

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

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Mobility 2045. The RTC was briefed on the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update. The schedule calls for the review of draft recommendations during the first quarter of 2018, an official public comment period in April-May, and final approval in June 2018. Preliminary estimates indicate transportation revenues of \$131.0 billion to be spent on the Plan with the following prioritized breakdown:

Maintaining Existing System

Infrastructure Maintenance	\$41.3B
Management and Operations	\$7.9B
Growth, Development, and Land Use Strategies	\$3.9B

Strategic Infrastructure Investment

Rail and Bus	\$30.0B
HOV-Managed Lanes / Freeways-Tollways-Arterials	\$47.9B

Air North Texas Partner Awards – City of Dallas Recognized. Dallas was recognized for outstanding outreach by using its website, social media platforms and advertising to promote Air North Texas, encouraging both the public and its employees to make clean air commitments. In addition, Dallas received the Arlo Ambassador Award for incorporating “Arlo the Airmadillo” into a popular social media campaign encouraging participation in Air North Texas. Arlo is the Air North Texas mascot!

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Roadblock on TTC “Big Projects” Initiative. The Texas Transportation Commission’s (TTC) bold initiative to fund several big urban projects over the next ten years using a combination of unallocated transportation funds and revenue from toll managed lanes appears to have been sidetracked when the Governor and Lt. Governor made statements in opposition to the use of toll managed lanes. Without the revenue that would be produced by the toll managed lanes, the TTC must rethink their approach to the projects. TTC Commissioner Jeff Austin addressed the DRMC on this topic at their last meeting (see DRMC item). This change of direction has immediate implications for the IH 635 LBJ East project that has been cleared environmentally and is ready to go to final design and construction next year. The use of toll managed lanes has been an integral part of the LBJ East project and has been supported by the business interests and residents along the corridor. Discussions are continuing among state and local leaders to find a solution that will allow these projects to move forward. This will be an item for discussion and possible action at the next RTC meeting on December 14th.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

DNT Extension North. The NTTA is moving forward with plans to extend the Dallas North Tollway (DNT) from US 380 to FM 121 in Grayson County, an additional distance of 17.6 miles. The extension would be a limited access toll road with six main lanes and four frontage road lanes. This project has been in development since 2007 when they began preliminary route

studies and environmental documentation. The Board approved a request to advertise for design and engineering services for the extension over US 380 in July.

Primacy Waiver on IH 635 LBJ East. The Board acted at their November meeting to waive primacy on the LBJ East project. This means that the NTTA has no intent to build and operate toll lanes within the LBJ East corridor, and allows TxDOT to pursue their plan to reconstruct the freeway with four toll managed lanes. This action may be rendered irrelevant if TxDOT is not allowed to use toll managed lanes on the LBJ East project.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Cotton Belt: Board Workshops, Community Meetings, Public Hearing. The Board's Committee-of-the-Whole held two workshops in advance of the next round of community meetings on the Cotton Belt project. At the November 1st workshop, they discussed noise, vibration, and visual impacts, and the difference between mitigation (required actions to comply with federal standards) and betterments (additional actions intended to improve compatibility with residential areas). The second workshop on November 28th focused on alignment deviations from the existing rail corridor and proposed station locations. The Board expressed some concerns about the close spacing of stations between the Addison station and the UTD station through North Dallas. The second workshop was going to include information on traffic analysis and the potential for rail-road grade separations, but this discussion was delayed to a future meeting due to time constraints.

DART held a series of three community meetings in late November and early December to present preliminary findings on the topics discussed at the Board workshops. The North Dallas meeting was held at Parkhill Junior High School on November 29th and was attended by about 150 citizens.

At its December 12th meeting, the Board will consider calling a public hearing in February 2018 regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and revisions to the DART Service Plan. The Board will not make any decisions regarding the Cotton Belt on the day of the public hearing; these decisions will be scheduled for a later date.

Commitment to Enhanced Security. In response to increasing concerns about safety and security on the DART system, the Board approved a resolution on November 14th expressing its commitment to enhanced security and identifying eleven specific actions to accomplish this objective. Specifically, the resolution directed that eight DART police officers be assigned to the West End station and adjacent areas, set a goal of 100% coverage by DART security personnel on all trains by March 2018, and set dates for complete installation of security cameras on all trains and other high-activity locations.

Annual Retreat. The Board is scheduled to hold its annual retreat on Friday and Saturday, January 5-6, 2018. The retreat provides an opportunity for the Board to have extended discussions on policy issues that are difficult to cover in regular committee meetings. The location and agenda for the retreat has not been announced yet.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Texas Transportation Commissioner (TTC) Jeff Austin was the speaker for the Friday, December 1st DRMC meeting. Mr. Austin was appointed to the TTC by Governor Rick Perry in October 2011 and resides in Tyler. He indicated that the Commission would be taking a step

back from its “Big Projects” initiative (see TxDOT item) and suggested that state leaders are only hearing from a minority of constituents who are against the use of toll lanes in any form. He stressed that this is a time for state leaders to be “listening,” and hopes that local community leaders, businesses and residents who support getting transportation projects underway will step up and voice their support.

Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFW Airport)

First Cell Phone Lot. DFW has opened its first cell phone lot at the north end of the airport. Customers can park in this lot for free before heading into the terminal area to pick up passengers. The parking lot is a direct response to customer demand, and will serve to reduce the number of cars parked on the curb. The cell phone lot is located on the north end of the airport, south of airfield drive, between north and southbound International Parkway. A similar lot for the south entrance is in the planning stages.

New Automated Screening Lanes Debut. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and DFW Airport have installed automated screening lanes at Terminal A and Terminal D. The new system is intended to enhance security effectiveness while efficiently moving customers through the screening process. Currently, four automated screening lanes are installed at DFW, located at checkpoints A21 and D22. Ultimately, DFW will deploy ten new automated screening lanes at various checkpoints.

The lanes allow up to five customers at a time to place their travel items into bins and send them through the screening process. Items that require secondary screening are diverted for additional checks without slowing the flow of the lanes, allowing trailing customers to continue through security. Some of the new features designed to improve the process include:

- Stainless steel countertops that enable several passengers to simultaneously place their items in bins;
- Automated conveyor belts that return the bins to the front of the security checkpoint for easy customer access;
- Automatic diversion of any bag that may contain a prohibited item, which allows the customer line to keep moving uninterrupted;
- Bins that are 25 percent larger than previous bins and capable of holding a roll-aboard bag;
- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags attached to each bin, matching travelers to their property as they move through the security screening process; and,
- Cameras that capture images of the contents of each bin and are linked to the x-ray image of a carry-on bag’s contents.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

Tier 1 EIS Completed for Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision for the Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study (TOPRS) and determined that the project is feasible. The service-level study looked conceptually at potential alignments for rail service from Oklahoma City to South Texas. In particular, the study identified three high-speed rail routes as preferred alternatives between DFW and San Antonio. Funding has not been identified to move the project to a Tier 2 EIS that would identify a specific alignment.

2018 Southwestern Rail Conference. The 14th Annual Southwestern Rail Conference will be held January 18-19, 2018, at the Magnolia Hotel on North Central Expressway across from the SMU campus. The agenda includes updates on the Dallas-Houston HSR project and Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail Study (TOPRS), and discussion on how to integrate rail planning into statewide planning efforts. The conference is sponsored by Texas Rail Advocates.