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RESOLUTION APPROVING REQUESTED CHANGES BY THE TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION TO THE DRAFT 2017 UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (R16-07)

WHEREAS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area by the Governor of Texas in accordance with federal law; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), composed primarily of local elected officials, is the regional transportation policy body associated with NCTCOG and continues to be the regional forum for cooperative decisions on transportation; and,

WHEREAS, [the Texas Transportation Commission has requested comments on the proposed 2017 Unified Transportation Program; and,](#)

WHEREAS, the RTC has aggressively pursued innovative finance methods, such as tolling and tolled managed lanes in order to address rapid population growth based on a partnership between the Texas Transportation Commission and MPOs in 2003 that occurred with the approval of the Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the partnership program was designed so that regions that pursued local innovative funding sources would not be penalized by a reduction in other sources of transportation revenue and began the formula allocation of Category 2 – Metropolitan Corridor funding to MPOs for MPO policy boards to select projects in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Districts; and,

WHEREAS, the partnership program has led to over \$14 billion worth of roadway capacity improvements in the Dallas-Fort Worth region alone, with only a fraction of that coming from traditional transportation capacity improvement funding; and,

WHEREAS, population growth is projected to continue into the future with the need for capacity improvements also expected to continue at the same time that the public and elected officials are asking for fewer projects with a toll component, putting increased pressure on traditional and newly-approved state transportation funding sources; and,

WHEREAS, the draft 2017 Unified Transportation Program does not account for comprehensive benefits of roadway construction with nearly 50 percent of major corridor construction costs going to maintenance improvements vs. capacity improvements, therefore significantly underfunding capacity improvements for urban regions; and,

WHEREAS, it appears that the draft 2017 Unified Transportation Program creates new strategic programs that will not be formula allocated to MPOs for project selection and therefore would result in negative unintended consequences where major Interstate and U.S. Highway projects may be underfunded due to a project-by-project funding selection rather than a comprehensive analysis of the overall transportation system within a metropolitan region as well as connecting metropolitan regions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

Section 1. The Regional Transportation Council [strongly supports Governor Abbott's Metropolitan Congestion Relief Initiative and](#) respectfully requests that the Texas Transportation Commission commit to three elements of Category 12 –Strategic Priority (Congestion Initiative). It is proposed that the Commission commit that \$5 billion be allocated to urban congestion relief [and,](#) that some reasonable formula be developed so no one region sweeps the urban program, ~~and that 20 percent of the total funds be suballocated to urban regions that develop innovative partnership~~

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~~programs that leverage resources and successfully demonstrate congestion relief/connectivity system implementation. In addition, the RTC suggests that the Commission develop a funding trade fair partnership to maximize projects that are in the best interest of the State of Texas.~~

- Section 2.** The Regional Transportation Council respectfully requests that the Texas Transportation Commission reconsider the Category 4 – Connectivity (Congestion) Program. The Commission should allocate these funds to large urban regions in Category 2 and create a system of transportation solutions that simultaneously solve urban congestion and connectivity projects. ~~Metropolitan Planning Organizations and TxDOT Districts are better able to identify performance measures that meet multiple objectives as well as obtain local consensus on project prioritization and selection. TxDOT Minute Order # 109370, approved on August 28, 2003, indicates that this proposed new program would need to be reviewed.~~
- Section 3.** ~~If Section 2 cannot be carried out,~~ the Regional Transportation Council respectfully requests that the Texas Transportation Commission increase funding in Category 2. The proposed funding levels are significantly less than the level of capacity funds discussed by TxDOT in advance of the Proposition 7 statewide election.
- Section 4.** The Regional Transportation Council respectfully requests the Texas Transportation Commission support these allocations in order for the RTC to continue to reduce the number of future tolled projects in our region.
- Section 5.** The Regional Transportation Council respectfully requests that TxDOT adopt performance measures, consistent with H.B. 20, to be used to determine funding levels, project need, and project prioritization.
- Section 6.** This resolution will be transmitted to members of the Texas Transportation Commission and Executive Staff of the Texas Department of Transportation, ~~and members of the North Central Texas Legislative Delegation.~~
- Section 7.** This resolution shall be in effect immediately upon its adoption.

Ron Jensen, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor, City of Grand Prairie

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area on July 14, 2016.

Gary Fickes, Secretary
Regional Transportation Council
Commissioner, Tarrant County