each choice. Parking products available for prepayment include:

- Terminal Parking: The most convenient self-parking option, with 28,000 spaces at all terminals and state-of-the-art digital parking guidance systems at Terminals A, D and E.
- Express Parking: Features 7,000 covered and uncovered parking spaces with direct bus service to all terminals.
- Remote Parking: The most economical option with nearly 5,000 uncovered spaces and bus service to all terminals.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

Texas Central and Amtrak Reach Agreement. The developers of Texas' high-speed train project between Dallas and Houston announced an agreement with Amtrak, which will allow passengers to use Amtrak's reservation system to buy tickets for through travel on both the Texas Bullet Train and Amtrak's national routes. Texas Central will offer a convenient transfer service connecting riders between Amtrak passenger stations and the high-speed train stations in Dallas and Houston. The agreement also will make other Amtrak services, such as training, marketing and sales capabilities, available to Texas Central. One of the most significant gaps in Amtrak's route structure is the connection between the Texas Eagle service to Dallas and the Sunset Limited service to Houston.