

Irving Student Crowned Champion of Progress North Texas Art Contest

A local eighth-grade art student whose passions for traveling and family come alive in her artwork has taken top honors in the 2025 Progress North Texas art contest.

Irving ISD eighth-grade student Natasha Torres won first place in NCTCOG’s annual art contest. Her colorful, four-panel drawing of bicycles, trains, planes, buses and skateboards perfectly captures the Progress North Texas 2025 theme: Dallas-Fort Worth: A Region of Choice.

More ART CONTEST on back page



Natasha Torres (right), an eighth-grade student at de Zavala Middle School in Irving, has been named the winner of the annual NCTCOG art contest. Natasha is pictured with her art teacher, Angela Ruvalcaba.



Mobility 2050 is the North Central Texas Council of Governments’ long-range transportation plan, guiding how we’ll improve and expand our multimodal transportation network through the year 2050. Covering 12 counties, the plan outlines strategies to enhance access to jobs, education, healthcare and healthy food, while also improving safety and air quality. Shaped by public input, Mobility 2050 supports policies and projects that promote livable, connected communities. It’s a roadmap for a more efficient, inclusive and sustainable transportation future.

Mobility 2050 Dedicated to Helping Shape Future of North Texas Transportation

It’s difficult to imagine exactly what the region will look like in 25 years. But gauging that scenario is precisely what transportation planners were asked to do during an 18-month process that culminated in the approval of the region’s next long-range plan.

In October 2023, the North Central Texas Council of Governments kicked off its Mobility 2050 efforts, examining demographics, density and other data needed to determine what projects, programs and policies should be carried forward as the region prepares for 4 million new residents by 2050.

More than 8 million people currently live in the 12-county metropolitan area, for which NCTCOG is responsible as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Public engagement was an important component of the planning process, as NCTCOG used public meetings, as well as interactive tools such as Map Your Experience, to help build the multimodal blueprint.

Feedback from Mobility 2050 outreach efforts highlighted critical gaps in the transportation system. Out of more than 4,800 survey respondents, only 38% said that roadways fully meet their job access needs. Despite being a preferred mode for many North Texans, transit was reported as meeting needs by just 5%.

NCTCOG is actively working to enhance options for current and future residents through its Regional Transit 2.0 initiative, which is examining ways to

build the public transportation system of the future. The percentage of residents living in areas served by transit is projected to decline from approximately 45% to 38% by 2050, when more than 12 million people are expected to live in Dallas-Fort Worth, according to the region’s latest demographic forecast.

The Regional Transportation Council in June approved the \$217 billion Mobility 2050 plan, which represents an anticipated revenue increase of nearly \$70 billion over Mobility 2045, which was updated in 2022.

Mobility 2050 proposes spending \$97 billion on roadways, \$56 billion on bus and rail transit, \$32.9 billion on maintenance and \$23.9 billion on management and operations. An additional \$7 billion is projected to be spent on strategic and policy initiatives.

The next step in the process is transportation conformity, which is needed for the plan to proceed. Conformity is the process by which the U.S. Department of Transportation determines that transportation plans comply with federal air quality regulations.

For more information, visit www.nctcog.org/PlanInProgress.



Dallas-Fort Worth Leans on Big-Game Experience as it Prepares for 2026 World Cup



The 2026 FIFA World Cup is coming to North America, and no other city will host more than the nine matches

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington has been awarded.

This will be the biggest opportunity for a region already quite accustomed to attracting some of the most significant events on the sports calendar. The eyes of the world will be focused on Dallas-Fort Worth when the world’s largest athletic competition commences here next year. In 1994, the last time the World Cup was on our soil, the Cotton Bowl hosted six matches. We are humbled FIFA had enough confidence in our ability to deliver a first-class experience to award us more matches in the 2026 tournament.

From Super Bowl XLV and the first College Football Playoff national championship game to NCAA men’s and women’s Final Fours, our region has successfully hosted some of our nation’s biggest college and professional sporting

events. We have world-class facilities and a transportation system capable of moving not only millions of residents every day, but also the thousands of visitors associated with these events.

Our defining characteristic is the dedicated professionals who have organized special events and coordinated with transportation providers, law enforcement, and city, regional and state partners to ensure a positive fan experience. This same dedication helped regional officials develop North Texas into one of the most prosperous, attractive metropolitan areas in the nation.

Since I joined the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) in 1979, our region’s population has grown by 5 million people to 8.5 million people today.

Home to two dozen Fortune 500 headquarters, Dallas-Fort Worth has built one of the largest urban economies in the world, supported by people and transportation systems capable of handling the logistical challenges encountered with such massive growth.

Big-game experience

For each of the nine World Cup matches, North Texas is likely to draw more than 100,000 spectators. Hosting nine matches is more like 10 Super Bowls when you include all the related events. There are watch parties, team training basecamps, even media members here to cover the matches and provide fans around the world with an idea of what makes our region special. We are confident the groundwork has been laid for a successful World Cup run. When we hosted Super Bowl XLV, we worked closely with the limousine and charter bus industries as well as general aviation airports to make sure the teams, their fans and VIPs could move about the region reliably. The relationships forged during the Super Bowl planning were crucial in helping us land and execute subsequent events.

