

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
October 8, 2020

In accordance with the Texas Governor's March 13, 2020, Disaster Declaration which was renewed through November 6, 2020, and subsequent suspension of certain Texas Open Meetings Act provisions, the October 8, 2020, meeting of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) was conducted as a videoconference via Zoom. Staff conducted a roll call of members and the presence of a quorum was confirmed. The following members or representatives were present on the videoconference:

1. **Opportunity for the Public to Speak on Today's Agenda: Consistent with HB 2840:**
This item allows members of the public an opportunity to give input on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Roger Harmon asked if there were any public comments. No members of the public chose to speak.
2. **Approval of the September 10, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the September 10, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Reference Item 2. Theresa Daniel (M); Ivan Hughes (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 3.1. **Fiscal Year 2021 Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives: Phase 1:** Support to recommend Executive Board approval of up to \$215,000 in funding for education campaigns for transportation initiatives that will initiate in Fiscal Year 2021 was requested. Benefits of the education campaigns and cost savings obtained from bulk education campaign purchasing was provided in Electronic Item 3.1.1. Additional information on Phase 1 FY2021 education campaign costs was provided in Electronic Item 3.1.2.

Barbara Odom-Wesley asked if educational materials are provided in multiple languages. Michael Morris noted that yes, materials are provided in multiple languages.
 - 3.2. **Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of revisions to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was requested, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP-related changes. A subset of technical corrections made prior to the submittal of the 2021-2024 TIP listings for inclusion in the Statewide TIP were included in Electronic Item 3.2.1 and consist of a list of changes that require RTC approval per the TIP Modification Policy. Electronic Item 3.2.2 is a list of administrative changes to the TIP. Additional details on the TIP development process were provided in Electronic Item 3.2.3. November 2021 quarterly modifications to the 2021-2024 TIP were provided in Electronic Item 3.2.4.
 - 3.3. **Computer Equipment and Hardware:** Approval of \$650,000 in Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Local funds for the purchase of computer hardware and equipment, with approximately \$390,000 in Transportation Planning Funds returned for other projects in the region was requested. Details were provided in Electronic Item 3.3.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Richard Aubin (M); Theresa Daniel (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to the Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris provided an overview of items in the Director of Transportation Report. He noted that Virgin Hyperloop has announced that the Hyperloop Certification Center will be located in West Virginia. In addition, he noted the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and partners were awarded \$25 million in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) funds for the for the North Texas Multimodal Operations, Velocity, Efficiency, and Safety Program. He also noted beginning with this month's meeting, performance measure emphasis areas for each agenda item will be noted differently. Items will reflect up to two of the following performance measures addressed: administrative, safety, air quality, transit, roadway, goods movement, and bicycle/pedestrian+. Mr. Morris also noted that a continuing resolution funding the government through December 11, 2020, has been approved and Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act surface transportation funding and policies have been extended through September 30, 2021. Staff has written a letter, as requested by the RTC, to the North Texas Tollway Authority and Texas Department of Transportation Headquarters with regard to interest to extend SH 360 and potentially Chisholm Trail Parkway eventually outside the region as part of a State network. A copy of the letter will be included in next month's RTC recent correspondence. He noted details of a proposed new Strategic Traffic Signal Program were provided in Electronic Item 4.1, and the new Curb Management Regional Planning Guide is available at www.nctcog.org/parking. In addition, the Fall 2020 Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course virtual training course announcement was provided in Electronic Item 4.2. Electronic Item 4.3 contained current information on the Auto Occupancy/High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy Report. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities events were provided at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings> and current air quality funding opportunities for vehicles were provided at <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>. Electronic Item 4.4 included the latest status report on ozone. An additional comment received for the August public input opportunity minutes was provided in Electronic Item 4.5 and September online input opportunity minutes were provided in Electronic Item 4.6. Electronic Item 4.7 contained a notice for the October online input opportunity. The current Public Comments Report was provided in Electronic Item 4.8, recent correspondence in Electronic Item 4.9, recent news articles in Electronic Item 4.10, and recent press releases in Electronic Item 4.11.
