

Interagency Transportation Report  
RTC / TxDOT-TCEQ / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR  
November-December 2018

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

**CMAQ/STBG Funding Program: Strategic Partnerships.** NCTCOG staff presented recommendations for awarding Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) transportation funds under the RTC's "Strategic Partnerships" program. The projects include a variety of project types: roadways, intersections, bicycle/pedestrian, complete streets, ITS/traffic signals, and strategic partnerships. The recommendations include \$171 million in federal funding with about \$109 million allocated to the eastern side of the region. The RTC will consider final approval at its December meeting.

Projects identified for funding within the City of Dallas account for about \$50 million in federal funding and include:

Bicycle Pedestrian Projects

- SOPAC Trail from Greenville/Meadow to Northaven Trail – \$4M CMAQ / Local funding match using Transportation Development Credits (TDC)
- KCS Trail Connector from LBJ/Skillman DART Station to Richardson City Limit – \$4M CMAQ / Local funding match using TDCs

Complete Streets / Context-Sensitive Design Projects

- West Commerce from Fort Worth Ave. to Riverfront – \$3.27M CMAQ and \$5M STBG / Local funding match using TDCs
- Park Lane from Greenville to Hemlock – \$8.2M CMAQ / Local funding match using TDCs

Strategic Partnerships

- Klyde Warren Park Expansion from St. Paul to Akard – \$30M STBG / Local funding match to be identified from City (TIF), County and/or private sector sources
- Southern Dallas County Transportation Management Association (Inland Port) – \$1M CMAQ / Local funding match from DART

**Milestone Projects Policy Update.** The RTC adopted a "Milestone Policy" in 2015 to address the problem of projects that have been funded, but not constructed, for ten or more years. The RTC was updated on five projects that will not meet a deadline to be let for construction by the end of 2018. The RTC's Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) recommended that these projects be given a one-year extension to the end of 2019 with automatic cancellation if they do not meet the new deadline. The RTC approved the one-year extension.

The TxDOT Dallas District has two projects in this group that are in the City of Dallas along Northwest Highway at Jupiter and Plano roads. The scope of these projects was modified in 2016 to eliminate turn-lane improvements based on a new traffic analysis and to focus only on traffic signal upgrades and pedestrian improvements. TxDOT plans for a let date of March 2019.

Dallas County also has a milestone project to widen Camp Wisdom between Carrier Parkway and FM 1382 from 2 to 4 lanes. While most of this project is in Grand Prairie, the eastern

segment is in the City of Dallas. Dallas County plans to let this project for construction in the Spring of 2019.

**Legislation and Finance Partnership Subcommittee.** The Subcommittee met prior to the regular RTC business meeting on November 8th to discuss legislative issues with a focus on the draft legislative program for the 86th Texas legislative session. The draft program includes active support for local decision-making regarding the use of toll managed lanes, debt financing and public-private partnerships; clarification on the definition of toll roads in regard to the use of Prop 1 and 7 revenue for non-tolled portions of projects with toll managed lanes; additional revenue for transportation; and reinstatement of LIRAP/LIP (air quality programs) funding with increased project flexibility. The RTC will adopt a legislative program in December.

**511DFW Traveler Information System.** The RTC was briefed on the latest 511DFW website and mobile app that went live in September 2018. The system integrates regional travel data from various sources (e.g., TxDOT, DART, cities, and Waze). Data can be displayed for freeway and arterial speeds, incident and event locations, rail and bus transit stops, and CCTV and dynamic message sign images. Future enhancements will include bicycle/pedestrian routes, motorist assistance, EV charging stations, and parking information.

**Air North Texas 2017-2018 Partner Awards.** The City of Dallas is one of more than forty organizations involved with Air North Texas – a regional air quality partnership and general public outreach effort. Annual awards were announced at the November RTC meeting. The City of Dallas received the “Arlo Ambassador Award” for advancing the Air North Texas message through the campaign mascot – Arlo the Airmadillo. The “Partner of the Year” award was received by the City of Grand Prairie.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

**Volkswagen Mitigation Program Funding Finalized.** The TCEQ published the final “VW Beneficiary Mitigation Plan for Texas” on November 16th. The plan sets out the state’s strategy for distributing more than \$209 million received in settlement of claims relating to emissions control defeat devices on Volkswagen light-duty diesel vehicles. The RTC and the City of Dallas had sought a “fair share” allocation of about \$63 million for the DFW region. The original TCEQ proposal provided only \$29 million to North Texas -- the final allocation is somewhat better at \$33 million. TCEQ chose to weigh the funding toward San Antonio, El Paso, and Beaumont-Port Arthur as areas where the funding could be more likely to make a difference in the near-term in achieving or maintaining attainment with the federal standard for ozone.

