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## SUMMARY

### TWG Meeting

May 6, 2021

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

### Follow-up Actions from THIS MEETING

- Kristi Holstead will **compile the notes from the meeting** and provide the slides on the TWG website.
- Kristi Holstead and Madhu Venugopal will be **updating the TEAMS calendar invite** to accommodate for the chat option
- All participants reach out to Kristi and Madhu Venugopal for **training needs and potential presentation topics/ideas**
- A request was made from San Antonio seeking information to understand the implication of the **San Antonio Moderate Designation**
- Kristi Holstead and Madhu Venugopal will work with Janie Temple on the potential **TxDOT RTI** presentation topics, including **Texas Local Assistance Program and the Texas State Transportation Innovation Council**.

### Next Meeting

Thursday, August 5, 2021 (tentative)

### Participants

There were approximately 48 TWG members in attendance via Microsoft Teams.

**Madhu Venugopal** led the meeting. Venugopal began the meeting by welcoming the attendees.

### Primary Discussion Items

**Nick Allen** (NCTCOG) presented a Legislative Update:  
[Legislative Update](#) (PDF)

**Madhu Venugopal** led an open discussion on *COVID-19 Impacts on Air Quality*:

**Vivek Thimmavajhala** stated that NCTCOG's director, Michael Morris, shares in meetings with the Committee and Policy Board about various metrics that NCTCOG is tracking (with help from partners). They are tracking different speeds on various freeways and other roads in the region and how the AMP and PMP have changed since COVID, and how it is now going back. From a speed standpoint, NCTCOG observed that the morning peak is still eliminated in the region. The noon speed is going back to where they were pre-COVID. A lot more people are driving in the afternoons. It may not be just commute traffic, but maybe something else. NCTCOG has various other metrics, too. There is information about the traffic volumes, how the airports are doing (passengers and how air travel has been

affected), and toll road transactions. NCTCOG has put together a dashboard and update it as data become available:

[North Central Texas Council of Governments - Changing Mobility \(nctcog.org\)](https://www.nctcog.org/Changing-Mobility)

NCTCOG is also tracking metrics related to Air Quality but has had internal discussions and concerns about how the impacts of this is not being shown in terms of regulatory data. Despite the decrease in VMT, there were still quite a few ozone incidents last year. The design value for the NCTCOG region is around 76 ppb, so NCTCOG did not comply with the 75 max standards. From NCTCOG's standpoint, the primary area of interest is in understanding the correlation between the transportation metrics and how it is being translated to air quality. NCTCOG also had discussions about the ratios (the ratios for NOx vs. VOC and how the ozone formation might be affected). These are the areas that NCTCOG is trying to understand. NCTCOG is reaching to know more about air quality and ozone formation. What are the primary triggers?

**Graciela Lubertino** stated that H-GAC did a study based on the lockdown time. H-GAC received confusing results because although the average concentration of NOx decreased by 21% in the month of April 2020 vs. April 2019. The ozone only decreased 5%. PM<sub>2.5</sub> increased 25%. These are confusing results because the H-GAC area is NOx limited. The decrease in NOx should have a bigger impact on ozone. The H-GAC area has a lot of industry and the permits for the emissions from the industry were relaxed during that time.

**Chris Kite** stated that the TCEQ Data Analysis group has been looking at this. In some areas of the world, when COVID hit, they saw a big response right away. Kite stated that if COVID had happened 20-25 years ago, on-road emissions were huge then and are a lot lower now. In Dallas in 1999, it was estimated to be about 525 tons of NOx (half of that is passenger fleet, roughly). With all the growth (Dallas as an example, but this applies to all metropolitan areas), 20 years later, with a lot of growth throughout the Texas Metropolitan areas, and all the emissions are down around 100 tons in Dallas (and other areas). If COVID hit 20-25 years ago, there would be a bigger drop in NOx. There are very controlled emissions from on-road now; therefore, a 10% cut is not going to drop you as much in magnitude. Power Plant emissions have been cut 80-90% in the state, even with growth, due to newer plants meeting higher standards and retrofits on older plants.

**Christiane Alepuz** stated that CAPCOG has partnered with the City of Austin and is contracting with TTI to do a study to understand the extended on-road activity and air pollution potentially affected by COVID behavior change and to estimate the impact of increased telecommuting due to COVID on on-road emissions. The study is currently underway and will be released on July 30, 2021. Another task in the study is modeling ambient air quality impact of reduction on on-road emissions due to COVID.