5. **Clear Path™ Technology Program:** Jeff Hathcock discussed the Clear Path™ Technology Program that was highlighted at the September 10, 2020, Regional Transportation Council (RTC) meeting. Since that time, the North Central Texas Council of Governments received notification it was awarded \$25 million in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant funds for the Trinity Trailway Express (TRE) transit rail line. The project includes five bridges and double tracking sections on the TRE line. In addition to the infrastructure improvements, Clear Path™ technology implementation was included in the BUILD Grant project. Approximately \$2.5 million from the BUILD Grant award is available for implementation of the technology. In addition, regional rail agencies will potentially participate and contribute approximately \$3.1 million to the total project cost of \$13.1 million. Additional RTC funding was proposed for the efforts. Details were provided in Electronic Item 5. A motion was made to approve \$400,000 in RTC Local funds and \$7.1 million in RTC federal funds as part of the total project cost to implement the Clear Path™ Technology system as outlined in Electronic Item 5. Action also included approval for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents to include the project details. Rick Grady (M); Dianne Costa (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **2021 Unified Transportation Program and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:** Christie Gotti briefed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on updates to the Regional 10-Year Plan as a result of Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) action on the 2021 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). The RTC last approved Regional 10-Year Plan updates in June 2020. The changes included adjusting cost overruns on existing projects with Category 2 and/or Category 4 funds and requesting Category 12 funding from the TTC. At its August meeting, the TTC approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 UTP. Staff noted funding changes made since the RTC's approval in June. FM 545 was a new project in Collin County funded with Category 4 funds. Category 2 funding changes included a decrease in funding for US 380 from \$320 million to \$278 million and an increase in funding on FM 2642 in Hunt County. Other funding changes due to cost adjustments and category funding changes were also highlighted. A listing of all 10-Year Plan changes was provided in Electronic Item 6.2. In addition, a funding overview for US 380 and north/south roadways in Collin County was provided. In December 2016, the RTC approved \$452 million for the projects and in 2018 the RTC approved additional funding for Collin County. However, funding was not added in the UTP until 2019 because control-section-job (CSJ) numbers were not assigned for the projects. For 2020, the TTC has approved \$560.6 million for the project, which is greater than the original funds proposed by the RTC in 2016. Staff will continue to advocate for fair share allocation to the region and focus on Collin County projects. Michael Morris thanked the TTC for recognizing the RTC's previous commitments in Collin County. A map of Dallas-Fort Worth Regional 10-Year Plan projects from 2016 to date was highlighted, including approved projects, the new Category 4 project, and proposed tolled projects. Ms. Gotti noted that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has already initiated discussions on the FY2022 UTP and staff anticipates efforts will largely include refunding projects for which funding was previously removed in prior 10-Year Plans especially in light of COVID-19 funding implications. Staff anticipates very few new projects, and funding targets are not expected to be received until after the draft project listings are due to TxDOT Austin in January 2021. The timeline for this effort was highlighted. Staff will continue to coordinate with TxDOT districts to prepare the initial draft project listing due in January and will resubmit after funding targets are received. Public involvement is expected to be in the spring, with Surface Transportation Technical Committee and RTC action anticipated in the May/June timeframe, followed by TxDOT public involvement prior to anticipated TTC action in August 2021. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 6.1. Duncan Webb thanked the RTC and TTC for their support of projects in Collin County and noted the county will continue to move forward with freeways. He added he was supportive of the information presented. Mr. Morris noted as the RTC moves forward with its Legislative Program, it is important to tie the allocation of Category 12 funds to IH 35 in Austin to actual unfunded projects. For example, the inability to fully fund US 380 comes at the expense of Category 12 funding being allocated to IH 35. There is clearly a connection since there is only a certain amount of Category 12 funds available for the TTC to allocate. A motion was made to approve the revised 2020 Regional 10-Year Plan project listings in Electronic Item 3.2 as well as the ability to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these changes. Dianne Costa (M); John Keating (S). The motion passed unanimously.
7. **High-Speed Rail Status Report and Contingency Action:** Michael Morris presented a status report on high-speed rail and noted that action was not needed for the item. Regarding the Dallas to Houston project, the federal government has released the final Rule of Particular Applicability and the Record of Decision for Texas Central Railroad to move towards financial closure and implementation of high-speed rail. The project is number one in the COVID-19 #00X Infrastructure Program at over \$20 billion in investment. The City of

Dallas is advancing levees as part of its floodway extension, and additional engineering is needed for high-speed rail to get to the downtown station. Texas Central will pay for the engineering cost as part of the process, and financial support from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is no longer necessary. Mr. Morris thanked the RTC for its continued support for this project, as well as for funding the extension of high-speed transportation from Dallas through Arlington to Fort Worth. He also thanked State Representative Yvonne Davis for her support of the project. RTC Vice Chair Theresa Daniel asked if the Governor was reconsidering his support for high-speed rail and if there would be any impact. Mr. Morris noted he had seen similar news reports but was unsure of the Governor's position, but that the region should continue efforts to advance high-speed transportation.

