

Interagency Transportation Report RTC / TxDOT / NTTA / DART / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR March 2018

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Mobility 2045 Plan Approved for Public Review. The RTC received an updated Mobility 2045 briefing at its March 8th meeting that included an overview of all major elements of the plan. The draft roadway recommendations for the plan, as well as copies of all the plan briefings from the past year, are available online at: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/mtp/2045/index.asp>. The RTC gave NCTCOG staff approval to present the draft plan recommendations at public meetings in April and May.

Access North Texas Plan Approved. “Access North Texas” is a federally-required regional public transportation coordination plan for the 16-county North Central Texas region. It is developed by NCTCOG staff in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders to outline strategies that address the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and others with transportation challenges. It was first adopted in 2013 and will be updated every four years.

Public meetings on the draft plan were held in February. The public meeting on the eastern side of the region was held on Tuesday, February 13th at the Richardson Civic Center. The plan’s recommendations focus on four themes:

Availability – address gaps in service and explore non-traditional delivery of transit

Affordability – help with fares for those most in need

Complexity – improve seamlessness for regional trips and simplify regional fares

Advocacy – recruit influential champions for public transit

North Texas Ozone Season Begins March 1st. Ten North Texas counties are designated nonattainment for ozone pollution which means that ozone levels began to be monitored March 1st. The NCTCOG staff will visit many community fairs over the next few months to remind residents of the importance of making clean-air choices. NCTCOG’s efforts culminate in Clean Air Action Day, a celebration held on the first Friday of summer – June 22nd this year. The event provides an opportunity to introduce residents to clean air choices such as carpooling, telecommuting and taking transit. Ozone season ends on November 30th.

NCTCOG sponsoring Car Care Clinics in April. NCTCOG is partnering with local automotive repair shops to sponsor Car Care Clinics throughout April 2018 to help North Texas drivers whose vehicles have the check engine light illuminated. This is an air quality issue because a vehicle’s check engine light turns on when there may be an issue that could negatively impact its emissions. These free clinics will provide drivers with an opportunity to talk to a technician about their vehicle’s issues. There will also be on-site application processing for the “AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine” program which can provide up to \$600 for repairs or \$3500 toward the purchase of a new vehicle. To find a clinic, visit <http://www.NTXCarCare.org>.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) Vacancy. The TTC Commissioner position normally filled by a DFW-area representative continues to be vacant. Victor Vandergriff, who

represented North Texas on the Commission the past five years, resigned last month. The RTC is planning a reception for Mr. Vandergriff.

IH 635 LBJ East Design-Build Procurement Update. The TTC will not act at its March 22nd meeting regarding the procurement of a design-build contract for the LBJ East project. TTC Chairman Bugg has indicated that the procurement will not move forward until (1) the RTC demonstrates that it is aligned with the state regarding advancement of LBJ East as a non-tolled project, and (2) the RTC has identified sources to fill the funding gap that remains on the project. Communications between the Chairman Bugg and RTC Chair Rob Franke were shared with the RTC this month. Discussions are continuing between the two agencies to work out an approach that will allow the project to move forward. Each month that the procurement is delayed costs the taxpayers about \$5 million in inflated construction costs.

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Update on DNT Projects. The NTTA has been upgrading two sections of the Dallas North Tollway (DNT) within the City of Dallas:

DNT from President George Bush Turnpike (PGBT) to IH 635 LBJ Freeway: This project added a fourth lane to/from Belt Line Road to the north, moved the lighting from the median to the outside shoulder areas, and resurfaced/restriped the entire segment. The work is substantially complete; the contractor is completing punch list items.

DNT from IH 635 LBJ Freeway to IH 35E near downtown: This project is replacing the median barrier and resurfacing/restriping the entire segment. The median replacement is about 50 percent complete and will continue through late 2018.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

Shuttle Agreement with MATA. DART's Operations, Safety and Security Committee recommended approval for a two-year extension of the site-specific shuttle agreement with the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority (MATA). However, some committee members indicated that they wanted DART, the City of Dallas and MATA to develop a comprehensive strategy regarding development and funding responsibility for the streetcar system. The agreement provides \$325,000 per year for two years, and provides for the pass-through of formula allocated transit funds that are earmarked for MATA based on their ridership.

Update on Service Standards Topics. The Operations, Safety and Security Committee was given an overview on a series of "Service Standards" topics that will be brought to the Board over the next five months. The topics include hours of operation, service frequency, passenger amenities, directness of service (ratio of bus travel time to auto travel time), ADA Paratransit service, on-time performance, customer information and communication. The Board was previously briefed on performance measurement and route types and structure.

Mobility on Demand (MOD) GoLink Service Expansion. DART is pilot testing its new GoLink service in three southern sector areas – Inland Port, Rylie, and Kleberg– and three areas in Plano. The City of Dallas areas began service on February 26th. GoLink is a flexible on-demand shuttle service that can be scheduled by phone or by using a new smartphone app called "TapRide". Service is currently available Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. If successful, it is expected that DART will convert its existing On-Call services to the new GoLink service.

Positive Train Control (PTC). PTC is a federally-required safety technology that slows down and/or stops freight and commuter trains that are operating in an unsafe manner. It is used to prevent collisions between trains, keep trains from rolling into work zones, and stop trains from cruising through track signals left in the wrong position. Implementation of positive train control by DART is currently 95 percent complete and will be ready for testing by the November 2018 deadline. PTC will be used in the Cotton Belt corridor.

Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC)

DRMC Bylaws Revisions. The DRMC made two changes to its bylaws at the March 2nd meeting. One modified the leadership structure to call for a single Chair of the Executive Committee instead of the current use of two Co-Chairs. The second change specifies that the terms for officers will start in June instead of January. The changes are intended to streamline communication and improve preparation for the upcoming Texas Legislative session. The Executive Committee also committed to a reevaluation of its fee structure and representation formula for its members.

Expanded Agency Reports. In preparation for development of the DRMC legislative agenda this fall, each of the transportation provider agencies (TxDOT, NTTA, and DART) have been asked to give expanded presentations over next few meetings. They will provide an overview of key issues facing their agencies, the status of critical projects, and legislative agenda items for consideration.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

Environmental Review Status for High-Speed Rail Projects. There are three high-speed rail segments that are currently envisioned to form a passenger rail network connecting the major urban areas of Texas. Each segment is currently in the environmental review / project development stage:

Texas Central (Dallas to Houston) – The public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) ended on March 9th. The Federal Railroad Administration will review and respond to comments prior to issuing the final report and announcing a record of decision in early 2019 that would allow the project to move into final design and construction.

DFW Core Express (Dallas to Fort Worth) – TxDOT was leading the environmental review process for this segment using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. Unfortunately, the ability to use these funds expired last year before the project was completed. The RTC is proposing to take the lead in funding and completing this study. It is anticipated that it would take up to two years to receive environmental clearance.

Texas-Oklahoma Passenger Rail (Oklahoma City to DFW to Austin to San Antonio to Laredo) – The Tier I EIS which narrows down the number of potential alignments and evaluates general feasibility, has been completed by TxDOT. The NCTCOG has taken the lead with other Metropolitan Planning Organizations along the corridor, in proposing that they jointly fund a \$500,000 study of potential technologies before passing it back to TxDOT for the detailed EIS.