

Engaging Diverse Audiences in Planning for Transportation and Improving Air Quality

Public Participation Plan

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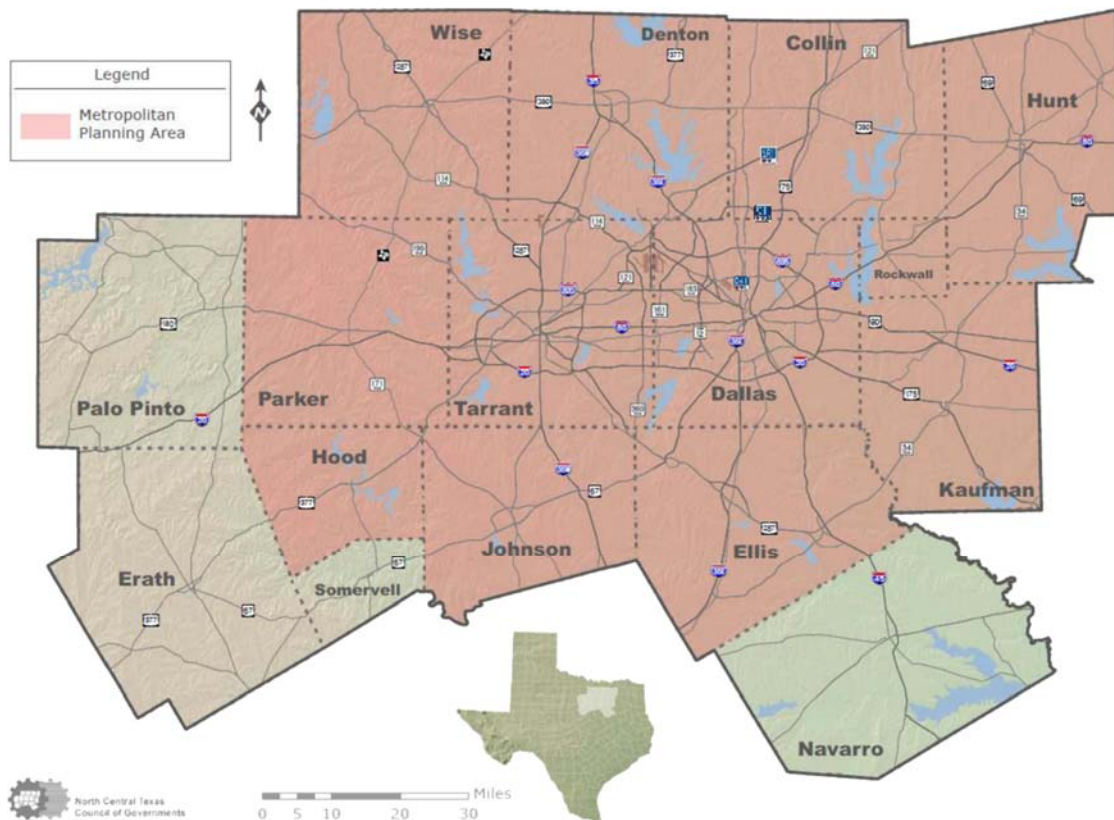


Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Area

1. About the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department and Regional Transportation Council

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974, the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing region. The 12-county region includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. This is the area expected to be urbanized in the next 20 years. North Texas is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, adding about 1 million people every 10 years. About 6.8 million people live in the region today, and that is expected to increase to nearly 10 million by 2035. NCTCOG works with its transportation partners and all levels of government as well as the public to ensure traffic safety and congestion are addressed and choices such as passenger rail and bicycle-pedestrian facilities are part of the multimodal transportation system.



The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the independent policy body of the MPO, oversees the work of the MPO, establishes priorities and guides the development of multimodal transportation plans, programs and partnerships. The RTC consists primarily of local elected officials and representatives from the area's transportation providers, and the RTC determines how to allocate federal, state and regional funds to transportation improvements. Committees and advisory groups lend expertise and develop recommendations for the RTC to consider.

2. Collaboratively Developing Solutions

Communication, Coordination Enhance Transportation Plans

Defining the future of transportation is a collaborative process, and the MPO works with many different individuals and groups to identify the transportation needs and solutions to preserve the quality of life in the region and ensure people and goods can travel safely, efficiently and reliably in the region today and in the future. Additionally, in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the MPO must ensure transportation plans are consistent with federal goals to improve air quality because 10 Dallas-Fort Worth area counties do not meet the ozone standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency. The MPO develops and implements programs to reduce ozone-causing emissions from transportation-related sources. To accomplish the mobility and air quality goals of the entire region, it is important to hear from people who live, work and travel in North Texas and have varying transportation needs and priorities. This Public Participation Plan outlines the responsibilities as well as the goals and strategies for engaging the broadest and most diverse audiences possible.

Public Involvement Goals

NCTCOG will continue to adhere to federal requirements for public involvement, in addition to finding new ways of engaging the public in the transportation planning and programming process. The laws and legislation relevant to public participation and how NCTCOG responds to each are outlined in Appendix A.

To engage diverse audiences in planning for transportation and improving air quality, an integrated communications and outreach plan must be implemented. Making content relevant, removing barriers to participation and stating information simply and visually will facilitate understanding and meaningful input. NCTCOG not only seeks to inform and educate but also to empower and improve opportunities for the public to share their ideas, perspectives and priorities for transportation. When the public has been informed and has had an opportunity to provide input, sufficient consensus building can take place, which provides the support for whatever transportation decisions are made. Finally, monitoring, evaluating and refining communications and outreach strategies will ensure NCTCOG's efforts to inform and gather input are inclusive and effective. Public involvement goals and the strategic priorities to accomplish each are outlined below.

Inform and Educate

- Increase awareness and understanding of the MPO among North Texans.
- Connect with organizations and community leaders who can help reach more people and engage those individuals in the planning process.
- Make information accessible and understandable.
- Provide timely public notice of information resources and opportunities to comment on plans, policies and programs.
- Develop visuals to illustrate and enhance communications.
- Ensure transparency as Regional Transportation Council and the standing technical, policy and strategic committee meetings are all open meetings that anyone can attend.
- Provide language translation and alternate formats as requested.

Engage Diverse Audiences and Encourage Continued Participation

- Identify the affected public and other stakeholder groups with respect to the plans, programs, projects, policies and partnerships under development.
- Encourage input to be submitted in numerous ways, including those that are flexible, creative and innovative.
- Clearly define purpose and objectives for public dialogue on transportation plans, programs, projects, policies and partnerships.
- Eliminate barriers to participation by allowing 24/7 access to information and comment opportunities and hosting public meetings at accessible locations and convenient times but complemented by a video recording that can be viewed as individual schedules permit.
- Document and respond, as needed, to comments received, whether at a public meeting, an outreach event or received by mail, e-mail, website or social media.
- Share public input with technical and policy committees.
- Use input to develop policies, plans and programs, making the final versions easily accessible.

Evaluate Public Participation Strategies

- Incorporate more surveys at events and online.
- Review quantitative and qualitative data for outreach and communications efforts.
- Review how public input influenced transportation decision-making.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

It is a priority to increase the number and diversity of participants.

Consistent with federal requirements outlined in Appendix A, NCTCOG is committed to incorporating Environmental Justice elements and Title VI considerations into its Public Participation Plan. During the public participation process, populations that have been traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households, are sought out and their needs considered.

NCTCOG addresses Environmental Justice concerns throughout the transportation planning process, and it is the responsibility of all staff to consider the needs of traditionally underserved communities during planning, project selection and project implementation. As the Public Participation Plan is implemented, special consideration is given to ensure all residents have reasonable access to information and opportunities to give input. Demographic data is analyzed to identify areas having considerable numbers of protected populations, and this can be used for public meeting location and outreach event selection as well as identification of need for more targeted or diverse outreach efforts.

A Language Assistance Plan (LAP) (Appendix B) outlines NCTCOG's efforts to make information available to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. The LAP outlines demographic information, analysis of Department activities, language assistance provided and communication to LEP persons about the availability of language assistance.

Title VI states that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. Title VI prohibits discrimination: whether intentional or where the unintended effect is unduly burdensome.

Title VI Complaint Procedures (Appendix D) outlines the NCTCOG Title VI policy, how an individual may submit a complaint, how the complaint will be investigated and potential resolution scenarios.

Through building new relationships with organizations and communities that serve groups traditionally under represented, NCTCOG will reach far more individuals. Other opportunities to potentially increase the number and diversity of people reached and engaged include, but will not be limited to:

- Media outreach – traditional and non-traditional. Research newspapers and blogs serving areas with considerable numbers of protected populations.
- Paid advertising. Identify opportunities to place paid advertisements in strategically selected media and organization publications to encourage individuals to sign up to be involved in determining transportation plans for the region.
- Language translation.
- Community liaisons. Establish and facilitate a network of community liaisons who can share information and opportunities with those whom they interact with on a regular basis.
- Business outreach. Beginning with focus group-type meetings with chambers of commerce, staff will evaluate how to enhance outreach to the business community. Chambers of commerce, including minority chambers, are included in the public involvement contact list. Staff, however, will consult with chamber and business leaders to identify other opportunities to inform and involve businesses and employees.
- Non-profit coordination. Identify and develop opportunities to coordinate with non-profit organizations already effectively reaching segments of the North Texas population.

Audiences and Stakeholders

Collaboration and communication help develop the consensus needed for transportation plans, policies and projects that accomplish the mobility, quality of life and air quality goals of the region. NCTCOG strongly encourages involvement and input from individuals and groups who reside, have interest or do business in the North Texas area and may be affected by transportation and air quality decisions. Individuals especially connected to others, either formally or informally, are important to enhancing communications and outreach, as they can share information, resources and opportunities for public input. Further developing these connections will expand the reach of NCTCOG information and involve more people in transportation decision-making.

