

# Regional Mobility Initiatives

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*The North Central Texas Council of Governments serves the region as its **Metropolitan Planning Organization** by developing transportation plans and programs that address the complex needs of the rapidly growing Dallas-Fort Worth area.*



North Texas' transportation needs are becoming more acute as the population surges to new levels. The nine-county Metropolitan Planning Area has a population of 6.1 million and new residents bring strain to the area's roads and a need for increased capacity. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization's 40-member independent transportation policymaking body, determines how regional transportation funds should be spent. For more than 30 years, NCTCOG and the RTC have served as the MPO for the Dallas-Fort Worth area. A region as diverse as DFW contains governments with competing interests, necessitating a galvanizing force to help them solve complex problems. The RTC meets this need.

Transportation planning by a single group – which includes representatives from throughout the area – allows cities, counties, and transportation agencies to coordinate efforts. RTC meetings often offer lively discussion, based on differing priorities, but the meetings allow regional players to solve problems together. NCTCOG helps communities in the 16-county region plan for common needs, using its resources to offer mutually beneficial solutions. One of eight NCTCOG departments, the Transportation Department supports the RTC. The two form the MPO, which guides transportation policy for the nine-county Metropolitan Planning Area.

NCTCOG is one of 25 MPOs in Texas and has served in this capacity since 1974. Federal law requires states to establish MPOs for urban areas with more than 50,000 residents. The NCTCOG Executive Board sets policy for comprehensive planning and coordination in North Texas and serves as the MPO's fiscal agent. The RTC, technical committees and NCTCOG Transportation Department staff members complete the planning structure. The MPO works with regional transportation providers to improve mobility and air quality.

Federal law requires the MPO to maintain a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The objective of this process is to ensure development, management, and operation of an integrated, multimodal transportation system. This allows people and goods to move safely and efficiently throughout the region.

**Regional Mobility Initiatives** is a report on the transportation planning activities and air quality programs of the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Regional Transportation Council – together serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area since 1974.

# Regional Transportation Council

The RTC meets monthly to determine transportation policy for the nine-county area. Its 40 members include elected officials and representatives from the metropolitan area's transportation providers. RTC members understand the importance of cooperation when seeking key improvements to the transportation system. They work with the Legislature and transportation agencies to acquire the legal ability and financial mechanisms necessary to complete projects beneficial to the region.

The RTC oversees the metropolitan transportation planning process and mainly does the following:

- Guides the development of multimodal transportation plans and programs.
- Determines allocation of federal, state, and regional transportation funds.
- Selects transportation projects in some programs and recommends projects to the Texas Transportation Commission in other programs.
- Ensures transportation providers coordinate services.
- Ensures the metropolitan areas comply with State and federal laws and regulations regarding transportation and air quality.

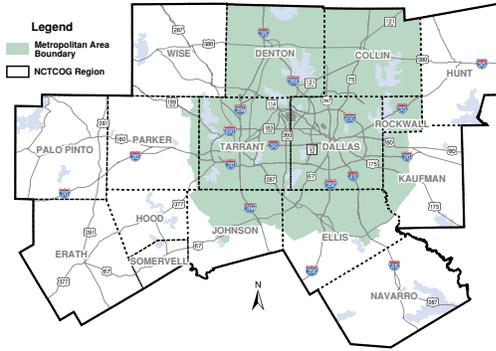
While the RTC provides policy direction to the transportation planning process, the federal government in recent years has given MPOs more authority. They are now responsible for selecting projects funded by the Surface Transportation Program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. The State has also decentralized parts of the decision-making

process. In 2004, the Texas Transportation Commission gave the RTC more authority to recommend regional projects. The Surface Transportation Technical Committee, which meets monthly, is one of the several committees guiding the RTC. STTC is composed mainly of staff members of area government bodies. Other transportation and air quality committees work with the RTC to provide members with the information they need to develop sound transportation policy.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is a collaborative structure of committees and organizations creating partnerships to address the region's complex transportation needs. Key players in this organizational structure include:

- **NCTCOG's Executive Board**, which oversees the administrative funds granted to the MPO.
- **The Regional Transportation Council**, which sets transportation policy for the MPO.
- **Technical committees** that review, comment on, and prepare recommendations for transportation improvements.
- **NCTCOG's Transportation Department**, which provides support and staff assistance to the RTC and its technical committees.
- **Residents of the region**, who participate in the planning process through public meetings, workshops, and listening sessions.

