

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

## Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Top Five Regional Transportation Council Policy Initiatives for 2017. At the RTC's January 12th meeting, Michael Morris, NCTCOG Director of Transportation, outlined five focus areas for regional transportation planning:

- Understanding and taking advantage of any new federal infrastructure focus – expect an emphasis on the use of public-private partnerships.
- Working with the local TxDOT Districts to move the recently approved 10-Year Plan projects to construction as quickly as possible.
- Continuing support for high-speed rail development; obtain a Record of Decision for the two environmental studies that are currently underway – the Dallas to Houston link (Texas Central Partners) and the Dallas to Fort Worth link (TxDOT).
- Monitoring transportation issues at the state legislature – support CDA authority for IH 635 LBJ East project, guard against legislation limiting high-speed rail, and protect transportation funding gains from the last two legislative sessions.
- Supporting development of rail transit in the region – in particular, the TEXRail-Cotton Belt corridor and funding partnerships needed with Coppell/DFW; and, continue development of people mover projects (e.g., Midtown and Medical District) that could also be used to deliver freight.

## Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Environmental Review Completed for Southern Gateway Project. In December 2016, TxDOT determined that the preferred alternative for the Southern Gateway project (IH 35E from downtown to US 67 and US 67 from IH 35E to IH 20) will not have a significant impact on the human or natural environment. With this approval, the project can move forward to the next phase of the project to select a construction team to build the project. Construction is estimated to begin Summer 2017.

Public Hearing for IH 635 LBJ Freeway East Project. TxDOT has scheduled a public hearing for the IH 635 LBJ project (from US 75 to IH 30) for Tuesday, January 31st at the Highland Oaks Church of Christ, 10805 Walnut Hill Lane. An open house will be held from 5-6 p.m. to allow the public to review project documents and get answers to specific questions from project staff. The public hearing will begin with a presentation at 6 p.m. After Southern Gateway, the LBJ project is the second highest priority project in the region. Most of the funding to build the project was approved by the RTC at its December 2016 meeting; some private sector investment is expected to complete funding.

## North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

New Ramps at DNT/PGBT Interchange to Unwind Traffic. Drivers will soon see major changes on ramps to/from the north side of the Dallas North Tollway (DNT) and President George Bush Turnpike (PGBT) interchange. DNT drivers will have an additional lane on the overhead ramps leading to and from the PGBT. These improvements are part of an overall improvement

program for the DNT that includes adding a fourth lane in each direction between Belt Line Road in Dallas to the Sam Rayburn Tollway in Plano.

NTTA 2nd Wednesdays Business Chats. The NTTA Business Diversity Department holds monthly sessions to inform and encourage businesses to become vendors with the Authority.

### Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

DART Surveys Dallas Streetcar Riders. Customer Support Representatives met with Dallas Streetcar riders on Wednesday, January 18th from 5-10 a.m. at the Union Station, Oakenwald, and Bishop Arts stops. Reps wanted to hear from riders about the quality of the service, what's being done right, and what improvements are needed.

DCCCD Partners with DART to Provide Transit Passes to Students. El Centro College has participated in DART's Higher Education Pass Program since 1997. Recently, the Dallas County Community College District Board of Trustees approved funds totaling \$1.2 million to provide free DART passes for eligible students at all DCCCD colleges. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in six or more credit hours for either the fall or spring semester, and three or more credit hours during the summer semester.

### Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Annual DRMC-TRTC Meeting. The DRMC held its annual joint meeting with its sister organization, the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition (TRTC) on January 5th. The meeting was held at Globe Life Park in Arlington. In addition to a presentation by representatives of the Texas Rangers, the meeting featured a video celebrating the 100th anniversary of TxDOT, and agency reports from other regional transportation partners.

### High-Speed Rail (HSR)

Southwestern Rail Conference in Dallas on January 12-13. The Southwestern Rail Conference is a rail-only conference held each year in Texas that brings together the public and private sector to discuss important issues that affect both freight and passenger rail. Tim Keith, President of Texas Central Partners (TCP), the private company developing high-speed passenger rail between Dallas and Houston, participated in a panel discussion on "Emerging Passenger Rail Corridors."

RTC Endorses a Financial Backstop for HSR Environmental Study. TxDOT's environmental impact study for the high-speed rail link between Dallas and Fort Worth (called DFW Core Express) is being funded with American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) monies. This funding will expire at the end of September 2017, unless Congress extends it. Since this may not be enough time to finish the work and receive a Record of Decision, the RTC authorized the use of up to \$3 million in regionally-controlled Surface Transportation Program funds to ensure that the process is completed.