



Connecting North Texas





The North Central Texas Council of Governments serves as the **metropolitan planning organization (MPO)** for the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. Dallas-Fort Worth is one of the largest regions in the nation, boasting a diverse collection of small and big cities that together make up a dynamic, prosperous metropolitan area. The makeup of North Texas requires a coordinated effort to plan and administer programs that ensure the quality of life residents expect will not only be preserved but will improve as the area grows.

Federal law requires a metropolitan area with 50,000 or more people to have a metropolitan planning organization. In 1974, Governor Dolph Briscoe designated the NCTCOG transportation department as the region's MPO. NCTCOG's Regional Transportation Council serves as the transportation policymaking body for the 12-county area.

Over the years, NCTCOG has adapted and expanded its role in the planning process. The MPO works closely with regional, state, and federal partners to plan and recommend transportation projects that will improve mobility and encourage more efficient land use.

Planning for the Future

With approximately 8 million residents, the region must have a comprehensive transportation system to ensure efficient, reliable movement throughout the area. The roadway system is not enough. It needs to be complemented with public transportation and other options such as bicycle and pedestrian paths.

When planning for the transportation needs of the region, NCTCOG must carefully consider the

transportation system's impact on air quality. Ten Dallas-Fort Worth area counties are in nonattainment for the 8-hour ozone standard.

Regional Transportation Council

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) sets transportation policy for North Texas, developing policies, plans, and programs that address the needs of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. The policymaking body consists primarily of local elected officials and representatives of North Texas transportation providers.

The RTC oversees the metropolitan transportation planning process. Its responsibilities include the following:

- **Guide** the development of multimodal transportation plans and programs.
- **Allocate** federal and state transportation funds.
- **Select** transportation projects.
- **Ensure** transportation providers coordinate services.
- **Ensure** the metropolitan area complies with state and federal laws and regulations regarding transportation and air quality.

Metropolitan planning organizations are responsible for selecting surface transportation and air quality projects funded with federal dollars. In North Texas, transportation leaders and policymakers work with state and federal officials to ensure air quality continues to improve while transportation facilities are enhanced.

Committees and Advisory Groups

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) is one of several committees advising the RTC. STTC is composed of staff members of area government bodies and transportation providers. STTC and other transportation committees work with the RTC to provide information needed in the development of transportation and air quality policies and programs.

NCTCOG also has subcommittees and advisory groups handling aviation, congestion management, air quality, safety, and transportation issues important to the development of North Texas. Prior to implementation, these groups review all aspects of projects and programs, which also undergo extensive review by stakeholders and the public.

Key players in NCTCOG's organizational structure:

- **The Executive Board** is the policymaking body for the council of governments, overseeing the activities of NCTCOG, including the disbursement of federal funds.
- **The Regional Transportation Council**, as the MPO, determines funding for transportation and air quality projects in the 12-county metropolitan area.
- **RTC Subcommittees** provide direction to policymakers about transportation and air quality projects.
- **NCTCOG's Transportation Department** offers staff expertise to assist the RTC and technical committees with transportation-related matters.
- **Residents** participate in the discussion through public meetings and other methods of providing input.

RTC membership and representation can be viewed online at www.nctcog.org/rtc.

Snapshot of the Region

- 8 MILLION RESIDENTS
(11.4 million expected by 2045)
- LARGER THAN 38 STATES IN POPULATION
- APPROXIMATELY 30% OF THE TEXAS ECONOMY

Core NCTCOG Functions

The core functions below help NCTCOG promote efficient and effective transportation solutions in the 12-county metropolitan planning area.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Within this comprehensive 20-25-year transportation blueprint are projects, programs, and policies to improve mobility, quality of life, and air quality for the region. Many strategies in the MTP involve roads, passenger rail, and enhancements to the bicycle-pedestrian system. It also focuses resources on maintaining existing facilities. The MTP is not just a vision, but a carefully planned collection of projects that can be reasonably afforded.