# Metropolitan Planning Area within the NCTCOG Region



The Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Tarrant and Rockwall counties, and parts of Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, and Parker counties. The metropolitan area (shaded) covers almost 5,000 square miles.

## Regional Transportation Council Organizational Structure

	Representatives
City of Arlington	2
Cities of Carrollton and Farmers Branch	1
Cities of Dallas, Highland Park, and University Park	6
City of Denton (urbanized area)	1
Cities of Duncanville, DeSoto, Lancaster, Cedar Hill, and Glenn Heights	1
City of Fort Worth	3
Cities of Garland, Rowlett, and Rockwall, and Rockwall County	1
City of Grand Prairie	1
Cities of Hurst, Euless, Bedford, Colleyville, Grapevine, Southlake, and Trophy Club	1
Cities of Irving and Coppell	1
Cities of Lewisville, Flower Mound, Highland Village, Corinth, Lake Dallas, Little Elm, and The Colony (urbanized area)	1
Cities of Mansfield, Benbrook, Forest Hill, White Settlement, Azle, Crowley, River Oaks, Everman, and Kennedale, and Parker County (partial)	1
Cities of Mesquite, Balch Springs, Seagoville, and Forney, and Kaufman County (partial)	1
Cities of North Richland Hills, Haltom City, Watauga, Keller, Saginaw, and Richland Hills	1
Cities of McKinney, Allen, and Frisco (urbanized area)	1
City of Plano	1
Cities of Richardson, Addison, Wylie, Sachse, and Murphy	1
Collin County	1
Dallas County	2
Denton County	1
Ellis County (partial) and the Cities of Waxahachie, Midlothian, Ennis, and Red Oak	1
Johnson County (partial) and the Cities of Burleson, Cleburne, and Keene	1
Tarrant County	2
District Engineer, Dallas District, TxDOT	1
District Engineer, Fort Worth District, TxDOT	1
Policy Representative, Dallas Area Rapid Transit	1
Policy Representative, Fort Worth Transportation Authority	1
Policy Representative, North Texas Tollway Authority	1
Policy Representative, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport	1
Policy Representative, Denton County Transportation Authority	1
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>40</b>

The **Regional Transportation Council** is the independent transportation policy body of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

# Transportation and Air Quality Advisory Committees

## Surface Transportation Technical Committee

Reviews and provides recommendations for surface transportation planning and transportation funding in the Dallas-Fort Worth area



## Air Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

Oversees the development and maintenance of the Regional Airport System Plan



## Clean Cities Technical Coalition

Serves as a technical resource to NCTCOG in funding clean vehicles and promoting the use of clean-fuel technology



## Corridor Study Working Groups

Aim to improve existing traffic conditions as needed; also plan for increased traffic at specific locations



## Travel Demand Management/Congestion Management Process Task Force

Supports and coordinates implementation of travel demand management initiatives, including the State Implementation Plan



## Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Task Force

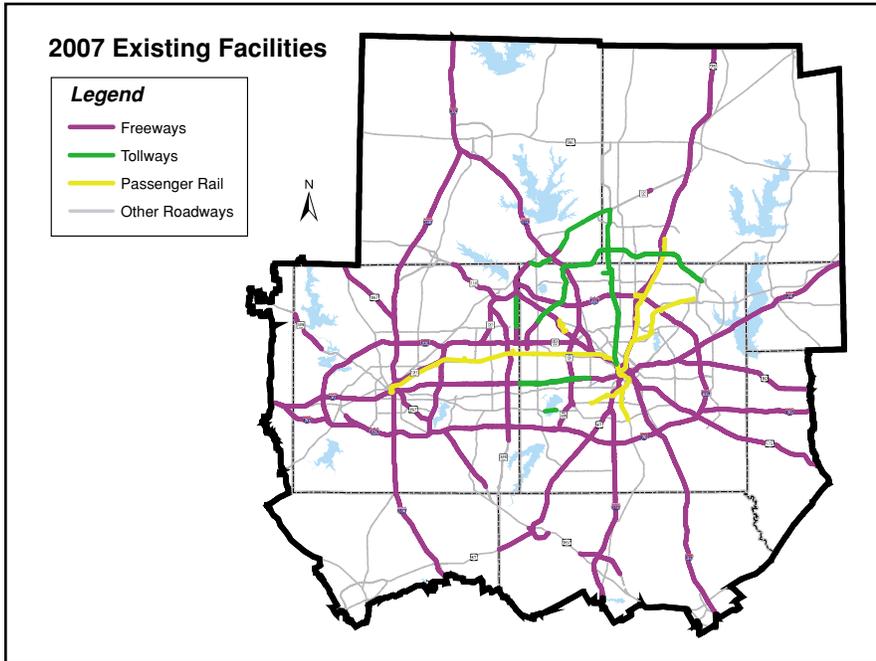
Supports planning of regional pedestrian and bicycle projects funded by the RTC



