

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE May 22, 2020

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, May 22, 2020, at 1:30 pm, by WebEx/audio conference. The Regional Transportation Council Bylaws establish that the Technical Committee approved membership in attendance at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for action to be taken, therefore individual attendance was not taken for committee members or other attendees.

1. **Approval of April 24, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the April 24, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Jim O'Connor (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 2.1. **2020 Traffic Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects – Recommendations:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval of the 2020 Traffic Incident Management Equipment Purchase Call for Projects recommendations, provided in Electronic Item 2.1.1, was requested. Additional information was provided in Electronic Item 2.1.2.
 - 2.2. **Federal Functional Classification System Amendments:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval of four amendments to the currently approved Federal Functional Classification System, provided in Electronic Item 2.2 and updated in Electronic Item 2.2.1, was requested.

A motion was made to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Jim O'Connor (M); Clarence Daugherty (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program Draft Listings:** Brian Dell presented efforts over the past year to develop the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project listings. Transportation funding and project implementation is a cooperative effort among the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) districts, local governments, and other transit and transportation agencies. Mr. Dell highlighted the TIP development process, which includes the review of existing projects and additional locally funded projects of regional significance with respective entities. Needed revisions to existing project schedules, funding, and/or scopes are completed to create revised project listings which are financially constrained based on estimated future revenues in the Unified Transportation Program. In addition, staff conducted a Metropolitan Transportation Plan and air quality conformity review to ensure project listings are consistent and meet conformity requirements. Public and Committee/Council comment has also been requested on the draft project listings and upon approval will be submitted to TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration for approval. A summary of the scope of programming was presented. Moving forward in the 2021-2024 TIP are approximately \$15.2 billion in roadway and transit projects. This includes over 950 projects from 64 implementing agencies. Details of the various funding included in the 2021-2024 TIP, as well as the development process, were provided in Electronic Item 3 and the financially constrained draft project listings for the 2021-2024 TIP were provided at https://www.nctcog.org/nctcog/media/Transportation/DocsMaps/Fund/TIP/21-24TIP/STTC_Action_21_24DraftProjectListings.pdf. Mr. Dell noted that only projects in fiscal

years 2021-2024 will be included in the new TIP. Projects in fiscal years 2025 and later will be included in Appendix D to allow project development activities such as environmental clearance to continue. The timeline for this effort was highlighted. If approved, staff will submit the final 2021-2024 TIP to TxDOT for including in the statewide TIP in July 2020, with Texas Transportation Commission approval in September 2020. Federal approval is expected in the October/November timeframe. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the projects and project changes identified in the project listings, as well as the ability for staff to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other administrative documents as needed. Onyinye Akujuo (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Southeast Dallas County Funding Partnership:** Michael Morris provided an overview of proposed funding partnerships with three cities in southeast Dallas County. Details were provided in Electronic Item 4. For the first partnership, staff initially worked with the City of Balch Springs for several years on a project involving the private sector. The City learned that federal funds would be received too late in the process for the project, so assistance was requested for an alternate project for improvements to Hickory Tree Road from Elam Road to Lake June Road. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff proposed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) fund the design of the project with \$500,000 of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds. Staff will work with the City to develop a project that will mitigate congestion, but that is also context-sensitive and facilitate future economic growth and present findings to the Committee. The second proposed funding partnership is with the Town of Sunnyvale and includes two projects: 1) Collins Road from Tripp Road to Town East Boulevard (\$450,000 in Regional Toll Revenue funding for engineering) and 2) Tripp Road from The Falls Drive to Belt Line Road (\$800,000 in Regional Toll Revenue funds for construction). This partnership aids in community revitalization and is a major partner in the George Bush Extension. In the final proposed partnership, the City of Hutchins has requested assistance for improvements at the intersection of IH 45 and Dowdy Ferry Road. The project addresses two interchanges north of the International Inland Port of Dallas and would improve mobility in the area. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing Texas U-turns to help with intersection capacity. Staff is working closely with the district and proposed to fund the project with \$3.7 million of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds (including a State match from TxDOT) with TxDOT funding the design of the project. A map of the proposed projects was highlighted. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the partnerships outlined in Electronic Item 4, as well as the ability to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other administrative/planning documents as needed. Clarence Daugherty (M); Stanford Lynch (S). The motion passed unanimously.
5. **2021 Unified Transportation Program and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:** Brian Dell presented information on the 2021 Unified Transportation Program and the Regional 10-Year Plan update. Texas House Bill (HB) 20 requires that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) develop 10-year plans using performance-based planning and project selection methods. This includes projects funded with Category 2 (MPO selected), Category 4 (TxDOT district selected), and Category 12 (TTC selected) funds. The first Regional 10-Year Plan was approved in December 2016 and since has been updated three times, with the last update in September 2019 in conjunction with the development of the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). Since September 2019, the Texas Department of Transportation has begun development of the 2021 UTP. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff has coordinated with the TxDOT districts regarding project

