

INTERAGENCY TRANSPORTATION REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2022

RTC / TxDOT / DART / Dallas County/ NCTA / DRMC / TEX-21 /DFW Airport



RTC SUPPORTS “RAILROAD CROSSING ELIMINATION PROGRAM” APPLICATION FOR DALLAS PROJECT

At their September meeting, the **RTC approved** North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff's request to submit **the Prairie Creek Road/Union Pacific Railroad Grade Separation project for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) FY 2022 Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP).**

The RCEP funds highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects focused on enhancing the safety and mobility of people and goods.

The project cost totals \$36,254,902.

Through the grant, NCTCOG will request \$15,138,299 in federal funds for the project.

The City of Dallas has already committed \$9.4 million towards the project. Dallas County and Union Pacific Railroad will support the project with \$3.2 million and \$1.5 million, respectively.

RAILROAD CROSSING ELIMINATION PROGRAM (RCEP) – SUBMITTAL



RTC Action Item – Railroad Crossing Elimination Program

The grant application deadline is October 4, 2022, with an anticipated notification of award announcement in spring 2023.

NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC WEEK EVENT ON CITY HALL PLAZA OCTOBER 2ND

National Drive Electric Week is September 23rd through October 2nd. Local events include a series of webinars and a showcase **in-person event at Dallas City Hall Plaza on Sunday, October 2nd from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM.** Attendees can experience a wide variety of electric vehicles, mix and mingle with current EV owners, take a ride or test drive, and receive information from recharging companies and innovative energy solutions. Food trucks will be available.

See [2022 National Drive Electric Week \(dfwcleancities.org\)](https://dfwcleancities.org) for more information.

RTC SUPPORTS “SAFE STREETS FOR ALL” GRANT APPLICATION FOR MLK/CEDAR CREST CORRIDOR

The RTC approved NCTCOG staff's request to submit a regional application for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program for the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd/Cedar Crest Blvd. corridor**.



The total project is anticipated to cost \$27.5 million. NCTCOG staff will request \$21.8 million from the grant with the local match being provided by the City of Dallas (\$5.25 million) and DART (\$200,000).

The application due date was September 15th with an anticipated notification of award announcement in spring 2023.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

Michael Morris, Director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, **published an article** entitled “*Opinions of Ordinary Texans Needed to Make High-Speed Trains Reality.*” **The full article is attached at the end of this report.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The **next RTC meeting is in-person and is scheduled for October 13, 2022** at 1:00 PM in the Transportation Council Room at the NCTCOG headquarters (616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011).



SANTA FE TRAIL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE REOPENED

The Santa Fe Trail pedestrian bridge over SH 78 (Garland Rd./Grand Ave.) reopened to trail users on September 2nd.

The trail had been closed over the summer as part of the ongoing \$6.3 million project to improve the SH 78 (Garland Rd./Grand Ave.) intersection at Gaston Avenue. **The overall project is scheduled to complete in spring 2023, weather permitting.**

Reminders about the project:

- The existing intersection is being reconfigured to provide safer turning movements and more efficient through-lanes on SH 78.
- New access points will be constructed for pedestrians and cycling traffic to safely cross through the intersection.
- Drivers should remain alert to various lane closures and traffic shifts in this area throughout the project.

MO BUR PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Mohamad “Mo” Bur, P.E. was promoted to serve as the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) Director of Project Development where he will direct and coordinate the Department’s project development divisions (Environmental, Right-of-Way, Professional Engineering and Procurement Services, Design, Alternative Delivery, and Transportation Programs) to ensure the state’s transportation system and portfolio is planned and developed in a safe, timely, efficient, and effective manner.

Mr. Bur started as the Dallas District Engineer in June 2018. **He will continue to serve as the Dallas District Engineer until a replacement is named.**

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION APPROVES 2023 UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

On August 30th, the Texas Transportation Commission (“Commission”) approved **the 2023 Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) advancing an \$85 billion, 10-year statewide roadway construction plan.** The 2023 UTP is \$10.5 billion more than the 2022 UTP.