# Transportation Choices

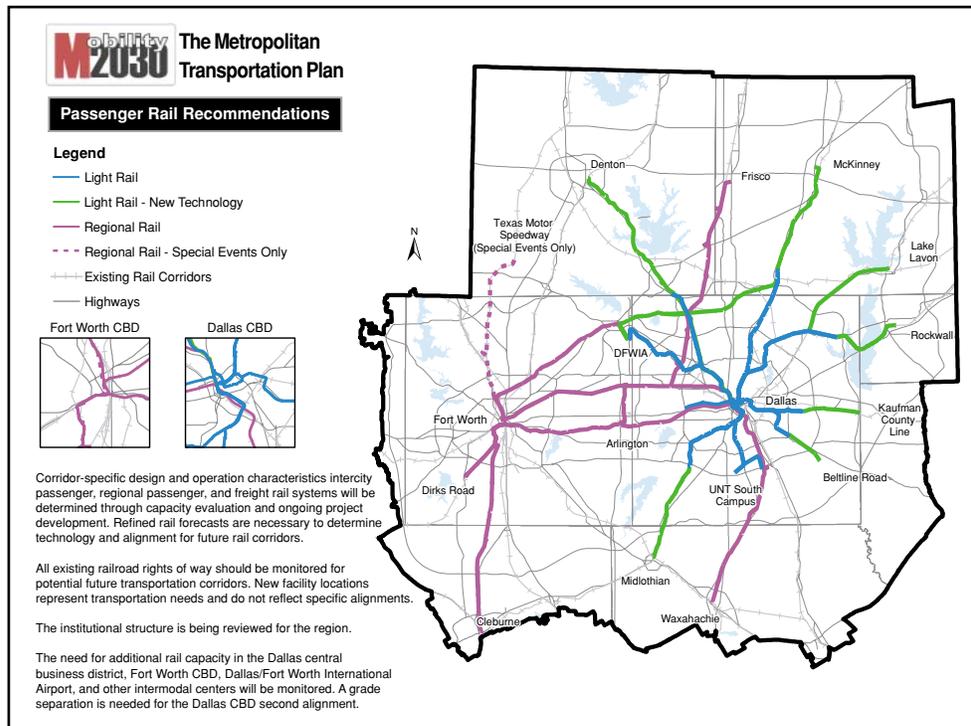
North Texas' multimodal transportation network is designed to enhance the region's quality of life by providing mobility choices, economic vitality, and efficient movement. Identifying the appropriate tools to improve mobility is critical as population and congestion increase. Capacity on traditional freeways can be expanded by adding lanes and eliminating bottlenecks. But these are not the only ways to improve mobility.

Transportation planners hope to relieve congestion through a combination of tolled express lanes and traditional toll roads. High-occupancy vehicle lanes increase efficiency by encouraging solo drivers to share rides. Passenger rail offers an alternative to driving, also reducing the number of vehicles on the roads. North Texas leaders also are expanding the region's system of bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and sidewalks, which have environmental and health implications.