updates and potential new projects. Projects were scored by NCTCOG staff and to satisfy a January 31, 2020, deadline set forth by TxDOT, NCTCOG drafted a project listing that includes project scores, project revisions and potential new projects. The list was refined in February and March 2020 as a result of funding targets being received after the January 31 deadline and refined projects listings were resubmitted. In addition to developing the 2021 UTP, an update to the 2020 UTP was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission on April 30, 2020, in order to fund the IH 35 project in Austin. In order to fully fund the IH 35 project, the TTC programmed Category 12 funds that otherwise could have been used for projects in other region of the state. This action, combined with lower than anticipated revenues, has led to a decline in the amount of funding coming to the region through the UTP. Existing projects are generally not impacted, but projects with cost overruns may not be addressed and new projects were largely not able to be added. Mr. Dell highlighted the project scoring process used for the Regional 10-Year Plan update, which was detailed in Electronic Item 5.3. Additional projects were submitted by TxDOT to include in the Corridor Preservation Program, which consists of projects that may be added to the Regional 10-Year Plan in the future and need a preliminary commitment in order to commence preconstruction activities such as right-of-way acquisition. In addition, some projects that were previously part of the listing are being proposed for construction funding through the latest update, but very few due to decreased available revenues. A map identifying the proposed projects for the Regional 10-Year Plan was highlighted. A proposed list of projects was provided in Electronic Item 5.1 and additional information about the process was provided in Electronic Item 5.2. During development of the Regional 10-Year Plan, staff created a set of principles by which to adhere: 1) projects should be included in Mobility 2045, 2) focus on system versus new, stand-alone projects, 3) fully fund existing projects before funding new projects, 4) ensure equity of county allocations, 5) reintroduce toll lanes/tolled managed lanes on selected corridors, 6) re-fund all RTC projects when possible (address in future 10-Year Plan update), 7) ensure all RTC projects are approved in 2021 UTP (including placeholders such as US 380 and north/south arterials in Collin County), and 8) projects must be scored and should have a score sufficient to qualify for funding. Staff will continue efforts to finalize project selections and updates in coordination with TxDOT staff and provide listings to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for approval at its June 11, 2020, meeting. Once the Texas Transportation Commission weighs in and approves the 2021 UTP, projects changes will be brought back to the Committee and RTC. A timeline for the effort was reviewed. John Polster discussed Category 12 Clear Lanes proposed funding. He asked for clarification that this funding may or may not be available given the fact the Commission has proposed Category 12 funding for IH 35 in Austin. In addition, regarding IH 35 in Denton County north of the split to the county line, he noted that it was his understanding that the section was funded originally in the 2020 UTP, but noted the first two projects on Page 6 of Reference Item 5.1 that shows Category 12 Clear Lanes and Category 12 Strategic Priority proposed. Mr. Dell confirmed that Mr. Polster was correct regarding the availability of funding related to IH 35 in Austin. In addition, Mr. Dell clarified that the amounts in red, bold, and underlined are newly proposed, otherwise funds are being carried forward that were previously approved. Clarence Daugherty discussed the placeholder projects in Collin County and asked how the proposed project amounts were determined. Michael Morris explained efforts to identify control-section-job (CSJ) numbers for the north/south roadways and US 380 in Collin County. Staff has worked with the TxDOT Dallas district to find CSJ numbers to which funds can temporarily be identified for Commission approval. Once the Commission approves the 2021 UTP, modifications can be made to place the funding on the appropriate projects. Currently, the north/south funding has been placed on CSJ 0135-04-036 and US 380 funding has been placed on CSJ 0135-03-053. Regarding the funding amounts, staff effectively backed into those numbers by placing as much funding as possible through the