The UTP is the document that authorizes highway projects for development and construction. Additionally, the UTP identifies public transportation, maritime, aviation, and rail investments. Projects are selected by TxDOT and local transportation leaders based on effectiveness in addressing criteria such as safety,

pavement condition, capacity, and rural connectivity, with opportunities for public input at both the state and local levels.

The 2023 UTP reflects a continued focus on improving transportation safety as the top priority, maintaining the current system, addressing traffic congestion, and improving statewide connectivity over the next decade.

The UTP coincides with **an additional \$32 billion** over the life of the program **for routine maintenance contracts and project development** such as planning, professional engineering and right of way acquisition **for a total investment of \$118 billion statewide.**

More information on the UTP projects is available at [Unified Transportation Program \(txdot.gov\)](https://www.txdot.gov/unified-transportation-program)



DART BOARD APPROVES RETURNING FUNDS TO MEMBER CITIES

At their August 23, 2022 Board meeting, **the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Board approved a one-time distribution of \$214 million in unallocated Sales Tax Revenue Funds to DART's 13 Service Area Cities.**

Unspent Funds

The Federal government provided operating funds during COVID which DART used entirely. As a result of this influx of federal funds, DART did not spend all sales tax collections in FY2021 and FY2022.

These offset sales tax revenues, previously unallocated, will be distributed to the cities to be used for the public transportation system or complementary transportation system purposes which include:

- Special transportation services for a person who is elderly or has a disability,
- Medical transportation services,
- Assistance in street modifications as necessary to accommodate the public transportation system,
- Any other service that complements the public transportation system, including providing parking garages.

Distribution Methodology

The methodology for distributing the funds back to the Service Area Cities is still under discussion. **The Board is anticipated to vote on specific distributions at their September 27th Board meeting.**

CHANGES TO BUS AND GOLINK SERVICES STARTING SEPTEMBER 26TH

Below are several improvements and adjustments which have occurred since the most recent service change. **Some of these changes have already taken effect or will become effective on Monday, September 26, 2022.**

For more information about these changes, please visit [DART Service Changes](#).

Bus Route Changes

Bus Route	Change
Route 45 (Marsalis)	To provide more direct service to Camp Wisdom Station, buses operating outbound will continue on University Hills Boulevard, turn left on Camp Wisdom Road to Patrol Way and into the station. Service inbound to downtown Dallas will travel over the same route in reverse. Routing on Conchetto, Lazy River, Sax Leigh, Troyglen and Firebird will be discontinued. A minor schedule change will also occur.
Route 224 (I-30 Broadway) and Route 383 (Lake Ray Hubbard Transit Center Express)	All trips between Lake Ray Hubbard Transit Center and downtown Dallas were modified to travel over Green Belt, Duck Creek and Broadway, as of August 1, 2022, re-establishing service to the Walmart Supercenter and other businesses in the Broadway/Interstate 30 area. NOTE: Only Route 224 will be serving these facilities, as Route 383 will be operating non-stop
Route 230 (Irving Blvd. DFW)	Following a temporary relocation at the DFW Airport Rental Car Center, the northern terminus of Route 230 (previously 408) was returned to DFW's nearby Remote South Parking Lot during summer of 2022.
Route 436 (Parkland Empire Central Shuttle)	On August 17, 2022, Parkland Shuttle Route 436 was discontinued, ending a long-standing agreement between Parkland and DART to provide service for patients and staff. Pending the outcome of a September 27 public hearing, Routes 434 and 435 may cease operation as well, effective October 31. UT-Southwestern shuttles 422 and 423 continue to serve the district, along with 7-day-a-week DART Routes 1, 23, 57, 101, 213, 219, 222 and 230.
Route 442 (SMU Blue Express Shuttle)	On August 1, in conjunction with the fall semester, SMU replaced the Bush Library/Meadows Museum shuttle service with a new campus circulator, named the "Blue Express." Buses on the new route travel basically in an outer loop, serving 14 stops between the East and Main campuses on a half-hourly schedule, weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. The 442 number has been

