

Interagency Transportation Report  
RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR  
March-April 2019

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

**Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course Announcement.** NCTCOG has scheduled the next offering of its “Executive Level Incident Management Training” for Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in their Transportation Council Room. This course is directed toward local agency decision-makers including elected officials, city managers, and department directors and managers, and is intended to emphasize the importance of maintaining a safe operating environment for first-responders, rapidly clearing accident scenes to restore normal traffic flow, and preventing secondary accidents upstream. To RSVP for the course, contact Barbara Walsh at NCTCOG at 817-695-9245 or [bwalsh@nctcog.org](mailto:bwalsh@nctcog.org).

**Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Funding.** The RTC approved two funding programs at their April meeting:

**Management and Operations / NCTCOG Implemented / Air Quality Programs.** This category extends funding through 2022 for a variety of programs that contribute to better highway operations and improved air quality. Some examples include vanpool program support for DART, Trinity Metro and DCTA; traffic signal retiming with local governments; mobility assistance patrols on freeways; and, freeway incident management training. The air quality improvement associated with these programs has been instrumental in helping the region obtain federal “air quality conformity” approval for the metropolitan transportation plan so that major construction projects can stay on schedule. The total funding approved for this category was \$66 million.

**Assessment Policy Projects.**

The idea behind the "Assessment Policy" project category is for the RTC to partner with local governments to fund projects that include a payback component for all or a portion of the RTC funding when it directly benefits private development and increases economic activity through improved accessibility. Some of the recommended projects would provide an initial grant (no payback) in order to further develop a project that could later include a payback component for future construction funding.

This item included approval of \$7.4 million to the City of Dallas for planning/engineering related to transportation projects for an area labelled “Priority Zone #1” with the following boundaries:

- Young Street, Gaston Avenue, and Washington Street on the north;
- Sylvan Avenue, Tyler Street, and Polk Street on the west;
- Illinois Avenue on the south; and,
- Elsie Faye Heggins Street on the east.

This amount would be a grant and would not require payback -- but would require a local match of \$1.85 million since it involves federal funds. The local match could come from public or private entities or through Transportation Development Credits. The project is not fully defined at this point. NCTCOG staff and the City will have further discussions about the

projects to be targeted with this funding. The Dallas Council will have an opportunity to review and approve the projects.

This item also included approval of \$5 million to fund a land banking partnership for some undeveloped parcels west of the Lake Highlands LRT station.

**Congestion Management Process (CMP).** The CMP is part of the federally-required regional transportation planning process. One of its purposes is to focus transportation improvement efforts on system management strategies before undertaking capacity projects that are primarily intended for single occupant vehicles (SOV). The management strategies must include: (1) demand management, (2) traffic operational improvements, (3) public transportation improvements, and (4) intelligent transportation system (ITS) technologies. The last CMP was adopted by the RTC in 2013 and focused on major highway corridors in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton counties. The RTC will be briefed on this process over the next few months with approval scheduled by the end of the year.

**Community College Partnership.** The RTC also approved two pilot programs designed to facilitate public transportation accessibility for higher education students in Tarrant County. The proposals are intended to support a federal initiative to address the root causes of poverty. The source of funding for the program are Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The briefing materials suggested that the program could be expanded to Dallas County in the near future. DART and the Dallas County Community College District already have a program in place that provides free access to DART transportation services for DCCCD students.

**Gentrification Study.** During the approval process for the Southern Gateway project, Senator Royce West and Council member Lee Kleinman asked NCTCOG to examine the issue of gentrification as it relates to major transportation improvements. Based on that request, NCTCOG staff prepared a report that focuses on the identification of strategies that address the unintended consequences of gentrification. The RTC was given an overview of the report at their March meeting and the report has been shared with the Transportation, Housing, and Planning departments at the City.

**Ozone Season Begins.** The ozone monitoring season began on March 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through the end of November (9 months). NCTCOG provides a monthly report on the number of monitors that show a level of ozone in excess of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). There have been no exceedances so far this year.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

**Update: IH 635 LBJ East.** TxDOT reports that the design-build contract for the LBJ East project is on schedule. Final proposals are due in April and the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) is expected to award the contract in May. Sound wall construction in the corridor is already underway. TTC Chair Bruce Bugg is expected to host a “kick-off event” in late June at the Prosperity Bank located on LBJ East between Greenville and Abrams.

**Update: S.M. Wright Conversion to Thoroughfare.** Phase 1 of the S.M. Wright project extending C.F. Hawn Freeway to IH 45 began construction in June 2016 and is expected to be complete by December 2019. This project eliminates the dangerous curve that connected S.M. Wright and C.F. Hawn Freeway. TxDOT is scheduled to approve a contract in June for Phase 2 which includes the reconstruction of S.M. Wright Freeway as an urban thoroughfare. Completion of the project is scheduled for 2022.

## Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

**New DART Board Member.** Doug Hrbacek has been appointed to the Board to represent Carrollton and Irving. He replaces Timothy Hayden.

**New DART VP of Government Relations.** Edie Diaz has been appointed Vice President of Government Relations for DART. The Government Relations staff is responsible for all legislative issues at the state, federal, regional and local levels, and Ms. Diaz serves as DART's primary liaison with the Dallas City Council, City Manager's staff and the Regional Transportation Council. She last worked for Neighbor Up - Dallas as a General Manager for the Parkdale/Urbandale target area in southeast Dallas. Her contact information is: ediaz2@dart.org (email) and 214-749-2853 (office).

