

Dallas-Fort Worth Area Partners In Mobility  
Texas Transportation Commission Presentation  
March 26, 2009

**Slide #1 – Title Slide**

Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Commission, and Director Saenz.

I am **Kenneth Barr, here today on behalf of the Dallas-Fort Worth Area Partners In Mobility, the North Texas Commission,** and the business community across the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

**Slide #2 – Dallas-Fort Worth Area Partners In Mobility**

I am proud to kick off our 15<sup>th</sup> annual Dallas-Fort Worth Area Partners In Mobility presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission. It is an exciting time to be here talking about transportation in our region considering the decision you will make today on the DFW Connector, and the other major projects you have awarded this year – LBJ, the North Tarrant Express, and economic recovery projects. We are here today to showcase what partnerships between our region and the Commission have accomplished, highlight the transportation improvements being made this year, and share with you what is on the horizon.

**Slide #3 – Presenters**

Our Partners In Mobility coalition is represented today by over 200 elected officials; city managers; chamber, business, and civic leaders; and transportation professionals throughout North Texas each dedicated, like you, to improving our

transportation system. I would like for our delegation to please stand and be recognized. Thank you to each member of our delegation for being part of our 15<sup>th</sup> annual presentation.

#### **Slide #4 – Transportation Providers**

We distributed our 2009 State-of-the-Region report. This comprehensive report includes information on regional performance measures, how we are utilizing innovative finance, and what projects are on the verge of construction after decades of planning work.

#### **Slide #5 – Population Growth**

The report and this presentation come at a time when the Census Bureau has just released population growth figures for the nation. In 2008, our region grew by over 146,000 people. This shows that even with the nationwide economic downturn, North Texas is still attracting new residents and new businesses. Improving our transportation system will help us continue to grow.

#### **Slide #6 – Innovations in Infrastructure Finance**

As we go through this presentation, I want everyone to keep something in mind. If gas taxes met our needs, building transportation projects would be a lot easier – in fact, we would not need to be as innovative and we would not need to reach out to establish new partnerships. Over the past 15 years, we have experienced an absence of leadership from federal and State legislators on revenue. In spite

of this absence of leadership, our local elected officials have not put our heads in the sand and given up. We have risen to the occasion by providing leadership, working with this Commission to create outstanding projects, entering into successful regional partnerships, and using innovative finance. Although we could spend hours talking about partnerships, let me highlight three examples of our success.

First and foremost, this Commission took an early and outspoken lead on using public-private partnerships to advance transportation projects. You are often criticized for this decision, but our region is here to thank you for your vision. By looking at comprehensive development agreements, design-build contracting, partnerships with the North Texas Tollway Authority, and managed lanes, projects that have been on the books for decades are moving into construction. Our local governments and transportation partners have also been tremendous assets through transit sales taxes and bond programs. Innovation and local partnerships are generating nearly 65 percent of transportation funding in North Texas.

**Slide #7 – SH 121 Allocation Table**

A second example of success is the entire State Highway 121 process. The announcement of the 3.2 billion dollar payment by the North Texas Tollway Authority was amazing in itself, but what came after was a partnership between local governments, the Texas Department of Transportation, the North Texas

Tollway Authority, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Local governments have selected hundreds of transportation projects through the Regional Toll Revenue Funding Initiative. Our emphasis was on air quality, roadway, and transit projects with nearly three-quarters of the funds going to on-system projects.

### **Slide #8 – RTR Projects Map**

We want to thank this Commission for your willingness to help the local governments in North Texas and allow local contracting, local design standards, and local environmental review of the off-system projects. And if this entire process was not an innovative enough partnership on its own, part of the payment will be used to construct the rail line from Denton to Carrollton. This kind of multimodalism is probably not found anywhere else in the nation and just demonstrates the type of leaders we have in our local elected officials and this Commission.

### **Slide #9 – Regional Rail Map**

This leads into our final example of successful partnerships with and among our three transportation authorities: Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the Denton County Transportation Authority, and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority. The Denton County Transportation Authority's "A Train" is a 21-mile commuter rail line that will connect Denton with Carrollton, Dallas, and eventually the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. In addition, Dallas Area Rapid Transit is

currently constructing the longest light rail project in the entire nation – the 28-mile Green Line from Fair Park to Carrollton. This project received a record 700 million dollar federal transit grant which is helping to leverage local sales tax dollars. Another exciting transit partnership is The T's Southwest to Northeast line that will connect southwest Fort Worth to the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. This rail line is being paired with the Cotton Belt project in Dallas and Collin Counties to bring airport access to Plano, Richardson, and Addison.