Groups and Individuals to Inform, Involve

- Affected public agencies
- Affordable housing groups
- Airport operators
- City/county staff
- Commercial property interests
- Community groups (economic development organizations, neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce and business organizations, bicycle groups, community organizations)
- Community leaders
- Commuters
- Elected officials

- Environmental groups
- Federal and state wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies
- Freight industry (freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services)
- Higher education faculty, staff and students
- Individuals
- Landowners
- Limited English proficient persons
- Local and state emergency response agencies
- Low-income populations
- Media
- Minority populations
- Non-profit organizations
- Organizations focused on aging
- Organizations serving rural area residents
- Organizations serving veterans
- Private providers of transportation
- Professional organizations
- Public health organizations
- Public transit operators
- Public transit users
- Real estate professionals
- Representatives of agencies and organizations serving individuals with disabilities
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- School district representatives
- Seniors
- Social service organizations
- State and local agencies responsible for growth and economic development
- Transportation advocates
- Transportation partners
- Tribal Governments
- Women's organizations
- Youth

Committees

Standing and ad hoc committees, subcommittees, task forces and working groups provide valuable input, insight and coordination on planning for transportation and air quality issues in the region. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is the forum for cooperative decision-making by primarily elected officials of local governments in the Metropolitan Planning Area. The Regional Transportation Council meets regularly on the second Thursday of each month.

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee provides technical review and advice to the Regional Transportation Council with regard to the surface transportation system. Other technical committees, determined by the NCTCOG Transportation Director, as needed, shall provide technical review and advice for the regional transportation planning process.

Meetings of the RTC and the standing technical, policy and strategic committees are open meetings. For more on the committees, past and upcoming meetings and other information, visit www.nctcog.org/trans/committees.

3. Specific Opportunities for Involvement, Outcomes

Early and Continuous Public Engagement Complements Focused Efforts for Outcomes, Milestones

NCTCOG strives to continuously inform and involve the public. North Texans are encouraged to submit comments and questions at anytime. However, when developing and updating major plans and programs there are several specific outcomes and milestones that especially benefit from public input. Staff seek to align the outcomes and milestones to outreach efforts and opportunities for public involvement. It is important that local governments, transportation partners, business and community groups, non-profits, stakeholders and interested residents who all have a stake in the outcomes have opportunities to be involved in determining the future of transportation in the region. As such, the level of outreach and opportunities for input correlate to the significance of the transportation planning outcomes and milestones.

Consideration of and Response to Public Comments

NCTCOG compiles, summarizes and responds to (as appropriate), substantive comments submitted on plans, programs and policies. Public input provides NCTCOG and the RTC with community insight that can be balanced with professional expertise and technical analysis to reach an informed decision. In the event that more than one public meeting is scheduled, the public comment period begins the day of the first meeting. When a specific comment period is stated, comments must be received by 11:59 pm CST on the date specified as the deadline.

With an increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent modification of the Transportation Improvement Program due to funding requirements or timelines. In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated comment period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least 72 hours. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible.

Additional Comment Opportunities for Changes to Final Plans

If any of the final plans or programs differ significantly from the draft that was made available for public comment and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available. At the minimum, the format of the additional comment opportunity will be the same as the initial opportunity and have a minimum 14-day comment period, unless provisions for an expedited comment period apply as outlined above. In the case of public meetings, the number and location of the subsequent public meeting(s) may vary, but at a minimum one public meeting will be held at NCTCOG, and a video recording of that meeting will be posted online.

Minor changes or changes that could have reasonably been foreseen can be made without further opportunities for public involvement. This is consistent with CFR § 450.316 (a)(1)(viii) included in Appendix A.

Inclement Weather and Public Comment Periods

Specific public comment periods are given for the transportation planning actions and outcomes outlined, and these are initiated either by a public meeting or posting information online for public review. Should inclement weather lead to the cancelation of one or more public meetings,

NCTCOG will first notify the public of the cancelation through e-mail, web page updates and social media. In most cases, if another public meeting in the series can be hosted as planned and/or a video recording made available at www.nctcog.org/input, the deadline for public comments will remain as if weather was not a factor. However, based on the topic, staff may determine it is necessary to reschedule the meeting or meetings and adjust the public comment period. If action initiating a public comment period, such as posting information to www.nctcog.org/input for review, is delayed by inclement weather, staff will communicate by e-mail and social media the delay and again when the information becomes available. If the delay is less than seven calendar days, the deadline for public comments will remain as if weather was not a factor.

Public Participation Plan Development and Updates

The Public Participation Plan describes the public involvement responsibilities of the MPO and outlines goals and strategies for engaging the broadest and most diverse audiences possible in the transportation planning process. Staff monitor and evaluate communication and outreach strategies and review federal legislation and guidance for public participation. As communications trends and transportation planning requirements change, staff will determine the level and timing of changes needed to the Public Participation Plan. Staff will align input opportunities with the extensiveness of proposed changes.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development or update of the Public Participation Plan	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	45 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Update to one or more Public Participation Plan appendix or legislative reference in the document	Proposed changes posted online for public review and comment at www.nctcog.org/input	45 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications
Typographic or grammatical correction	None, changes not substantive	Not applicable	Not applicable

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program for Regional Transportation Planning provides a summary of the transportation and related air quality planning tasks conducted by the MPO. It is developed every two years and serves as a guide for transportation and air quality planning activities to be conducted over the course of specified fiscal years. Included in the UPWP are detailed descriptions of the transportation and air quality planning tasks with a summary of the amount and source of funds to be used. The UPWP is developed in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, transportation authorities, toll authorities and local governments in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. Specific planning needs for the region are identified through requests solicited from representatives of these agencies. This information is combined with regional needs identified by NCTCOG, and after allocating funds from available resources, presented as a proposed Work Program for the upcoming fiscal years. The UPWP is modified periodically to reflect new initiatives, project modifications and funding adjustments.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development of the UPWP	One public meeting that is also video recorded and available online with materials to outline recommendations.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Modifications	Video summary and recommendations posted online for public review and comment at www.nctcog.org/input	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Updated at least every four years, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the long-term, financially constrained, multimodal transportation plan for the region. It includes policies, programs and projects for development that respond to adopted goals, and it guides expenditures of state and federal funds during the next 20 or more years. It is the product of a comprehensive, cooperative and continuous planning effort. Transit, highway, local roadway and bicycle and pedestrian projects are among projects included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. During its development, transportation investment priorities and major planning-level project design concepts are established. Broad regional impacts of transportation and the environment are addressed. This is an early and important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to help define and influence transportation in the region. As such, numerous outreach and communications strategies are implemented to engage a diverse audience in public input opportunities. Strategies may include but are not limited to print and online surveys, stakeholder workshops, website content, media outreach, e-mail and mail notices, presentations to community groups and public meetings for both the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and review of its final recommendations prior to Regional Transportation Council approval consideration. Public comments on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be included in the documentation of the plan or by reference to the Transportation Conformity documentation.

Changes to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are incorporated through an update, amendment or administrative modification, and public input opportunities correspond to the level of proposed changes.

The most comprehensive set of changes, an update, is a complete review of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan that addresses new demographics or changes to the overall timeframe for the plan. Project changes, additions or deletions may also be part of an update.

An amendment incorporates a significant change to one or more projects included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, but it does not modify the demographic assumptions or overall timeframe for a plan. The addition or deletion of a project is completed through the amendment process. Other examples of changes to projects that would require an amendment include, a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope, e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes. An amendment requires public review and comment and redemonstration of fiscal constraint. Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes outside of the financially constrained section of the plan do not require an amendment.

It should be noted that the purpose of the public comment and review period in all cases is to solicit feedback on the recommendations and information documented in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. As a result, it is sometimes necessary to make minor modifications to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan documentation and coded transportation model networks. These modifications may include updating existing project data, correcting erroneous information, or clarifying text. In the event that these types of changes are necessary during the public comment and review period, revised documentation will be posted online at www.nctcog.org/input and the associated Metropolitan Transportation Plan website. Notification of these revisions will be provided to the public involvement contact list and through social media.

Administrative modifications are minor changes to project/project phase costs, funding sources of previously-included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative revision is a revision that does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination. This could also include project clarifications or technical network coding/reporting corrections consistent with NCTCOG review, public comments and conformity partner comments.

Finally, changes to the section of non-regionally significant projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan may be incorporated through the Transportation Improvement Program modification process to ensure consistency between the two documents.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan	A series of public meetings shall be held at least 60 days prior to requesting RTC approval. A second series of public meetings will be held at least 30 days prior to RTC approval. Meetings will be throughout the region at day and evening times, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days following each meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release

Metropolitan Transportation Plan, continued

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Metropolitan Transportation Plan administrative revisions	Summary of modifications accessible from www.nctcog.org/input for informational purposes.	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of information included on next notice for a public input opportunity

Transportation Improvement Program

As projects listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan move closer to implementation, they are added to the Transportation Improvement Program, a comprehensive, multi-year list of funded transportation projects. The TIP lists projects with committed funds from federal, state and local sources. To maintain an accurate project listing, this document is updated on a regular basis, according to the Transportation Improvement Program Modification Policy in Appendix C. The modification policy defines types of TIP modifications and the related procedures. Every two to three years, NCTCOG, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies, develops a new TIP. Public comments on the TIP will be included in the documentation of the TIP or by reference to the Transportation Conformity documentation. With an increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be very rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent modification of the Transportation Improvement Program due to funding requirements or timelines. In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated comment period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least 72 hours. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development of the Transportation Improvement Program	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
TIP Revisions requiring Regional Transportation Council approval	Recommendations posted online for public review and comment at www.nctcog.org/input	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
TIP Administrative Amendments and modifications supporting previous RTC action	Summary of modifications accessible from www.nctcog.org/input for informational purposes.	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of information included on next notice for a public input opportunity
Project changes not requiring TIP modification	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Transportation Conformity

The region's long- and short-range transportation plans, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, must comply with federal air quality regulations because the Dallas-Fort Worth area is designated by the EPA as nonattainment for the pollutant ozone. The Transportation Conformity analysis documents that the total ozone-causing pollution expected from all of the region's planned transportation projects are within limits established in the State Implementation Plan. The analysis incorporates, among many factors, the expected completion date of transportation projects. The draft conformity determination of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program and supporting documentation shall be made available at the related public meetings.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Transportation Conformity determination draft related to development of the Transportation Improvement Program or Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Transportation Conformity determination draft related to update or amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Transportation Conformity draft related to changes to the transportation system	One or more public meetings at least 30 days prior to RTC approval.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release

Transportation Conformity, continued

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Transportation Conformity draft related to changes in the emission budget of the State Implementation Plan and/or nonattainment area boundary changes	Draft conformity determination and supporting data posted online for public review and comment at www.nctcog.org/input	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Transportation Conformity approval by federal partners	None, final approval available at www.nctcog.org/conformity	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News release announcing federal approval

