

MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

April 24, 2020

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) held a meeting on Friday, April 24, 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 participants.

1. **Approval of March 27, 2020, Minutes:** The minutes of the March 27, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Daniel Vedral (M); John Polster (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following item was included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 2.1. **Clean Fleets North Texas Funding Recommendations:** A recommendation for Regional Transportation Council approval of funding recommendations for the second funding round under the Clean Fleets North Texas 2019 Call for projects was requested. An overview of the call for projects and staff recommendations was provided in Electronic Item 2.1.1. Detailed projects listings were provided in Electronic Item 2.1.2.

A motion was made to approve the item on the Consent Agenda. John Polster (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Federal Transit Administration Funding in Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19):** Shannon Stevenson presented details of the \$25 billion in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding allocations provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help the nation's public transportation systems respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Funding is available for allocation to recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds at a 100 percent federal share, with no local match required, to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Funding made available through the CARES Act is not required to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program unless the funding will be used for projects that have substantial, functional, locational, or capacity changes. Through the CARES Act, the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Urbanized Area (UZA) is anticipated to receive approximately \$318 million and the Denton-Lewisville UZA approximately \$23 million. Funding for the McKinney UZA is allocated through the Texas Department of Transportation. The recipients of FTA funding by Urbanized Area were highlighted. In the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington UZA, six entities receive funding directly from FTA and five are subrecipients of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). For the Denton-Lewisville UZA, funds are allocated directly to the Denton County Transportation Authority. Ms. Stevenson also highlighted FTA data points that determine the formula allocation, including population, population density, revenue vehicle miles, low-income population, and others. Staff followed this methodology to allocate the funds for the general public transportation. FTA apportionment was utilized to recreate the formula for specific data points and the formula factors specific to the CARES Act were then used to determine dollar amounts for the recipients. Details were provided in Electronic Item 3. When determining allocations, staff also considered that cities/areas with no transit

service still generate funds for the apportionment based on population, population density, and low-income population. Funding generated from these areas are being distributed to recipients based on vehicle revenue mileage. Funding generated from the operation of the Trinity Railway Express were split between Dallas Area Rapid Transit and Trinity Metro based on their interlocal agreement. She also noted NCTCOG proposed to retain .25 percent from the total apportionment for the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Urbanized Area for administrative purposes to support various related staff activities. Funding allocations by recipient were highlighted and detailed in Electronic Item 3. For the City of Mesquite, an error in Electronic Item 3 was noted: the \$3,432,401 allocation should have been \$3,442,401. The timeline for this effort was highlighted. A motion was made to endorse Regional Transportation Council action on April 9, 2020, approving the overall Federal Transit Administration funding based on federal funding formula methodology in response to the Coronavirus and to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the specific funding allocations. Action also included a recommendation approving staff to revise administrative documents, as appropriate, to incorporate the funding. Onyinye Akujuo (M); Phil Dupler (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Fiscal Year 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Discretionary Grant Program:** Jeff Neal presented project recommendations to be submitted for consideration of funding through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program. A total of \$1 billion is nationwide and the deadline for application submittal is May 18, 2020. Three projects were proposed for submittal. The North Texas Multimodal Operations, Velocity, Efficiency, and Safety (MOVES) Program will improve passenger/freight rail operations and capacity along the Trinity Railway Express corridor. The proposed project includes approximately 3.5 miles of double track and rail rehabilitation, five bridge replacements, and implementation of Clean Path technology. The Dallas Fort Worth International Airport East-West Connector is the second project and will complete a continuous thoroughfare connection from SH 360/Harwood Road and International Parkway/Rental Car Drive. The project will provide additional entry into and out of airport property as an alternative to SH 183 and other facilities. The interim 2-lane facility will be built with ultimate intersection capacity where appropriate. The third project is the South Dallas Enhanced Mobility Project. This project will provide new technology and infrastructure applications to increase multimodal efficiency and accessibility in the vicinity of the International Inland Port of Dallas (IIPOD) to connect rural residents and large employers surrounding the area to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light rail system, the Veterans Administration Medical Center, and education/job training sites. The project will include new and upgraded bus facilities to support new vehicles and charging systems to ensure that there is adequate functioning for various trips, as well as sidewalk and traffic signal improvements that help improve safety and efficiency. Mr. Neal highlighted the funding details for each of the proposed projects, along with the proposed BUILD grant request: 1) North Texas MOVES Program, \$25 million; 2) Dallas Fort Worth International Airport East-West Connector, \$5.4 million; and 3) South Dallas Enhanced Mobility Project, \$9.3 million. It was noted that the South Dallas Enhanced Mobility Project can be designated as a rural project and will compete in a separate category, likely to give the project significant advantages. In addition, Oncor has provided a private commitment to the project regarding the charging systems for electric buses. The timeline for the effort was reviewed. He noted agencies that would like to receive a letter of support from the Regional Transportation Council should submit requests to staff by May 1, 2020. Phil Dupler asked if the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport East-West Connector project will include traffic signals at International Parkway and Rental Car Drive. Mr. Neal noted the project does include traffic signals at those intersections. Bryan Beck asked for clarification of the double