Now that we've given you a view of what has led us to this point, let me turn the presentation over to Rob Franke to discuss what is happening now in transportation.

Good morning Commissioners and Director Saenz. My name is **Rob Franke**. I am the **Mayor of Cedar Hill, and Chairman of the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition**.

**Slide #10 – Enhanced Partnership Program Map**

As we find ourselves in difficult financial times, it is encouraging to think of all the jobs we are about to create in construction and supporting fields thanks to the foundation that has been laid by this Commission and our local officials. This map illustrates that foundation. We have shown this map to you since 2005 and our region has taken every opportunity possible since that first showing to put money on these priority projects.

### **Slide #11 – Toll Road Implementation**

Right now, billions of dollars worth of projects are under construction in our region. State Highway 121 in Collin County is well underway, the Lewisville Lake Toll Bridge will open this summer, the President George Bush Turnpike eastern extension is under construction, and parts of State Highway 161 will open this summer. In addition, the agreement between the North Texas Tollway Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation, and funded by the Regional Transportation Council, to complete Southwest Parkway and State Highway 161 can now move forward. The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Trinity Parkway was recently released and regional leaders remain committed to mobility in downtown Dallas.

### **Slide #12 – Toll Road Table**

All of these projects are a result of this Commission and the North Texas Tollway Authority Board of Directors recognizing the vital need to work together to improve transportation in North Texas. The funding and implementation of all five of these projects are very different and range from North Texas Tollway Authority system funding, surplus toll revenue payment, toll equity, and revenue sharing.

Some may question why all of these major projects are toll roads. Our region alone has a 109 billion dollar funding shortfall between now and 2030. No one is eager to build toll roads, but without leadership from the Legislature and

Congress to provide adequate revenue, our region is moving ahead and taking on the need to improve mobility, reliability, air quality, and ultimately the quality of life in North Texas.

### **Slide #13 – Managed Lane Map**

Managed lanes are another important component of our regional transportation system. Corridors that are rebuilt with managed lanes added will provide an element of choice for commuters. These roadways will have traditional highway lanes – at least as many as are currently available in the corridor, continuous frontage roads with access to businesses and residential areas, and express lanes in the center.

There has been a lot of misinformation in the media and the public about managed lanes. Our region has been working on this concept for the past 20 years. We have launched a major education campaign together with the Texas Department of Transportation to explain how managed lanes work. In fact, we have distributed a new brochure today, along with the State-of-the-Region report, to the audience. To summarize, the new express lanes will be tolled, but a nontolled alternative will always be available. Tolls will rise and fall based on the congestion level on the tolled lanes. Therefore, there will be a guaranteed speed in the managed lanes, providing reliability. We feel that people will use the managed lanes when necessary. There will be discounts for carpool users and vanpools, and transit vehicles will have free access to these lanes. In addition,

should there ever be an emergency situation, these lanes can be opened to first responders or to improve evacuation flows.

**Slide #14 – Managed Lane Table**

In addition to Interstate 30, which is currently under construction, three managed lane projects will quickly move forward thanks to the work of this Commission to select best-value proposals. In January, you approved the North Tarrant Express along Interstate 820 and State Highway 183 in Tarrant County. With a 600 million dollar State commitment, the private sector will construct a 1.8 billion dollar project through this design-build-finance contract. Last month, you approved the Interstate 635-LBJ project. This is one of the most congested corridors in the State and a 445 million dollar State commitment will produce a 2 billion dollar project. This decade-long effort is sensitive to the needs of neighborhoods and businesses and will be completed in five years. Finally, today you are expected to approve the DFW Connector – a design-build partnership with the private sector to unclog the roadways just north of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Combined with toll road and rail projects we have already discussed, this represents an unprecedented level of construction and a much-needed source of jobs in our region. The success of these projects is based on this Commission's leadership and willingness to stay the course in bringing innovation to transportation funding.