Federal Transit Administration Funding

Local public transportation providers receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds through the Urbanized Area Formula Program. The providers request Urbanized Area Formula Program funds, including Job Access / Reverse Commute (JA/RC) projects, through their annual Programs of Projects (POPs). The POPs are included in the Transportation Improvement Program following public comment and approval by the Regional Transportation Council. The public involvement procedures outlined below satisfy the federal public participation requirements associated with development of POPs, and this is stated on public meeting notices. Additionally, up to two percent of the Urbanized Area Formula Program funds are awarded through a competitive Call for Projects for Job Access / Reverse Commute projects. NCTCOG follows the same public involvement procedures when recommending the award of funds through a Call for Projects. Local public transportation providers may also receive funds from other FTA formula programs, and the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations. Whenever possible, draft POPs and other funding recommendations will be combined with a discussion about regional public transportation needs and priorities to garner interest and provide for a more comprehensive discussion. Changes to POPs will be addressed through the Transportation Improvement Program modification process.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Draft Programs of Projects for Urbanized Area Formula Program funds (includes Job Access / Reverse Commute projects)	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release
Funding recommendations for other Federal Transit Administration formula programs, e.g., Bus and Bus Facilities, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and State of Good Repair	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

Federal regulations require NCTCOG to develop an annual listing of obligated projects, including investments in roadways, transit, maintenance, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which federal funds were obligated in the preceding fiscal year. NCTCOG, in consultation and coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation and public transportation agencies, compiles the information and publishes the annual listing of projects at www.nctcog.org/annual.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Publishing of Annual Listing of Obligated Projects	Review only at www.nctcog.org/annual	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media

Congestion Management Process

The Congestion Management Process outlines lower-cost projects and programs for the effective management of transportation facilities and systems, maximizing the benefit of available resources and improving reliability of the system. A transportation system as large as Dallas-Fort Worth's needs more than just capital improvements to run smoothly. The CMP includes quick-to-implement, low-cost strategies to better operate the system and manage travel-demand. These strategies complement costly infrastructure improvements. This plan is required of metropolitan areas with populations exceeding 200,000 people, and it is updated periodically.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development of the Congestion Management Process	Multiple public meetings throughout the region at day and evening times, and at least one meeting will be video recorded and posted online at www.nctcog.org/video	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to public involvement contact list • NCTCOG publication article • Social media • Newspaper ad, including minority publications • News release

Environmental Studies

Whenever NCTCOG is involved in the development of environmental documents pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the public involvement requirements of implementing agencies; and when applicable, the Texas Department of Transportation Environmental Manual, will be met. During this process, NCTCOG will continuously coordinate with the implementing agency.

Additionally, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, NCTCOG receives copies of draft environmental documents to make available to the public for review and comment during business hours. The comment period is determined by the agency publishing the document.

4. Integrated, Comprehensive Outreach and Communications

Expanding Opportunities to Learn about, Provide Input on Plans

By offering information in a variety of formats, NCTCOG is able to include far more people in the planning process than relying on a limited number of strategies and opportunities. Efforts to inform and gather input from the public include, but are not limited to, the following strategies.

Upon request, any NCTCOG Transportation Department information will be converted into alternative formats or languages.

Websites and Technology

Advances in technology have made it easier for the public to participate in the planning process on their own free time using a computer or mobile device. An increase in ownership of smart phones is narrowing the digital divide and presents additional opportunities to engage users.

The Internet is a dynamic tool that allows NCTCOG to reach a large cross section of people at times conducive to their schedules. People have access to web-based information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Websites, e-mail lists, online video, webinars and social media can all be used to inform, educate and start dialogues about transportation planning.

NCTCOG maintains a website, www.nctcog.org/trans, that provides easy access to information about the plans, programs and policies of the MPO. The website includes a calendar of events, committee activities and actions, requests for proposals and requests for qualifications and electronic versions of plans, reports, policies and program information. The site includes a search feature that allows users to find specific documents or other information using key words.

When information is released for public review and comment, it will be available at www.nctcog.org/input, which will be included on all communications announcing the public review and comment opportunity.

This site includes a Public Involvement web page, www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/involve, to provide the latest information on public meetings, media releases, public surveys and the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan. Public meeting presentations, handouts, schedules, flyers and minutes are made available on this site as well. A printable public notification form for mailing or an online version that can be used via e-mail is available.

Interested parties may also directly access all Transportation Department staff members via e-mail, phone, fax or postal mail.

Finally, website visitors can easily subscribe to receive information from NCTCOG and submit comments and questions. Public information staff can make available to the public items on the website if a person does not have Internet access.

Social Media

The NCTCOG Transportation Department maintains a social media presence to inform North Texans about programs, projects, policies and opportunities for them to give input and be involved in the decision-making process. This includes the use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo and YouTube. Additional types of social media may be added in the future. NCTCOG staff will post information on the department accounts and monitor and respond to questions and concerns as warranted. Additionally, staff occasionally submit suggested social media content to cities, chambers of commerce and other organizations for inclusion in their communications.

Video

One of several visualization techniques, video is used to increase understanding of complex transportation plans, policies and programs. Video recordings of public meetings and Regional Transportation Council meetings are posted online at www.nctcog.org/video. Video recordings of selected other meetings and workshops are also available. Additionally, short, informational videos are posted at www.youtube.com/NCTCOGtrans and www.vimeo.com/NCTCOGtrans. As needed, video will complement materials available for public review and comment at www.nctcog.org/input. Depending on the length of the video, not only will it be online at www.nctcog.org/input, but it will also be available at www.nctcog.org/video or www.youtube.com/NCTCOGtrans.

Public Meetings, Workshops, Conferences, Forums and Other Events

For large, complex or extensive transportation planning efforts, public meetings, workshops, roundtables, conferences, forums and other events allow for in-depth discussion. Typically, these events are reserved for development of plans, programs and policies and significant changes to those as well as more project or study area specific discussions.

As needed, NCTCOG Transportation Department will host these events to gather input and build consensus among various transportation stakeholders. To facilitate greater participation in public meetings specifically, the following criteria are considered when selecting meeting locations. These criteria also reflect Environmental Justice considerations.

- Meetings will be held in accessible locations, preferably near transit lines or routes.
- Meetings will be held in buildings that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Presentations and supporting documentation, as needed, will be available at meetings.
- An informal meeting environment will be cultivated, allowing attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- For meetings on a specific project, the meeting(s) will be held in corridor(s) directly affected by the project.
- The NCTCOG Transportation Department will make every effort to accommodate attendees with special needs if they provide sufficient notice. Upon request, language translation, including sign and foreign language interpreters and handouts in large print

or Braille, will be available. Additionally, staff will make every effort to accommodate requests from persons with disabilities. A minimum of three days advance notice is required for these arrangements to be provided. Public meeting notices will provide the telephone number and e-mail address to request special arrangements.

- At a minimum, the meeting will be audio taped. Video recording, however, is increasingly offered.

NCTCOG Transportation Department will, on occasion, provide other informational items at public meetings. Any additional information or materials may be requested at public meetings and NCTCOG can assure that information is mailed to citizens upon their request.

All public meeting notices are sent to selected newspapers, including minority publications, as necessary, to ensure regional coverage. Translated notices are sent to non-English newspapers. All public meetings are posted on the Texas Register website as part of the Open Meetings requirement. Public meeting notices are mailed to public libraries and city and county offices for posting. Additionally, notices are mailed and e-mailed to individuals, elected officials, transportation partners and organizations on the public involvement contact list, which is constantly growing. To be included, individuals subscribe at meetings and events, on the website or by contacting NCTCOG. Staff coordinate with public information officers of the cities in which meetings are scheduled, to request assistance in posting information, often on the city cable television channel, websites and social media accounts.

Print and Digital Publications

The NCTCOG Transportation Department develops publications designed to educate the public on transportation issues and encourage their active involvement. Many of the publications are sent to the public involvement contact list and made available at public meetings, community events and Regional Transportation Council and subcommittee meetings. All are available on the NCTCOG website or by contacting NCTCOG at transinfo@nctcog.org or 817-695-9240. Upon request, any NCTCOG Transportation Department publication will be converted into alternative formats or languages. Publications include, but are not limited to:

- *Citizen Guide to Transportation Planning and Programming in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area*
- Educational pieces, such as topic-specific *Fact Sheets* and the annual report
- Local Motion (a newsletter for local elected officials and transportation decision-makers)
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan Executive Summary
- *Mobility Matters* (a newsletter mailed and e-mailed to the public involvement list)
- Notices of public meetings, opportunities for public review and comment, workshops and open house events

Various planning documents and other publications are available upon request. Most can also be viewed via the NCTCOG website. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Congestion Management Process
- Transportation Conformity Analysis
- Technical Report Series
- Unified Planning Work Program

Environmental documents received by the Metropolitan Planning Organization are also available to the public. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, NCTCOG receives copies of draft environmental documents to make available to the public for review and comment during business hours.

Finally, staff occasionally submit suggested article content to cities, chambers of commerce and other organizations for inclusion in their communications.

Stakeholder Interviews

Meeting with regional transportation stakeholders, such as community and business leaders, non-profit organization representatives and other individuals help staff understand local communities and how to best share relevant information and engage more and increasingly diverse groups of people in the transportation planning process.

Speakers Bureau

Staff often present to organizations and groups such as neighborhood associations, Kiwanis and Rotary groups, chambers of commerce, professional associations, businesses and non-profits, among others. To schedule a speaker or for more information, e-mail transinfo@nctcog.org or call 817-695-9240.

Media Relations

Proactive media outreach efforts include distributing news releases on major projects and programs and opportunities for public input to more than 240 reporters at local media outlets and community news sources, including minority news media. The extensive media list includes all major television stations and newspapers as well as radio stations. The media contact list is continuously updated, and staff are committed to coordinating with local editors and news directors and providing timely and accurate information. Staff participate in interviews with local and national print, radio and television media. The goal of furthering these relationships with local media is to foster greater public awareness and understanding among Dallas-Fort Worth area citizens regarding transportation issues.

Surveys and Keypad Polling

The NCTCOG Transportation Department may conduct surveys to determine public awareness and/or sentiment with regard to certain planning issues. Surveys may be relatively small endeavors designed to shed light on one or two issues, or may be large-scale planning endeavors. They may be in print and/or electronic versions.

Similar to a survey, keypad polling is another opportunity to gather input on community preferences and priorities. Polling questions can be integrated in a presentation and attendees respond with keypads provided by NCTCOG. Results can be immediately shown in the presentation or captured and reviewed later.