Collin County allocation established in December 2016. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of list of proposed projects provided in Electronic Item 5.1. Clarence Daugherty (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Congestion Management Process Update:** Natalie Bettger provided an update on efforts underway to update the region's Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP is a federally mandated planning document and process that helps outline how to continue to monitor and analyze the transportation system to determine how best to plan for congestion in the future. Regulations are not prescriptive towards the methods, approaches, and strategies in the CMP, with the focus on how the region implements demand reduction and operational improvements to maximize the existing system and only adding capacity as a final option. Potential improvements include demand management strategies, as well as operational, public transportation, and technology improvements. The eight-step process to develop the CMP was highlighted and details were provided in Electronic Item 6. During the evaluation process, there are four main criteria for identifying deficiencies within corridors: 1) recurring congestion, 2) safety, 3) non-recurring congestion, and 4) pavement and bridge condition. In addition, staff conducts a corridor asset inventory to determine alternative modes of travel available along the corridor and what operational improvements can be made within the corridor to identify best strategies for addressing deficiencies. Example strategies include implementing traffic incident management programs, employer trip reduction programs, addition of transit or bicycle pedestrian facilities, and others. Staff also reviews performance measures after a strategy is implemented, often in comparison to performance before implementation, to better assess and understand the benefits of the identified strategies that may be applicable in other corridors. Ms. Bettger highlighted the schedule for the CMP update which includes a proposed workshop in the fall and Committee action in December 2020.
7. **Effect of COVID-19 Restrictions on Transportation: Information System RTC4U:** Michael Morris presented information about performance metrics impacting transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth region because of COVID-19 restrictions. The creation of an information system, RTC4U, will help the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) identify early actions to neutralize negative impacts in the region. The first metric is travel behavior response to COVID-19. Two things trigger travel behavior, government restrictions and the comfort individuals feel about COVID-19. Both are easily represented in the travel behavior response and staff proposes to track in real time for all modes of transportation. Focus on this data will help the region identify actions to reduce negative impacts. The second metric is financial implications to traditional revenue sources impacting transportation in the region. COVID-19 restrictions may impact the loan on SH 360, North Texas Tollway Authority bonds, transit agencies, Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 revenues, traditional Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) resources, gasoline tax, and others. The RTC may choose to adjust because of these impacts to revenue sources. A third metric is travel behavior responses that provide benefits to areas of RTC responsibility such as congestion management, national performance measures, and the ozone standard. The fourth metric is the prioritization of infrastructure improvements resulting in economic benefits offsetting unemployment increases, which is the source of the recent op-ed piece. Mr. Morris discussed various metrics including air quality and continued ozone exceedances, congestion management, as well as impacts to Dallas-Fort Worth passenger enplanements. In addition, he also discussed options to leverage projects such as funding potentially available from the private-sector provider for SH 183 for capacity improvements totaling approximately \$162 million. The improvements will create a lane imbalance near Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, and the private sector has proposed an additional \$860 million of improvements as an extension of the current facility to balance lanes between SH 121 and SH 161. In addition, \$270 million is proposed for payment to TxDOT

for lane balance improvements east of SH 161 for a total of \$1.3 billion to the region. This is an example of an innovative project that can proceed through partnership with the private sector. Mr. Morris also discussed elements of the recent op-ed piece outlining how the region no longer has the luxury to do what it wants but must do what it needs. In response to the existing funding constraints, the region should return to the efforts of the financial crisis response from 2009. During that time, the cost of construction index was 25 percent lower which allowed for approximately \$2 billion in projects to proceed during this time due to cost savings. Other examples include a potential federal infrastructure bill, public-private partnerships as part of the RTC Legislative Program, taking advantage of low interest rates, and the use of infrastructure bonds. As previously discussed, leveraging and innovative funding are important elements. Candidate projects were highlighted, including the approximate \$20 billion private-sector, high-speed rail investment between Dallas and Houston and the advancement of the environmental document for high-speed technology between Dallas and Fort Worth. Efforts continue on the Virgin Hyperloop One Certification Center, autonomous transit, freeway induction loops, SH 183 improvements by the private sector, and US 75 technology lanes. He noted that related projects will be included in the COVID-19 #00X Program to track how the region moved forward with projects through innovation.

8. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.
 1. Latest on High-Speed Rail from Dallas to Houston (Electronic Item 8.1)
 2. United States Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao Thanks America's Public Transit Workers (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eUUVw-mirU>)
 3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle Round 4 (Electronic Item 8.2)
 4. Air Quality Funding Opportunities or Vehicles (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/funding-and-resources/fundingvehicle>)
 5. Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/dfw-clean-cities-meetings>)
 6. Recent Podcasts in Collaboration with the North Texas Commission (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/topic-north-texas/id1485003695#episodeGuid=9db98ebf-23a0-4365-aa17-1e2b3750609b>)
 7. Status Report on Ozone (Electronic Item 8.3)
 8. April Online Input Opportunity Minutes (Electronic Item 8.4)
 9. June Online Input Opportunity Notice (Electronic Item 8.5)
 10. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 8.6)
 11. Written Progress Report:
 - Local Motion (Electronic Item 8.7)
9. **Other Business (Old and New):** John Polster asked if the Surface Transportation Technical Committee will be making new officer appointments to the Committee in conjunction with the Regional Transportation Council's appointment of officers. Dan Kessler noted that efforts have begun to prepare Committee officer nominations for consideration by the North Central Texas Council of Governments Executive Board at its June 25, 2020, meeting.
10. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on June 26, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.