	<p>retained in the DART system for easy access to service information and updates.</p> <p>NOTE: Service to the Bush and Meadows facilities remains available from SMU/Mockingbird Station on the current Route 440-SMU Express, which has also been given the designation "Red Express" to complement the new Blue route as a campus circulator service.</p>
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Bus Schedule Adjustments

The following routes will have minor schedule changes, and in some cases, a slight timepoint adjustment: Routes 13, 45, 218, 222, 230, 232 and 235.

For the most up-to-date information, please obtain new timetables dated September 26, 2022.

Bus Bay Modifications – Hatcher Station

Installation of a new sidewalk has reduced the number of bus bays to three.

Revised bay assignments:

- Route 13-downtown Dallas - Bay 1
- Route 13-MLK, Jr. Station - Bay 2
- Paratransit and Rail Disruption Shuttle - Bay 3
- Route 216 continues to serve the station from Elsie Faye Heggins Street.

Bus Bay Modifications - Addison Transit Center

The following bus bay changes were implemented during the summer of 2022.

- Two new bus bays — 12 and 13 — were added outside the Center on westbound Arapaho Road.
- Route 227 now occupies Bay 12
- Route 235 boards at Bay 13.

These changes are considered temporary, as the facility awaits renovation in conjunction with the arrival of Silver Line regional rail service.

GoLink Changes - Keller Springs Zone

In response to customer requests, service has been extended beyond the northern zone boundaries to the Walmart at 18121 Marsh Lane @ Frankford Road (Dallas, TX 75287).

GoLink Changes - Preston Hollow Zone

To reestablish service along the Dennis Road corridor, this zone has been extended three quarters of a mile to the west, providing customers new access to Royal Lane Station, the transfer island to Park Cities GoLink at Marsh Lane and Northwest Highway, and the Walmart at Marsh and Midway Road.

The addition expands the zone to 9.22 square miles and is bordered by Webb Chapel Road, Jerridee Circle, Grissom Lane and Allister Street. This change adds GoLink service to Sierra Vista Apartments, Northaven Park Apartments, and Northaven Terrace Apartments.

CHARLES CATO APPOINTED AS DART'S CHIEF OF POLICE

Charles Cato has been selected as the new chief of police at DART and started on September 6, 2022.

Chief Cato will direct and oversee the DART Police Department including sworn officers, emergency preparedness, security services and related functions to carry out DART's safety, security and emergency preparedness initiatives. He will lead a team of over 250 licensed peace officers, as well as 110 fare enforcement officers and 67 support staff.

Cato joined DART from the City of Mesquite, where he served as the chief of police and was responsible for leading, planning, and directing a staff of 331 employees, including 243 sworn and 88 non-sworn personnel.

Prior to his role in Mesquite, **he served as the first assistant chief of police at the Dallas Police Department.** As second in command of the police department, he was responsible for planning, implementing, and directing the day-to-day operations of 3500 sworn and 500 non-sworn personnel.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next DART Board meeting will be on **September 27, 2022**, at the DART Headquarters Building, 1401 Pacific Avenue in Dallas.



UPDATE - RIVERFRONT BOULEVARD PROJECT

At their August meeting, the RTC approved changes to the project limits that were recommended by the City, Dallas County and NCTCOG staff.

As a reminder, there were technical design challenges within the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way (under the railroad that crosses Riverfront just north of the Courthouse) that have significantly impacted the timely implementation of this project.

City and County staff proposed amending the project limits to exclude roadway reconstruction within the UPRR right-of-way.

This proposed change of scope required approval by the RTC.

