



North Central Texas Council of Governments

MEETING SUMMARY

Public Works Council (PWC)

Thursday, February 15, 2024

9:30 a.m., In-Person Meeting

NCTCOG Offices, William Pitstick Conference Room

616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011

Chair: Carrie Jones, City of Plano

Vice Chair: Matt Leppla, City of Weatherford

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Carrie Jones (Plano) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Erin Blackman (NCTCOG) took attendance via a written checklist to ensure at least 11 PWC members were present for a quorum and to provide accurate attendance records. The attendance checklist is included at the end.

ACTION ITEMS

2. Meeting Summary

A motion was brought forward by Joseph Cotton (Allen) and seconded by Michael Owen (Fort Worth) to approve the November 16th meeting summary. All voted for approval, none opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Sustainable Public Rights of Way (SPROW) Subcommittee, *integrated* Stormwater Management (iSWM) Subcommittee, and Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition Proposal.

Sue Alvarez (NCTCOG) brought forth a proposal for the consideration of the PWC. Sue conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis and voiced concern about the number of meetings the department hosts. The goal is to better use department resources and member staff time. SPROW, iSWM, and RISE have similar programming aims. SPROW's goal is to improve infrastructure within public rights of way to benefit air and water quality, promote multi-modal forms of transportation, provide walkable communities, etc. iSWM helps communities achieve their goals of water quality protection, streambank protection, and flood mitigation. RISE supports a broad array of sustainability and environmental initiatives. SPROW is similar to iSWM in a roadway setting and all three groups promote the use of green infrastructure.

Carrie sought the input from the PWC for their initial feedback. Larry Hoover (White Settlement) said it makes sense to combine the subcommittees for increased attendance, but asked if the work could be split if detail is needed from the PWC. Sue said that this idea is feasible and pointed to the Regional Stormwater Management Coordinating Council as an example for main communication with specialized task forces. She suggested discussing how this would work in



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the communities. Sam Davis (Texas Materials) agreed that bringing the communities together to discuss commonalities would be beneficial while keeping the option to split off to work on team-specific tasks. Sue said the PWC could provide additional feedback following the meeting via email.

4. **UTA Public Works Recruitment and Retention Plan.**

Kate Zielke (NCTCOG) introduced Dr. Kevin Carr from the University of Texas at Arlington's (UTA) College of Business. Dr. Carr introduced his fellowship students who would be working on this effort. The project team has a basic understanding of the needs of the PWC but requested direct feedback. The scope of the project is to provide innovative outreach strategies for recruitment to address current and future workforce gaps in the Public Works field.

Daniela Pedraja (UTA) asked the PWC for an acceptable timeline to implement their recommendations. Sam suggested that the solutions should be long-term as workforce struggles will be ongoing. Workforce demographics are changing, and high school students are interested in alternative career paths. Sam added that employment issues do not have a short-term fix and an intentional, concerted effort is needed.

Tiffany Melkoski (UTA) asked the PWC if anyone has a youth program and Sam explained that Missouri conducts a youth summer internship program to try out different jobs in municipalities. Justin Stoker (Waxahachie) mentioned that internships are difficult because technical jobs have a steep learning curve. Non-technical jobs are not considered desirable due to outside working conditions.

Tiffany asked how many jobs are technical versus non-technical. Justin estimated that in his department one-third are technical, and two-thirds to three-fourths are non-technical. Jeremy Hutt (Cleburne) mentioned that technical jobs have more flexibility because they are higher paid positions. Jody Byerly (Carrollton) added that his city has a program that hires five to ten employees on an eight-week trial period with an opportunity for hire if they perform well. After implementing this program, their vacancies have been filled (except one).

Daniela asked about the current recruiting process and budget. Carrie said Plano does not have a specific budget and each department is responsible for their recruitment. Also, there is a need to better advertise for non-technical positions as most advertisements go through LinkedIn, but non-technical staff may not be on that platform.

Daniela asked the PWC if they seek a generalized recruitment strategy or one specific to their regions. Carrie explained that each Public Works department is structured differently, so a generalized strategy may be difficult. Sam stated that there needs to be a collective effort to attract people to opportunities within the industry. Michael Owen said that in Fort Worth, the hiring department is also responsible for recruitment and hiring. Most communication with Human Resources consists of following regulations until a viable candidate is found. Since resources are limited, the focus shifts to getting work done, leaving little time to develop internship programs. Due to this, intern engagement is hindered.