**Madhu Venugopal** led an open discussion on *GHG Work Around the State*:

**Jenny Narvaez** stated that NCTCOG has been working with ICLEI and are in the process of conducting a region GHG emission inventory for the 12-county metropolitan planning area. NCTCOG is utilizing ICLEI's ClearPath software. The GHG inventory is transportation, energy,

water, wastewater and goes beyond transportation. As part of this regional inventory, NCTCOG has decided to expand the access to the ClearPath software to our local cities (those who are members of NCTCOG). Eight cities have joined. This means that they are going to have access to the software to conduct their own city-wide GHG inventory. NCTCOG had a call for Interest in cities that opened in March and closed on April 16<sup>th</sup>. NCTCOG has decided to open it back up in June through the end of July. NCTCOG plans on starting the GHG process, as a group, in the August timeframe. It is a very detailed and coordinated process, as far as the data collection goes. This is a cross-department effort and involves NCTCOG's regional partners, too. NCTCOG is in the data collection process. Agencies who decide to conduct an inventory can use a default for certain data inputs, but this is NCTCOG's first inventory like this, so NCTCOG wants to make sure that it is done as best as possible. As a part of this, but separate, NCTCOG is working with the Environmental Defense Fund. NCTCOG has been given a fellow from the Environmental Defense Fund. She will be joining in June. It will be a 12-month fellowship. She will be working with NCTCOG to build their control strategy list for reducing GHG emissions across the region.

## Agency Information & Updates

### EPA, Jeff Riley

**Jeff Riley** provided the following updates:

- **Rulemaking Reviews** – Along with January 20, 2021 Executive Order (EO) 13990, the White House issued a list of agency actions for heads of the relevant agencies to review. Implementation of these agency actions may be impacted by EO 13990, and therefore these rulemakings must be reviewed for consistency with the EO.

The rulemakings include:

- "The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule Part One: One National Program," 84 Fed. Reg. 51310 (September 27, 2019). Preempted state & local tailpipe GHG emissions standards & zero-emission vehicle mandates.
- "The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule for Model Years 2021–2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks," 85 Fed. Reg. 24174 (April 30, 2020). Set CAFE & CO2 standards that increase 1.5% in stringency each year from model years 2021-2026.
- April 26, 2021 — As directed in EO 13990 and in response to requests by states and other stakeholders, today the EPA issued a Notice of Reconsideration seeking public input on its reconsideration of the Agency's 2019 SAFE Vehicles Rule Part One: One National Program Rule for the purposes of rescinding the action taken by the prior administration.
- The agency will hold a virtual public hearing on June 2, and the public comment period on the Notice of Reconsideration will be open until July 6.
- EPA will be taking a separate action to reconsider the previous administration's final rule titled The Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Final Rule for Model Years 2021-2026 (SAFE-2). EPA plans to propose this rule in July 2021.

- **Houston 2008 Ozone Serious area RFP SIP** – the Houston 2008 Serious area Reasonable Further Progress (RFP) SIP revision was signed by the Regional Administrator on April 30<sup>th</sup>. The action was published in the Federal Register on May 10, 2021 (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-10/pdf/2021-09626.pdf>). EPA’s approval and finding of adequacy for the 2020 MVEBs becomes effective 30 days after the date of FR publication (June 9, 2021).

A schedule for final action on the DFW 2008 Ozone Serious area RFP SIP has not been established yet, but final action within CY 2021 is a reasonable expectation.

- **MOVES3 (MOVES Model Update)** – On May 5<sup>th</sup>, EPA held the MOVES3 Information for Experienced MOVES Modelers webinar. An announcement went out via Mobile listserv and was sent to TWG. Presentation slides are available online, and it is possible that the webinar was recorded and will be shared. The webinar covered:
  - New content in MOVES3
  - Improvements in the user interface
  - Built-in MOVES tools
  - Other MOVES3 resources, including EPA’s March 2021 MOVES3 Overview Report

OTAQ confirmed they are currently working to update 2-day hands-on training for MOVES3, and the User Guide.