## **Slide #15 – Economic Recovery**

Another successful partnership process is the recent selection of federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects. Our region would like to thank the Commission for funding a portion of the DFW Connector from the 1.2 billion dollar allocation to the Texas Department of Transportation. North Texas received a direct allocation of 143 million dollars. The Regional Transportation Council recently selected two interchanges to the Southwest Parkway – at Interstate 20 and at U.S. Highway 67 – to be built with these funds.

By selecting projects in the western side of the region, we were able to free up revenue from the State Highway 121 payment that was intended to go to Tarrant County. The selection of Southwest Parkway will also ensure that the commitments made to put funding into that project are met and will allow both the Southwest Parkway and State Highway 161 to proceed under the Texas Department of Transportation-North Texas Tollway Authority agreement. Overall, this represents a 4 billion dollar level of transportation investment, thanks to innovative leveraging and partnerships.

I think the conclusion I have is the same conclusion from our last speaker.

These projects would not be moving forward without strong leadership from local elected officials and this Commission and without innovative partnerships. With that, I will turn the presentation over to Mayor Shetter.

### **Slide #16 – Transit Photos**

Thank you Mayor Franke. Good morning Commissioners and Director Saenz, I am **Ken Shetter, Mayor of Burleson and Chairman of the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition**. I have the pleasure this morning of talking about what is next for North Texas. My remarks will continue the theme of innovation, partnership, and leadership.

### **Slide #17 – Regional Rail Map**

North Texas is focused right now on one initiative that could mean more to the future of our region than any other transportation initiative, and that is passage of the Texas Local Option Transportation Act sponsored by Senator John Carona and Representative Vicki Truitt. This is a culmination of six years' worth of meetings, technical review, and policy development by hundreds of individuals putting in thousands of hours of work. For the past year, the effort was led by Fort Worth City Council Member Jungus Jordan and Dallas City Council Member Linda Koop. On behalf of the region, I would like to take a moment to publicly thank them for their Herculean effort.

Through the Texas Local Option Transportation Act, our region could be able to fund 251 miles of commuter rail throughout North Texas. Once this vision becomes a reality, it will be possible to take a train from Cleburne to McKinney or from Denton to Waxahachie. The Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport and Love Field will be more accessible, as will colleges and universities,

entertainment venues, and major employment centers. Some have questioned whether this kind of investment makes sense – I would argue that it not only makes sense, but it is vital to Dallas-Fort Worth's continued success. People are desperate for an alternative to driving and being stuck in congestion. The region's transportation authorities have seen huge increases in riders this year. Much of the growth was seen last summer when gas prices were over 4 dollars a gallon. Rail works in North Texas.

### **Slide #18 – Menu of Local Funding Options**

However, rail is not the only option under the Texas Local Option Transportation Act. As its name indicates, it is a transportation funding bill. It is an opportunity to provide our local elected officials – who have clearly demonstrated leadership on transportation issues as we have discussed throughout this presentation – with a new way to improve our region. This bill will allow local officials a process to select the highest priority projects and put together a menu of funding options that make sense for each county and put that list of projects and taxes to a vote of the public. This plan may be complicated and it certainly isn't perfect, but our local officials are doing what they can to provide transportation options for the 6.5 million residents we have now and the 9 million residents we will have by 2030.

### **Slide #19 – Future Toll System Expansion**

We are very close to being able to achieve our rail vision, but we have several more intermodal projects on the horizon that will complete the total transportation system for North Texas. On the roadway side, we are looking to projects like State Highway 360, State Highway 170, the President George Bush Turnpike East Branch, and Loop 9. These are all corridors that will require significant partnerships between multiple agencies within our region.

### **Slide #20 – Priced Facilities**

We do not feel confident that transportation revenues will be increased in the near future. This legislative session is no different. We believe that toll roads and managed lanes will continue to be part of a regional transportation system.

### **Slide #21 – Tower 55**

It is critical that public-private partnerships continue to be a tool in our toolbox to complete these projects. Tower 55 is a very different partnership project – one that involves local governments, the Regional Transportation Council, homeowners and business groups, and two private railroad companies trying to solve the largest freight rail bottleneck in the country.