10-Year Plan

A 10-Year Plan is required by House Bill (HB) 20, passed by the Texas Legislature in 2015. This legislation mandates that the state and metropolitan planning organizations utilize performance-based planning and project selection, along with developing criteria to consider congestion, safety, economic development, available funding, air quality, and socioeconomic effects.

Public Participation Plan

This plan outlines the MPO's responsibility to inform and involve individuals and communities. The plan discusses the principles, goals and strategies NCTCOG uses to broadly engage the diverse audiences in North Texas. This includes federal requirements and additional strategies NCTCOG has employed.

Transportation Improvement Program

The TIP is a federal and state-mandated list of projects with committed funding for implementation within the next four-year period. This list includes project information and details such as how public funding from different sources will be allocated. The MPO updates this information every two to three years with the assistance of local, state, and regional entities.



Congestion Management Process

The Dallas-Fort Worth area has a congestion management process (CMP) because its population exceeds 200,000. The CMP outlines effective management of available resources and how to maximize those benefits. The CMP develops lower-cost operation management and travel-demand-reduction strategies to complement those improvements.

Unified Planning Work Program

Within the UPWP are detailed descriptions of transportation and air quality tasks, a summary of funding sources, and a detailed list of how that funding will be spent on planning activities. Activities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region include efforts to coordinate transportation and air quality planning. The tasks and planning functions in the UPWP are prepared every two years and guide the planning process.

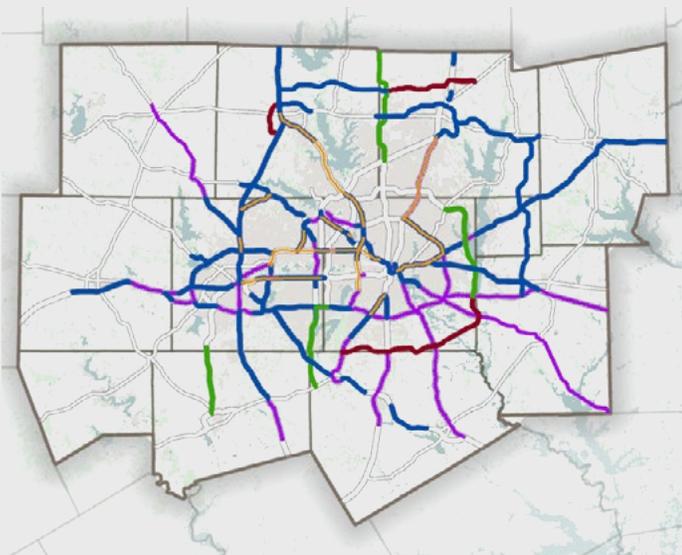
Federal Performance Measures

MPOs like NCTCOG are required to monitor and set targets for a specific set of performance measures covering various aspects of the transportation system under their jurisdiction. A series of rulemakings specifically define the measures, calculation procedures, target-setting processes and reporting requirements.

Air Quality Attainment

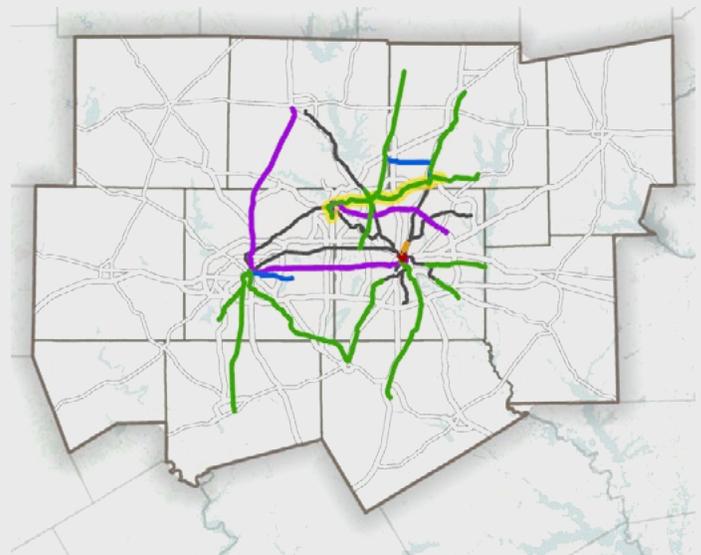
Ten North Texas counties – Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, and Wise – are in the nonattainment zone for not meeting the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) standards for ozone. NCTCOG works with local governments and businesses through policy and program partnerships to improve air quality in the region.

