The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) answers the call for increased transportation funding for highways and transit systems while reaffirming the importance of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Past investments in our region’s transportation systems have paid dividends in mitigating traffic congestion and expanding all modes of travel. TEA-21 will advance efforts to improve mobility and air quality.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on June 9, 1998, and ushered in the next era of federal transportation spending. Although the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) expired at the end of last year, it remains a powerful influence in TEA-21 by establishing the format for funding of highway and transit programs until the year 2003. TEA-21 is not a radically new transportation bill signifying a major “change in direction” from previous years, as was ISTEA in 1991. Rather, TEA-21 is an expansion and refinement of programs that worked well in ISTEA, including new programs to help states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) improve and enhance urban and rural mobility. With the population of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area expected to increase from 4.5 million in 1995 to nearly 7 million by 2020, the increase in transportation dollars to North Central Texas will help address our region’s ever-growing traffic congestion and air quality problems.

The authors of TEA-21, as did the writers of ISTEA, recognized that the construction of new highways was only part of the solution for providing improved mobility. While ISTEA required states and MPOs to consider specific factors in long-range planning reports, TEA-21 streamlines these 16 factors into seven planning areas, such as promoting economic development and improving the safety of our transportation system. The role of NCTCOG, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for North Central Texas, will continue with emphasis on expanding participation in the regional planning process. Input from transit users, the public at-large, commuters, bicycle and pedestrian groups, as well as freight interests, will be sought in the development of plans and programs. The Major Investment Study process, which utilizes public involvement for transportation corridor analysis and decision making, will be integrated with the federal environmental review procedures to reduce development timelines. The addition of new programs, such as Access to Jobs, will require NCTCOG to develop new partnerships; these partnerships are necessary to improve economic benefits and quality of life in North Central Texas. Under TEA-21, fiscal responsibility in regional transportation planning is expanded to include additional projects as funding sources become available. In essence, TEA-21 gives our region the opportunity for continued progress toward reaching our mobility goals.
ISTEA worked in North Central Texas, and worked well. Not only were individual projects constructed, but the implementation of a multimodal network that links transportation modes together, providing commuters and travelers with a range of mobility options, was a cornerstone of the bill. The landmark legislation also expanded the Metropolitan Planning Organization process for regional transportation decision making. This included the prioritization of mobility projects, the expansion of the process to include those not traditionally represented, and the creation of public/private partnerships. NCTCOG’s Regional Transportation Council was expanded from 29 to 37 members during the ISTEA era. ISTEA also emphasized the importance of managing our highways as well as constructing new managed facilities. The development of the Fort Worth Traffic Management Center was part of the approach found in ISTEA. Projects which increase highway capacity, introduce rail transportation, construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities, upgrade urban streets, promote carpools and vanpools, and implement regional mobility strategies, were all funded, at least in part, through ISTEA’s innovation. Yet, additional funds were needed to continue ISTEA’s vision.

**ISTEA FUNDS PROGRAMMED IN THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH REGION FISCAL YEARS 1992-1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>FEDERAL PROJECT COST D-FW REGION (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERSTATE CONSTRUCTION MAINTENANCE</td>
<td>Provides for the completion and maintenance of the Interstate System.</td>
<td>$339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM</td>
<td>Provides for construction, rehabilitation, traffic management, and other efforts for the 159,000 miles that comprise the National Highway System.</td>
<td>$347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM</td>
<td>Provides funds used by state and local governments for roadway improvements and for various safety and enhancement activities. Typically, this funding is used for construction, rehabilitation, and grade-crossing improvements.</td>
<td>$335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM</td>
<td>Directs funds toward transportation projects in nonattainment areas as designated by the federal Clean Air Act. Typical projects that contribute to reducing emissions include: intersection and signal improvements, HOV lanes, vanpool and rideshare programs, and rail system improvements.</td>
<td>$141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIDGE PROGRAM</td>
<td>Provides for bridge replacement and rehabilitation needs for bridges which are functionally obsolete or structurally deficient.</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGIC PRIORITY</td>
<td>Provides discretionary funds for projects which do not meet other program criteria.</td>
<td>$97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,384</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our state and region will continue to experience unprecedented growth in employment and population, thereby increasing the demands on our aging transportation infrastructure. TEA-21 will provide to Texas over $11 billion dollars in highway funding through the six years of the Act. A full 97 percent of these funds is guaranteed. Transit programs will receive approximately $1.1 billion in formula funds throughout the state for rural and urban operators. Ultimately, Texas' highway program will receive an additional $700 million per year in much-needed, additional transportation funds over previous yearly ISTEA allocations. Also, discretionary funds could be appropriated for Texas which will help reduce the strain on our transportation systems.

