

Interagency Transportation Report
RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR
October 2017

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Mobility 2045 Workshop. The RTC held a workshop to update members on the status of the comprehensive Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update, called Mobility 2045. NCTCOG staff is expected to brief the RTC monthly as they move toward release of the final recommendations in April 2018, and final approval by the RTC in June 2018. The USDOT is expected to confirm that the plan satisfies air quality conformity requirements by November 2018 so that regional transportation projects can continue to be constructed.

Update on the Next “Big Projects” in Texas and the Dallas-Fort Worth Region. The RTC approved three policy statements at its October meeting regarding the Texas Transportation Commission’s (TTC) initiative to fund several big urban projects in Texas. The policy statements endorsed three projects in the DFW Region: (1) IH 635 LBJ East from US 75 to and including the IH 30 interchange, (2) Dallas CBD Highways including SH 183, IH 35E, IH 30, IH 45, and US 175, and (3) IH 20 “Y” Connection including IH 820 and US 287. All three statements affirmed support for formula allocation of transportation funds from the TTC to urban areas. The Dallas CBD Highways project is a response to the City of Dallas decision to reject the Trinity Parkway project, and will require that the City of Dallas, TxDOT and NCTCOG work cooperatively to develop an acceptable design for this project and build community consensus. An additional element was suggested by Sandy Greyson, and included in Lee Kleinman’s motion to approve the item to the effect that the Dallas CBD Highways project would be developed within the existing highway alignments with minimal additional right-of-way acquisition. The TTC is expected to act on this initiative before the end of the year.

Funding Approved for Transit Programs Supporting Low-Income, Seniors and Disabled. The RTC approved funding for two Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (\$5310) and Job Access/Reverse Commute Program (\$5307). Approved projects included \$418,184 in federal funds for the City of Dallas’ Senior Medical Transportation Program, and a total of \$390,045 in federal funds for two Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas projects supporting access to Inland Port jobs from Southern Dallas.

CMAQ and STBG Funding Approved to Support Local Bond Programs. The RTC approved a package of funding partnerships with cities planning near-term bond programs. The idea behind the program is to help local agencies stretch their bond funds by matching local dollars with federal funds, and to help local agencies “sell” their bond programs to the public by showing that the bonds will leverage outside transportation funds. The RTC action authorized up to \$46.6 million in support of seven Dallas bond projects – this is in addition to the \$40 million that has already been pledged for the Southern Gateway pedestrian plaza.

New Technology for HOV Verification. The RTC was briefed on a pilot program to test a new technology that can be used to verify the number of passengers in a high-occupant vehicle to determine that the vehicle is eligible for the 50% HOV-discount on toll-managed lanes. The system, supplied by CARMA Technology, utilizes a smart phone app and an in-car beacon to verify that there are at least two passengers. The goal of the program is to simplify the process for the HOV user and to substantially reduce the enforcement cost for the public.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

New Texas Transportation Commission Chairman. Governor Greg Abbott named J. Bruce Bugg, Jr. as Chair of the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) on September 19th. Mr. Bugg was originally appointed to a six-year term in February 2015. He represents San Antonio on the Commission and recently spearheaded the Commission's "Clear Lanes" program to fund urban projects that provide congestion relief. Mr. Bugg replaces Mr. Tryon Lewis from Odessa as Chair of the Commission. This appears to signal a shift toward a more urban focus at the TTC which is supported by their "Big Projects" initiative.

Mr. Vic Vandergriff represents the DFW area on the Commission and was appointed by former Governor Perry in April 2013. His six-year term will end in April 2019.

Commission Schedules Workshop on "Big Projects" in Texas. The TTC will have a workshop on October 25th concerning their Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) update and development of a funding plan for the next big urban projects in the state. The IH 635 LBJ East and Dallas CBD Highways projects will be a part of this discussion. The DRMC is encouraging members to attend the meeting.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Ramp Improvements on Dallas North Tollway (DNT). In addition to the median replacement and resurfacing project that is currently underway on the DNT between LBJ Freeway and downtown, the NTTA will undertake a six-month ramp rehabilitation project in early 2018. The scope of the project includes full-depth concrete pavement repairs, curb and drainage structure repairs, pavement crack sealing, and pavement markings at select locations along six ramps: Oak Lawn Ave. (northbound entrance ramp), Lemmon Ave. (southbound entrance ramp), Lovers Lane (northbound exit ramp), Northwest Hwy. (northbound exit ramp), Walnut Hill Lane (southbound entrance ramp), Royal Lane (southbound entrance ramp).

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

DART Board Elects New Officers. On October 3rd, the DART Board elected new officers for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Sue Bauman (Dallas) was elected as Chair; Paul Wageman (Plano), Vice Chair; Michele Wong Krause (Dallas), Secretary; and Jonathan Kelly (Garland) Assistant Secretary. Gary Slagel (Richardson, Addison, Highland Park, and University Park) had served in the Secretary position this past year would normally have been expected to move into the Vice Chair role, but was successfully challenged by Mr. Wageman. This action continues the agency's practice of alternating the Chair position between a City of Dallas representative and a suburban representative each year.

Board Approves D-Link Shuttle Service Funding Agreement. The DART Board approved a one-year funding agreement with the City of Dallas and Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI) to continue the D-Link service when the current agreement expires on November 20th. DART will contribute \$494,576 or 46% of the total cost of the service under the new agreement.

Planning Committee Briefed on Cotton Belt Stations and Grade Separations. The Board's Planning Committee was briefed on the potential locations of stations, and the status of the street crossing grade-separation analysis. The Board will be asked on October 24th to call a public hearing in February 2018 to cover the environmental findings, alignment, grade separations, stations, and other facilities.

Operations, Safety, and Security Committee Briefed on 2018 Security Goal – Plans and Strategies. The Board's Operations, Safety, and Security Committee received a comprehensive briefing on security strategies that included physical/facility initiatives, service plan modifications, DART police operations, and marketing plans. The Board's questions exceeded the time available for this briefing and they asked that it be brought back for further discussion.

Board Briefing on Provision of Services Outside the DART Service Area. The DART Committee-of-the-Whole (COTW) was recently briefed on Policy III.07 which allows DART to provide transit services outside its member city service area, but requires that municipalities develop a transit system plan and a plan for DART membership within 36 months. This policy has been a topic of discussion at the DART Board for several years. Given the number of new members on the DART Board, they asked staff to schedule additional time for discussion of the policy.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

The DRMC Executive Committee met on Friday, October 6th. DRMC staff provided a short legislative update followed by agency reports from the RTC, TxDOT, NTTA, DART, and the DCTA. Staff summarized several changes to Governor Abbott's staff and commented that the changes indicated that he was strengthening his team to provide stronger legislative coordination and communication. The upcoming TTC workshop on "Big Projects" was discussed, as well as the need to continue the push for formula allocation of state and federal highway funding.

Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFW Airport)

Board Approves New US Post Office. At their October meeting, the DFW Board of Directors approved a new lease with the United States Postal Service (USPS) to construct and operate a Post Office at the Southgate Development, near the Airport's Administrative Headquarters. This new lease would relocate the airport's current post office, situated on the southwest side of the airport. This relocation would allow DFW Airport to keep its unique address and zip code (DFW Airport, TX 75261) and will provide a better customer experience with up-to-date facilities for tenants, the public and travelers.