Recommendations from the Mobility 2045 Plan 2022 Update



Major Roadways

- New/Additional Freeway
- New/Additional Managed Lane
- New/Additional Toll Road
- Staged Facility (Frontage Roads)
- Asset Optimization



Major Transit Corridors

- High-Intensity Bus
- High-Capacity Transit
- Existing Rail
- Light Rail
- Regional Rail
- Streetcar
- Recommendation Currently Under Construction



Transportation Choices

North Texans rely on a comprehensive network of roadways, rail lines, and bicycle-pedestrian paths to move throughout the metropolitan area. These modes have undergone vast expansions to keep up with the demands from the growing population. Planners continue to examine how the transportation system can be improved to meet the needs of residents today and in the future.

Highway Networks

Traditional freeways, toll roads, and surface streets are all essential to mobility. Additionally, the region's managed lanes are playing a more significant role than in the past. Managed lanes in North Texas are optional tolled high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes that serve as alternatives to tax-supported limited-access lanes in certain corridors.

Public Transportation

In Dallas-Fort Worth, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the Denton County Transportation Authority, and Trinity Metro offer their customers bus, rail, and microtransit services. Although they operate separately, together they function as a public transit system for North Texas. The rail system continues to expand to meet the needs of North Texans who are dependent on transit and those who want to use it by choice. Additionally, the Trinity Railway Express commuter rail line, which connects Dallas and Fort Worth, is jointly operated by DART and Trinity Metro.

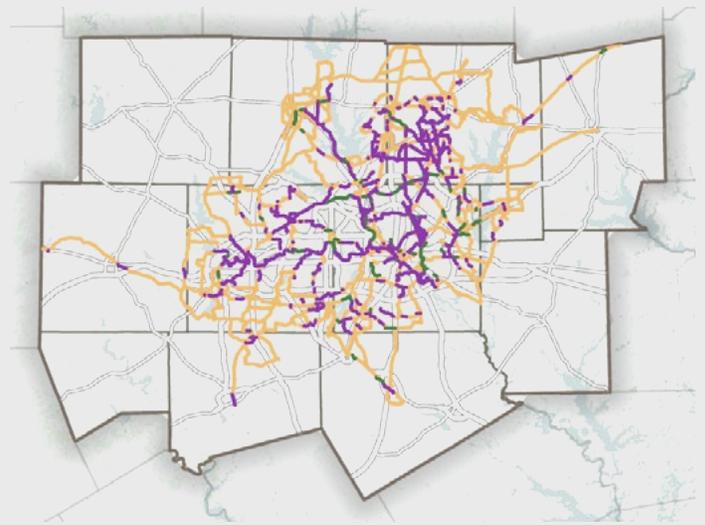
Regional providers connect people to important places like school, work, recreation, or medical services. Fixed-route bus services provide critical links to North Texans who rely on public transportation, as well as those who just want to leave the driving to someone else. Transit providers' bus networks were redesigned in 2021 to provide their customers with better connectivity. Bus and microtransit systems provide connections to and from rail stations and intracity transportation for enhanced accessibility throughout the region. Microtransit systems are on-demand transportation services that enhance

mobility by connecting people to desired destinations within a designated area.

Bicycle-Pedestrian Network

The active transportation network consists of over 8,000 miles of shared-use paths (Regional Veloweb), including community shared-use paths, and the on-street bikeway network. This network supports the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the implementation of the multimodal streets and transit infrastructure that aim to safely accommodate all travelers. More than 1,000 miles of this network are local trails, with additional expansion planned.