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Daniela asked how the PWC can expand recruitment resources. Joseph said the expansion must be reflected in the annual budget to create buy-in from city officials. Jody mentioned that empty positions funded their efforts to utilize cost saving strategies.

Dr. Carr asked the PWC for feedback on what is working in recruitment and retention. Justin mentioned their efforts to host events during Public Works Week in May, hold open houses, and host summer library kickoffs for kids to see the work they do. Public Works is an invisible industry and needs to show the good done in the community. Michael mentioned that Fort Worth has hosted job fairs and would schedule in-person interviews at the event. Aaron Russell (Lewisville) said they have done same-day hiring at job fairs. Larry explained that a regional message directing potential employees to the city would be beneficial. Dr. Carr noted that the project team could provide a regional plan that the communities could adapt.

Sam suggested a Dallas Workforce Solutions event on April 2nd at Fair Park as a great way to showcase the industry. He added that these jobs are labor intensive and not remote, which causes difficulties in recruiting. Ted Sugg (Council of Engineering Companies) agreed and stated that the private sector has the same recruitment issues as the public sector. Dr. Carr stated that the scope is to develop a marketing campaign, which may include internships. Kate said the PWC could provide additional feedback following the meeting via email.

5. **Providing Access to Construction Standards CAD Files.**

Samuel Morrall (NCTCOG) stated past purchasers of the Construction Standards were emailed a free PDF version of the updated Construction Standards. Cities and private companies asked about the availability of the CAD files. Most files are stored and maintained in-house at NCTCOG. After departmental research, previous PWCs did not share files due to potential liability issues. Concern was expressed by Chris Cha (Council of Engineering Companies) and Sam over the intended use of the CAD files. There was also concern over the state of the CAD files as they were created through volunteer work. Mike Rozelle (Garland) said Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) makes their CAD drawings available. Katie Barron (University Park) said the PDF files take up more space and can create issues when printing. Kate suggested that we not share the CAD files for now, but budget for the next update to be done professionally.

6. **Cost Share Review.**

Erin mentioned the Public Works cost shares are up for review for FY26 and is seeking volunteers to assist with this effort. She noted that it would be beneficial to have volunteers from smaller and larger cities/counties. To give the PWC an idea of commitment, five meetings over a four-month period were held during the review for FY21. The goal is to approve cost shares for FY26-FY30 at the November meeting. Sam volunteered to help. (After the meeting, Dillon Luna (Northlake) and Michael Owen volunteered to help.) Please email Erin if you are interested.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. **Regional Public Works FY2024 Work Program**

Samuel displayed a slide listing the cities/counties that have paid their FY24 Public Works



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Program cost shares, as well as any donations received. More than 40 communities are participating, which accounts for 99 percent of the budget.

- **Public Works Roundup.**

Samuel discussed the details of the Annual Public Works Roundup which will take place in a couple of months. He presented Thursday, August 22nd. and Monday, September 30th as potential event dates. Erin mentioned that the Hurst Convention Center is the best choice because it can accommodate larger groups of people and has better A/V than Grapevine.

Michael supports the August date and mentions that September 30th is the last day of the fiscal year, which will be a busy week. Others seemed to prefer the August date. Samuel said he will secure the Hurst Convention Center for August 22nd. He will also email a survey to gather feedback on the topics that the PWC would like to learn more about. Erin said a follow up survey would be sent to rank the topics suggested in the first survey. NCTCOG will base the call for presentations on the top ten topics.

- **Standard Drawings Subcommittee.**

Samuel mentioned that he distributed the drawings in December, and they are available for purchase on the NCTCOG website. He also said to email him if their community purchased the drawings but have not received them.

- **integrated Stormwater Management (iSWM) Subcommittee.**

Casey Cannon (NCTCOG) provided an update that the next iSWM meeting that will be held virtually on April 24th. He is collaborating with Halff Associates to develop project deliverables (e.g., hosting iSWM Best Management Practices (BMP) training, community workshops, and promotional presentations, and researching cumulative stormwater impacts of small footprint developments). The in-person BMP training will occur in the next couple of months. Casey is collaborating with Halff Associates, Dallas, and Denton on community workshops. He said to inform him if any professional organizations would be interested in hosting an iSWM presentation.

8. Other Program Activities

- **Cooperative Technical Partnership (CTP) Program and the Community Rating System (CRS) Users Group.**

Kate provided an update on CTP, a Federal Emergency Agency (FEMA) program. NCTCOG and Halff will continue working with communities in the Hog Branch and East Fork study areas. Erin is planning the logistics for another CRS Users Group meeting. Please email Erin for topic needs.