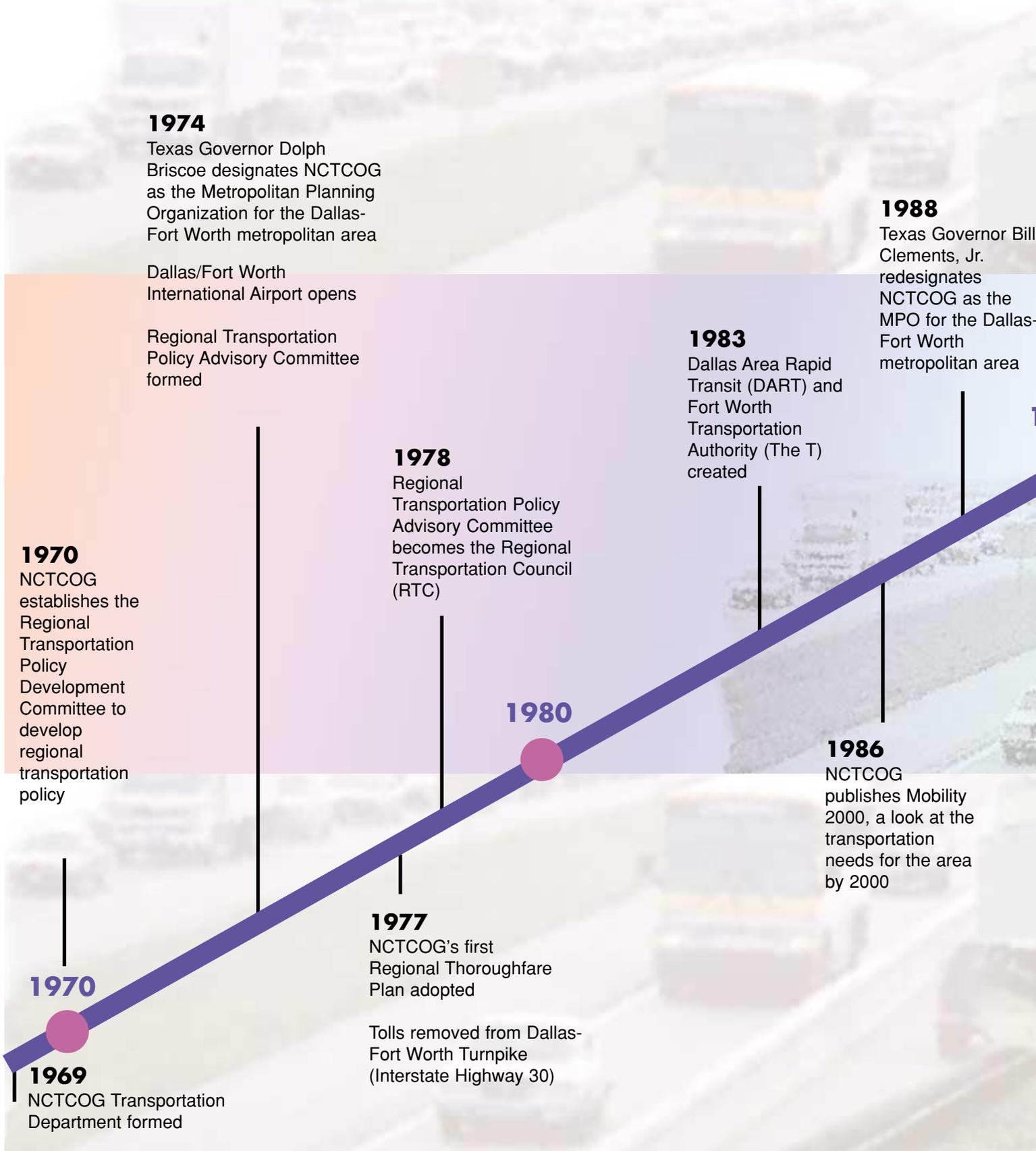


North Texans have vast networks of tollways, freeways and transit lines from which to choose when trying to navigate their way through the region.

North Texas transportation planners hope to bring regional rail to the Metroplex, alleviating mounting traffic congestion plaguing many areas. The rail lines would supplement existing commuter and light-rail systems in Fort Worth and Dallas, creating a seamless alternative to the region's roadways. NCTCOG staff members and the RTC continue to work toward a plan that would fund rail in the cities and counties without access to the service. The preferred plan would require legislative action.



# Metropolitan Transportation Timeline



**1991**

DART/TxDOT open the region's first HOV lane on IH 30

Mobility 2010 introduces the region to the concept of financial constraint

**1993**

NCTCOG designated as MPO for Denton and Lewisville urbanized areas

**1996**

Dallas-Fort Worth Area Partners In Mobility initiated

DART's light rail starter system opens; the first segment of the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) from Dallas to Irving opens

**1997**

North Texas Tollway Authority created

**1999**

NTTA introduces TollTag system on Dallas North Tollway

**2001**

TRE links Dallas and Fort Worth by commuter rail for first time since 1930s

**2002**

Denton County Transportation Authority established

**2003**

NCTCOG is designated as the MPO for the McKinney urbanized area

**2004**

Texas Transportation Commission grants increased project selection authority to the Regional Transportation Council

