

# INTERAGENCY TRANSPORTATION REPORT – JANUARY 2021

RTC / TxDOT / DART / DALLAS COUNTY/ NTTA / DRMC / DFW Airport / HSR

## **\$4 MILLION GRANT FOR S.M. WRIGHT CORRIDOR**

A \$4 million Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment grant has been awarded to the City's Transportation Department. The grant, written and submitted by the Office of Government Affairs (OGA) in conjunction with the Transportation Department and other partners will be used to optimize the S.M. Wright corridor for connected vehicles and more efficient freight delivery by funding traffic signal improvements and connectivity, smart transit shelters, air quality sensors, broadband communications, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

The City of Dallas will work directly with key partners including the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) industry partners such as Kapsch USA and Ericsson, and the Texas A&M University Transportation Institute (TTI) to reach the goals and objectives of the grant.



## **CITY OF DALLAS AWARDED "AIR NORTH TEXAS PARTNER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING OUTREACH"**

At the December RTC meeting, the City's Office of Environmental Quality and Sustainability (OEQS) was awarded the North 2019-2020 Air North Texas Partner Award for Outstanding Outreach.

This award reflects the work the Air Quality/Climate Policy Team in OEQS did to re-vamp the North Texas Climate Symposium, the Clean Air Action Day, and other outreach and engagement efforts to a virtual platform to amplify NCTCOG Air North Texas messages on local air quality. As part of this work, staff compared air quality data before and after the initial COVID19 shutdown to investigate and better understand air quality improvements achieved with reduced vehicle emissions.

## **NORTH TEXAS REGION EXPECTED TO MISS FEDERAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS**

At the December RTC meeting, NCTCOG staff advised the Council that the North Texas region has until August 2021 to come into compliance with the Federal Air Quality Standards for ground level ozone. Furthermore, staff advised that it is likely the region will not meet the standards.

Because of this there is contemplation that the region will be moved from the "Non-attainment" category to the "Severe non-attainment" category which carries requirements to take certain actions.

What those exact actions may be are, at this point, not known but may include vehicle-mile-travelled offsets, additional travel demand management strategies, and other measures. For the City of Dallas, this means that the actions proposed within the Comprehensive Environmental Climate Action Plan (CECAP), and in the Connect Dallas Strategic Mobility Plan for reducing emissions, reducing single occupancy vehicular travel, and promoting transportation multi-modality will become more critical.

### **UPCOMING RTC MEETINGS**

There is an upcoming RTC meeting scheduled for January 14, 2021, at 1:00 PM via teleconference, unless otherwise notified.

---



### **S.M. WRIGHT PROJECT**

Work is progressing on Phase II of the S.M. Wright Project. Construction continues at the intersection of Elsie Faye Heggins Street, and work will begin at the Pine Street intersection in the next 30-60 days. The \$79 million project to convert the S.M. Wright Freeway into a parkway will be complete in Fall 2023.

Project information and project renderings can be found at TxDOT's [S.M. Wright Phase II Project website](#).



***Elsie Faye Heggins Street and S.M. Wright Parkway***



***Pine Street and S.M. Wright Parkway***

## **I-345 FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The last I-345 Feasibility Study public meeting was held in December 2019. Since that time, TxDOT has assessed more than 1,300 public comments and hosted one-on-one listening sessions with more than 100 stakeholder groups. This feedback has helped guide TxDOT in its current efforts to develop several conceptual alternatives for what the highway could possibly look like.

TxDOT plans to host additional public meetings by late spring but is currently exploring options to find a solution for both staff and attendees to participate in a way that complies with pandemic safety protocols.



*Aerial of I-345 Study Area*

The December 2020 project newsletter can be found in English and Spanish at [English I-345 newsletter](#) and [Spanish I-345 newsletter](#) and at [I-345 Project Page](#).



## **DAVID LEININGER NAMED INTERIM PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

After Gary Thomas' announced his retirement in November, the DART Board named David Leininger to serve as the interim President/Executive Director, effective February 1, 2021. Mr. Leininger served as DART's Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer prior to his retirement in 2018. DART's Board Chair, Paul Wageman, established an ad-hoc Committee to lead the nationwide search for a new President/Executive Director.

## **JOPPA SERVICE**

After the Dallas City Council approved the interlocal agreement with DART in October 2020 for the Joppa on-demand service, the DART Planning Committee approved the interlocal agreement in December 2020. The Agreement is now scheduled to go to the DART Board for approval in January 2021.

The interlocal agreement provides for on-demand service for Joppa residents to certain defined destinations while a pedestrian bridge along Linfield Road over the Union

Pacific rail lines is being constructed. The service would be in the form of UberX service supplemented by DART Rider Assistance service.

## **DARTZOOM BUS NETWORK REDESIGN: SCHEDULE**

Over the next two months, DART staff and the project consultant will be working to better define the draft Bus Network Plan and prepare it for presentation (timeline below).

Timing	Bus Network Redesign Timeline
<b>21Q2</b> Jan-Mar 2021	Complete Draft Bus Network Plan * Initiate Service Change Process *
<b>21Q3</b> Apr-Jun 2021	Combined Public Involvement
<b>21Q4</b> Jul-Sep 2021	Approve Service Changes * Approve Bus Network Plan *
<b>22Q1</b> Oct-Dec 2021	Prepare for Implementation
<b>22Q2</b> Jan-Mar 2022	Implementation January 2022

## **DART TRANSIT SYSTEM PLAN: DRAFT THEMES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS**

In December 2020, DART hosted a series of virtual public meetings on the DART Transit System Plan's draft themes, goals and actions. The City of Dallas Transportation and Planning and Urban Design departments were also able to provide feedback to DART staff. Related planning efforts, including recommendations from DARTzoom Bus Network Redesign and the Streetcar Master Plan, will be integrated in the final 2045 Transit System Plan For more information, visit [www.DART.org/TransitSystemPlan](http://www.DART.org/TransitSystemPlan).