Visualization

Maps, charts, diagrams, illustrations, photographs, infographics, video and the use of color are used to visualize ideas, concepts, plans, projects and programs. Visualization elements are integrated in presentations, publications and website content.

Advertising

Paid advertising is used to announce public meetings, opportunities for public review and comment and other initiatives. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations emphasize the importance of public involvement, including public meetings and the opportunity for public comment, in the transportation planning process and require adequate notice be given to the public of these activities. As such, paid advertising complements other outreach and communications efforts. Ads are placed in select newspapers, including minority publications, to ensure regional coverage. Online advertising may be used to complement traditional print advertising.

Mail and E-mail

The public involvement mail and e-mail lists provide for the most direct forms of communication. Together, they represent a comprehensive way to reach member governments, state agencies, neighborhood associations, civic organizations, transportation advocacy groups, social service organizations, freight companies, transit providers, chambers of commerce (including minority chambers), churches and individuals.

Individuals receive public meeting notices; information about public review and comment opportunities; announcements of workshops or open houses; educational brochures; newsletters; and other material suitable for mass mailings.

The lists are continually maintained and expanded based on requests from the NCTCOG Transportation Department web page (an online form is available for submission), returned mail and requests for additions and deletions from various sources and events.

Community Events

In an effort to educate the public and increase public awareness of transportation plans and programs, information is distributed at a variety of community events such as local government events, Earth Day celebrations, bike rallies, etc. To request NCTCOG's participation in an event or for more information, e-mail transinfo@nctcog.org or call 817-695-9240.

Telephone Town Halls

The NCTCOG Transportation Department will periodically host telephone town hall discussions. Announced through NCTCOG Transportation Department communications, interested individuals can sign up to participate. The format is similar to a radio show, except participants listen in from their phones. Staff provide information on a topic and callers can then ask questions or make comments. Callers can participate on either a landline or mobile phone and polling can be integrated in the discussion, as relevant. An audio recording is captured and posted online.

Connections and Shareable Content

Staff will seek to develop connections and partnerships with a wide range of outreach professionals, community groups, jurisdictions and agencies to extend the reach of messaging about transportation and air quality issues and opportunities for public input. Engagement of NCTCOG committee members and community leaders willing to share NCTCOG information will also help involve new audiences in the planning process.

5. Evaluation

The evaluation structure incorporates both quantitative and qualitative evaluation and aligns the results with desired outcomes for measuring the strategy. Ultimately, staff gain a better understanding of how time and resources devoted to strategies are having an impact on public involvement and the overall transportation planning process.

Strategy	Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation	Desired Evaluation Outcomes
Website and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website visits • Source of web traffic/referring websites • Time spent on web pages • Navigation on web pages • Search terms • Language • Browser/device • Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of trends and changes for website usage over time. • Understanding of how other outreach and communications strategies may influence website use. • Prioritization of and increased accessibility to information and opportunities for input most important to the public.
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions and engagement • Audience • Content views • Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader distribution of information and public involvement opportunities through shareable content, interactions and engagement. • Increased feedback and public input.
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views • Average view duration/time spent • Geography (NCTCOG website only) • Information viewed (NCTCOG website only) • Engagement/likes (YouTube only) • Subscribers (YouTube only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to meetings at anytime from anywhere. • Engaging, visual content to make complex transportation issues more understandable. • Elimination of time constraint and travel/geographic barriers.

Strategy	Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation	Desired Evaluation Outcomes
Public Meetings, Community Workshops, Roundtables, Conferences, Forums and Other Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events hosted • Attendance • Input received • Type of information distributed and shared • Geographic representation • Demographic information • Regional accessibility to event(s) or information (if applicable) • All events hosted at locations accessible to individuals with disabilities • Notification of how to request language translation or special accommodations at a public meeting • Communications strategies through which people learned about the event • Number of viewers of live or recorded video of the event • Communication strategies used to announce event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned opportunities for the public to interact directly with staff. • Meaningful opportunities for all individuals to learn about and provide input on plans, programs and policies. • Notification of events through a variety of strategies. • Live and recorded video online complement in-person events, making information more accessible.
Print and Digital Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of publications distributed • Distribution plan, e.g., accessibility of information in print and online • Website analytics for digital publications • Variety of publication formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is available in multiple formats and accessible to all communities. • Publication content encourages continued involvement in transportation planning. • Publications enhance understanding of plans, programs and policies.
Stakeholder Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic representation • Variety of organizations/stakeholders interviewed • Opportunities for ongoing communication, engagement • Information learned to enhance communications, gather public input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of audiences, region. • Identification of new opportunities to educate and engage new audiences and/or connections for shareable content.

Strategy	Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation	Desired Evaluation Outcomes
Speakers Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of presentation requests • Groups reached • Number of people reached • Materials distributed • Input received • Topics of presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of Transportation Department plans, programs and policies.
Media Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage • Media requests • Number of news releases • Media contact list characteristics, e.g., number of reporters, types of news sources, regional diversity, inclusion of minority news sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive media relations and communication of Metropolitan Planning Organization news, policies, programs and opportunities for public involvement. • Understanding of local, regional, statewide and national media coverage of transportation and air quality stories relevant to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.
Surveys and Keypad Polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rate • Completeness of responses • Percent of respondents who would participate in a public involvement activity again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and public input. • Relevant, accessible and simple opportunities to gather feedback and public input. • Information about public understanding, awareness and priorities. • Results facilitate further discussion and inform decisions.
Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualization resources available to staff • Use of visualization in presentations and publications and on the website • Input received • Demonstrated or stated understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects or programs among intended audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects and programs. • Informed input. • Facilitates analysis of data.
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions/number of people potentially reached • Click throughs of online ads • Comments received noting advertising • Diversity of advertising placements, e.g. minority news sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad regional distribution of opportunities for public input.

Strategy	Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation	Desired Evaluation Outcomes
Mail and E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of contacts • Number of new contacts • Number of unsubscribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All interested individuals, organizations and communities receive regular communication from the department.
Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events attended • Location of events • Number of events held/attended that provided opportunities for strengthening relationships with environmental justice populations • Event attendance • Interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for the public to interact directly with staff in an informal setting. • Makes information accessible where people are already gathering instead of requiring people seek it out. • Attending events throughout the region is important in the large planning area.
Telephone Town Halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of telephone town halls hosted • Number of registrants • Number of participants • Participation during telephone town hall • Input received • Topics of telephone town halls • Website analytics for registration page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of time constraint and travel/geographic barriers. • Planned opportunities for the public to interact directly with staff. • Meaningful opportunities for all individuals to learn about and provide input on plans, programs and policies.
Connections and Shareable Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article and social media content sent to partners, local governments, community groups and other organizations • Content published by partners, local governments, community groups and other organizations • New audiences reached through established connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended reach of messaging about transportation and air quality issues and opportunities for public input. • Sustained engagement of connections who influence/conduct outreach. • Communication in a format that facilitates sharing with others.

Overall Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of the overall public participation process will consider the following data, and the information will be used to establish priorities and refine efforts.

- Type and quantity of materials distributed
- Translation of materials
- Number of opportunities for specific public input
- Number of public comments
- How comments influence regional transportation plans
- Timely responses to public comments
- Communication about final plans, policies and programs following public input opportunities

Evaluation of Project-specific Outreach

Some or all of the strategies outlined in the Public Participation Plan may be used for project-specific outreach, and the corresponding evaluation criteria and outcomes apply. Additional outcomes, however, may also be established to complement measureable public involvement goals for public involvement specific to the project. At the beginning of a project requiring public involvement, staff will outline strategies and expected outcomes so the public knows what to expect. How public involvement influences or changes the project will be communicated throughout the project and documented in final reports as applicable.

Public Participation Plan (February 2015)

Appendix A

Laws and Legislation Relevant to Public Participation

Federal Legislation and Executive Orders

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)

MAP-21, the most recent federal transportation legislation, and the associated implementing regulations emphasize the importance of public involvement and contain specific language outlining requirements for public participation processes and procedures. In general, MAP-21 legislation and regulations maintained requirements of previous transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU) and did not establish any new requirements.

Elements of the Public Participation Plan that specifically respond to requirements:

- Notices of public input opportunities, including public meetings, will be sent to newspapers to ensure regional coverage. Translated notices will also be sent to non-English newspapers. Notification is also sent to local libraries, city halls, county court houses and chambers of commerce (including minority chambers). NCTCOG will maintain a comprehensive contact list of individuals and organizations that wish to be notified of all public input opportunities as well as stakeholders outlined in federal requirements.
- Information is disseminated through NCTCOG's publications, reports, public meetings and other outreach events, the NCTCOG website, local media sources and open meetings.
- To the maximum extent possible, NCTCOG will employ visualization techniques such as maps, charts, graphs, photos and computer simulation in its public involvement activities.
- Reports, plans, publications, recent presentations and other information are available on the NCTCOG website. Public comments may also be submitted on the NCTCOG Transportation Department website and via e-mail. Interested parties may subscribe to receive topic specific e-mail correspondence. Additional web-related communication tools are evaluated continuously for implementation.
- Public meetings are held in diverse locations throughout the region, accessible to individuals with disabilities, preferably near transit lines or routes, at both day and evening times. Public meeting materials and summaries are archived online and hard copies can be mailed upon request.
- Public meetings will be held during development of the Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Unified Planning Work Program. There are also online public input opportunities. All public comments will be reviewed and considered by the Regional Transportation Council and standing technical, policy and strategic committees. Public comments received on the TIP and the MTP shall be included in documentation of the TIP and the MTP or via reference to Transportation Conformity documentation.

- If the final TIP or MTP significantly differs from the draft made available for public review and public comment and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment will be provided.
- When possible, public meetings will be coordinated with the Texas Department of Transportation.
- NCTCOG regularly reviews its Transportation Public Participation Plan. If modified in a more restrictive fashion, a 45-day comment period will be held following the public meetings at which proposed revisions are discussed.

23 CFR §450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Title VI states that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. Title VI prohibits discrimination: whether intentional or where the unintended effect is unduly burdensome.

Title VI Complaint Procedures (Appendix D) outlines the NCTCOG Title VI policy, how an individual may submit a complaint, how the complaint will be investigated and potential resolution scenarios.