**Details Released for Texas Freight Mobility Plan Meetings.** The two Dallas meetings regarding TxDOT’s Statewide Truck Parking Study and Design Considerations for Freight Infrastructure will be held as follows:

East Dallas/Mesquite Location	South Dallas Location
TxDOT Dallas District Office	UNT Dallas – Bldg. 2 / Room 138
4625 East Highway 80, Mesquite	7300 University Hills Blvd., Dallas
December 12th from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.	December 12th from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

**Board Adopts Legislative Agenda.** The NTTA adopted a legislative agenda for the 86th Texas Legislative Session at their November 14th Board meeting. The agenda identified the following general goals: (1) support initiatives that improve the safety of NTTA customers,

employees and contract workers, (2) keep all available project financing tools on the table, and (3) partner with stakeholders throughout North Texas and the state to address the transportation funding gap. The NTTA will not be initiating any specific legislative action.

## Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

**Cotton Belt Update.** DART received notification of a “Record of Decision” approving the environmental documentation for the Cotton Belt rail project. This clears the way for DART to finalize the federal Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) loan by mid-December to finance the project.

**Downtown D2 Subway Update.** The Board was briefed on staff efforts to respond to development-related changes affecting the locally preferred alternative (LPA) alignment for the D2 Subway at the eastern end of downtown. Specifically, the planned expansion of a parking garage makes it problematic to put the subway under the garage structure. DART staff has proposed an alternative alignment that avoids the garage and moves the alignment away from Carpenter Park – and appears to cost less than the original LPA alignment. DART is continuing to work with stakeholders in the area to refine the alignment as well as evaluate other stakeholder suggestions.

**Fare Structure Overview – Reduced Fares for Low-Income Riders.** When the DART Board approved fare increases earlier this year, the Board expressed a desire to reevaluate the process for considering fare increases and to consider the adoption of a more robust program of reduced fares for low-income persons and families. DART staff provided a Board briefing that indicated many other major transit agencies have implemented, or are considering, reduced fare programs for low-income customers. Additional staff research will be done to develop recommendations on where to set the threshold for eligibility and how to qualify customers.

**Master Consolidated Streetcar Interlocal Agreement.** The development of the Dallas streetcar service has necessitated the adoption of a series of interlocal agreements (ILA) to define responsibilities of the two agencies. Now that the service is in place, the DART Board asked that the various ILAs be combined into one master “consolidated” agreement to operate the current service and guide the development of future lines. A Board committee was briefed on the structure and elements proposed for the new agreement. The new master ILA would also have to be approved by the Dallas City Council.

**SMU Naming Rights Agreement.** The Board approved a ten-year agreement with SMU to rename the “Mockingbird Station” LRT station to “SMU/Mockingbird Station”. The agreement will generate more than \$460,000 in net revenue for DART.

**Transit Legislative Agenda.** The legislative agenda approved by the Board is consistent with its traditionally low-profile approach with the Texas Legislature. The primary objective is to monitor any legislation that would impact DART’s primary funding source – the dedicated one-cent transit sales tax. However, they do have one item to actively pursue an amendment to the Texas Transportation Code that would allow DART to contract with private entities (corporations, non-profits) to provide transit outside the member cities’ service area. They are currently limited to contracting with other governmental entities. This change would give the agency more flexibility, such as providing services in the Inland Port area.

**2019 DART Board Retreat.** The Board set the dates for their annual retreat for Friday and Saturday, February 1st and 2nd. The retreat provides an opportunity for teambuilding among the Board members and extended discussions on major policy issues. The location and agenda have not been set.

## Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Texas Transportation Commissioner (TTC), Jeff Austin III, was the guest speaker at the November 2nd meeting. Mr. Austin was appointed to the TTC by Gov. Rick Perry in October 2011 and resides in Tyler. He has been a reliable advocate for North Texas transportation priorities during his years on the Commission – supporting a mix of tools to deliver transportation projects including toll managed lanes.

The DRMC Executive Committee has adopted its 2019 Legislative Agenda for the upcoming state session – a copy is attached to this report.

The December meeting of the DRMC has been cancelled because it conflicts with the North Dallas Chamber's Transportation Crossroads Conference on December 7th at the Anatole Hilton. The DRMC is a co-sponsor for the Crossroads Conference.

## DFW International Airport (DFW)

**DFW Airport Signs Cargo Agreement with Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport.** DFW has joined with Groupe ADP – Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport (CDG) to develop air cargo strategies. The goal of this agreement is to influence the movement of goods between Texas and Europe, and more specifically between the two airports. The agreement is expected to expand growth opportunities in several key industries including pharmaceuticals, perishables, and other time-sensitive, high-value products. The DFW-CDG agreement comes just months after DFW led a trade mission to Europe, further strengthening the trans-Atlantic relationship that is a critical component of the \$6 billion in annual trade between Texas and France.

