



June 2023

Welcome to Local Motion, a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department.

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## **7 tips to make summer safer for anyone riding a bicycle**



Bikes have been the mode of summer transportation for children and teenagers for decades. They allow them to independently move around without a car.

Summer has begun, and with that comes more children and teens on their bikes on neighborhood streets and trails.

It is important for children and teens to have proper knowledge about bike safety to ensure a fun and memorable summer. This is not just a message for North Texas youth. Bike safety is important for riders of all ages. Here are some tips to help North Texans have an active, fulfilling and safe summer on bikes:

Tip #1: Obey traffic signals and stop signs at intersections.

Tip #2: Use hand signals when turning, changing lanes or stopping.

Tip #3: Be aware of your surroundings and don't wear headphones/ear buds while bicycling.

Tip #4: Ride as far to the right as practicable without jeopardizing your safety.

Tip #5: Always ride in the same direction as traffic.

Tip #6: Claim space at intersections by riding in the rightmost lane going in your destination direction and position yourself at intersections to be seen by drivers.

Tip #7: Be visible, especially at night. Turn on your front and rear bike lights and wear bright or reflective clothing.

In addition to the tips mentioned above, there are other ways to increase safety. Make sure children and teens know how to check their brakes, tire pressure, and how to inflate tires to their recommended pressure. Additionally, always send children and teens out with a water bottle (or two!). In Texas, dehydration can happen quickly. Remember that the combination of cycling and the sun will cause everyone to have to drink more water to remain safe.

For more information and valuable tips, visit [www.lookouttexans.org](http://www.lookouttexans.org).

Have a fun and safe summer.

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## Continue your clean air commitment through ozone season



If you made a commitment on Clean Air Action Day to help improve the region's air quality, consider adopting it as part of your routine. Whether you worked from home, combined errands, limited idling, took your lunch to work or opted for another ozone-reducing measure, you can carry that commitment through ozone season, which ends November 30. And share it with others. Your actions may inspire your friends or colleagues to become part of the solution. Be sure to use #CAAD2023 and tag @NCTCOGtrans on social media to show your commitment to clean air in your community. A full list of clean air strategies individuals, businesses and governments can enact is available at [www.airnorthtexas.org/cleanairactionday](http://www.airnorthtexas.org/cleanairactionday)

Sign up for air quality alerts at [www.airnorthtexas.org/signup](http://www.airnorthtexas.org/signup) to stay informed of when action is encouraged.

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## Study examines automated transportation and its integration





NCTCOG has completed the Automated Transportation Systems (ATS) Development Study. Conducted in collaboration with Lea + Elliott, this study advances the regional ATS initiative. ATS are automated, track-free vehicles on elevated surfaces transporting people and goods.

The study covered four main elements: ATS vehicle technologies, wireless electric vehicle charging technologies, standard guideway infrastructure design and case studies featuring opportunities for retrofits and new pilot projects.

### **Vehicle Technologies**

The vehicle technology element of the study evaluated the current and emerging ATS vehicle market to create an inventory of state-of-the-art ATS vehicle technologies. Each ATS vehicle was evaluated using multiple criteria, such as passenger/payload capacity, maximum operating speed and dimensions.

### **Wireless EV Charging**

Dynamic EV charging allows a vehicle to draw energy while in motion without the need for a physical electrical connection such as an overhead catenary or electrified third rail. The benefits of dynamic charging could include smaller batteries and the ability for vehicles to stay in service longer since they could charge while operating. A system may also need fewer vehicles. While dynamic charging is still in its infancy, the technology shows potential for future ATS applications, and NCTCOG will continue to monitor progress in this field.

## Guideway Design

The goal of the guideway design element was to determine how a simple paved structure could be built with modular construction, innovative materials and cost-effective methods. A standardized method for assembling and constructing ATS guideways would allow the region to achieve economies of scale in developing ATS facilities.

## Case Studies

Two retrofit opportunities were analyzed: the Las Colinas Area Personal Transit and the DFW Airport Skylink. The study found modernizing the Las Colinas guideway would be feasible. With Skylink operating successfully at DFW Airport, no retrofit of the existing system is envisioned in the near future. Potential pilot projects for new ATS facilities include a people mover in the Dallas International District and a cargo mover in Arlington, connecting the General Motors assembly plant to a nearby railhead.

For more information, and to read the report, [www.nctcog.org/ats](http://www.nctcog.org/ats).

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## By the Numbers

# \$200

The Legislature approved a new annual registration fee to be paid by owners of electric vehicles because they do not pay gas tax.

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## 88th Texas Legislative session ends with transportation-related bills passing



In January, the Texas Legislature began the 88th Legislative session with a historic \$32.7 billion budget surplus. When the 140-day session ended in May, several transportation-related bills the Regional Transportation Council were monitoring had been approved.

For example, officials passed legislation to address issues related to temporary tags. House Bill 914, signed by Governor Greg Abbott in May, raises tampering with a temporary tag to a Class A misdemeanor. Further, HB 718 would eliminate the temporary tag program all together and require automobile dealers to issue metal tags at the point of purchase.