track miles proposed in the North Texas MOVES Program. In addition, he asked if the double tracking would support the Stadler vehicle. Mr. Neal noted the proposed projects includes approximately 1.2 miles of double track just north of Dallas and slightly more than 2 miles in Hurst and Richland Hills and that the project would support the Stadler vehicle. A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the proposed projects for submission to the FY2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Discretionary Grant Program: 1) North Texas MOVES Program, 2) Dallas Fort Worth International Airport East-West Connector, and 3) South Dallas Enhanced Mobility Project, including the ability to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and other planning/administrative documents to include the projected projects, if selected for funding. John Polster (M); Greg Royster (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Effect of COVID-19 Restrictions on the Transportation System:** Francisco Torres highlighted performance measures for roadway, transit, air quality, non-motorized trips, the airport, and crashes being compiled by staff in review of data observed since the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions. Decreases in freeway volume comparing the first week of March 2020 with the last week of March 2020 were highlighted, with an overall 35 percent decrease in freeway volume experienced in the region. The decrease was slightly different for all the counties, including weekdays and weekends. Traffic counts by time of day for each of the weeks in March 2020 were also highlighted and show that the morning peak has disappeared over the time period. Mr. Torres noted the North Texas Tollway Authority has also provided information regarding toll road transactions. When comparing March 2019 and March 2020, there has been an overall 29 percent decrease in traffic with varying results by facility. When comparing data from the first week in March versus the fourth week in March, an overall 57 percent decrease was experienced after COVID-19 restrictions were implemented. In addition, toll transactions by vehicle class were highlighted. Vehicles with three or more axles experienced a less significant decrease than those with two axles. Next, Mr. Torres highlighted various speed data for freeways and major roadways in the metropolitan area during the month of March 2020. By the third week of March, speeds increased indicating congestion has disappeared and peak hours of congestion have also disappeared. In addition, he presented information provided by transit agencies regarding ridership. For Dallas Area Rapid Transit, when comparing March 2019 and March 2020 a decrease in total ridership is seen in all services except GoLink. Data includes weekend and weekdays. Average weekday ridership for the Denton County Transportation Authority decreased by 45 percent in rail and 34 percent in bus service. Trinity Metro provided similar data and shows a 22 percent decrease in average ridership in bus service and 23 percent decrease in TEXRail when comparing March 2019 and March 2020. City of Arlington Via performance also decreased by 63 percent in ridership when comparing the first week of March and the fourth week of March. Mr. Torres also discussed the effects of COVID-19 restrictions on air quality. He highlighted a five-year comparison in the changes of the yearly design value as the ozone season progresses. By April 22, 2020, the region has already reached a design value of 70 parts per billion. Staff will continue to monitor this information throughout the year to determine the impacts of COVID-19 measures on the region's design value. In addition, historical ozone cumulative weekly exceedances were shown. As of April 2020, the region has not experienced any ozone exceedance days. Also highlighted was regional nitrogen dioxide tracking comparisons between February 2020 and the week of March 29, 2020, which shows a significant reduction in emissions throughout Texas, but especially in the IH 35 corridor. Regarding non-motorized data, information collected from four cities comparing the March 2019 and March 2020, as well as the first and last weeks of March 2020 indicate a significant increase

in the usage of bike trails within the region. Dallas Love Field has provided data comparing March 2019 and March 2020 that shows a 52 percent decrease in passenger movement at the airport. Finally, Mr. Torres highlighted data regarding fatal crashes. In a comparison of March 2019 and March 2020 fatal crashes, there has been an overall increase as of April 21, 2020, but a decrease in the total number of crashes. In addition, when comparing the first and last weeks of March 2020, there has been a significant decrease in crashes. Mr. Torres thanked all agencies who shared data with the North Central Texas Council of Governments. John Polster noted that toll roads were tracked for reductions in transactions and asked if there was similar data available for IH 35E managed lanes. Mr. Morris noted that staff will compile the managed lane data for the region and provide to members.

6. **Transportation Infrastructure Post COVID-19 and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:**

Michael Morris presented the latest information related to the 2021 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). Staff continues to work with the Texas Department of Transportation districts on the schedule and project selection and proposes to bring the Regional 10-Year Plan listings to the Committee at the May 22, 2020, meeting. The Texas Transportation Commission is anticipated to take action on the 2021 UTP in August 2020. Staff does not anticipate many new projects will be included due to decreases in revenue forecasts. For Collin County, he noted staff believes a resolution has been reached regarding the control section jobs numbers to ensure funds for Collin County projects are identified in the 2021 UTP. In addition, staff will continue efforts to advance the four tolled projects in the region as discussed at the January meeting. Mr. Morris also discussed the 2020 UTP proposed update. The public hearing was held earlier in the day and four comments were made: 1) the revenue forecast in Texas will decrease by more than the amount of money the Commission has proposed to include for IH 35 in Austin and more money is needed in the 2021 UTP, 2) conversations are needed regarding the process of opening the UTP after it has been approved and canceling projects that were previously approved, 3) post COVID-19 infrastructure efforts will be to advance shovel-ready projects, the opposite of the Commission's proposal to cancel projects, and 4) the Commission should see all comments received before consideration of the proposed changes to the 2020 UTP. Mr. Morris also discussed the op-ed piece outlining a change of focus from not only transportation but also in getting people back to work that was recently published in the Dallas Morning News and Fort Worth Star Telegram, as well as a recent request to speak at a national town hall meeting to present how the Dallas-Fort Worth region was able to expedite project completions with innovative funding during the financial crisis of 2007-2008. In addition, he further discussed how the planning process moving forward must include job creation. For every job created in transportation, three additional jobs are created in other industries. Staff will continue to provide updates to members on these efforts.

7. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.

1. Postponement Announcement for the May 2020 Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course (Electronic Item 7.1)
2. East/West Equity Update (Electronic Item 7.2)
3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle Round 4 (Electronic Item 7.3)
4. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for 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. Department of Energy Redesignates Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities (Electronic Item 7.4)
 7. May Online Input Opportunity Notice (Electronic Item 7.5)
 8. Public Comments Report (Electronic Item 7.6)
 9. Written Progress Report:
 - Local Motion (Electronic Item 7.7)
8. **Other Business (Old and New):** There was no discussion on this item.
9. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on May 22, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.