Recommendations from the Mobility 2045 Plan 2022 Update



Regional Veloweb

- Existing Bicycle Network
- Funded
- Planned



Transportation Funding

NCTCOG receives much of its funding from the Federal Highway and Federal Transit administrations. The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy offer funding for technologies that improve air quality. Planners weigh the effects on the environment from transportation projects so the region can continue reducing its ozone concentration. The Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the State Energy Conservation Office provide funding for air quality and transportation improvements.

Federal Funding

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is the largest investment in public transportation history. The IIJA designated \$28 billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs in Texas, with a total of \$32.9 billion over a term of five years. This investment in infrastructure will provide resources for highways, transit, transportation projects, as well as environmental initiatives through the development of new programs. North Texas will be able to develop its resources to better serve the future of the growing region with the investments of the IIJA.

Electric Vehicles

The popularity of electric vehicles is expected to lead to air quality benefits. As the inventory of EVs grows, so must the charging options. The IIJA established a grant program of \$408 million statewide over the next five years that will deploy EV charging infrastructure across the region and state.

Highways and Bridges

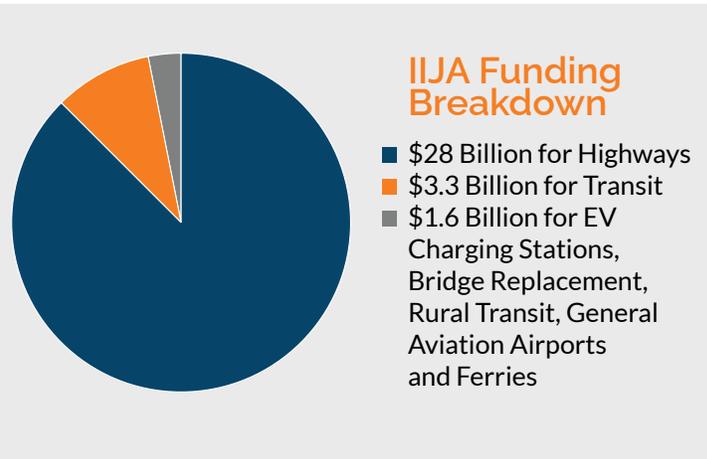
Texas will receive \$537.2 million for bridge investments as part of its total infrastructure funding allocation over five years. With the funding commitment of the IIJA, critical transportation projects can continue.

Broadband Internet

Broadband access for all North Texans is increasingly being considered as a mode of transportation that connects people to their jobs. The IIJA will provide \$65 billion dollars to invest in the development of broadband access across the country.

Other Transportation Programs

The IIJA will distribute grants to improve resilience of transit infrastructure and general funds for structural improvements. The Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) program offers \$7.3 billion in grants and an additional \$1.4 billion in discretionary funds nationwide. Through fiscal year 2026, Texas will benefit from \$642 million in the Carbon Reduction Program, which will focus on electrification in transit systems, with a goal to reduce transportation emissions. Another initiative, the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, will invest in rail crossings within urban areas to enhance safety and efficiency.





Transportation Safety

Safety plays a key role in the mobility of the region and the well-being of residents. NCTCOG's Transportation Safety Program Area focuses on improving traffic safety through the collection and analysis of crash data and the implementation of educational projects and programs. The RTC's position on safety is that even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable. The RTC supports TxDOT's Vision Zero, which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2050. NCTCOG works with state and local partners to implement new projects, programs, and policies that will help move the region closer to the goal of Vision Zero.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, speeding is the primary factor in 25% of all fatal or serious injury crashes in the region. Other factors like impaired and distracted driving are also important safety issues.

Roadway Safety

NCTCOG established Drive Aware North Texas to improve negative driver behaviors that are leading factors in serious-injury and fatality crashes.

The Mobility Assistance Patrol Program (MAPP) is an essential element to the region's incident management operations. MAPP helps alleviate congestion and improves

safety on highways in Dallas, Tarrant, and portions of Collin and Denton counties. The program seeks to get stranded vehicles operating or off the roadway completely. MAPP also assists first responders by providing traffic control at the scene of crashes on patrolled roadways.