### **Slide #22 – Regional Outer Loop**

Finally, I will mention the Regional Outer Loop, a 240-mile corridor around the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Local elected officials and regional planners are working

to expedite environmental review and secure right-of-way, but at the same time balance transportation and land-use needs so the corridor does not cause additional sprawl. This corridor is critical to moving goods and people around and through North Texas. Now, I would like to introduce my colleague Linda Koop to conclude our presentation.

Thank you Mayor Shetter and thank you Commissioners and Director Saenz for having us here for the 15<sup>th</sup> time. I am **Linda Koop, Chair of the Regional Transportation Council and a member of the Dallas City Council**. We looked back at our first presentation to you. At that time, the business community was just beginning to get involved with transportation, we were planning a few toll roads, we had a mere 9.4 billion dollar shortfall, and we were here asking for money. What a difference 15 years makes.

**Slide #23 – Innovative Finance Table**

I want you to think back over our presentation so far. This Commission, along with local elected officials, has made possible or is working on getting over 20 billion dollars worth of projects to construction between 2006 and 2013, with additional projects when the Texas Local Option Transportation Act becomes a reality. This includes State Highway 121, all of the Regional Toll Revenue projects, toll roads being developed by the North Texas Tollway Authority, managed lanes leveraging private-sector dollars, massive light and commuter rail

projects, federal economic recovery projects, and the list goes on. This is what leadership, innovation, and partnerships can accomplish!

**Slide #24 – Federal and State Legislative Initiatives**

This morning we have laid out a fantastic future of an integrated, seamless, multimodal transportation system. While I, too, am confident that we can get to that future, we do need legislative assistance, and we ask for your support on these legislative initiatives.

We have extensively covered the local option funding initiative, but the Regional Transportation Council is also calling for increased statewide funding. We support the efforts of Senator Carona to index the motor fuels tax to inflation. We also support his efforts to end or reduce diversions of transportation revenues to non-transportation uses. Another funding option is to provide general revenue for the 5 billion dollars in bonds authorized by voters across Texas through Proposition 12 in 2007.

Funding for freight rail relocation is critically important to our region. We mentioned Tower 55 and finding a solution to that bottleneck earlier, and the Rail Relocation Improvement Fund – authorized by Texans in 2005 – should be funded by the Legislature this year.

Finally, the process to identify the agency to develop toll roads and managed lanes in our region needs to be simplified and move to a more coordinated and partnership-oriented process. The market valuation created in 2007 is too cumbersome and is not in the region's best interest. We must also ensure that any future surplus toll revenue or CDA concession payments return to the region for local elected officials to utilize for transportation projects.

We have been working hard on these issues all year long, and will continue to hit this message hard across the street until the session is over. Many of our officials with us today from the region have been visiting their State Representatives and State Senators yesterday and today in a major advocacy effort.

In addition to legislative initiatives in Texas, this year marks the expiration of federal surface transportation legislation – the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. What we are anticipating is not simply another reauthorization, but a completely new bill that will move the nation towards a more sustainable transportation future.

### **Slide #25 – Sustainable Future**

The Regional Transportation Council will soon develop a legislative program calling for a major change in focus from donor/donee states fighting for dollars, hundreds of modal programs acting independently, and thousands of earmarks.

The new bill should focus on mega regions and providing local elected officials in those regions flexibility to identify problems, implement solutions, and report on performance. Funding should be increased, but also be flexible enough to truly create a multimodal transportation system. The new bill also needs to address energy independence through new technology and better land-use/transportation connections. This represents a radical departure from business as usual, but as we have shown today, our region and this Commission are no strangers to charting new territory and breaking through barriers.

### **Slide #26 – Leadership and Courage**

We are calling today on our State legislators and U.S. Representatives and Senators to join us and show leadership and courage in providing adequate resources and flexibility to the State and the nation for needed transportation investments. The problem has been identified. Your 2030 Commission found over 300 billion dollars worth of needs statewide over the next 21 years – a staggering figure. What we need to do better is educate the public and legislators about not only the problem, but the solutions that we have identified and seek their ideas on additional solutions and build consensus around ways to improve transportation. But, what we really need is for all of us to find and nurture the political will to become leaders on this issue. If we can do that, then we can get to a better future in transportation.

**Slide #27 – Thank You**

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today. My colleagues and I will be happy to address any questions you may have.