## TCEQ, Jamie Zech

Jamie Zech provided the following updates:

- **General Ozone -**
  - On March 25, 2021, the TCEQ submitted a 2008 Eight-hour Ozone NAAQS Milestone Compliance Demonstration for the 2020 Calendar Year for the DFW and HGB serious nonattainment areas. This submittal demonstrates that the 2020 NOX and VOC emission reductions adopted in the serious RFP SIP revisions for both areas have been achieved. This submittal meets a Clean Air Act requirement applicable to ozone nonattainment areas classified serious and above.
  - TCEQ staff is still in the internal planning phase in anticipation of potential reclassifications under the 2008 and 2015 ozone NAAQS. The attainment deadline for the DFW and HGB serious nonattainment areas under the 2008 ozone NAAQS is July 20, 2021, and the deadline for the DFW, HGB, and Bexar County marginal nonattainment areas under the 2015 ozone NAAQS is August 3, 2021 (DFW and HGB) and September 24, 2021 (Bexar County).
  - As you know, attainment is determined in the ozone season prior to the attainment deadline, so for both ozone NAAQS, the attainment year was 2020. We expect EPA’s action to reclassify areas under the 2008 and 2015 NAAQS to be proposed shortly after the attainment deadlines and to be finalized by early 2022.
- **Additional DFW Updates**
  - The TCEQ developed an ozone exceptional events demonstration for wildfire events occurring near the Grapevine Fairway monitor on August 16, 17, and 21,

2020. The EPA's concurrence that any one of those days was influenced by exceptional events would lower Grapevine Fairway's 2020 ozone design value to 75 ppb. That would bring Grapevine Fairway and the entire DFW nonattainment area into attainment of the 2008 ozone NAAQS. The demonstration was posted for public comment on April 14, 2021 and the comment period will close on May 14, 2021. (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/airmod/docs/ozone-data-exceptional-event-flag-demonstrations>)

- **Additional HGB Updates**

- On April 6, 2021, the TCEQ submitted a one-year attainment date extension request to the EPA for the HGB 2008 eight-hour ozone nonattainment area. The request was submitted on the grounds that the area meets the requirements necessary for the EPA to grant the extension:
- The state is implementing all requirements and commitments pertaining to the area in the SIP (FCAA, §181(a)(5)(A)); and
- No more than one exceedance of the NAAQS has occurred in the area in the year preceding the extension year (FCAA, §181(a)(5)(B)). The fourth highest daily maximum eight-hour average concentrations for all monitors in the nonattainment area were not greater than 75 ppb in 2020, and only the Conroe Relocated monitor had a fourth high of 75 ppb.

- **Additional Bexar County Updates**

- As you remember, the commission adopted the Bexar County §179B Demonstration SIP revision on July 1, 2020, and submitted it to the EPA on July 13, 2020. Approval of that demonstration would suspend nonattainment planning in the area for the 2015 ozone NAAQS, and the area would not be reclassified to moderate.

- **Additional El Paso Updates**

- El Paso County was designated attainment/unclassifiable for the 2015 ozone NAAQS, but the designation was challenged in a 2018 lawsuit that was decided on July 10, 2020. The court remanded the El Paso County attainment designation to the EPA (without vacatur) and required the EPA to issue a revised El Paso County designation as expeditiously as practicable for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. On December 21, 2020, the TCEQ submitted supplemental information to the EPA in support of retaining El Paso County's original attainment designation.

## **MPO's (For those in attendance) – Status & Updates**

**Allie Blazosky** stated that AAMPO has been in touch with Barbara Maley and Jose Campos (FHWA) and is waiting for FHWA to wrap up the STIP approval for FY 2021-2024. AAMPO has their Regional Transportation Conformity in line after FHWA accomplishes the STIP approval and is working toward wrapping this up in mid-July. Barbara Maley contacted AAMPO regarding a way to move the MTP project listing away from the current way (very long project listing) into a shortened version. AAMPO has been busy preparing for public

input on a Call for Projects that will be going into the 2023-2026 TIP and forthcoming conformity after this one.

**Claudia Valles** stated that El Paso MPO is waiting for answers to the last set of questions received from FHWA. In addition, El Paso MPO has continued the development of the new MTP and the new Travel Demand Model.