We have the infrastructure and know-how to successfully present major events, as we have demonstrated time and again over the past two decades.

But, there are specific infrastructure and service enhancements that need to be



AT&T Stadium

put in place to meet our obligations to the FIFA organizers and our valued regional partners. The Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has invested money in the infrastructure of the Arlington Entertainment District to ensure spectators can move around safely and reliably once they get here. Sidewalks and wayfinding signage are being improved.

We even have a vision to provide digital signage with the native languages of the teams playing each match. If Mexico is playing France, fans from those nations would be able to read instructions in Spanish and French.

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Regional Transportation Council

Rick Bailey Brings Vision, Purpose and Experience to RTC Leadership

Member Profile

Rick Bailey, Commissioner, Johnson County

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has a new chair, and he brings with him a deep understanding of North Texas, a passion for infrastructure and a commitment to progress. Johnson County Commissioner Rick Bailey has stepped into the role with a clear vision and purpose for the year ahead.

In June, he was elected chairman of the 45-member RTC, taking over for Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins.

Bailey’s connection to the region runs deep. A native of East Texas, he has called North Central Texas home for more than five decades. Bailey started a trucking business in 1979 that served the Dallas area before relocating into Johnson County in 1987. What began as

primarily a sand and gravel operation later expanded to include a flatbed interstate trucking division.

This experience, he says, provided him with valuable insight into the very foundations upon which our roads and infrastructure are built. In 2009, he was elected County Commissioner, Precinct 1, which includes western portions of the county such as Rio Vista and Godley. As a county commissioner, he remains involved with gravel and road building and has added short-span bridges to his list of responsibilities.

Bailey knows the trucking industry well and has years of experience overseeing a budget for county roads. He recognizes the rising costs due to inflation and the

deterioration of aging infrastructure. Addressing this issue - especially aging bridges and overpasses – will be a high priority for him as he leads the RTC.

Recognizing the problems caused by overweight trucks, he has testified before legislative subcommittees about the devastating effects of overweight permitting on the road system.

Bailey has worked with Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, participated in a nationwide bridge study and met with lawmakers in Washington, D.C., to oppose increased weight limits to the federal highway system.

“Recognizing the many needs for mobility, aging infrastructure must be a topic for the board,” he says.

“Each city or county represented have their local needs, but the one thing we all have in common is indeed aging infrastructure.”

Outside of work, Bailey is a longtime musician, having played guitar for years in various local and regional bands. He’s also an avid car collector and enjoys game hunting.

At the end of the day, Bailey wants RTC members to know he’ll lead with grace and respect.

“I respect each and every member of the RTC board and I’m honored to serve it however and wherever I can,” he said. He looks forward to a productive year of service to the region.

Former Ellis County Judge Todd Little selected as NCTCOG’s next Executive Director



The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) recently selected Ellis County Judge Todd Little as its Executive Director. Little succeeds Mike Eastland as NCTCOG’s third Executive Director in its 59-year history.

A third-generation resident of Ellis County, Little served as the County Judge from 2019 to 2025. In July 2022, Little was elected to serve on the NCTCOG Executive Board, which has voting authority over all policy, fiscal and vision-setting activities.

Little began his duties May 15 upon Eastland’s retirement from a position he had held since 1992. William J. Pitstick was the agency’s

first executive director, serving from 1966 to 1992.

“It is an honor to follow in the footsteps of two servant leaders and mentors like Mike Eastland and William J. Pitstick. I cannot express how excited I am to further NCTCOG’s mission of fostering partnerships that bring mutual benefit and will improve the quality of life within the North Central Texas region,” said Little, who served as Mayor of Red Oak from 2000-2006.

Chosen from a pool of 103 candidates from 14 states, with the help of Keller-based executive search firm SGR, Little is making the transition from Board Member to the agency’s Executive Director. “From workforce development to transportation infrastructure, to emergency preparedness and economic development, North Central Texas has so much potential to lead the nation in defining quality growth,” Little said. “The future is bright for DFW, and I look forward to working with our Executive Board and stakeholders to set policies that are of, for, and by our local governments to fulfill our shared vision for success in the coming years.”

Collin County Judge Chris Hill, Past President of the NCTCOG Executive Board, is excited to welcome his colleague as Executive Director.

“We are thrilled to welcome Todd to our team,” Hill said. “Over more than three decades, Mike Eastland has led the North Central Texas Council of Governments with an innovative mindset that has contributed to the agency’s reputation as a national leader in regional planning. I look forward to working alongside Todd as we continue the important work of serving our partner communities and the residents and businesses of North Central Texas.”

Little holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from Baylor University’s Hankamer School of Business in Waco and since 1992 has been owner and principal of ABS Insurance Services. He served as the Board President of Hope Health in Ellis County, a community-based nonprofit health center, and as a Trustee for Meals on Wheels North Central Texas.