Additionally, with the passage of SB 1308, protection for airports and military installations from incursions by drones is likely to be restored. A federal judge had ruled most of the laws governing drones unconstitutional in March 2022. Electric vehicle owners must begin paying into the State Highway Fund due to the passage of Senate Bill 505. SB 505 requires a \$200 annual registration fee for electric vehicles.

The expiration dates of Propositions 1 and 7 were extended eight and ten years, respectively. Approved by Texas voters in 2014, Proposition 1 takes taxes collected from the oil and gas industry and deposits them into Texas' Rainy Day Fund and the State Highway Fund which is used to maintain highways and build new roads.



Proposition 7, approved by voters in 2015, under which portions of sales and use taxes as well as the motor vehicle sales and rental taxes are used to construct, maintain, or acquire rights of way for public roadways other than toll roads or repay the principal of and interest on general obligation bonds.

Governor Abbott has until June 18 to sign or veto the measures that passed through the legislature. He could also allow legislation to become law without his signature.

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## NCTCOG pursuing funding to build EV, hydrogen infrastructure



The RTC has voted to pursue funding from a discretionary grant program intended to boost the deployment of publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging and other alternative fuel infrastructure. The Federal Highway Administration program offers grant opportunities for alternative fuel stations along designated alternative fuel corridors and EV charging in communities. NCTCOG is pursuing funding in both categories. The deadline to apply is June 13.

Under the corridor program, NCTCOG is applying for \$82.4 million to build an electric truck depot in Denton and up to five hydrogen fueling sites for medium- and heavy-duty trucks near the Alliance Texas Mobility Innovation Zone, Southern Dallas County Inland Port, and around the Texas Triangle (Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston). Federal money awarded would cover 80% of the project costs, with the remaining portion paid by private partners. This grant would allow NCTCOG to begin deploying recommendations made in the Interstate Highway 45 Zero Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Plan.

Through the community program, NCTCOG is seeking \$15 million to build as many as 100 electric vehicle charging stations to expand or fill gaps in access to infrastructure throughout the region, particularly in underserved and disadvantaged communities. This application will include specialized technical teams to expedite the deployment of the charging stations. These teams will work with cities across the region to provide a cohesive approach to requirements and barriers to implement the charging stations.

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## NCTCOG to highlight efforts to improve quality of life at June public meeting

NCTCOG invites residents to a public meeting at noon on Monday, June 12 to learn about transportation initiatives intended to improve the region's quality of life.

The hybrid public meeting will be held at NCTCOG's Arlington offices, 616 Six Flags Drive, and available live online at [www.publicinput.com/nctcogJune23](http://www.publicinput.com/nctcogJune23). Participate via phone by dialing 855-925-2801, then code 2463.

The Transit Strategic Partnerships Program is accepting project ideas for the May 2023 cycle. This program allows innovative transit projects and solutions to be connected to both public agencies looking to implement services and those seeking to partner with an existing transit provider.



NCTCOG has completed a study of the Automated Transportation System (ATS) Initiative. This study identifies existing ATS vehicles and described the present state of technology in the field of dynamic wireless charging. The intention of the ATS



Initiative is to develop ATS networks to move goods and people in urban centers throughout the region. Staff will be presenting the results of the study.

Additionally, NCTCOG staff is applying for Climate Pollution Reduction Grants from the Environmental Protection Agency. The program will provide funding to develop a regional plan to reduce greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants. Once the plan is developed, entities can pursue funding from the EPA to assist with implementation. Staff will provide details on the program, including the application process.

The Regional Scrap Tire Program offers ways to reduce the number of scrap and abandoned tires in the region, which helps alleviate environmental and public health nuisances. Staff will provide additional program details for review and comment.

Federal legislation requires NCTCOG to collaborate with the Texas Department of Transportation on the evaluation and establishment of targets for the condition of National Highway System pavement and bridges. Public input is being requested on a pending decision to either affirm support for TxDOT's new statewide targets or establish separate regional targets. Staff will provide updates on state and regional estimates, potential effects of new funding and coordination efforts.

The Unified Planning Work Program provides a summary of transportation and air quality projects to be conducted by NCTCOG. Recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2024 and FY2025 UPWP draft will be presented for public review and comment.

During the meeting, staff will also provide information about the Juneteenth Museum partnership; administrative revisions to the Mobility 2045: 2022 Update; the department's interactive public input tool, Map Your Experience; and vehicle incentive and funding opportunities.

For residents who want to take transit to the meeting, \$6 roundtrip rides from the Centerport/DFW Airport Station to NCTCOG are available on VIA, through <https://city.ridewithvia.com/arlington>. For special accommodations due to disabilities or language interpretation, contact 817-695-9255 or email [jcastillo@nctcog.org](mailto:jcastillo@nctcog.org).

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*For more information about Local Motion topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or [bwilson@nctcog.org](mailto:bwilson@nctcog.org). Visit [www.nctcog.org/trans](http://www.nctcog.org/trans) for more information on the department.*

*--Imagery provided by Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Getty Images, Lea + Elliott and NCTCOG.*

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