In September, Air France announced its return to DFW with seasonal service starting in Spring 2019, providing a second non-stop flight between DFW and CDG.

**TEXRail Begins Testing at DFW Airport.** The first TEXRail trains have made their way to DFW Airport. The arrival of the trains was part of Trinity Metro's testing of the station at Terminal B. The trains will undergo additional testing involving the FAA Radar Towers as well as the traffic signals and gate arms at various traffic intersections. TEXRail is expected to begin passenger service in January 2019.

## High Speed Rail (HSR)

**Funding Swap for HSR Study from Fort Worth to Laredo.** The RTC previously approved a \$500,000 study of high-speed rail modes and alignments from Fort Worth to Laredo with \$300,000 coming from the RTC and \$200,000 coming from other MPOs along the alignment. The RTC approved a funding exchange where the RTC will fund the full \$500,000 directly for the study and the Alamo Area MPO will transfer \$200,000 in federal funds to the RTC for other projects.

**DFW Core Express Service Update.** NCTCOG reported that an agreement has been reached with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on how to restart the environmental review of the high-speed rail project between Dallas and Fort Worth. The first phase of the review would involve a one-year conceptual engineering study led by the RTC/NCTCOG and the TxDOT HSR Commission. The FRA would complete the environmental documentation with the second phase of the study which is expected to take two years. NCTCOG would conduct the procurement of consultants for the work and the same consultants would handle both phases.



The **Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)** is a transportation advocacy group made up of cities, counties and transportation agencies in a five-county region (Dallas, Denton, Collin, Rockwall and Ellis) with a primary mission to advance critical mobility projects through advocacy efforts with state and federal elected officials and regional transportation agencies.

## Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition 2019 Legislative Agenda

The Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC) is a transportation advocacy group made up of cities, counties and transportation agencies in a four-county region (Dallas, Denton, Collin, and Rockwall) with a primary mission to advance critical mobility projects through advocacy efforts, with state and federal elected officials and regional transportation agencies.

As such, the DRMC represents local governments from the fourth largest region in the country: with over 7.4 million residents, a regional GDP of over \$511 billion, 30% of the state's overall GDP, and headquarters of 22 Fortune 500 companies. The DFW region has encountered tremendous job growth and economic success over the last several decades, which has led to exponential increases in population. North Texas grows by 401 people, every single day. Without substantial investment in transportation infrastructure, North Texas' economic growth will not continue. Adequately investing in transportation infrastructure is a good return on our investment and a core function of government. Based on these principles, the DRMC supports the following legislative agenda for the 2019 Legislative session:

1. Support efforts to fully implement Propositions 1 and 7 and extend the Sunset dates to ensure continued investment in transportation.
2. Support a definition of various types of toll projects to allow a Region/District to leverage State/Federal Dollars with supplemental funding, including **optional tolled** managed lanes and public/private partnerships, for earlier development of mobility projects.
3. Oppose any efforts to reduce anticipated funding from Proposition 1 or 7.
4. Support the Comptroller's effort to create an investment fund, using a portion of the Economic Stabilization Fund, to allow the State of Texas to earn revenue from this fund, rather than leaving it in non-interest-bearing accounts.
5. Support continued policy of non-diversion of revenue from the State Highway Fund.



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6. In an era of rapid growth, allow metropolitan regions the ability to use alternative funding mechanisms, in order to accelerate project delivery.
7. Support continuation of eminent domain authority and related tools to allow planning and development of new and/or expanded transportation corridors including high speed rail, commuter rail, freight rail, and highways.
8. In general, support legislation that encourages TxDOT to plan and develop multi-modal corridors and implement emerging technology related to autonomous vehicles and other new innovations.
9. Ensure equitable distribution of funding among the districts and support the continued use of formula funding.
10. Support the funding of Proposition 12 debt service out of general revenue, as intended by the voters when approved.
11. Grant TxDOT the flexibility to disqualify contractors who have performed poorly on previous jobs.
12. Support efforts to appropriate LIRAP and LIP funds and restructure the program to fund transportation and air quality projects.
13. Support a Joint Resolution from the Texas Legislature that calls upon the Texas Congressional Delegation to address the fact that Texas is the only donor state when it comes to Transportation Funding from the Federal Government as to the formula based on redistribution of the gasoline tax. Texas is the only state in the nation that gets back less revenue than it pays in from the Federal gasoline tax.
14. Oppose legislation that would impose revenue caps or appraisal caps on local governments or reduce rollback rates as this would affect their ability to finance and plan for transportation projects and would have an adverse effect on their bond ratings.