**2005**

Congress passes the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)

NTTA opens 5.4-mile "Superconnector" segment of President George Bush Turnpike

**2007**

The Legislature approves Senate Bill 792, which freezes development of toll roads by private companies for two years; Projects in the Metroplex are exempt

# Transportation Funding

## Mobility 2030 The Metropolitan Transportation Plan

### Funded Roadway Recommendations

- Legend**
- New Freeway Facilities
  - New Tollway Facilities
  - Additional Capacity To Existing Freeway/Tollway
  - HOV/Managed Lanes
  - Improvements to Existing Freeway and HOV/Managed Lanes
  - Selected New/Improved Regionally Significant Arterials
  - Freeways/Tollways

Fort Worth CBD



Dallas CBD



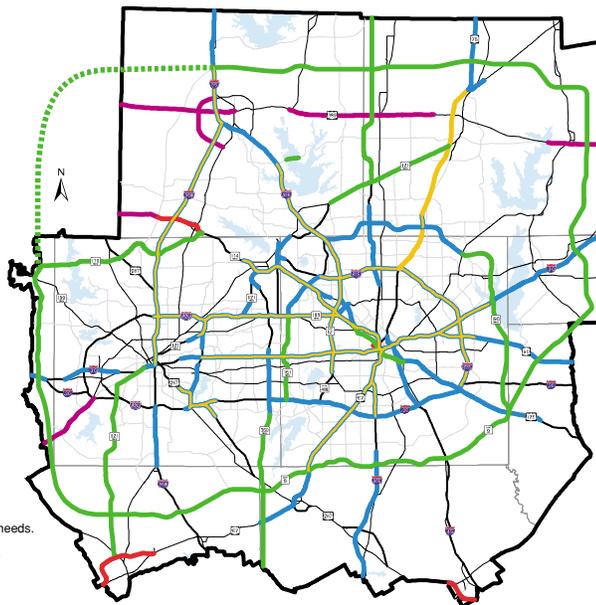
Corridor-specific design and operation characteristics for the freeway/tollway system will be determined through ongoing project development.

Additional and improved freeway/tollway interchanges should be secured on all freeway/tollway facilities to accommodate a balance between mobility and access needs.

All freeway/tollway corridors require additional study for capacity, geometric and safety improvements related to truck operations.

New facility locations indicate transportation needs and do not represent specific alignments.

Operational strategies to manage the flow of traffic should be considered in the corridors where additional freeway or toll way lanes are being considered.



**\$29.8 billion regional roadway system**  
**Additional freeway/tollway lane miles: 3,444**  
**Additional HOV/managed lane miles: 626**

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration provide the Council of Governments with money for transportation planning. Two other federal agencies, the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, offer funding for cleaner-burning fuels and environmentally friendly programs, especially important as the area's air quality faces federal scrutiny. Dallas-Fort Worth is an ozone nonattainment area, meaning its ozone levels do not comply with standards set by the Clean Air Act.

The state shares a role in improving transportation options and protecting the region's environment. The Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and State Energy Conservation Office provide money for transportation and air quality planning. The federally required Unified Planning Work Program outlines the budget for each of these programs. The UPWP is prepared every two years with the help of transportation providers, area governments and residents of the region.

# Transportation Planning

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU, is the federal legislation that directs transportation planning in North Texas and across the country. Signed into law in 2005, SAFETEA-LU replaced the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21.

A new Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mobility 2030, was developed in 2006 to replace Mobility 2025 as the region's transportation blueprint. Mobility 2030 contains several innovative financing techniques and \$71 billion in recommendations believed to move the region closer to solving its traffic problems. North Texas is finding ways to meet the transportation

demands placed on it by an expanding population, even as construction costs make it more difficult to build needed projects. Mobility 2030 identifies \$16.8 billion in innovative financing.

Further investment in rail, HOV lanes, freeways, tollways, and Intelligent Transportation Systems is hoped to improve mobility in Dallas-Fort Worth, a metropolitan area expected to exceed 9 million in population by 2030. Several projects hoped to substantially improve traffic flow are on the horizon. They will be completed with traditional and innovative financing tools, with an emphasis on the latter.