8. **Calls for Projects to Reduce Diesel Emissions:** Chris Klaus presented a recommendation to open three new, competitive calls for projects (CFP) to reduce diesel emissions. This effort addresses the air quality emphasis areas for high-emitting vehicles and equipment, idling, and fuel use. Over the past few years, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has been successful in receiving grant funding for multiple proposals submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, three calls for projects are proposed with a total of approximately \$4 million available. The Clean Fleets North Texas 2020 CFP and the North Texas Freight Terminal Electrification 2020 CFP have small amounts of funding available from previous calls for projects, and the North Texas Emissions Reduction Project 2020 CFP provides new funding with more flexibility. Funding is available to replace heavy-duty diesel vehicles/equipment, rail/switch yard idle reduction technologies, and installation of infrastructure for refrigerated trucks and trailers at freight terminals. Eligible applicants for each call for project were highlighted. Projects must operate in the required geographical area for each funding program, and applicants with fleets must adopt the Clean Fleet Policy. Scoring criteria will be based 75 percent on cost per ton of NOx reduced and 25 percent on oversight to balance the benefits and administrative burden. Details were provided in Electronic Item 8. The schedule for this effort was highlighted. If approved, the calls for projects was estimated to open October 9, 2020, but flexibility was requested for staff to open shortly thereafter, if necessary. Application deadlines will be every 90 days until funds are fully awarded. A motion was made to approve opening the Clean Fleets North Texas, North Texas Emissions Reduction Project, and North Texas Freight Terminal Electrification 2020 calls for projects and associated details such as eligibility screens and selection criteria included in Electronic Item 8, as well as the proposed schedule that includes a rolling 90-day application deadline to exhaust grant funds. Theresa Daniel (M); Richard Aubin (S). The motion passed unanimously.
9. **Changing Mobility: Data, Insights, and Delivering Innovative Projects During COVID Recovery:** Michael Morris provided an update on performance metrics to help understand the impacts of COVID-19 to the transportation system. Four performance metrics have been developed that will be tracked through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process: 1) travel behavior response to COVID-19, 2) financial implications to traditional revenue sources, 3) benefits of travel behavior responses to areas of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) responsibility, and 4) prioritization of infrastructure improvements that offset unemployment increases. Related to travel behavior response, freeway volumes remain improved, but morning peak congestion has not returned. Afternoon peak congestion has increased but is not necessarily related to commuter trips. Transit ridership has not improved over the last few months and staff will meet with the three transit authorities to develop potential options to help increase transit ridership in the region. Bicycle/pedestrian activity remains higher than pre COVID-19, and aviation trends are also positive and will

likely take two-to-three years to fully recovery similar to after 9-11 or the previous financial crisis. Data related to financial implications, the second metric, was highlighted. Transit sales tax is fluctuating, and motor fuel tax trends remain decreased at approximately 12 percent lower than 2019. Sales tax, a component of Proposition 7 has not fully recovered, and August data is 5 percent lower than 2019 which dropped from July data and could be the result of no additional CARES funding. Also highlighted was the oil and gas severance tax related to Proposition 1 which continues to be negatively impacted with projections significantly lower for 2021 and 2022. Toll transactions have improved and are not expected to impact the ability for repayment of the \$300,000 million loan on SH 360. Tolloed managed lane transactions remain low for IH 35E TEXpress lanes for which there is a TIFIA loan. Policy metric three is related to the benefits of travel behavior responses. Air quality improvements have occurred but are not as significant as anticipated and there is concern there may be offsets occurring such as increased diesel emissions from truck travel/goods movement, or cleaner vehicles that result in a lower gain when those vehicles do not travel. Staff will be working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regarding this issue and will discuss how to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about the impacts of lower travel. The final metric is how the RTC can use innovation to advance projects and create needed employment opportunities. Every \$1 billion in transportation investment produces approximately 12,000-15,000 jobs, which is a major focus area. Staff continues to advance projects within the region to have a positive impact on the economy. Supporting efforts of Metric 4 include high-speed rail, as well as an additional round of COVID-19 #00X Infrastructure Program projects that will be presented at the next meeting. Details were provided in Electronic Item 9. RTC Vice Chair Theresa Daniel asked what occurred in the 8-hour ozone historical trends for the year 2017 that caused lower exceedances. Mr. Morris noted many things impact ozone, including nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOC), temperature, and wind. Ozone seasons with a cooler summer may have less exceedances, or seasons with a wetter spring may impact the level of VOC from natural sources. These are examples of the many impacts, as well as changing impacts from COVID-19, that are not yet fully understood and for which adjustments may be needed in air quality areas of lesser focus. The travel behavior changes have provided an opportunity for the region and the State to rethink efforts since larger decreases were not realized and consider what other influences may be impacting air quality. Rick Grady discussed IH 35E managed lanes and asked if there was any concern within the current system regarding bond lettings and interest rates that these bonds would receive in the future considering that this revenue repays the bonds. Mr. Morris discussed repayment and noted that the short-term impacts of COVID-19 are not expected to increase financial risk.