## **UPCOMING DART MEETINGS**

There is a DART Board meeting on January 12, 2021, and an upcoming meeting scheduled for January 26, 2021.



## **COMMISSIONERS' COURT APPROVES COUNTY MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

On December 15, 2020 the Dallas County Commissioners' Court approved funding for their Major Capital Improvement Program (MCIP), including \$69,863,000 for 49 projects in the city of Dallas.



In 2019, the City of Dallas submitted applications for 49 projects requesting \$87,000,000 in County funding. We are exceptionally grateful to County staff and the Commissioners for approving more than 80% of the funding requested by the City.

Like the City of Dallas' Bond Program, funding for these capital improvement projects is spread out over several years, and this round of the MCIP funds is planned for 2022-2025.

The County's MCIP program typically funds about 50% of the cost of a project with the partner city or other entities responsible for the remaining costs. The City of Dallas typically funds its portion with bond money. Some of the projects already have matching funds identified from previous bond programs or private funding; others will need to have funding identified at a future date.

A full list of the projects will be sent via memo to the Dallas City Council.



### **NEW NTTA PODCAST**

In December, NTTA launched a new podcast called *The Road Trip*. The first episode can be heard here [NTTA Road Trip Podcast](#).

In the first episode, they discuss safety innovations including information about their Safety Operations Center and their free Roadside Services program. Future episodes will focus on behind-the-scenes look at the people and technology NTTA uses to get drivers to their destinations safely.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The January committee meetings were canceled. The next board meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2021 at 10:00 AM.



### **GUEST SPEAKER REPRESENTATIVE TODD HUNTER**

State Representative Todd Hunter who represents the Corpus Christi/Port Aransas area was the guest speaker at the January 8, 2021 Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition (DRMC) meeting.

Representative Hunter provided the Committee with information about the upcoming legislative session, specifically providing a preview of how the House anticipates operating under pandemic protocols. He stated that he expects that entrance into the building will be limited to the North door of the Capitol, that visitors will be required to wear masks, there will be capacity requirements, and that Covid testing will be available. Furthermore, each legislators' office will be setting their own rules for visits to their offices. He anticipates some will opt for virtual meetings, other will see people by appointment only, some will limit capacity. He advised that anyone wishing to visit a legislator's office should contact that representative's office prior to any meetings.

DRMC members asked if Representative Hunter had heard of any new revenue sources for transportation. He said he had not heard of anything, but that it is something that needs to be looked at.

### **UPCOMING MEETING**

The February DRMC meeting will be a virtual meeting and is scheduled for Friday, February 5, 2021 at 11:00 AM.

---

2019 Airport of the Year



### **DFW AIRPORT LEADS THE INDUSTRY IN SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS**

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) has taken its commitment to sustainable initiatives to new levels – literally – by becoming the first airport in the world to achieve newly established carbon neutral levels announced by Airports Council International (ACI). DFW Airport earned the new 4+ level in ACI's global Airport Carbon Accreditation program. DFW was recognized as the first carbon neutral airport in North America in 2016.

The ACI announcement came just weeks after DFW Airport received international recognition as the first airport to earn a United Nations Global Climate Action Award.

### **DFW Airport Named Healthiest Employer in Texas**

DFW Airport has been named Healthiest Employer in Texas and one of the Top 100 Healthiest Workplaces in America. The award honors people-first organizations that prioritize the well-being of their employee population, their commitment to workplace wellness and their exceptional health and benefits offerings. Award applicants were evaluated across six key categories: Culture and Leadership, Foundational Components, Strategic Planning, Communication and Marketing, Programming and Interventions and Reporting and Analytics.

The organization *Healthiest Employers* ranked DFW Airport number one in Texas in the category of businesses with 1,499 to 4,999 employees.

### **UPCOMING MEETING**

The next Board Meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021. For more information, including agendas and actions, please visit [www.dfwairport.com/board](http://www.dfwairport.com/board).

---



The High Speed Rail project cleared many important hurdles in 2020.

In June, the project received environmental clearance from the federal government for the alignment from Dallas to Houston. The process for environmental clearance began in 2014, and receiving this approval is an important milestone for making high speed rail a reality.

Also in June, the Federal Railroad Administration approved safety regulations for operation of high speed rail. These are the first new, complete high-speed rail-specific rules issued in the United States and, like the environmental clearance, is a crucial step in the process.

Finally, in October, the United States Surface Transportation Board (STB) asserted jurisdiction over the Texas Central project, culminating a process that began in 2016. This is another significant step for the project because it recognizes the Texas High Speed Rail as an important addition to the nation's passenger rail system.

Project construction is expected to begin in late 2021. In anticipation of this, Texas Central, the company building the Texas Bullet train, along with its major contracting partners, will mobilize and implement its Business and Workforce Opportunity Program (BWOP) later this year and prior to construction start. Texas Central recognizes that business and workforce development is critical to the project's success and has been working with colleges, school districts, and workforce development agencies to develop curriculum designed to train a workforce with the capabilities to build and operate the train. In addition to identifying and training the required workforce, the aim of the BWOP is to ensure the inclusion of many small, minority, and women, veteran, and disability-owned businesses in building and operating the train.