**Graciela Lubertino** H-GAC is working on an air quality conformity in support of the amendments to the 2045 RTP. The public comment process ended on 4/28/2021, and we received 135 comments in total, including several air quality comments. Right now, H-GAC is in the process of classifying the comments in order to answer all of them. Due to the unusual amount of comments, it is possible that H-GAC will delay the TPC approval of the 2045 RTP amendments and its air quality conformity by a month.

**Vivek Thimmavajhala** stated that NCTCOG is in the process of developing on-road mobile emission inventories to support TCEQ's updates and revisions to the Reasonable Further Progress and Attainment Demonstration SIPs for the reclassification of both the ozone standards. NCTCOG is continuing the plan for the 2022 Conformity with approval for the Mobility Plan by RTC in June and a potential conformity determination by November.

## TxDOT TPP

**Field representative updates: Raymond Sanchez (H-GAC, El Paso), Nick Page (NCTCOG, San Antonio), and Phillip Tindall (Beaumont, Port Arthur)**

**Raymond Sanchez** had no additional comments.

**Nick Page** had no additional comments.

**Phillip Tindall** had no additional comments.

## FHWA, Barbara Maley

Barbara Maley provided the following updates:

- **Announcements**
  - Round 5 Alt-Fuel Corridor Designation
  - (Pending) I-40 b/w OK and NM borders (177-mi)
- **Events**
  - MOVES Training, May 10th to May 13th
- **Resources**
  - TR Conformity Training
  - CMAQ 101 Training

## TxDOT Updates

**Janie Temple** provided two updates:

**DMV Data Registration Update** – TxDOT previously updated that the DMV had a suspension from March 2020 on updates. That was lifted in April, and then people had to

go in and update/renew their information. The DMV was not releasing data during that time because they did not have anything new to provide. TxDOT had to pull their request for the 2020 data and has restarted the request. The waiver ended in the middle of April, but people had until the end of the month to get things turned in, and then the DMV needed time to process it. TxDOT is now able to make the 2020 request and is going through the process of that now. The DMV informed TxDOT that the 2017 and 2018 data might not be consistent with what TxDOT is asking for because starting in 2018, 2019, and 2020 there are different categories. They are separating out the 2020 request as they think it will take longer to pull the 2017/2018 requests and are not sure that it will make sense with the rest of the data. TxDOT is working with the DMV to determine if they will move forward with the requests for the older data.

**TxDOT Research Ideas** – TxDOT’s Research and Technology Group wrapped up a round of research proposals, and there were 45 projects that were posted for evaluation. Proposals have been received on those, and they have been reviewed and scored. Recommendations are going forward to TxDOT’s Research Oversight Committee to have those awarded. There are about 45, and roughly 10 universities will receive those. Some of those could be modified or changed. These are for the fiscal year 2022 research process. Those will be coming out in the September timeframe. There is at least one that is air quality related. TxDOT would like to make sure that, from the TWG perspective, now is the time to start planning for the next cycle. Temple proposed having RTI come back in and present to TWG. Also, TxDOT’s RTI office has two programs that they support: [Texas Local Assistance Program](#) and the [Texas State Transportation Innovation Council](#).

**Tim Wood** stated that in the research proposal titled, Assessing Ozone Impacts of Electric Vehicle Adoption in Texas, we have received TM-4 on building the future EV scenarios for modeling ozone impacts.

**Jackie Ploch** stated that Tim Wood has been selected to be the AASHTO Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Sub-Committee Vice-Chair.

## TTI, Madhu Venugopal and Reza Farzaneh

**Tara Ramani** provided an update on the [2<sup>nd</sup> Transportation, Air Quality and Health Symposium](#). TTI is the lead organization for a USDOT funded University Transportation Center consortium called the Center for Advancing Research in Transportation, Emissions, Energy and Health (CARTEEH), which works on transportation air quality topics and also extends it to the health arena. The symposium is virtual and will be held from May 18<sup>th</sup> to May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The program will start at 10:30 am (CST) and end between 3 and 3 30 pm each day.

**Madhu Venugopal** provided the following updates:

**MOSERS** – Reza Farzaneh is working with the MPOs on finalizing the training and other materials. Information will be shared with the TWG participants as it becomes available.

**The Texas Air Quality Portal** (Portal)– work is proceeding, and TTI is planning to shift the TWG legacy website to the Portal.

**Air Quality Master Schedule** – there is a meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

**Training** – TTI is working on the Texas MOVES training.

**(Meeting Concluded)**