**IDENTIFIED FUNDING NEEDS  
DALLAS-FORT WORTH REGION**  
(Based on Mobility 2030 Funding Levels)

Metropolitan Transportation System Components	Funded Needs (Billions/2006 \$)	Unfunded Needs (Billions/2006 \$)
Operation & Maintenance	\$18.7	
Congestion Mitigation Strategies	\$2.1	
Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities and Transportation Enhancements	\$1.1	
Rail and Bus Transit System	\$11.0 <sup>1</sup>	
HOV and Managed Facilities	\$3.3	
Freeway and Toll Road System	\$26.4	\$12.7 <sup>2</sup>
Regional Arterial and Local Thoroughfare System	\$5.7	\$6.0
Additional Cost to Purchase Right-of-Way		\$1.1
Rehabilitation Costs	\$ 2.6	\$32.1
Goods Movement/Rail Freight Costs (Trans Tx Corridor)		\$6.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$70.9 (55 %)</b>	<b>\$58.6 (45 %)</b>
	<b>\$129.5 Billion</b>	

<sup>1</sup> \$3.4 billion obtained through Regional Transit Initiative  
<sup>2</sup> Includes freeway-to-freeway interchanges

By working with TxDOT and local governments, the RTC identifies needs and determines which ones are addressed. Projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are completed in accordance with the priorities laid out in the Transportation Improvement Plan. The TIP includes a list of needed projects and an estimated timeframe for completion of each. The funding source is also included.

North Texas must have a Congestion Management Process because it has a

population of more than 200,000. The CMP seeks to maximize resources through sound management of regional assets. Alternatives to solo driving such as peak-period pricing, telecommuting, vanpooling, and ridesharing are encouraged by the CMP.

The region's explosive population growth and corresponding traffic congestion are just part of the problem. The Dallas-Fort Worth area also finds itself under a strict set of air quality rules as it confronts ozone nonattainment.

## Air Quality

The EPA has designated North Texas as a nonattainment region because of its high concentration of ozone. The eight-hour standard, which measures ozone levels for extended periods of time, must be met by 2010. The MPO has chosen a mix of education and policy initiatives to help the region reach attainment. The RTC has taken an active role in helping improve ozone levels. In 2006, the region

reached the one-hour standard, which was replaced by the stricter eight-hour rule in 2004. Although the region is no longer held to the one-hour standard, meeting it shows the policies intended to improve air quality are working. North Texas has acceptable levels of five other pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxide, particulates, and sulfur oxides, according to the EPA.

Air Pollutant	Abbreviation	Status
Carbon Monoxide	CO	In attainment
Lead	Pb	In attainment
Nitrogen Oxides	NOx	In attainment
Ozone	O3	Violation of standard
Particulates	PM	In attainment
Sulfur Oxides	SO	In attainment

## Management and Operations

NCTCOG's Transportation Department staff members work together to develop transportation and air quality plans adequate for a quickly growing region. The growing department uses technology and experience to develop solutions for the region's traffic congestion, a problem for any large metropolitan area. With innovative policies, projects and procedures, the MPO and its partners are making progress in the fight for mobility. The work done to improve the transportation system indicates long-term relief is on the way. NCTCOG staff members are experienced in concentrations that make it easier for the MPO to accomplish its goals.



### Program areas:

#### Air quality planning and operations

- Air quality operations
- Air quality policy and program development
- Air quality technical planning and research
- Transportation air quality marketing and outreach

#### Community outreach and transportation project programming

- Community outreach programs
- Transportation project programming

#### Congestion management, safety, security, and information systems

- Congestion Management System plan
- TDM project implementation
- Intelligent Transportation System implementation
- Transportation information systems
- TSM project implementation
- Safety and security

#### Development, freight, and aviation

- Aviation
- Goods movement
- Sustainable development

#### Fiscal management and transit operations

- Budget procurement coordination
- Computer systems
- Management and operations
- Transit operations planning

#### Transportation planning

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Transit system plan
- Roadway corridor refinement and project development

#### Model development group

#### Program administration

## Responding to Challenges

NCTCOG helps area cities, counties, and transportation authorities implement programs intended to reduce congestion and improve air quality. These programs aim to more efficiently use existing resources to address the region's transportation needs. Some projects are important air quality transportation control measures and are supported by the State Implementation Plan.