With the RTC's approval of the change, the current expectation is that project construction will start in fall 2023.



BOARD MEETING HELD AUGUST 17, 2022

The NTTA Board of Directors held their regular meeting on Wednesday, August 17, 2022. There were no committee meetings conducted in August.

The Board approved contracts for 2023 fleet vehicles and for a Dallas North Tollway corridor study.

The Board also approved construction speed limits on the Dallas North Tollway, and refunding documents and the Preliminary Official Statement for Series 2022 bonds.

The Board received briefings on the 2022 2nd Quarter Investment Report, the 2021 Business Diversity attainment results, the Consolidated Monthly Performance Report, and the Executive Director's report on contracts, supplements, and change orders less than \$300,000 that were executed in July 2022.

Finally, the Board entered into **Executive Session** to receive legal counsel on cyber security issues and to discuss personnel related items.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next Board meeting is scheduled at **10:00 AM on Wednesday, September 21, 2022**, at the NTTA headquarters in Plano (5900 West Plano Parkway, Plano, Texas 75093).



GUEST SPEAKER

Mo Bur, Director of Project Development for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), **was the speaker** at the September 9th Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC) meeting.

Mr. Bur briefed the DRMC Board on the Texas Transportation Commission's (TTC) recently approved 2023 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). More information on this topic can be found in the TxDOT section on page three of this report.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next DRMC Board meeting is scheduled at **11:00 AM on Friday, October 14, 2022** at the NTTA headquarters in Plano (5900 West Plano Parkway, Plano, Texas 75093).



SEPTEMBER MEETING HELD IN HOUSTON

The TEX-21 Statewide meeting **was held September 9th**. The meeting was focused on transit opportunities and transportation commerce, including corridor coalitions and other multimodal transportation opportunities.

One of the key agenda items was a discussion by **Jefferson County Judge, Jeff Branick**, speaking on the **necessity of improving US-287**, the corridor that travels 754 miles in Texas from the ports of Beaumont/Port Arthur through to the Panhandle region.

This is an important initiative for the City of Dallas and the International Inland Port of Dallas (IIPOD) area because US 287 is a major connector for both IH-35 and IH-45, connecting southeast to the Texas coast and northwest to the Texas Panhandle and impacting freight movement.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next TEX-21 will be held on **Friday, September 30, 2022, hosted by Lamar University and Jefferson County (Beaumont).**

TEX-21 is an organization whose purpose is to join together cities, counties, private businesses, ports, and transportation entities in a collective, informed voice to the State and Federal Executive and Legislative Policymakers to improve transportation in Texas. This effort includes strategies to increase investment in multi-modal transportation infrastructure, improve the planning and management of our transportation facilities, and increase the awareness of the importance of transportation to all areas of Texas.



DFW AIRPORT BOARD WELCOMES NEW MEMBER

The DFW Airport Board held a swearing-in ceremony for the newest board member from the City of Dallas, Vincent Hall. He was appointed by the Dallas City Council at the August 24th City Council meeting.

Mr. Hall occupies the seat vacated by former Board Member Eddie Reeves.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, October 13, 2022. For more information, please visit www.dfwairport.com/board.



Opinions of Ordinary Texans Needed to Make High-Speed Trains Reality

by Michael Morris

Recent media communication in Texas is trending around the subject of high-speed rail between Houston and Dallas. The question most often raised is what is the status of Texas Central Partners and its proposed high-speed rail project? Perhaps a more important question is, as Texans, what is our interest in continuing to pursue high-speed rail corridors. Can our voices be heard? Whether you are for or against it, your voice is needed now in order to explore the future of high-speed rail under an updated vision. What if the vision eliminated fatalities, mitigated hurricane evacuation challenges and had the public own the right-of-way? What if high-speed rail met your desires?