Part of Texas' economic future lies in the efficient movement of freight through, and within, the North Central Texas region. Eighty percent of the goods movement traffic that enters the U.S. from Mexico moves across Texas. As a result of the projected increases in truck traffic due to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), TEA-21 provides $700 million for national efforts to develop corridors of international trade and border infrastructure. Interstate Highway 35, which runs through Dallas and Fort Worth, could receive a share of these funds for corridor improvements, along with other trade routes throughout the state. TEA-21 funding, along with intermodal freight planning elements already outlined in Mobility 2020: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, will ensure that the economic engine, that is North Central Texas, continues to work efficiently.

In our region, TEA-21 will provide opportunities for continued partnerships. By leveraging MPO funds with State funds, the NCTCOG Regional Transportation Council / Texas Transportation Commission Partnership Program will result in the implementation of needed projects in our region. These include improvements to State Highway 114 in Tarrant County; Interstate Highways 20, 30, and 635 in Dallas County; U.S. Highway 287 in Ellis County; and Loop 288 in Denton County. In addition, North Central Texas is anticipating to receive funds for State Highway 121 in both Collin and Tarrant Counties, as well as funding from the TEA-21 High Priority Projects Program.

### TEA-21 HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade I.H. 30 between Dallas and Fort Worth</td>
<td>$22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruct intermodal connectors on S.H. 78 and S.H. 544 in Wylie</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct S.H. 121 from I.H. 30 to U.S. 67 in Cleburne</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve I.H. 35W from Spur 280 to I.H. 820 in Fort Worth</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widen S.H. 287 from Creek Bend Drive to the Waxahachie bypass</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct Houston Street Viaduct project, Dallas</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widen Meacham Boulevard from I.H. 35W to F.M. 146 and extend Meacham Boulevard from west of F.M. 156 to North Main Street</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$68</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Environment: The Impacts of Mobility and Air Quality

TEA-21, as with ISTEA, acknowledges the impacts of our transportation on the environment. With the recent designation of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan region as a serious nonattainment area for ozone, tougher mobility measures are needed in order to reduce single occupant commuting and comply with federal air quality standards. By failing to meet these standards, our region’s highway funds could be jeopardized.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) eligibility is expanded in TEA-21 to include programs that will help reduce “cold start” emissions, and help fund the deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems. TEA-21 also changes federal tax law by increasing the limit on nontaxable transit and vanpool benefits (from $65 to $100 per month) after the year 2001, thereby allowing vanpool benefits to be treated similarly to transit usage benefits. The combination of CMAQ and Surface Transportation Program funds allocated to our region, along with incentives for reducing automobile use, will increase our ability to improve regional travel and to meet federal air quality goals.

The Transportation EnhancementsActivities Program, which began with ISTEA, continues in TEA-21. These projects will be funded at 20 percent above ISTEA levels signifying the success of the program over the past six years. Transportation Enhancements Activities’ funds help our region’s mobility and air quality by constructing projects for use by those who would prefer to walk or ride a bike instead of travel by car. A new parallel program in TEA-21 for transit enhancements will improve transit center accessibility for those who are disabled and for bicycle and pedestrian users, as well as improve landscaping at transit stations. Also, federal incentive grants will be used for the conversion of diesel transit buses to cleaner-burning diesel, biodiesel, liquified natural gas, compressed natural gas, and other low or zero emissions technologies. TEA-21 will permit inherently low-emission vehicles to operate on high occupancy vehicle lanes, unless determined otherwise.

TEA-21 continues the efforts initiated in ISTEA to bring about a better understanding of the relationship between land use and transportation. The Transportation and Community System Preservation Pilot Program will offer public agencies over $100 million to study how land-use development, transportation, environmental concerns, and private sector involvement affects community preservation goals. NCTCOG, along with state and local government entities, will have the opportunity to compete for these research funds in order to provide another tool for building efficient and livable communities.
Highway Safety: A National and Regional Priority

Establishing highway and automobile safety was a major concern by federal legislators in the development of TEA-21. An average of $10 million per year for Texas' highway safety programs is included in TEA-21, an increase of $1 million per year over ISTEA. Also, a total of $500 million in highway incentive grants will be made available to states that crack down on drunk drivers by establishing tougher blood alcohol levels. Between 1999 and 2003, an additional $500 million will be made available for states that encourage the increased use of seat belts for adults and children. TEA-21 funding in the amount of $3 billion is also designated for upgrading roadway rail crossings, a critical safety point for automobiles, trucks, and pedestrians.

A full 10 percent of TEA-21’s Surface Transportation Program allocations must be earmarked for projects that will improve highway safety. Automobiles and commercial trucks are also to be slated for safety improvements. Motor carrier safety is provided for in TEA-21 by offering funding for improvements to: information systems containing carrier, vehicle, and driver safety records; development of new databases; analysis of motor carrier information and program effectiveness; implementation of Performance and Registration Information System Management; and improvements to commercial driver programs.

Intelligent Transportation Systems: Advancing Mobility through Technology

As our region’s roadways continue to operate at or near capacity, the benefits of traffic management programs will become apparent. Part of the $1.3 billion in national Intelligent Transportation System spending found in TEA-21, and the additional funding to be flexed from TEA-21’s highway and air quality programs, will allow transportation engineers and planners in our region to expedite transportation technologies.

