

North Central Texas Council of Governments

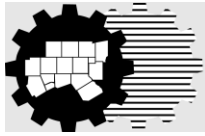
GREEN BUSINESS PANEL DISCUSSION

PROGRAM INTRODUCTIONS

- City of Plano - Plano launched their program in 2012, following extensive research into local programs. Participation requires completion of a core competencies checklist, along with additional requirements depending on the business category. In-person verification is required to participate. The current program is aimed at small-medium businesses, but they are getting ready to launch a corporate business program.
- City of Dallas - Dallas recently revamped their program to enhance value and recognition, increase engagement, and improve user experience. The program is free to participate in with no size or industry requirements. Their certification has different levels and tiers (bronze, silver, gold, platinum), and their Sustainability Scorecard drives the certification program.
- City of Denton - Denton has several large manufacturers in the city. They launched the program in 2019 and aligned the focus areas with their sustainability framework. In 2025, they had two participants in the program. For recognition, they provided employer and project awards in Resource Conservation, Wildlife and Community Resilience, and Transportation. Denton has also hosted lunch and learn events for local businesses to share Denton programs with Denton residents.

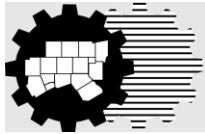
DISCUSSION

1. What are some challenges that your city faced both establishing and maintaining your green business program?
 - a. **Plano** – The need to get more businesses engaged. To combat this, they have modified the checklists. Plano has found that the executive level is what empowers the department to run the program as green businesses are their biggest advocate.
 - b. **Dallas** – Since the program is free, budget limitations. They would love to focus on smaller businesses to provide resources.
 - c. **Denton** – Recruitment for the program. Industries already report to TCEQ and may not want to do voluntary or additional reporting, which may deter people from applying. Marketing and Communications department also has limitations due to promotion of private businesses.
2. How do you measure and report the impact of your program?



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- a. **Plano** – Their team meets annually to review and discuss what's working and what doesn't, but there is no official reporting mechanism in place.
 - b. **Dallas** – Measures are included in quarterly reporting and reports progress to their Parks & Trail Council and Environmental Commission.
 - c. **Denton** – Mid-year check-ins and an annual report with external partners. Internally, they present to the Economic Board and update the Committee on the Environment and Sustainability Framework Committee.
3. What does the budget for your program look like, and where does funding come from?
 - a. **Plano** – Businesses are charged a small fee, which funds program advertising. Some additional funds are available as needed. Plano also promotes green businesses in green newsletters.
 - b. **Dallas** – The program is offered for free. Money is set aside for the program, but working with Dallas Communication and Economic Development departments allows for limited external spending.
 - c. **Denton** – The budget is low. They provide one lunch-and-learn with participating businesses, as well as window decals and plaques. Their program is free, and they partner with Economic Development for advertising.
4. How do you communicate the value of your program to businesses, and what approaches have been successful in gaining participants?
 - a. **Plano** – Plano's program has developed green business roundtables, hosted 1-2 times a year by the businesses to network and collaborate.
 - b. **Dallas** – Participation provides businesses with free marketing and ties them to big initiatives, such as Visit Dallas and FIFA. There is value in the ability to move up in certification tiers for sustainability with a low effort program.
 - c. **Denton** – The value is the ability to collaborate with other businesses and share ideas. They are currently looking to implement a retrofit funding program with the municipal electric utility.
5. What shared outcomes should a regional set of green business standards prioritize, and how do we reconcile differences in local priorities?
 - a. **Plano** – Waste diversion would be a good regional goal to focus on.
 - b. **Dallas** – While their program is broad, regional standards should include transportation/air quality efforts or local cities collaboration efforts.
 - c. **Denton** – Due to varying priorities, a template that cities can tailor to their own efforts.



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Q&A

6. How do you manage the verification piece? What does that process look like?
 - a. **Plano** – The checklist is sent to applicants and is completed with their support. They may perform an initial visit and request the business to fix any issues before performing a final walkthrough.
 - b. **Dallas** – Eligibility criteria are set with a requirement that businesses are within City limits. Then, the verification process is an onsite walkthrough of answers to a checklist and a review of policies. They may request more information or offer different suggestions, but no one has had any issues with verification.
 - c. **Denton** – A site visit is scheduled within 3 weeks after application completion to walkthrough and verify. The mid-year check-in is a documentation submission, and Project of the Year is an onsite verification.
7. How do you engage with smaller businesses and market the program?
 - a. **Plano** – The program works with the Chamber of Commerce, as well as promotes the program on the Economic Development website, newsletters, and green business maps. Current participating businesses are also big advocates.
 - b. **Dallas** – Similar channels to Plano are used. For smaller businesses, you have to visit them and make it as easy for them as possible.
 - c. **Denton** – Economic Development helps out by distributing flyers during site visits. They also promote the program during their small business workshops.
8. How long are businesses part of the program?
 - a. **Plano** – The certification is good for two years, and renewal includes a review of the checklist.
 - b. **Dallas** – The program is a three-year certification with an annual check-in survey.
 - c. **Denton** – The program is based on the calendar year, with businesses ideally moving from tier to tier.
9. Are non-profits eligible to participate?
 - a. **Plano** – Yes, with a reduced fee.
 - b. **Dallas** – Yes.
 - c. **Denton** – Yes.