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations

In response to Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, NCTCOG's policy reflects that no segment of the region should, because of race, economic makeup, age, sex, or disability, bear a disproportionate share of the adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, of its programs, policies and activities or be denied equal access to environmental benefits. Other fundamental concepts of Environmental Justice included in NCTCOG's policy are to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

NCTCOG addresses Environmental Justice concerns throughout the transportation planning process, and it is the responsibility of all staff to consider the needs of traditionally underserved communities during planning, project selection and project implementation. As the Public Participation Plan is implemented, special consideration is given to ensure all residents have reasonable access to information and opportunities to give input. Demographic data is analyzed to identify areas having considerable numbers of protected populations, and this can be used for public meeting location and outreach event selection as well as identification of need for more targeted or diverse outreach efforts.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

In 2000, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency. The order provided clarification of Title VI in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, stating that recipients of federal funds must "ensure that the programs and activities they normally provide in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin."

The order also required federal agencies and recipients of federal financial assistance to examine the services they provide and develop an implementation plan to provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation stresses the importance of reducing language barriers that can prevent meaningful access by LEP persons to important services. NCTCOG values public involvement and feedback and encourages participation by all communities.

To ensure all communities have meaningful access to information and opportunities to participate in the planning process, the NCTCOG Transportation Department analyzes department activities and demographic information for the region in order to:

- Identify LEP persons who need language assistance and determine how these individuals are served or likely to be served by NCTCOG Transportation Department programs.
- Outline how language assistance will be available.
- Train staff for considering the needs of and interacting with LEP persons.
- Provide notice to LEP persons.
- Monitor and update plans and strategies that address how LEP individuals have access to information and opportunities for program participation.

Because transportation planning and services provided by NCTCOG can be both a benefit and a burden to economic development, employment, housing, education, healthcare and social opportunities, NCTCOG staff is dedicated to assessing the location and needs of LEP communities and consequently, the services NCTCOG provides to these communities.

A Language Assistance Plan (LAP) (Appendix B) outlines NCTCOG's efforts to make information available to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. According to U.S. Department of Transportation Guidelines, a four-factor analysis is used to evaluate the extent to which language assistance measures are required to ensure meaningful access to LEP persons.

The four-factor analysis considers:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity or service.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the federal-funding recipient to people's lives.
4. Resources available to federal-funding recipients and costs of language assistance.

The LAP outlines demographic information, analysis of Department activities, language assistance provided and communication to LEP persons about the availability of language assistance.

Public Participation Plan (February 2015)

Appendix B

Language Assistance Plan (Updated February 2014)

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is committed to incorporating environmental justice elements and Title VI considerations into the public participation process for transportation planning. Input and involvement from populations that have been traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households, are sought out and their needs considered. Various communication strategies and information formats seek to make information easily accessible and understandable.

Title VI states that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. Title VI prohibits discrimination whether intentional or where the unintended effect is unduly burdensome. The North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department Title VI Complaint Procedures (Appendix D) establishes a procedure under which complaints alleging discrimination in NCTCOG's provisions, services, or NCTCOG activities can be made by persons who are not employees of NCTCOG.

The U.S. Department of Transportation defines Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

Executive Order 13166

In 2000, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." The order provided clarification of Title VI in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, stating that recipients of federal funds must "ensure that the programs and activities they normally provide in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin."

The order also required federal agencies and recipients of federal financial assistance to examine the services they provide and develop an implementation plan to provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation stresses the importance of reducing language barriers that can prevent meaningful access by LEP persons to important services. NCTCOG values public involvement and feedback and encourages participation by all communities.

To ensure all communities have meaningful access to information and opportunities to participate in the planning process, the NCTCOG Transportation Department analyzes department activities and demographic information for the region in order to:

- Identify LEP persons who need language assistance and determine how these individuals are served or likely to be served by NCTCOG Transportation Department programs.
- Outline how language assistance will be available.
- Train staff for considering the needs of and interacting with LEP persons.
- Provide notice to LEP persons.
- Monitor and update plans and strategies that address how LEP individuals have access to information and opportunities for program participation.

Because transportation planning and services provided by NCTCOG can be both a benefit and a burden to economic development, employment, housing, education, healthcare and social opportunities, NCTCOG staff is dedicated to assessing the location and needs of LEP communities and consequently, the services NCTCOG provides to these communities.

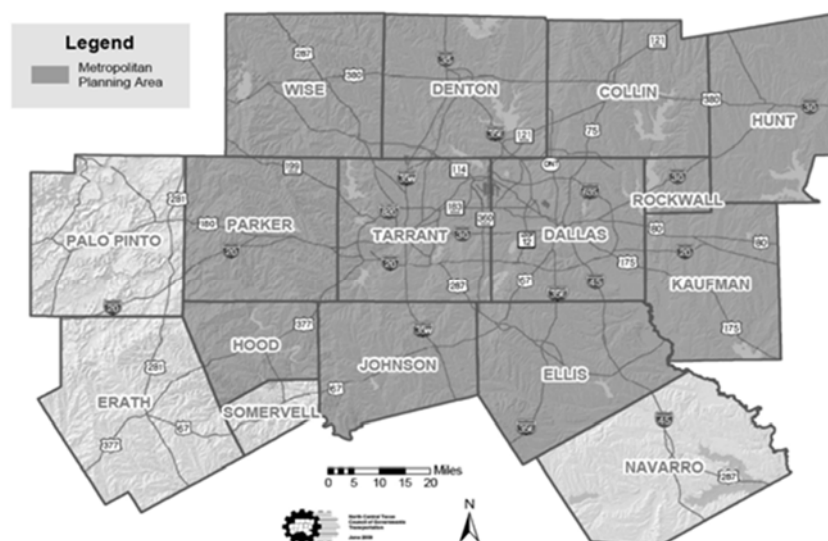
Identification of LEP Populations and Determination of How These Individuals are Served or Likely to be Served by NCTCOG Transportation Department Programs

The U.S. Department of Transportation issued Policy Guidance to federal financial assistance recipients regarding Title VI prohibition against national origin discrimination affecting LEP persons. In this guidance, the U.S. Department of Transportation provided the four-factor analysis as an approach to evaluate the extent to which language assistance measures are required to ensure meaningful access to LEP persons.

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient grantee.

The Metropolitan Planning Area boundary encompasses 12 counties (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise).

Limited English Proficiency Service Area



Data for the 12-county Metropolitan Planning Area was gathered using the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey to analyze a ten-year change. Data from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey was also included to show the most recent language statistics available. LEP persons were classified as anyone over the age of five that described their ability to speak English as 'well,' 'not well,' and 'not at all.' Figures from both data sets were compiled to provide an approximation for the rate of growth of LEP persons in the service area.

In 2010, the American Community Survey estimated population over five was 5,698,467 for the 12-county region. The LEP population was 765,371, approximately 13.4 percent of the total population over five. Data from the 2000 Census showed the LEP population to be 596,426; which is a 28.3 percent increase. Spanish was the largest language represented among the LEP population with 11 percent of the total population. Asian languages were the second largest group among the LEP population comprising 1.6 percent of the total population. LEP individuals speaking Indo-European languages and Other languages comprised 0.6 percent and 0.2 percent of the total population, respectively.

LEP Population for the 12-County Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area

Total Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Population Over 5		Total MPA LEP Population	% LEP of Total Population	Total MPA Spanish LEP Population	% Spanish LEP of Total Population	Total MPA Asian Languages LEP Population*	% Asian Languages LEP of Total Population	Total MPA Indo-European Languages LEP Population	% Indo-European Languages LEP of Total Population	Total MPA Other Languages LEP Population	% Other Languages LEP of Total Population
2000 Census	4,782,849	596,426	12.5%	486,399	10.2%	66,633	1.4%	29,705	0.6%	9,451	0.2%
2006-2010 American Community Survey	5,698,467	765,371	13.4%	624,880	11.0%	89,868	1.6%	35,731	0.6%	14,892	0.2%
2000-2010 % Change	19.4%	28.3%		28.5%		34.9%		20.3%		57.6%	
2008-2012 American Community Survey	5,947,648	788,157	13.3%	634,403	10.7%	95,643	1.6%	40,866	0.7%	17,245	0.3%
2010-2012 % Change	4.4%	3.0%		1.5%		6.4%		14.4%		15.8%	

Source: 2000 Census, 2006-2010 and 2008-2012 American Community Survey; www.census.gov

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is classified as any person whose primary language is other than English and answered that their ability to speak English was “well,” “not well,” and “not at all.”

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area consists of; Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties.

*LEP Asian Languages for 2010 include: Vietnamese (0.58%), Chinese (0.33%), Korean (0.24%), Other Asian Languages (0.14%), Laotian (0.07%), Tagalog (0.06%), Thai (0.04%), Mon-Khmer, Cambodian (0.04%), Japanese (0.04%), Other Pacific Island Languages (0.02%) and Hmong (0.002%).

LEP Asian Languages for 2012 include: Vietnamese (0.62%), Chinese (0.35%), Korean (0.25%), Other Asian Languages (0.16%), Laotian (0.06%), Tagalog (0.06%), Mon-Khmer, Cambodian (0.04%), Japanese (0.04%), Thai (0.03%), Other Pacific Island Languages (0.02%) and Hmong (0.001%).

LEP data for individual languages is not available from the 2000 Census.

Recognizing that low literacy could also result in Limited English Proficiency, data from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy was analyzed. The study used population estimates for persons 16 years and older as of 2003. Individuals determined to lack basic literacy skills either scored below basic in prose or could not be tested due to language barriers.

The study found that 19 percent of the statewide population lacked basic literacy skills. Within the 12-county area, 21 percent of the Dallas County population lacked basic literacy skills. Dallas County was the only county in the region above the state percentage.

Location	Population Size ¹	Percent Lacking <i>Basic Literacy Skills</i> ²
Texas	15,936,279	19%
Collin County	437,018	8%
Dallas County	1,650,735	21%
Denton County	371,897	8%
Ellis County	90,668	13%
Hood County	35,299	9%
Hunt County	60,001	13%
Johnson County	102,672	12%
Kaufman County	60,172	14%
Parker County	72,454	9%
Rockwall County	40,168	8%
Tarrant County	1,130,374	14%
Wise County	40,253	12%

¹ Estimated population size of persons 16 years and older in households in 2003.

² Those lacking *basic* prose literacy skills include those who scored *Below Basic* in prose and those who could not be tested due to language barriers.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy

This Language Assistance Plan outlines how needs of the LEP population in the service area will be addressed, how language services will be made available and how LEP persons will be notified of these services.

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.

The nature of the programs associated with the Metropolitan Planning Organization dictate that the majority of contact with the public and LEP persons is through inquires submitted to the MPO, public meetings, public outreach events, the MPO Website and program implementation activities.