Development of Intelligent Transportation Systems will continue in the region including the development of computer-based traveler information systems, installation of additional video cameras to monitor traffic flow, “smart” highways and vehicles which relay traffic information to motorists, additional ramp metering to control the flow of cars onto freeways, and emergency response activities to reduce the time it takes to clear accidents and keep traffic moving. Regional traffic control centers are located in Richardson, Irving, Fort Worth, Dallas, Farmers Branch, Carrollton, and Plano. TEA-21 funding for research and deployment of transportation technologies will expand the scope of regional traffic centers, transforming how we view travel in North Central Texas in the next century.

Public Transit: The Key to Intermodalism

Public transit plays a vital role in our region’s air quality programs and congestion management strategies. Public transit is a key element in TEA-21’s funding programs, with $42 billion in national transit spending (with $36 billion of that money guaranteed) to be available to transit operators over the six years of the Act. Texas will utilize approximately $1.1 billion in transit formula funds over the next six years to expand programs for state providers, an almost $400 million increase over ISTEA levels.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit will see additional funds to increase its bus fleet, as well as more funding to study and construct its light rail line. A total of $188 million dollars is identified in TEA-21 for DART projects over the next six years, including engineering studies for light rail corridors into South Dallas and suburban Las Colinas. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The “T”) is also identified for federal earmarks for its bus program through the FY 1999 funding appropriations authorized by TEA-21. The cities of Lewisville and Denton, providing service to residents in the northern subregion, will continue to use federal operating funds for

The use of alternative fuels, as provided through the CMAQ program, has offered the DART system a cleaner alternative to diesel-powered vehicles.
Good News, but . . .

While TEA-21 will offer our mobility providers in North Central Texas increased opportunity to meet the transportation goals of the next century, the legislation lacks the necessary funding needed to meet all of the growing demands on our transportation system.

Although TEA-21 is indeed a victory for those who fought diligently for increased federal investment in our transportation system over ISTEA levels, it represents one of several steps needed toward providing our region the funding and programs to overcome our growing mobility challenges. NCTCOG and our regional stakeholders must address the funding shortfalls of our expected travel demands in the next century. Initiatives which support increased state and local transportation funding should be pursued.

### COMPARISON OF ISTEA AND TEA-21 PROGRAMS AND FUNDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM ELEMENTS</th>
<th>ISTEA</th>
<th>TEA-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Programs</td>
<td>NHS, STP, CMAQ, Interstate Maintenance (IM), Transit, Highway Safety</td>
<td>NHS/ IM, STP, CMAQ, Transit, Safety, Bridge, Rec. Trails, Highway Safety, Access to Jobs, Border Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation</td>
<td>Minimum Allocation (hold harmless, 90 percent of payments guarantee)</td>
<td>91 Percent of Payments Guaranteed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas $$ Return on Trust Fund Contributions</td>
<td>77 Cents on the Dollar (formula &amp; discretionary programs)</td>
<td>No Less than 90.5 Cents on the Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Texas Highway Fund</td>
<td>$1.17 Billion</td>
<td>$1.88 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NATIONAL FUNDING LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ISTEA</th>
<th>TEA-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Program</td>
<td>$155 Billion</td>
<td>$204 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway Program</td>
<td>$125 Billion</td>
<td>$168 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Program</td>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>6 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway Program per Year</td>
<td>$21 Billion</td>
<td>$28 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D-FW AREA STP-MM AND CMAQ FUNDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ISTEA</th>
<th>TEA-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surface Transportation Program - Metropolitan Mobility</td>
<td>$36 Million per Year</td>
<td>$45 to 60 Million per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program</td>
<td>$37 Million per Year</td>
<td>$27 Million per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$73 Million per Year</td>
<td>$72 to 87 Million per Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Nathaniel Barnett
Intern II

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What Is NCTCOG?
The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments within the 16-county North Central Texas region. The agency was established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. North Central Texas is a 16-county region with a population of 4.6 million and an area of approximately 12,800 square miles. NCTCOG has 227 member governments, including all 16 counties, 161 cities, 26 independent school districts, and 24 special districts.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The Regional Transportation Council is the policy body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Regional Transportation Council consists of 37 members, predominantly local elected officials, overseeing the regional transportation planning process. NCTCOG’s Department of Transportation is responsible for support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which comprise the MPO policy-making structure.

We would like your comments...
If you have questions or comments regarding the transportation and air quality programs of the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Regional Transportation Council or need additional information, please contact the NCTCOG Transportation Department at (817) 695-9240, by fax at (817) 640-3028, or via e-mail: transinfo@dfwinfo.com

Regional Mobility Initiatives Issues

Advanced Transportation Management, March 1996
Air Quality, July 1996
Traffic Congestion, October 1996
Multimodal Solutions in the North Central Corridor, July 1997
Toll Roads, February 1998
Major Investment Studies, August 1998
Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century, October 1998

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings, and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or the Texas Department of Transportation. This document was prepared in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

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