High Speed Rail: Existing Version 1.0

In the mid-1980s, Japanese Railway and Japanese bank interests came to Texas to explore high-speed rail between Dallas and Fort Worth but did not pursue it to fruition. Since that

time, federal, state and private sector interests have continued to explore high-speed opportunities in corridors across the country. Frequent studies and analyses have concluded a need for a high-speed rail connection between Dallas and Houston. The Federal Railroad Administration began requesting states to provide high-speed rail plans. In Texas, private-sector interest re-surfaced in 2009 focusing on the Houston to Dallas line. The Japanese reentered the conversation and eventually decided to form Texas Central Partners. Environmental studies have advanced, legal questions appear answered, and private sector ownership of rail right-of-way remains. The very positive aspects of this effort are the proposed development of a world class project that will reduce highway congestion, offer exceptional travel times between the two large metropolitan areas and reduce harmful mobile air emissions.

A limiting factor is a technology that restricts other providers to

use the corridor, which prevents a competitive market from forming. Also, there continues to be a concern that a workable business plan has yet to materialize and right-of-way is still privately owned.

High Speed Rail: Existing Version 2.0

There have been many new opportunities that have emerged along with many advances in the high-speed rail arena over the past 15 years. A proposed high-speed rail line project between Fort Worth-Arlington-Dallas is entering the environmental review phase. Connecting this line to the Dallas-to-Houston route presents an opportunity to expand rail service from Fort Worth to Houston as a "one seat" ride, no need to transfer. Plus, current planning is underway to look at the feasibility of creating a branch-off point of this line that would connect to Austin and on to San Antonio. By planning for the new connection points now, there is

continued

Opinions of Ordinary Texans Needed to Make High-Speed Trains Reality *continued*

the opportunity to reduce overall long-term costs. This new vision is a major reason for introducing High-Speed Rail Version 2.0 as an alternative to Version 1.0.

Version 2.0 also helps foster the emergence of a megaregion by better connecting the major population centers of Texas and thereby creating super economies and maximizing gross domestic product through the resulting synergy. The concept of megaregions has been around for several years but a new book published in 2022, *Megaregions and America's Future*, gives the reader a deeper understanding of how the economics work to create these better results.

Under this newly proposed version, the rail lines would be publicly owned with the private sector being responsible for providing and operating the vehicles. Rather than one company having exclusive rights to the rail lines, it is envisioned that it would operate more like airports, which allow for many carriers. Thus, the traveling public could benefit from a competitive marketplace.

Below is a list of factors that need to be remembered as you consider your interest in the value of high-speed rail:

It can deliver consistent and reliable travel times compared to the intercity freeway system, which is often affected by congestion, traffic accidents and other automobile related incidents. It can speed up hurricane evacuation operations which are an ever-growing challenge due to the rapidly increasing population of south Texas and an increased frequency of weather events.

Its safety record is much better than that of automobile related travel which produces a staggering number of deaths each year. It also complements the State's Vision Zero Program which is focused on reducing deaths from automobile accidents.

It makes advanced medical services more readily available by providing easier access to specialized care that is being developed and delivered in each of these large metropolitan regions.

It can also be used to move light weight, high-end goods as well as people and, thereby, create more roadway capacity for high-volume freight movement by traditional rail and intercity trucks.

Funding options today are very different than those of the past. New federal legislation provides tax and fee supported funding for which high-speed rail is eligible. Getting our fair share should be an imperative, especially if Texans own the right-of-way.

As referenced, having multiple rail providers in Version 2.0 brings greater competition enhancing consumer protections similar to our airports. In addition, a new business model using latest federal funding tools, and potential State surpluses, creates an opportunity to assist land owners with additional royalty payments.

Agree or disagree with high-speed rail, but don't be silent. However, I believe we have a chance to take ownership of this decision and lead our State and nation to a new future – one where high-speed rail is transformed from concept to reality. What are your ideas?



Michael Morris, P.E.

Director of Transportation

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North Central Texas
Council of Governments