In order to better inform the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with MPO programs, a staff survey of LEP encounters was conducted in 2011. Department staff members were asked if they had encountered an LEP individual in the past six months, and if so, what

languages they had encountered, the frequency and what type of work activity they were conducting. Of the 134 department staff members surveyed, 18 indicated that they encountered LEP individuals speaking six total languages in a period of six months. Spanish was the most common, followed by rare encounters of Vietnamese, Hindi, Arabic, Chinese and unspecified languages. The most frequent work activities in which staff encountered LEP individuals were phone calls and public meetings. The majority of interactions were related to the AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine vehicle repair and replacement assistance program, a state-funded initiative to reduce ozone-causing emissions from high-polluting vehicles.

Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient to people's lives.

NCTCOG is the agency responsible for the regional transportation planning process; in this capacity, NCTCOG must ensure that all segments of the population are involved or have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process. As required by federal guidelines, NCTCOG produces a Metropolitan Transportation Plan that outlines long-range transportation investments, a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that provides short-range planning for transportation investments, a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that outlines tasks to be performed in the upcoming year and a Congestion Management Process for developing and implementing operational and travel-demand strategies that improve transportation system performance.

Consistent with the Public Participation Plan, planners seek public input on the products outlined above, which influence quality of life and mobility options in the region. Public meetings represent one way for North Texans to be informed and involved. Public meeting notices include the telephone number and e-mail address to request special arrangements for language translation or disability. On each notice, this information is included in English and Spanish. Public meetings are advertised in newspapers, and staff interact regularly with local reporters, some who contribute to minority publications. Translated ads are placed in the major Spanish newspapers.

Additionally, ten North Texas counties are classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as moderate nonattainment for eight-hour ozone levels. Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties are classified as nonattainment. MPO transportation plans must show transportation conformity and comply with rules established by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Therefore, NCTCOG is also responsible for developing and implementing plans, policies and programs that reduce transportation-related emissions that lead to ozone formation.

Based on the LEP Interaction Survey described in Factor 2, staff has encountered the most LEP individuals through the AirCheckTexas program. This state program offers financial assistance to individuals who meet income requirements and wish to make emissions-related repairs or replace older, high-polluting vehicles. It allows local residents to contribute to the regional air quality solution. There are currently bilingual staff on the AirCheckTexas program team to assist Spanish speakers that are LEP. Additionally, web content and other materials for the general air quality public awareness campaign are available in English and Spanish.

Factor 4: The resources available to the recipient and costs.

NCTCOG currently has available, if needed, bilingual staff to assist in translation needs and/or translation review. NCTCOG also has agreements with translation services that cover many languages, as well as American Sign Language. To date, no translation services requests for public meetings have been received. NCTCOG currently utilizes a translation service and department staff to translate documents. The average cost for outside translation service is \$0.12 per word. At no cost, the Google Translate tool was added to the NCTCOG Transportation Department Website, allowing information to be available in 80 languages. Each year a portion of the community outreach budget is proactively allocated to translation services. Visualization tools such as animations, maps, renderings, photos and others are also used when possible to increase understanding among all audiences. These tools can also be especially beneficial for LEP persons. All language assistance will be provided at no charge to LEP individuals.

Guidelines for Making Language Assistance Available

The four-factor analysis will be used as a tool for analyzing to what extent and how the needs of LEP communities are addressed during transportation planning and program implementation. For example, the four-factor analysis will be used to determine initial translation or alternative format needs for documents and the Website. Department reports, newsletters, brochures, other publications and Website information include instructions about how to request information be made available in another format. Translators and interpreters used by the NCTCOG Transportation Department will be evaluated to ensure accurate, high-quality language services are available to LEP persons.

Increased use of visualization tools will be used to make information more understandable and, in some cases, reduce the need for English proficiency.

Plans, projects and programs for areas with a high number of LEP persons will have materials that address needs of the population in that area. Environmental Justice communities, including non-English speakers, are mapped whenever possible to provide, as much as possible, plan- or project-specific data to be used.

The NCTCOG Transportation Department will make every effort to accommodate language translation needs, if provided sufficient notice. A minimum of three business days advance notice is required for these arrangements to be provided at public meetings.

NCTCOG Transportation Department staff will consistently seek out input and involvement from organizations and agencies which serve LEP populations to complement other language assistance and outreach efforts.

Staff Training for Considering the Needs of and Interacting with LEP Persons

All NCTCOG Transportation Department staff members employed as of February 2013 completed training on the requirements and techniques for providing meaningful access to services for LEP persons. Training materials and resources continue to be available for review by all staff — including new employees.

Notice of Assistance Available for LEP Persons

Public meeting notices include the telephone number and e-mail address to request special arrangements for language translation or disability. On each notice, this information is included in English and Spanish.

Notice of the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department Title VI Complaint Procedures is also included on publications such as public meeting notices and department publications.

Language assistance can be obtained by contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department:

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department
P.O. Box 5888
616 Six Flags Drive (76011)
Arlington, TX 76005-5888
Phone: (817) 695-9240
Fax: (817) 640-3028
E-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org
Website: www.nctcog.org/trans

Monitoring and Updating Plans and Strategies that Address how LEP Individuals have Access to Information and Opportunities for Program Participation

This Language Assistance Plan is intended to be reviewed and updated in conjunction with the NCTCOG Transportation Public Participation Plan.

Environmental justice and Title VI activities will be periodically summarized to provide information about how the NCTCOG Transportation Department:

- Addresses the needs of LEP persons and those traditionally underserved by existing transportation services.
- Facilitates opportunities for full and fair participation from all individuals.
- Makes information accessible and understandable.
- Ensures no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Public Participation Plan (February 2015)

Appendix C

Transportation Improvement Program Modification Policy Policies and Procedures to Streamline Project Delivery (Updated March 2013)

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM MODIFICATION POLICY Policies and Procedures to Streamline Project Delivery

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a staged, multi-year program of projects approved for funding with federal, State, and local funds within the Dallas-Fort Worth area. A new TIP is approved every two to three years by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which serves as the policy board for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Due to the changing nature of projects as they move through the implementation process, the TIP must be modified on a regular basis.

Please note certain project changes require collaboration with our State and federal review partners. This collaboration occurs through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) revision process. Therefore, modification of the Dallas-Fort Worth TIP will follow the quarterly schedule established for revisions to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

This policy consists of four sections:

General Policy Provisions: Overall policies guiding changes to project implementation

Project Changes Not Requiring TIP Modification: Changes related to administration or interpretation of Regional Transportation Council Policy

Administrative Amendment Policy: Authority granted to the MPO Director to expedite project delivery and maximize the time the RTC has to consider policy level (vs. administrative) issues

Revision Policy: Changes only the Regional Transportation Council can approve or recommend for State and federal concurrence

General Policy Provisions

1. All projects inventoried in the Transportation Improvement Program fall under this modification policy, regardless of funding source or funding category.
2. Air quality conformity, Mobility Plan consistency, congestion management process compliance, and financial constraint requirements must be met for all TIP modifications.

3. Project modifications will only be made with the consent of the implementing/impacted agency.
4. The Dallas-Fort Worth MPO will maintain a cost overrun funding pool. Program funds must be available through the cost overrun pool or from other sources in order to process modifications involving project cost increases.
5. All funding from deleted projects will be returned to the regional program for future cost overruns or new funding initiatives, unless the deleted funds are needed to cover cost overruns in other currently selected projects. However, it is important to note that funds are awarded to projects, not to implementing agencies. Therefore, funds from potentially infeasible projects cannot be saved for use in future projects by implementing agencies. MPO staff will manage timely resolution of these projects/funds. In addition, if a project was selected through a particular “program,” such as the Sustainable Development or Regional ITS Funding Program, funds from deleted projects may be returned to those programs for future “calls for projects” in those areas.
6. For projects selected using project scoring methodologies, projects will no longer be rescored before a cost increase is considered.
7. Cost increases for strategically-selected projects fall under the same modification policy provisions.
8. As a general policy, new projects are proposed through periodic regional funding initiatives. However, the RTC may elect to add new projects to the TIP, outside of a scheduled funding initiative under emergency or critical situations. Projects approved under this provision must be an immediate need.
9. Local match commitments (i.e., percentages) will be maintained as originally approved. Cost overruns on construction, right-of-way, and engineering costs will be funded according to original participation shares.
10. Additional restrictions may apply to projects selected under certain funding initiatives. For example, projects selected through the Land Use/Transportation Joint Venture (i.e., Sustainable Development) program are not eligible for cost increases from RTC-selected funding categories.
11. Cost overruns are based on the total estimated cost of the project, including all phases combined, and are evaluated once total project cost is determined to exceed original funding authorization.
12. Cost indicators may be evaluated on cost overruns to alert project reviewers of potential unreasonable cost estimates (examples include cost per lane-mile, cost per turn lane). The cost indicators are developed by the MPO, in consultation with TxDOT, using experience from the last several years. If a project falls out of this range, the MPO may either:
 - (a) require a more detailed estimate and explanation,
 - (b) require value engineering,
 - (c) suggest a reduced project scope, or
 - (d) determine that a cost increase will come from local funds, not RTC funds.

13. For a project change to be considered, implementing agencies must submit modification requests for their TIP projects through the online TIP modification system. Project change requests must include complete information by the deadline. Incomplete requests will be sent back to agency for re-submittal in a future cycle.
14. Implementing agencies must identify one or two official points of contact for TIP project modifications. The point of contact is responsible for entering complete project modification requests into the online TIP modification system on time. The point of contact must be capable of collecting and entering accurate project information. Points of contact will be sent reminders leading up to submittal deadlines.

Project Changes Not Requiring TIP Modification

In certain circumstances, changes may be made to TIP projects without triggering a TIP modification. These circumstances are outlined below:

1. **Changes that do not impact the overall purpose of a project:** Changes to MTP reference, CSJ's, or other clerical edits do not require a TIP modification.
2. **Changes to TxDOT's Design and Construction Information System (DCIS):** The DCIS is a project tracking system, therefore, simply updating the DCIS to match previously approved TIP projects or project elements does not require TIP modification. MPO staff maintains the official list of projects and funding levels approved by the RTC.
3. **Carryover Funds:** At the end of each fiscal year, unobligated funds are moved to the new fiscal year as carryover funds. For example, if a project receives funding in a specific fiscal year, but the project is not implemented by the end of the fiscal year, staff will automatically move the funds for that project into the next fiscal year. These changes do not require a TIP modification.
4. **Cost/Funding Increases:** Staff will update cost increases in the information system for changes of less than \$400,000.
5. **Increases in Local Funds:** Staff will adjust with concurrence of local agency.
6. **Changes in RTC Funding Categories:** Staff adjustments permitted.
7. **Emergency:** This provision includes emergency changes that need approval quickly, but timing is not aligned with the RTC Meeting schedule. These changes would come to the RTC for ratification at the next scheduled meeting.
8. **Cost/Funding Decreases:** Staff will update the information system with cost decreases.
9. **Funding Year Changes:** Staff will update the information system for changes that advance project implementation. Once projects are ready for construction (i.e., all federal and State requirements and procedures have been met), staff will advance the project to construction if funds are available.

