Plans for outer loop scaled back

Plans for the Regional Outer Loop, envisioned as a bypass around the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, have been scaled back.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments has concluded that based on traffic projections for 2035, a continuous 240-mile loop around the metropolitan area is not warranted.

However, additional studies were recommended for an east-west oriented, limited-access roadway in northern Denton County, north of US Highway 380, as well as the possible expansion of US Highway 67 between Alvarado and Midlothian in Johnson and Ellis counties. The Denton County roadway could extend westward from the proposed connection between the Collin County Outer Loop and Dallas North Tollway extension in Celina, allowing for a continuous future toll facility between US Highway 75 and Interstate Highway 35. The US Highway 67 stretch to be studied is currently a four-lane thoroughfare with traffic signals.

The Texas Department of Transportation is separately continuing planning and evaluation efforts for Loop 9 in Ellis, Dallas, and Kaufman counties, which is expected to receive environmental clearance by spring 2013.

NCTCOG began studying the need for the Regional Outer Loop in 2007. It was believed that adding a reliable circumferential route around the region to support through traffic and travel demands between rapidly growing outlying communities would improve freight movements and lessen congestion. Further improvements in the area may be considered as traffic congestion and population increase.

Funding available soon to expand transit options

The North Central Texas Council of Governments will open its 2011 Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs Call for Projects this fall.

Approximately $8.2 million in JARC and New Freedom grant funding will be available for competitive award to eligible projects in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area.

JARC projects help low income individuals get to jobs and job-related activities. New Freedom provides funding to projects and programs that remove barriers for people with disabilities and provide transportation above and beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

NCTCOG encourages state or local government agencies, public transportation operators, nonprofit organizations and private transportation providers to develop and submit eligible projects for funding consideration. Visit www.nctcog.org/jarc or contact Jamie Keshav at 817-608-2377 or jkeshav@nctcog.org for information about the programs and the upcoming call for projects.

Advancing the Choice focuses on emergency response vehicles

The Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition will host its annual Advancing the Choice workshop on Tuesday, September 27 at the Ruthe Jackson Center in Grand Prairie. This free, half-day event will focus on emergency response vehicles and the alternative fuel and advanced technologies, fuels, financial opportunities, and policies that can help improve their operation and efficiency.

Fleet managers, first responders, safety managers, transportation directors, city and county government officials, security companies, and purchasing managers are encouraged to attend.

For more information, contact Pamela Burns at 817-704-2510 or pburns@nctcog.org or visit www.nctcog.org/cleancities.
Web exclusives aim to keep content fresh

Read what Kent Penney, director of aviation for the city of Fort Worth has to say about how surface transportation affects airports, in Progress North Texas 2011.

This testimonial is available only online. In an effort to encourage continued public participation, the NCTCOG Transportation Department will periodically update the Web edition of its annual transportation report. If you would like to have your comments about the transportation system appear in Progress North Texas online, visit www.nctcog.org/ourregion.

As new information illustrating how the region is meeting its transportation challenges becomes available, it will be posted on the Web.

On the Web: www.nctcog.org/ourregion

Fact sheet explains new transportation plan

NCTCOG recently published Moving People with Strategic Investments, a fact sheet explaining the Dallas-Fort Worth area’s long-range transportation plan. This document outlines major components of Mobility 2035: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas, which proposes to spend $101.1 billion over the next 24 years to ensure the 12-county area meets the transportation needs of a growing population with the limited resources available.

The fact sheet is available at www.nctcog.org/mobility2035. A copy of the mobility plan is also posted on the website.
Cut non-road construction emissions

NCTCOG is accepting applications for projects that reduce emissions from diesel construction machinery through the North Central Texas Clean Construction Equipment 2011 Call for Projects. Equipment replacements, repowered and retrofitted engines, and engine upgrades may be funded up to 25 percent, 75 percent and 100 percent, respectively. Funding is based upon a percentage of project cost rather than the cost-effectiveness of emissions reduced and is available to public- and private-sector entities. Applications are accepted on the last Friday of each month. September 30 is the last opportunity to apply for funding. Visit www.nctcog.org/AQFunding or contact Roxann Nayar at 817-608-2378 or rnayar@nctcog.org.

State approves changes to idling rules

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality recently approved changes to the Locally Enforced Motor Vehicle Idling Limitations Rule, one of several measures implemented to reduce vehicle emissions. Emissions from vehicle idling contribute significantly to North Texas’ poor air quality. Changes include extending enforcement to year-round, adding an exemption for armored vehicles, reinstating an exemption for government-mandated rest periods and removing prohibition of idling in neighborhoods, school zones, and near hospitals. In addition, new legislation exempts 2008 and newer trucks with a “Certified Clean Idle” engine from the rule. For more information, visit www.EngineOffNorthTexas.org or contact Amanda Brimmer at 817-608-2354 or abrimmer@nctcog.org.