**D2 Subway Public Meetings.** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and DART have announced two public meetings to present information on the development of the D2 Subway project including:

- Project Background
- 10% Level of Design
- Station Design Concepts including Potential Access Locations
- Existing Conditions and Preliminary Impact Analyses

Both meetings will be held on Thursday, April 25th:

11:30 a.m. Open House / 12 p.m. Presentation  
6:00 p.m. Open House / 6:30 p.m. Presentation  
DART Headquarters - Board Room  
1401 Pacific Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75202

**Capital Construction Projects Update.** A DART Board committee was briefed on the agency's four major construction projects that are beginning this year:

**Cotton Belt Corridor Regional Rail. Start 2-2019. Completion 12-2022.**

Major construction activity in the corridor will not begin until at least August, but there will be utility relocation work in some sections over the summer.

**Red and Blue LRT Line Platform Extensions. Start 3-2019. Completion 12-2021.**

This project involves the extension of platform lengths at 28 stations on the Red and Blue LRT lines to accommodate longer trains and increase passenger capacity by 33 percent. Construction started in March on the Red Line stations from Lovers Lane to Plano.

**CBD Rail Replacement. Start 3-2019. Completion 11-2019.**

Completion of the rail replacement project through the CBD – prior phases began in 2014. LRT service will be disrupted through downtown on weekends and replaced with bus service. Weekend LRT service will be restored prior the start of the State Fair.

**Hidden Ridge LRT Station. Start 6-2019. Completion 5-2020.**

This is an LRT infill station along the Orange Line that is being funded by the City of Irving and the developer. It was previously referred to as the Carpenter Ranch station.

**Update on 2045 Transit System Plan and Bus Service Plan.** As a result of discussions at their annual retreat, the Board directed staff to develop a schedule to update the 2045 Transit System Plan by the end of 2020. The System Plan covers all modes, but will have emphasis on the bus service plan, potential high capacity corridors, streetcar master plan, and emerging mobility options and technologies.

Jarrett Walker and Associates will be asked to do a quick assessment of the current DART transit system focusing on ridership and coverage issues. Mr. Walker is a leading transit planning specialist who worked on the Houston bus system redesign. Staff will also initiate a procurement for a consulting team to help the agency develop a bus service plan over the next year.

In the meantime, DART is proceeding with August 2019 bus service changes based on the Board's updated service standards. These include building the "core frequent service" network, refining routes to be more direct with fewer deviations off the main route path, improving on-time performance, and improving job access particularly from low-income neighborhoods. DART has completed twelve public meetings held throughout their service area and had a public hearing on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

**DART Funding Authorized for Inland Port TMA.** The Board approved \$40,000 for the Inland Port Transportation Management Association (TMA). They also authorized the agency to develop funding agreements that would allow certain TMA expenses to be reimbursed from federal funding for TMA programs. The TMA will secure funding from other sources to help DART provide new public transportation services to the Inland Port area.

#### Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

The **March meeting of the DRMC** featured a presentation by Inaki Barron de Angotti, Director of International Affairs for Renfe. Renfe was recently named as the operating partner for the Texas Central high-speed rail project (see High-Speed Rail section). The **April meeting** focused on a review of bills filed in the Texas Legislature – most of the discussion was on the proposed property tax reform. DRMC staff produces a tracking list of transportation-related and other legislative bills that are of local interest. They are also available to help schedule meetings with legislators.

The DRMC hosted a legislative briefing and ice cream social for representatives from North Texas on March 27th in the Texas Capitol Legislative Conference Center.

#### DFW International Airport (DFW)

**New Board Member Vernon Evans.** Fort Worth has appointed Vernon Evans to the DFW Airport Board. He takes the place of former board member, Lillie Biggins, who left the board in March. Ms. Biggins served on the Airport Board for 14 years, and was twice the Board chair.

**Best Large Airport for Customer Service in North America.** DFW Airport has earned the title of "Best Large Airport" among North American airports serving more than 40 million passengers each year, according to Airports Council International (ACI). The recognition was part of the ACI Airport Service Quality (ASQ) program. This is the airport industry's only global benchmarking program that measures passenger satisfaction in real time, while passengers are at the airport. It covers 37 key performance indicators of the passenger airport experience.

Implemented at more than 75 percent of the world's 100 busiest airports, the ASQ program delivers an in-depth assessment of the quality of the customer service experience, including check-in, security, wayfinding, food and beverage offerings, and restrooms. This is the second time in the last three years that DFW Airport has received this honor.

**Trinity Rail Express Shuttle.** The Airport Board has approved an interlocal agreement with Trinity Metro and DART for operation of the Trinity Rail Express (TRE) shuttle between Centerport Station and DFW Airport. With the opening of the TEXRail commuter train in Terminal B, complimenting DART service in Terminal A, DFW Airport initiated an assessment of the existing TRE bus shuttle service. DFW worked closely with NCTCOG, Trinity Metro, and DART to preserve this critical last-mile service. This new agreement will allow Trinity Metro to operate the bus service at a lower cost than the airport.

### High Speed Rail (HSR)

**Texas Central Adds Two Partners for Dallas to Houston HSR.** Texas Central recently announced that Renfe would be its train operating partner. Renfe, a global railway company, headquartered in Spain, was chosen after a competitive review of railroad operating companies. It will provide technical advice on the design and construction of the Texas train and assist in the further development of Texas Central's operating and maintenance plans, preparing the railroad for passenger service. The operator runs the trains; maintains system components, such as the engines, signals and other equipment; and oversees ticketing, passenger loyalty programs and other services.

Texas Central also picked Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) as the project's provider of ecological mitigation services to help protect and enhance natural ecosystems and the environment throughout construction and operations. Operating out of its Houston offices, RES will oversee plans to comply with US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) requirements that the project restore, enhance and preserve wetlands, streams and environmentally sensitive habitats along the train's route.