Training

In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, there are over 1,000 centerline miles of freeway, along with 2,400 miles of regional arterials. Whether on the freeways or a high-capacity urban road, 50% of regional congestion is caused by car crashes or incidents. To better serve North





Texas residents, NCTCOG formalized a traffic incident management (TIM) training program for first responders in the region. The goals of TIM are to reduce accidents, improve efficiency within the transportation network, and initiate coordination with emergency personnel.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety

NCTCOG's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) notes that 1 in 5 transportation fatalities involve a pedestrian. The PSAP is a framework for the development of pedestrian-related safety policies and seeks to eliminate all serious-injury and fatal pedestrian crashes across the region by 2050.

Freight Safety

Dallas-Fort Worth has an abundance of freight transport, which continues to grow alongside the population. With more trucks on the roadways, the safe movement between passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles is a top priority. Truck drivers need 40% more time to stop than passenger vehicles. It is important for drivers to stay out of blind spots and give trucks extra space while on the road. NCTCOG safety initiatives pursue awareness through outreach efforts, with a goal of reducing freight-related crashes by 10% over

the next two years and fostering a safer environment for transportation through improved infrastructure.

The NCTCOG Transportation Safety Program works with commercial vehicle enforcement (CVE) agencies to reduce the number of crashes on regional roadways. In conjunction with the Texas Department of Public Safety, NCTCOG developed a data exchange web tool that allows CVE officers to access data in real-time. This ease of access will allow officers to make decisions based on current violation history, and encourages interjurisdictional cooperation. Data sharing will increase enforcement, improving safety measures for Dallas-Fort Worth residents.

To make the transportation system in North Texas safer, NCTCOG provides educational initiatives, which can be found on the "Transportation Safety" page, www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/safety.

50% of regional congestion is caused by car crashes or incidents.



Freight Planning

Dallas-Fort Worth contributes 34% of the total Texas gross domestic product, and the region's extensive transportation network is counted on to move goods.

Some major components of the freight network are: Fort Worth Alliance Airport, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, numerous industrial parks, and intermodal rail facilities. These resources generate substantial freight activity, which creates jobs and connects Dallas-Fort Worth to the rest of the world.

**Within 48 hours,
98% of the U.S. population
can be reached from
this region by truck.**



Managing Congestion

The Congestion Management Process seeks to maximize resources through sound management of regional assets. Major capital improvements are needed for the region to maintain its quality of life. The solution to congestion involves more than building massive projects. The CMP results in lower-cost strategies that complement these large investments and enable the region to make the most of its transportation system. This transportation system is closely monitored to provide an overview of the severity of congestion.

One innovative tool to ensure the reliability of the system is the region's managed lane network, which provides an alternative to tax-supported lanes when they are congested in key corridors. The Dallas-Fort Worth TEXpress Lane System was established to enable an alternative method for drivers to reach their destinations more reliably. Although there are many options for traveling the North Texas highway system, drivers have a choice between managed or general-purpose lanes. There are other efforts that allow the region to maximize the efficiency of the system while giving people choices.

Carpooling, telecommuting, transit, and more active options such as bicycling or walking are choices commuters have for leaving their cars at home. TryParkingIt.com allows North Texans to track these trips or search for carpool matches and even earn rewards from different companies.



Air Quality

Air quality is a primary focus of the MPO. NCTCOG works with public- and private-sector partners throughout the region to improve the environment. Better air quality will enhance quality of life and ensure future transportation improvements remain on track. Because much of the metropolitan area is in nonattainment for ozone, all planning activities must consider the impact of transportation projects on air quality.

The 10 counties of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise have been classified as nonattainment for the pollutant ozone. This classification means that those counties have not met the ozone standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Meeting attainment standards is critical to the region because high ozone affects transportation planning, quality of life within the region, and disrupts the health of people and their environment.

