

Interagency Transportation Report

RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR

August 2016

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

New RTC Officers Elected for 2016-17 Term. The RTC elects new officers each year at their June meeting. Council member Erik Wilson served on the nominating committee. The new officers are: Chair, Ron Jensen, Mayor of Grand Prairie; Vice Chair, Rob Franke, Mayor of Cedar Hill; and Secretary, Gary Fickes, Commissioner for Tarrant County. Since the population of the region is roughly split 70% in the eastern side and 30% in the western side, the chair position rotates with two out of every three years being a representative from the eastern side.

Regional 10-year Plan. House Bill 20 requires urban regions in the state to develop a ten-year plan identifying major roadway projects to be implemented over that time span. The RTC received a briefing at their August meeting about the initiation of a process to evaluate and prioritize projects in the region for the 2017-2027 timeframe. The process must utilize performance criteria such as traffic volumes/capacity, speeds, accident data, and pavement condition to select projects.

Automated Vehicle Workshop. The RTC held a workshop prior to their July meeting to discuss the impact of driverless vehicles and automotive technology on the transportation planning process. NCTCOG has created a new “Automated Vehicles Program” to monitor developments in this area and help the region and cities respond to the challenges of integrating new vehicle technologies.

Clean Air Action Day. Air North Texas sponsored its annual “Clean Air Action Day” on Friday, June 24th. The purpose of the day is to challenge everyone to proactively take action to improve air quality – such as carpooling, biking, walking or using public transit instead of driving alone. NCTCOG also sponsored a live-streamed workshop on “Transportation and Air Quality” for staff from local agencies to learn about technologies that have been successful in improving air quality. The City of Dallas held a Clean Air Action Day event on the City Hall Plaza and at the Central Library where staff educated the public about improving air quality and staying healthy.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Second Arch Completed on I-30 Bridge. The second arch on the Margaret McDermott Bridge was completed on July 21st. The Horseshoe Project replacing the I-30 and I-35E bridges is on track to be completed next summer.

Section of I-30 TEXpress Lanes Opened. TxDOT opened a 9-mile section of the TEXpress Lanes (toll managed lanes) on I-30 from west of SH 161 to west of Westmoreland on Monday, August 1st. This segment features two reversible lanes, and improved access including direct-connect ramps and upgraded connections to and from the mainlanes. On weekdays, the lanes will operate in the eastbound direction from 9 p.m. to 11 a.m., and in the westbound direction from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. The RTC has designated this corridor as a Value Pricing Demonstration Project which will allow TxDOT and NCTCOG to experiment with different marketing and pricing strategies to maximize use of the managed lanes.

Conversion of I-635 East HOV to HOV/Express Lanes. The high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-635 from US 75 to I-30 are in the process of being transitioned into HOV/express lanes. This transition is part of a regional congestion relief strategy that maximizes the use of the currently underutilized HOV lanes. When the transition is complete this summer, motorists with at least one additional passenger will be able to continue to use the lanes at no cost. Single-occupant vehicles (SOV) will be charged a toll. The HOV/express lanes are expected to carry nearly 18,000 vehicles a day, almost double the traffic they carried as HOV-only lanes.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

New DNT Construction Project South of LBJ Freeway. The NTTA Board approved a recommendation to advertise for improvements on the Dallas North Tollway (DNT) between LBJ Freeway and downtown Dallas. The project will include milling, asphalt overlay, and restriping the main lanes, and the replacement of the median barrier with a taller precast concrete barrier. The contract is expected to be approved in October, with construction beginning by the end of the year.

NTTA Board Briefed on Updated County Report. Consultants briefed the Board on the findings of their review of NTTA operations including finance, organization, transparency, and procurement. This effort was an update of a 2011 review requested by the four county judges that appoint members to the Board. The updated study found that NTTA had implemented changes to address issues in all 82 areas identified in the first study. The updated study did highlight the need for the NTTA to improve in the area of customer service.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Dallas Streetcar Extension Ready to Go. The extension of the Dallas streetcar line from Methodist Hospital to Bishop Arts will begin operation on August 29th.

South Oak Cliff Blue Line Extension Opening Early. The SOC-3 line, originally scheduled to begin revenue service in December, is now set to open on October 24th.

Cotton Belt Rail Public Meetings. DART is evaluating options to accelerate implementation of rail transit service in the Cotton Belt corridor from 2035 to 2022. Six public meetings have been scheduled for the last week in August to present information on the project history, proposed schedule and funding sources, and strategy for project development/community involvement. The meeting in the City of Dallas will be on August 29th at 7:00 p.m. at Parkhill Junior High School, 16500 Shadybank Drive.

Work Continues on Project Development Phase of D2. DART held its fifth Stakeholder Work Group meeting for the second LRT line through downtown on August 3rd. The DART Board will be briefed on the status of the process on August 23rd.

Mobility 2040 Transit System Plan Update. The Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) Bus Service Plan Executive Summary and the 2040 Transit System Plan Phase Two Alternatives Corridor Fact Sheets are now available online at www.DART.org/2040.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

Collin County Transportation Issues Highlighted. Collin County Commissioner, Duncan Webb, was the featured speaker at the August 5th DRMC meeting. Mr. Webb's presentation focused

on the rapid growth in Collin County and the need to construct additional limited-access highways to address it. This was also the subject of a Dallas Morning News feature article on Sunday, August 14th.

Transportation Advocates of Texas (TAoT). The TAoT is a statewide coalition of individuals, businesses, organizations, and elected officials with a common agenda: improve transportation in Texas. Drew Campbell, the Executive Director of the DRMC, is actively involved in the TAoT providing a link between transportation advocacy in our region and statewide interests.

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW)

DFW Airport Achieves Major Milestone with Carbon Neutral Recognition. DFW Airport has become the first airport in North America to achieve “Carbon Neutral” status, one of only 23 airports worldwide to achieve this milestone distinction. The Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Program upgraded DFW to “Level 3+ Neutrality”, which is the highest level of environmental achievement available to airports. Carbon Neutrality occurs when the net carbon dioxide emission over an entire year is zero, meaning the airport absorbs or offsets the same amount of carbon dioxide as it produces. The achievement is recognized and accredited by Airport Carbon Accreditation, an international organization that monitors the efforts of airports to manage and reduce their carbon emissions. The recognition culminates nearly two decades of sustainability efforts by DFW Airport to reduce its emission and carbon footprint.

High-Speed Rail (HSR)

NCTCOG Sponsors HSR Industry Forum. The USDOT Secretary of Transportation has requested private sector proposals to develop and operate high speed rail in the U.S. The NCTCOG hosted a HSR industry forum to encourage submittals high speed rail projects in our region. Regional leaders, including council member Lee Kleinman, helped present the case for the DFW area, and NCTCOG staff discussed the HSR plans and studies that are underway. Proposals must be submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration by August 31st.

Public Hearings Held for Texas-Oklahoma HSR Study. TxDOT held public hearings in Arlington, Austin and Laredo during the second week of August to solicit comments on their environmental impact study (EIS) that is examining the potential for passenger rail between Oklahoma City, DFW, Austin, San Antonio, and South Texas. A second, more detailed, EIS will be needed to determine the best route for this service, and to coordinate it with the findings of other HSR studies currently looking at Dallas-to-Houston and Dallas-to-Fort Worth HSR service.