10. **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revisions Consistent with Previous RTC Action** (e.g., Staff will place a project or changes previously approved by the RTC in the appropriate information system and documents.)
11. **Addition of Noncapacity, Conformity-Exempt Projects:** Staff will place projects in the appropriate information system/document.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Sign refurbishing	Intersection Improvements
Landscaping	Intelligent Transportation System
Preventive maintenance	Traffic Signal Improvements
Bridge rehabilitation/replacement	
Safety/Maintenance	

12. **Changes to Implementing Agency:** Staff will process after receiving a written request/approval from the current implementing agency and the newly proposed implementing agency.
13. **Increased Flexibility for Traffic Signal, Intersection Improvement, ITS, and “Grouped” Projects:** Staff will use best practices to advance this category of projects.
14. **Addition and Adjustment of Phases:** Includes engineering, right-of-way, construction, etc.
15. **Administrative Scope Changes:** Minor clarifications to the type of work being performed, physical length of project, and project termini/limits. For example, changing the limits of a project from “.25 miles west of” to “west of,” or changing the limits from “point A” to “.5 miles east of point A,” or clarifying limits due to a change to the name of a roadway when there is no physical change to the limits (the name of the roadway just changed from one name to another, etc.
16. **Funding Year Changes:** Can be moved by staff if project is being moved less than one year.

Please note that a STIP revision may be required to make these changes in the statewide funding document. In all cases, MPO information systems will be updated and changes will be noted in project tracking systems.

Administrative Amendment Policy

Administrative Amendments are TIP modifications that do not require action of the RTC for approval. Under the Administrative Amendment Policy, the RTC has authorized the Director of Transportation, or his designee, for the Dallas-Fort Worth MPO to approve TIP modifications that meet the following conditions. After they are approved, administrative amendments are provided to STTC and the RTC for informational purposes, unless they are merely processed to support previous RTC project approval.

- 1. Changes in Federal/State Funding Categories that Do Not Impact RTC-Selected Funding Programs:** RTC-Selected funding programs include: CMAQ, STP-MM, RTR, Category 2M - Metro Corridor (in coordination with TxDOT), Texas Mobility Funds, Urbanized Area Formula Program - Transit Section 5307.
- 2. Potentially Controversial Projects** - The administrative amendment policy does not restrict the Transportation Director from requesting Regional Transportation Council (RTC) action on potentially controversial project changes.
- 3. Change in funding share due to adding funding from one program to another:** For instance, if adding Thoroughfare Assessment Program funds (80% federal and 20% state/local) to a project that is 56% federal and 44% local, an administrative amendment is permitted. The revision policy applies to all other instances.

Revision Policy

Revisions are modifications that require approval of the Regional Transportation Council. A revision is required for any project modification that meets the following criteria or that does not fall under the Administrative Amendment Policy.

- 1. Adding or Deleting Projects from the TIP:** This provision includes all projects not covered previously in this Policy. All new projects regardless of funding source need to be approved under this Revision Policy.
- 2. Cost/Funding Increases:** A revision is required on any cost/funding increase over \$400,000.
- 3. Substantive Scope Changes:** This provision includes major or substantive changes that may have citizen interest or policy implications. For example, limits change to a brand new location, limits are extended or shortened substantially, the number of lanes changes, etc.
- 4. Funding Year Changes:** A revision is required to move a project more than one year into a fiscal year that would delay project implementation.
- 5. Changes in the Funding/Cost Shares:** A change to the percentage of the total project cost paid by each funding partner requires a revision (with the one exception noted in the administrative amendment policy).

Approved by the RTC on March 14, 2013

Public Participation Plan (February 2015)

Appendix D

Title VI Complaint Procedures



North Central Texas Council of Governments
Transportation Department

Title VI Complaint Procedures

Introduction

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. As a recipient of federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related Title VI statutes, NCTCOG ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any agency programs or activities. These prohibitions extend from the North Central Texas Council of Governments, as a direct recipient of federal financial assistance, to its sub-recipients (e.g., contractors, consultants, local governments, colleges, universities, etc). All programs funded in whole or in part from federal financial assistance are subject to Title VI requirements. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 extended this to all programs within an agency that receives federal assistance regardless of the funding source for individual programs.

This policy is intended to establish a procedure under which complaints alleging discrimination in NCTCOG's provisions, services, or NCTCOG activities can be made by persons who are not employees of NCTCOG.

Any person who believes NCTCOG, or any entity who receives federal financial assistance from or through NCTCOG (i.e., sub-recipients, sub-contractors, or sub-grantees), has subjected them or any specific class of individuals to unlawful discrimination may file a complaint of discrimination.

NCTCOG will follow timelines set forth in guidance from the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Justice for processing Title VI discrimination complaints.

When to File

A complaint of discrimination must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged act of Discrimination, or discovery thereof; or where there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which that conduct was discontinued. Filing means a written complaint must be postmarked before the expiration of the 180-day period. The filing date is the day you complete, sign, and mail the complaint form. The complaint form and consent/release form must be dated and signed for acceptance. Complaints received more than 180 days after the alleged discrimination will not be processed and will be returned to the complainant with a letter explaining why the complaint could not be processed and alternative agencies to which a report may be made.

Where to File

In order to be processed, signed original complaint forms must be mailed to:

North Central Texas Council of Governments
Transportation Department
Title VI Specialist
P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, TX 76005-5888

Or hand delivered to:

616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be made for persons who are unable to complete the complaint form due to disability or limited-English proficiency. A complaint may also be filed by a representative on behalf of a complainant.

Persons who are not satisfied with the findings of NCTCOG may seek remedy from other applicable state or federal agencies.

Required Elements of a Complaint

In order to be processed, a complaint must be in writing and contain the following information:

- Name, address, and phone number of the complainant.
- Name(s) and address(es) and business(es)/organization(s) of person(s) who allegedly discriminated.
- Date of alleged discriminatory act(s).
- Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability).
- A statement of complaint.
- Signed consent release form.

Incomplete Complaints

Upon initial review of the complaint, the Title VI Specialist will ensure that the form is complete and that any initial supporting documentation is provided. Should any deficiencies be found, the Title VI Specialist will notify the complainant within 10 working days. If reasonable efforts to reach the complainant are unsuccessful or if the complainant does not respond within the time specified in the request (30 days), the recipient may close the complainant's file. The complainant may resubmit the complaint provided it is filed within the original 180-day period.

Should the complaint be closed due to lack of required information, NCTCOG will notify the complainant at their last known address. In the event the complainant submits the missing information after the file has been closed, the complaint may be reopened provided it has not been more than 180 days since the date of the alleged discriminatory action.

Records of Complaints

The Title VI Specialist will keep a record of all complaints received. The log will include such information as:

- Basic information about the complaint such as when it was filed, who filed it, and who it was against.
- A description of the alleged discriminatory action.
- Findings of the investigation.

Complaint Process Overview

The following is a description of how a discrimination complaint will be handled once received by NCTCOG.

1. A complaint is received by NCTCOG:

Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant or their designated representative. If the complainant is unable to complete the form in writing due to disability or limited-English proficiency, upon request reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure the complaint is received and processed in a timely manner. Complainants wishing to file a complaint that do not have access to the Internet or the ability to pick up a form will be mailed a complaint form to complete. The complainant will be notified if the complaint form is incomplete and asked to furnish the missing information.

2. Complaint is logged into tracking database:

Completed complaint forms will be logged into the complaint tracking database; basic data will be maintained on each complaint received, including name of complainant, contact information, name and organization of person(s) who allegedly discriminated, date of alleged discriminatory act(s), basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability), and description of the alleged discriminatory action. Once the investigation is complete, the findings of the investigation will be logged into the complaint tracking database.

3. Determine jurisdiction:

Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint, NCTCOG's Title VI Specialist will complete an initial review of the complaint. The purpose of this review is to determine if the complaint meets basic criteria.

Criteria required for a complete complaint:

- Basis of alleged discrimination (i.e., race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability).
- Determination of timeliness will also be made to ensure that the complaint was filed within the 180 day time requirement.
- The program in which the alleged discrimination occurred will be examined to ensure that the complaint was filed with the appropriate agency. During this process, if a determination is made in which the program or activity that the alleged discrimination occurred is not conducted by NCTCOG or an entity who receives federal financial assistance from or through NCTCOG (i.e., sub-recipients, sub-contractors, or sub-grantees), every attempt will be made to establish the correct agency. Whenever possible, and assuming consent was granted on the Consent/Release form, the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate agency.

NCTCOG's Title VI Specialist will confer with the Department Director on the determination of a complete complaint and on any deferrals to other agencies. Once the Title VI Specialist completes an initial review of the complaint and determines that the criteria for a complete complaint is met, NCTCOG will forward the complaint to the Texas Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, Compliance Section.

4. Initial written notice to complainant:

Within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint, NCTCOG will send notice to the complainant confirming receipt of the complaint; if needed the notice will request additional information, notify complainant that the activity is not related to a NCTCOG program or activity, or does not meet deadline requirements. Conclusions made in step three will determine the appropriate response to the complaint. Examples of response letters are located in Appendix A. If any additional information is needed from the complainant, it will be communicated at this point in the process. A copy of the written response, as well as the complaint form, will be forwarded to the Texas Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, Contract Compliance Section.

5. Investigation of complaint:

The Title VI Specialist will confer with the Department Director to determine the most appropriate fact finding process to ensure that all available information is collected in an effort to reach the most informed conclusion and resolution of the complaint. The type of investigation techniques used may vary depending on the nature and circumstances of the alleged discrimination. An investigation may include but is not limited to:

- Internal meetings with NCTCOG staff and legal counsel.
- Consultation with state and federal agencies.
- Interviews of complainant(s).
- Review of documentation (i.e., planning, public involvement, and technical program activities).
- Interviews and review of documentation with other agencies involved.
- Review of technical analysis methods.
- Review of demographic data.