- **Public Works Emergency Response Team (PWERT).**

Clay Riggs (Flower Mound) was unable to attend and will give an update at the next meeting.

- **Texas Chapter of American Public Works Association (TX-APWA).**

Katie Barron (City of University Park), President of the North Central Texas Branch of APWA, provided an update on the following events and activities:

- Their upcoming meeting is this Tuesday at Frisco Public Library. Registration is still open.



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- One of the topics on the agenda is the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
- Registration is now open for the clay shoot competition on April 25th. The event raises funds to provide scholarships.
- National Public Works Week begins May 19th.
- The state chapter conference is in San Antonio from June 3rd-5th.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

9. Future Agenda Items

There was no response from PWC members.

10. Roundtable Topics/Other Business.

Sam asked if anyone had special plans for the upcoming April eclipse. He explained that TxDOT informed him there will be no lane closures during that time to enable traffic to flow smoothly. He inquired if any municipalities were doing anything specific, to which he received no response.

Erin is working with Dallas on a new inspector training which is expected to be held in April. The training is free for communities that have their paid cost share for the current FY. Erin will inform cities when the details are finalized. Also, Erin is exploring a CDL training partnership with Dallas. She asked the PWC for feedback on the cost per person if they partnered with private companies.

11. **The Next PWC Meeting** is scheduled for May 16, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

12. **Adjournment.**

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Erin Blackman by phone at (817) 608-2360 or email at EBlackman@nctcog.org.

Public Works Council Meeting Attendance
February 15, 2024

Public Sector Standing Member

Allen

Joseph Cotton

Arlington

Keith Brooks

Christopher Funches

Carrollton

Jody Byerly

Collin County

Mark Hines

Dallas

Ali Hatefi

Derek White

Dallas County

Cecelia Rutherford

Denton

Brett Bourgeois

Denton County

Stephen Belknap

Fort Worth

Juan Cadena

Michael Owen

Frisco

David Chacon, represented by Dane Stovall

Garland

Mike Rozelle

Grand Prairie

Brister Merritt

Irving

Walter Thomas, represented by Gregg Kidd

Lewisville

Aaron Russell

McKinney

Paul Sparkman

Mesquite

John Mears, represented by Mitchell Talley

Plano

Carrie Jones

Richardson

Jim Dulac

Tarrant County

Joseph Jackson

Public Sector Subregional Representative

Denton/Lake Cities Subregion

Jeffrey McSpedden, Town of Hickory Creek

DFW North Subregion

Clayton Riggs, Town of Flower Mound

East Subregion

Scott Monaghan, City of Fate

Mid-Cities Subregion

Caroline Waggoner, City of North Richland Hills

Northeast Subregion

Andrew Figueroa, City of Celina

Northeast Dallas Subregion

Ronnie O'Brien, City of Rowlett

Northeast Tarrant Subregion

Keith Miertschin, City of Grapevine

Northwest Subregion

Dillon Luna, Town of Northlake

Northwest Dallas Subregion

Danielle Rix, City of Farmers Branch

Northwest Tarrant Subregion

Larry Hoover, City of White Settlement

Southeast Subregion

James Gaertner, City of Waxahachie, represented by Justin Stoker

Southeast Dallas Subregion

Brooks Williams, City of Ferris

South Tarrant Subregion

Raymond Coffman, City of Mansfield

Southwest Subregion

Jeremy Hutt, City of Cleburne

Southwest Dallas Subregion

Robert Woodbury, City of Cedar Hill

West Subregion

Matt Leppla, City of Weatherford

Private Sector Representative

Associated General Contractors

Sam Davis, TexasBit

Connor VanSteenberg, AGC of Texas

Council of Engineering Companies

Chris Cha, Pacheco Koch

Ted Sugg, CobbFendley

Texas Council of Engineering Labs / Geoprofessionals Serving Texas

Lyndon Cox, Terracon

Consultants, Represented by Reece Taylor

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Guests

Katie Barron, City of University Park, TxAPWA North Texas Branch President
Erin Blackman, NCTCOG
Crystal Bowman, City of Carrollton
Casey Cannon, NCTCOG
Luis Gatica, City of Aledo
Stephanie Griffin, Half
Kayo Kolawole, ADS
Samuel Morrall, NCTCOG
Ranjan Muttiah, City of Fort Worth
Fernando Rodriguez, City of Frisco
Jennifer Rovezzi, City of Denton
Micheal Wellbaum, Shield Engineering
Kate Zielke, NCTCOG