10. **North Texas Center for Mobility Technologies: Research Project Funding Standards:** Thomas Bamonte presented proposed selection criteria and the process for providing funding for sponsored research projects on mobility technologies proposed by the North Texas Center for Mobility Technologies (NTCMT). In February 2020, as part of efforts to bring the hyperloop certification center to the region, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved \$2.5 million in seed funding for university research projects on mobility technologies that will help attract mobility-related companies to the region. In response to that action, four major research universities in the region (University of Texas at Arlington, University of North Texas, University of Texas at Dallas, and Southern Methodist University) have come together to form the NTCMT. NTCMT will function as a Research and Development network for mobility-related companies and public agencies in response to research sponsored by industry and other third parties. Mr. Bamonte highlighted the proposed evaluation process for selecting research projects eligible for funding. The NCTMT will complete initial vetting and propose research projects to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) for funding consideration. NCTCOG subject matter expert(s)

will evaluate proposals and final decisions on research project funding requests will be reported to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee and RTC, including a description of the NCTCOG contribution amount and how the project meets the selection criteria. Proposed projects must be sponsored by an outside party, related to mobility technology, supported by contributions from an industry sponsor and university, and advance a regional goal such as improved access, environmental protection/resiliency, economic development, equity, and technology innovation leadership. Mr. Bamonte noted that action will be sought at next month's meeting and requested members provide input. Devan Allen asked if staff would elaborate on the bullet that addresses equity. Staff gave examples of research on equipping vehicles to be more ADA accessible, to advance technology that helps close the gap on food deserts, or how to advance technology equitably in both affluent and lower-income communities. John Keating noted he was pleased to hear the RTC is thinking of issues such as food deserts, thinking beyond roads and tollways and of the end user.

11. **Overview of Regional Transportation Council Legislative Workshop:** Rebekah Hernandez provided an overview of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Legislative Workshop held prior to the meeting. Members were presented information on transit operational needs and options for transit funding, as well as the structure of transit in the region. Staff then provided an overview of various funding sources and preliminary analyses of transit studies that are ongoing. Staff also reviewed the background for formula allocations and implementation of transportation statutes in the Texas Transportation Code. This information will be discussed in further details with partner agencies before formal action is taken by the RTC. Finally, staff reviewed the draft RTC Legislative Program for the 87th Texas Legislature provided to members in Electronic Item 11. The draft program includes five broad topics: 1) adequately fund transportation and utilize tools, 2) improve air quality, 3) pursue innovation, technology, and safety, 4) expand transportation positions, and 5) support transportation planning and land use. During the workshop, members commented that the Legislative Program should be more strategic, items with more focus should be moved higher in the document and narrowing the list or making the list more actionable. Jungus Jordan requested members reconvene for another RTC Legislative Workshop prior to the November 12 RTC meeting. Members were also asked to provide any comments to staff within 15 days so staff can pull comments together and provide for members at the November workshop, with a goal to approve the final RTC Legislative Program in 30-60 days. Michael Morris noted that RTC members would be provided a copy of the RTC Legislative Workshop presentation and draft RTC Legislative Program for the 87th Legislature by email, with action by the full RTC as soon as the November 12 meeting, but no later than the December 10, 2020, meeting.
12. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 12.1, Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance and minutes in Electronic Item 12.2, and the current Local Motion was provided in Electronic Item 12.3.
13. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
14. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, November 12, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.