To attract good jobs and maintain livable communities for decades to come, it is important to address transportation and air quality concerns. As the region continues adding residents, good transportation choices and cleaner air will become more important. MPO staff members are working on various programs intended to improve both, and in the process, enhance the quality of life of the region's current residents and those who will be drawn to North Texas in coming years. Without quality jobs to employ people or

transportation systems to get them to work, the region would lose its status as one of the nation's strongest economies. NCTCOG will continue to find innovative ways to meet the challenges, posed by the diverse region, with an eye toward growth well into the future.

North Texas is leading the way with many innovative measures as it seeks solutions to transportation and air quality concerns in the face of mounting traffic congestion. North Texas will rely on its sophisticated network of roads to take people where they need to go, but a growing rail system will complement the freeways and toll roads, serving as an alternative for anyone who wants to avoid the hassle of navigating those roads. The NCTCOG Transportation Department will work closely with State and federal officials to ensure the progress continues on all modes of transportation.

## NCTCOG Executive Board 2007-2008

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## Regional Transportation Council 2007-2008

<b>T. Oscar Trevino, Jr., P.E., Chair</b> Mayor, City of North Richland Hills	<b>Mark Enoch</b> Board Chair Dallas Area Rapid Transit	<b>Jack Miller</b> Vice Chair North Texas Tollway Authority
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<b>Sheri Capehart</b> Councilmember, City of Arlington	<b>Joe Jaynes</b> Commissioner, Collin County	<b>Marti VanRavenswaay</b> Commissioner, Tarrant County
<b>Maribel Chavez, P.E.</b> District Engineer TxDOT, Fort Worth District	<b>Ron Jensen</b> Councilmember, City of Grand Prairie	<b>Cynthia White</b> Commissioner, Denton County
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<b>Wendy Davis</b> Councilmember, City of Fort Worth	<b>Jungus Jordan</b> Councilmember, City of Fort Worth	<b>Kathryn Wilemon</b> Councilmember, City of Arlington
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<b>Rudy Durham</b> Councilmember City of Lewisville	<b>Mike Leyman</b> Councilmember, City of Mansfield	<b>Vacant</b> Cities of Dallas and University Park and Town of Highland Park
<b>Loretta Ellerbe</b> Councilmember, City of Plano	<b>Bill McLendon</b> Councilmember City of Hurst	<b>Michael Morris, P.E.</b> Director of Transportation, NCTCOG
<b>Charles Emery</b> Board Chair Denton County Transportation Authority	<b>Becky Miller</b> Mayor, City of Carrollton	

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**Surface Transportation  
Technical Committee**  
Jill House, P.E., Chair

## Contributing Staff

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## What Is NCTCOG?

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments within the 16-county North Central Texas region. The agency was established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. North Central Texas is a 16-county region with a population of 6.4 million and an area of approximately 12,800 square miles. NCTCOG has 233 member governments, including all 16 counties, 165 cities, 23 independent school districts, and 29 special districts.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is the policy body for the MPO. The RTC consists of 40 members, predominantly local elected officials, overseeing the regional transportation planning process. NCTCOG's Transportation Department is responsible for support and staff assistance to the RTC and its technical committees, which comprise the MPO policy-making structure.

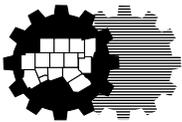
## We would like your comments. . .

If you have questions or comments regarding the transportation and air quality programs of the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Regional Transportation Council or need additional information, please contact the NCTCOG Transportation Department at (817) 695-9240, by fax at (817) 640-3028, via e-mail: [transinfo@nctcog.org](mailto:transinfo@nctcog.org), or visit our website at [www.nctcog.org/trans](http://www.nctcog.org/trans).

## Regional Mobility Initiatives Issues

**Advanced Transportation Management**, March 1996  
**Air Quality**, July 1996  
**Traffic Congestion**, October 1996  
**Multimodal Solutions in the North Central Corridor**, July 1997  
**Toll Roads**, February 1998  
**Major Investment Studies**, August 1998  
**The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century**, October 1998  
**High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes**, December 1998  
**Travel Demand Forecasting Procedures**, June 1999  
**Commuter Traffic**, December 2000  
**Pedestrian Transportation**, August 2002  
**Metropolitan Planning Organization**, November 2002  
**Rail Station Access**, February 2003  
**Traffic Congestion**, October 2004  
**Regional Rail**, October 2005  
**Goods Movement**, January 2006  
**North Texas Regional ITS Architecture**, December 2006  
**SAFETEA-LU**, May 2007

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



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