6. Determination of investigation:

An investigation must be completed within 60 days of receiving the complete complaint, unless the facts and circumstances warrant otherwise. A determination will be made based on information obtained. The Title VI Specialist, Department Director and/or designee will render a recommendation for action, including formal and/or informal resolution strategies in a report of findings to the NCTCOG Executive Director.

7. Notification of determination:

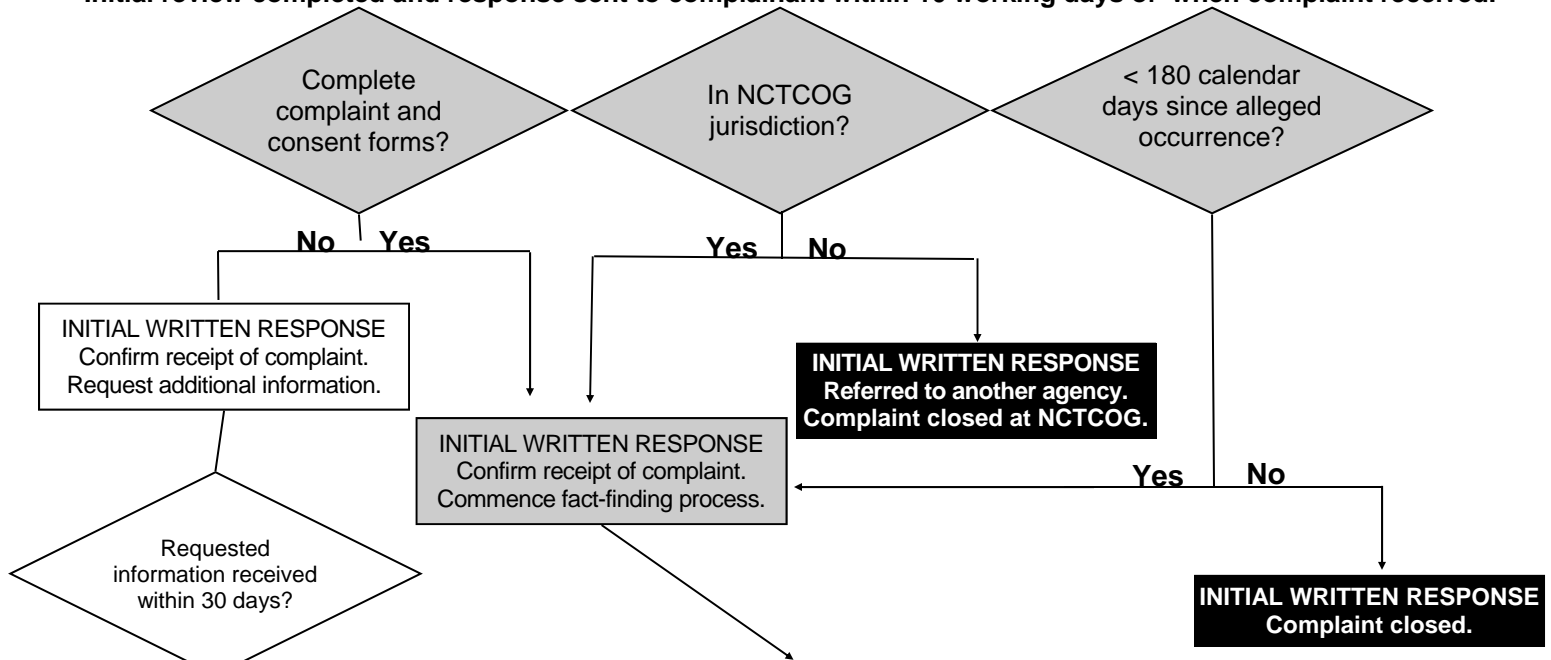
Within 10 days of completion of an investigation, the complainant must be notified by the NCTCOG Executive Director of the final decision. The notification will advise the complainant of his/her appeal rights with state and federal agencies if he/she is dissatisfied with the final decision. A copy of this letter, along with the report of findings, will be forwarded to the Texas Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, Contract Compliance Section for information purposes.

RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT

A written discrimination complaint is received and entered into tracking database.

INITIAL REVIEW

Initial review completed and response sent to complainant within 10 working days of when complaint received.

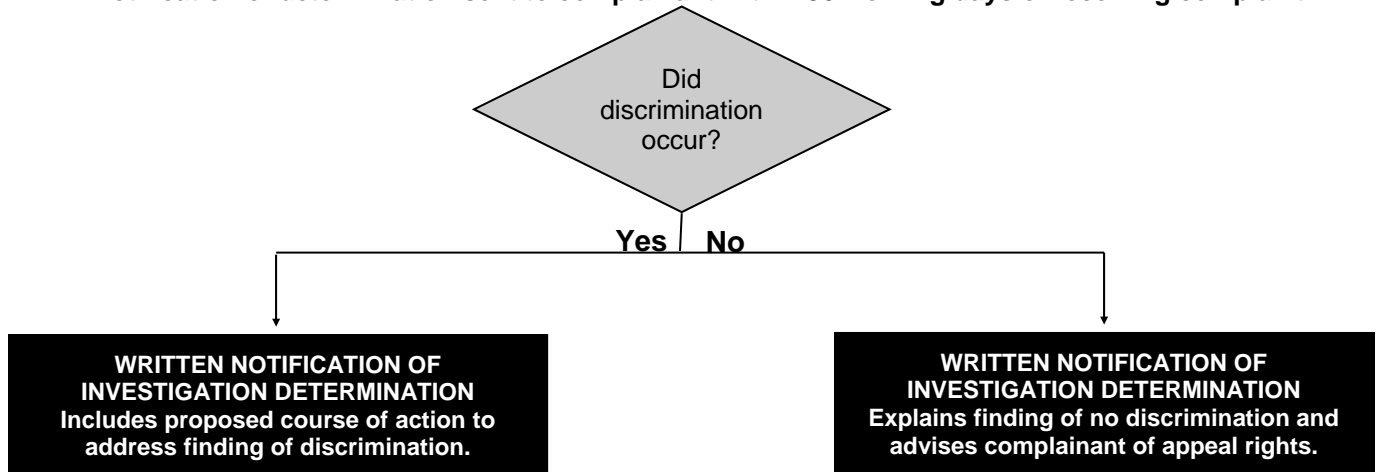


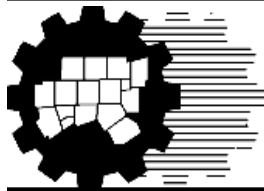
INVESTIGATION / FACT FINDING

Completed within 60 working days of receiving complaint.
Findings summarized and report submitted to head of Agency.

DETERMINATION OF INVESTIGATION

Notification of determination sent to complainant within 90 working days of receiving complaint.





North Central Texas Council of Governments Discrimination Complaint Form

Please read the information on this page of this form carefully before you begin.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. As a recipient of federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, NCTCOG ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any agency programs or activities. These prohibitions extend from the North Central Texas Council of Governments, as a direct recipient of federal financial assistance, to its sub-recipients (e.g., contractors, consultants, local governments, colleges, universities, etc.). All programs funded in whole or in part from federal financial assistance are subject to Title VI requirements.

NCTCOG is required to implement measures to ensure that persons with limited-English proficiency or disability have meaningful access to the services, benefits and information of all its programs and activities under Executive Order 13166. Upon request, assistance will be provided if you are limited-English proficient or disabled. Complaints may be filed using an alternative format if you are unable to complete the written form.

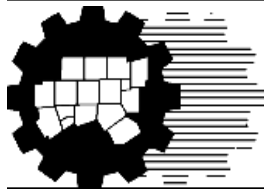
The filing date is the day you complete, sign, and mail this complaint form. Your complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days from the most recent date of the alleged act of discrimination. The complaint form and consent/release form must be dated and signed for acceptance. You have 30 calendar days to respond to any written request for information. Failure to do so will result in the closure of the complaint.

Submit the forms by mail to:

North Central Texas Council of Governments
Transportation Department
Title VI Specialist,
P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, TX 76005-5888

Or in Person at:
616 Six Flags Drive
Arlington, TX 76011

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call (817)695-9240 or e-mail titlevi@nctcog.org.



North Central Texas Council of Governments Discrimination Complaint Form

Please read the information on the first page of this form carefully before you begin.

1

First Name MI Last Name

Street Address City State Zip Code

Telephone Number e-mail Address

2 Who do you believe discriminated against you?

First Name MI Last Name

Name of Business/Organization Position/Title

Street Address City State Zip Code

Person's Relationship to You

3 When did the alleged act(s) of discrimination occur?

Please list all applicable dates in mm/dd/yyyy format.

Date(s):

Is the alleged discrimination ongoing? Yes No

4 Where did the alleged act(s) of discrimination occur? (Attach additional pages as necessary.)

Name of Location

5 Indicate the basis of your grievance of discrimination.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Race: | <input type="checkbox"/> Color: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin: | <input type="checkbox"/> Sex: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age: | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion: | |

6 Describe in detail the specific incident(s) that is the basis(es) of the alleged discrimination. Describe each incident of discrimination separately. Attach additional pages as necessary.

Please explain how other persons or groups were treated differently by the person(s)/ agency who discriminated against you.

Please list and describe all documents, e-mails, or other records and materials pertaining to your complaint.

Please list and identify any witness(es) to the incidents or persons who have personal knowledge of information pertaining to your complaint.

Have you previously reported or otherwise complained about this incident or related acts of discrimination? If so, please identify the individual to whom you made the report, the date on which you made the report, and the resolution. Please provide any supporting documentation.

Please provide any additional information about the alleged discrimination.

7 If an advisor will be assisting you in the complaint process, please provide his/her name and contact information.

First Name	MI	Last Name
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Name of Business	Position/Title	Telephone Number
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Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
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8 This complaint form must be signed and dated in order to address your allegations. Additionally, this office will need your consent to disclose your name, if needed, in the course of our investigation. The Discrimination Complaint Consent/Release form is attached. If you are filing a complaint of discrimination on behalf of another person, our office will also need this person's consent.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided is accurate and the events and circumstances are as I have described them. I also understand that if I will be assisted by an advisor, my signature below authorizes the named individual to receive copies of relevant correspondence regarding the complaint and to accompany me during the investigation.

Signature

Date