North Texas Public Agencies Team with NCTCOG to Leverage Technology to Reduce Freight Congestion

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is using traffic signal technology system partnerships to help trucks move more efficiently through some of the region’s key freight corridors. The cities of Arlington, Carrollton, Fort Worth, Garland, Grand Prairie and McKinney, as well as Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, are helping deploy a Freight Signal Optimization Program across more than 500 traffic signals in their jurisdictions.

The freight optimization program will improve traffic flow through signalized intersections by helping freight vehicles stop at fewer red lights. Funded through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant, this service-based, on-cloud computing technology is designed to save money, time and fuel while reducing emissions. Passenger vehicles driving alongside the heavy trucks will benefit from the same extended green time.

Participation is at no additional cost to freight operators. The technology being deployed has been used in transit and

emergency response applications across the United States, including Austin and San Antonio.

In North Texas, trucks are involved in the shipment of approximately 77% of goods.

The technology deployment also includes information announcing to the truck driver the recommended travel speed to arrive at a traffic light on green that is currently red. The FreightPriority Ecodrive app provides real-time information on any mobile device.

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ART CONTEST (continued from Page 1)

The NCTCOG Transportation Department received 30 entries from Irving ISD students from third to 12th grade. Inspired by family trips, Natasha’s work was judged the best, earning her artwork a place on the cover of Progress North Texas.	Her accomplishment was celebrated in May, as NCTCOG staff members visited her school to crown her the champion. Read Progress North Texas 2025 online. You can also request copies for presentations to civic and professional organizations to which you belong.	Progress North Texas contains updates on NCTCOG's efforts to safely and efficiently move users of our transportation system to their destinations, whether they choose to travel the region's roads, rails or trails. The report relies on performance data, including a suite of federal	performance measures, to help tell the story of how the transportation system is meeting the needs of the growing region of more than 8 million residents. To read the report online, please visit: www.nctcog.org/ourregion .
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MORRIS (continued from Page 2)

Communicating directly to visitors is a way of making sure their experience is one that lasts a lifetime. Built for this moment Working with TxDOT, the City of Arlington, the region’s public transportation providers and a variety of public and private sector strategic partners, the region has prepared well for the hundreds of thousands of people expected during the World Cup. We will have a combination of passenger rail, public-sector fleets and private-sector charter buses to get people from their hotels to their destinations, whether that’s a practice facility, the game or any of the various fan experiences. Technology will also allow us to leverage our transit assets to	move people efficiently. The GoPass app allows customers of all three of the region’s transit agencies – Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the Denton County Transportation Authority and Trinity Metro – to plan trips and purchase tickets. Our partnership with the Carma Technology Corporation allows users of the region’s TEXpress Lanes to qualify for peak-period discounts. The FIFA app could link our regional apps together, allowing users to move around without having to know exactly what apps to download. We also know how to effectively engage with rideshare partners to ensure seamless drop-off and pickup locations throughout the region.	The partnerships formed to accomplish the projects needed before the first match is played will live on long after the teams and their fans have returned home. Beyond transportation, there are investments that will improve the lives of our residents. Legacy of the World Cup Perhaps the most exciting thing for me is the impact the World Cup has on the growth of youth soccer, which already has a significant presence in North Texas. When the World Cup came to the U.S. in 1994, it gave a tremendous boost to professional soccer. Major League Soccer debuted in 1996 and has expanded significantly in the ensuing decades. Wouldn’t it be great if the next Mia Hamm came out of this partnership?	Witnessing elite athletes training and practicing up close, in their communities, before leading their teams to victory could have a profound effect on the soccer-playing youths of North Texas, inspiring them to take their own athletic abilities to the next level. As much fun as they have playing soccer, our young athletes will be able to apply the lessons they learn on the field to other academic and professional pursuits, propelling our community forward. There is no stronger legacy we can leave our children and grandchildren with than the tools to make our home a better place. While the world is watching, we have a chance to do just that.
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FREIGHT (continued from Page 3)

Drivers can complete deliveries more efficiently with this system. It provides information on when traffic signals will change and the	recommended travel speed. This allows freight drivers to use GPS location data from a truck’s existing Automatic Vehicle	Location (AVL) system or the FreightPriority app to safely clear traffic signals.	To learn more about the program, or to sign up as a freight operator for no cost, go to www.freightpriority.com .
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Imagery provided by NCTCOG, the City of Arlington, Irving ISD and Getty Images.

For a list of upcoming Transportation Department events, visit nctcog.publicinput.com/#events

mobility

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This publication can be made available in alternate formats upon request North Central Texas Council of Governments P. O. Box 5888, Arlington, Texas 76005-5888 PHONE (817) 695-9240 (metro) FAX (817) 640-3028 Email mobilitymatters@nctcog.org WEB www.nctcog.org	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 US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration. Mobility Matters is a newsletter 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. Editor, Brian Wilson Layout and Design, Kristy Libotte Keener, Graphic Design Coordinator Please email comments, suggestions or newsletter topic ideas to mobilitymatters@nctcog.org . If you would like to change your name or address we have on file, please email us at mobilitymatters@nctcog.org . Published by North Central Texas Council of Governments
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