The MPO is actively working to reduce the ozone levels through a combination of educational and policy initiatives. With the help of the public and private sectors, as well as the region's residents, North Texas' air quality can continue to improve.

The DFW Clean Cities coalition assists stakeholders in reducing petroleum use, encouraging use of alternative fuel vehicles to improve air quality. This initiative, which results in an annual savings of over 20 million gallon of gasoline, is successful due to local partnerships and initiatives.

Military

The military-community planning program was established to facilitate coordination and communication with local governments. NCTCOG works with surrounding cities to ensure compatibility among the communities, residents, and military installations. Through strategic partnerships, this program will identify needed infrastructure that benefits residents of the region. With thousands of people employed at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, the economic impact of the military is profound. NAS JRB Fort Worth alone contributes over \$2.7 billion to the economy.

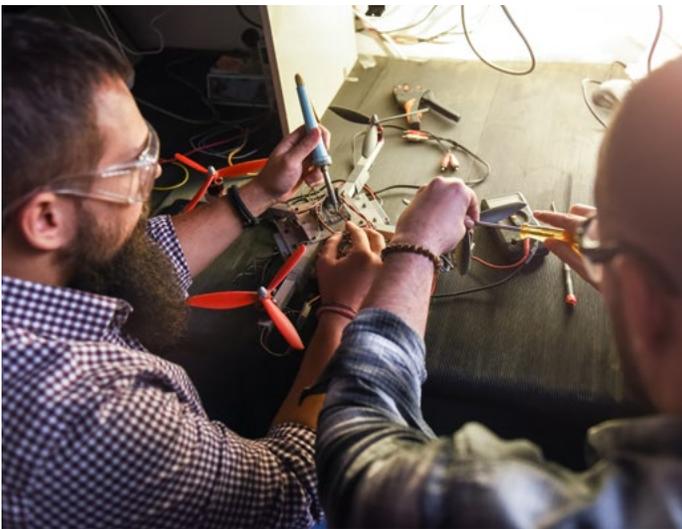
NCTCOG became involved in this because the positive impact of the military and associated defense contractor activity will promote readiness and collaboration. As planning efforts move forward, the Regional Coordination Committee serves as a forum to discuss planning, development, and modernization of Dallas-Fort Worth and its transportation network.



Innovative Transportation

The RTC has positioned Dallas-Fort Worth as a leader in transportation innovation. Whether through funding partnerships to deliver mobility-enhancing projects such as TEXPress Lanes or technologies such as automated and connected vehicles, NCTCOG is turning to technology to enhance the system.

To help advance emerging transportation technologies, planners will use a collaborative and transparent process to pursue the right solutions for the right challenges. The Certification of Emerging and Reliable Transportation Technology (CERTT) Program was created to connect providers of innovative transportation technology with partners in local governments throughout the region. Projects selected could improve the safety and efficiency of the system into the future by simultaneously using the infrastructure as an immediate solution to long-range transportation needs in the region.

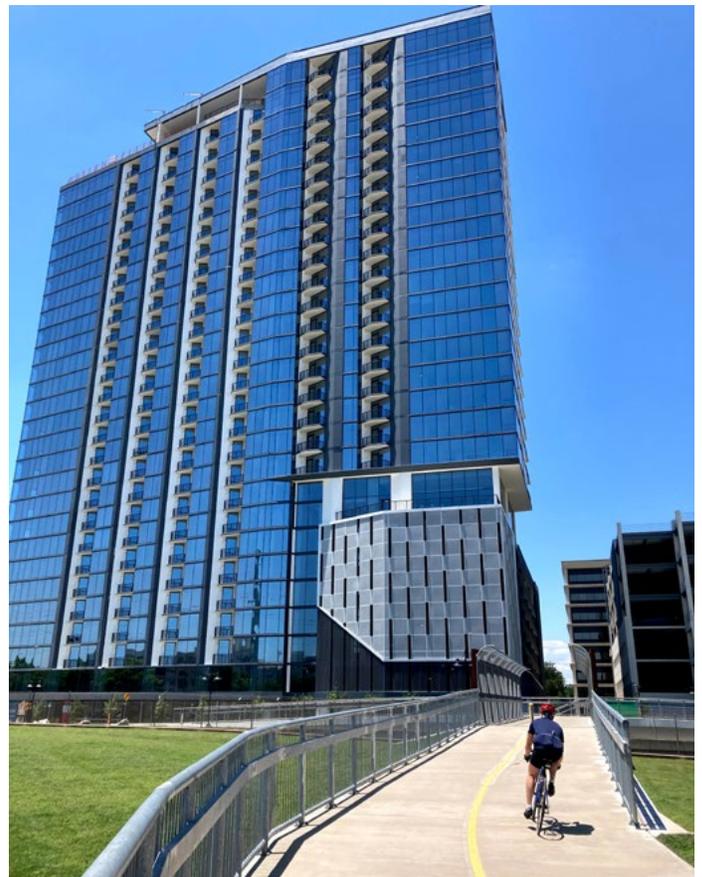


Uncrewed Aircraft Systems

NCTCOG has established a UAS Task Force composed of public- and private-sector industry experts to safely integrate uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) operation and its technologies in the Dallas-Fort Worth regional airspace. UAS technology offers many applications that can improve transportation planning and safety in the future. Additionally, companies in North Texas are using UAS technology in preparation for autonomous package deliveries to meet the growing needs of the region. The UAS Task Force hopes to foster an environment that focuses on growth, legislation, and training to promote standards for UAS operations.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

The ability to monitor, detect, and respond to transportation incidents in North Texas is vital to effective emergency response. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) can detect and respond to incidents on the roadways and inform the public of such traffic conditions via the media, mobile devices, or roadway signage. The Dallas-Fort Worth area is continually planning, programming, and implementing ITS programs and projects. The regional function of this system allows integrated technologies to provide real-time updates, which lead to less congestion and safer roadways for North Texans.



High-Speed Transportation

NCTCOG initiated the DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study to evaluate high-speed rail travel between Dallas and Fort Worth, including Arlington. Implementation of this plan would enhance the established regional transportation systems and foster the development of high-speed rail across the state. In conjunction with national efforts, high-speed rail would provide travel options to, from, and within the North Texas region. The establishment of high-speed rail could connect Dallas-Fort Worth to lines traveling to Houston, Austin, and San Antonio in the future.

Sustainability

The future of North Texas will require a transportation system that encourages higher density development and greater access to transit. With less available land, a greater emphasis will be placed on land-use decisions. Sustainable development will transpire through planning, grant programs, and collaboration between local governments. To preserve the valuable non-renewable resources, focus on mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable, and transit-oriented developments will be a key component of sustainability in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.



Environmental Justice

NCTCOG follows legislative directives and is committed to nondiscrimination and environmental justice efforts through its planning processes, public participation, and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program. Within the Public Participation Plan, NCTCOG incorporates Title VI, language assistance, and outreach efforts to underserved communities. As part of the organizational policy, the DBE Program awards contract opportunities to disadvantaged and underutilized business enterprises. Overall, the Transportation Department is taking an equitable approach in its service to the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Public Involvement

NCTCOG is committed to a continuous and open dialogue with the people who live and work in the region. This involves a mix of traditional and innovative outreach. Technology has made public participation more accessible. For example, the Transportation Department streams

its public meetings live on the internet, allowing residents to attend in person or online. Additionally, the Regional Transportation Council's monthly business meetings are required to be streamed live online.

The Transportation Department offers additional resources to encourage public participation. Another online tool, Map Your Experience, allows users of the transportation system to provide direct input about issues they face, allowing planners to better anticipate solutions. NCTCOG will continue to evaluate how best to use new technology and traditional techniques to provide people opportunities to become involved in transportation planning.



Connect With Us

Phone: 817-695-9240 | Email: transinfo@nctcog.org
North Central Texas Council of Governments
P. O. Box 5888
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888

@NCTCOGtrans



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