

North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

October 30, 2024

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

NCTCOG Offices, CPII, 1st Floor

Regional Forum Room

Chair: Alexander Pharmakis, City of Farmers Branch

Vice Chair: Lindsay Graf, City of Plano

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Corinne Buckley (NCTCOG) welcomed attendees and briefly went over housekeeping items.

ACTION ITEMS

2. **Meeting Summary.** Review and approve the July 31, 2024, meeting summary, which can be viewed [here](#).

Cory Heiple (City of Carrollton) made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Lindsay Graf (City of Plano) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

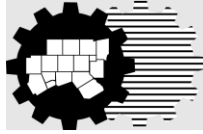
DISCUSSION

3. **FY2025 Work Plan and Project Updates.** NCTCOG will provide an update on the FY2025 Work Plan initiatives.
 - FY2025 Workshops and Webinars: Discuss selection of topics for upcoming workshops and webinars.

NCTCOG presented the topics of interest for workshops and webinars in FY2025: Engaging with Communities on Sustainability, Resilience Hubs, and Incorporating Regional Greenspaces. NCTCOG sought feedback on prioritization and additional details for these topics.

For Engaging with Communities on Sustainability, Alex Pharmakis (City of Farmers Branch) emphasized that while behavior change is important, finding ways to measure your actions and explaining why change is necessary are critical. Larry Howe (Plano Solar Advocates) suggested focusing on how sustainability can save money and tying it to financial incentives. Lindsay Graf (City of Plano) shared that they do a lot of outreach events within the broader

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scope of sustainability and would like to see a resource established that can serve as a clearinghouse for sustainability information. Farmers Branch asked about any council mayors pushing sustainability in their communities. The group expressed varying interest from council mayors depending on the topic but emphasized the importance of engaging residents and encouraging them to make their voices heard to help advance these topics.

When asked about Incorporating Resilience Hubs, Rosaerlinda Cisneros (City of Dallas) shared that they are working on a pilot project resilience hub, but work has paused due to needed building upgrades. Farmers Branch and Plano encouraged NCTCOG to reach out to other cities in the state, citing Austin and Houston as areas with resilience hubs that meet the individualized needs of the community. Farmers Branch requested information on battery costs and taking the next step with solar and encouraged NCTCOG to bring emergency management into the conversation as well.

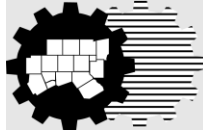
For Regional Greenspaces, Avery Pesek (City of Fort Worth) shared they have an open space program that supports habitat preservation and have submitted a Community Change grant application for additional greenspace work. Plano requested a regional study on how far residents are from a greenspace to which Cory Heiple (City of Carrollton) responded that there are a lot of online tools available with this information. Farmers Branch felt that regional greenspaces would be a great topic for older cities entering the re-development stage and could be an opportunity to identify best practices and standards. Sue Alvarez (NCTCOG) brought up the connection of regional greenspaces to the urban heat island effect and encouraged members to look into available funding for heat mapping projects. NCTCOG proposed exploring the overlap in greenspaces and equity. Farmers Branch suggested overlaying maps with EJ Screen data to identify gaps and help make the case to focus on those areas.

- **SECO Contract Scope of Work:** Discuss opportunities for cross collaboration with SECO work.

NCTCOG discussed opportunities in the SECO contract that overlap with the work of RISE. Feedback was requested on LEED for Cities and Communities and on energy and water efficiency signage.

Farmers Branch and Carrollton shared that they both participated in the LEED for Cities and Communities cohort this summer and are looking to have their applications done next year. Plano participated in the cohort last year and would have found it helpful to have a discussion with other cities involved in the process to hear what steps they were taking.

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Attendees shared that many of their buildings already have automations in place to conserve energy and water, but signage could be used to educate on the features in place. NCTCOG encouraged attendees to think about their older building stock where there may be opportunities for retrofits and upgrades, as well as high public use centers with high traffic to help reinforce these ideas.

INFORMATION ITEMS

4. **FY2025 Member Cost Share Commitments.** NCTCOG will provide an update on the status of cost shares for FY2025.

NCTCOG shared the cost share structure for FY25 and that invoices will be sent out to those who requested them shortly. Those interested in joining the RISE Coalition can reach out to Corinne Buckley at cbuckley@nctcog.org to request an invoice or inquire about how to become a member.

5. **Bylaws Task Force.** NCTCOG will provide an update on the Bylaws Task Force and request volunteers.

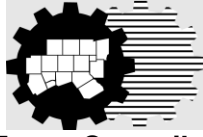
NCTCOG requested 3-5 volunteers interested in serving on the reformed Bylaws Task Force to provide input on officer term length, membership expansion, and updating the reappointment process. Alex Pharmakis (City of Farmers Branch) and Larry Howe (Plano Solar Advocates) volunteered to serve. If you are interested in serving on the Bylaws Task Force, please reach out to Corinne Buckley at cbuckley@nctcog.org.

6. **RISE University Partnerships.** NCTCOG will share details about opportunities for university partnerships.

NCTCOG requested input from attendees on potential universities to establish a partnership with. UTA, UTD, SMU, Paul Quinn, and Dallas College were all suggested as universities engaging with sustainability that could be possible partners. NCTCOG will work on establishing relationships with these institutions and requested RISE members share contact information they may have to help facilitate making the right connections.

7. **Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence Awards Update.** NCTCOG will provide an update on the FY2025 Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence (CLIDE) Awards Program.

NCTCOG shared a tentative timeline for the upcoming CLIDE Awards with the group. Applications for the CLIDE Awards will open in late winter, with applications to be judged by a panel in the spring. The winners will be announced at the 2025 General Assembly.



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8. **NCTCOG Regional Opportunities.** NCTCOG will go over other opportunities in the North Central Texas region that relate to sustainability and the Coalition's focus areas.

NCTCOG staff presented updates on upcoming meetings, webinars, workshops, and other opportunities that may be of interest to members. Full details on all opportunities can be found in the [meeting presentation](#).

- [DFW-AQIP Public Listening Session](#)
- [Whitepaper: Planning for Resilient EV Charging Infrastructure](#)
- [Resilient EV Charging and Minimizing Grid Impact Webinar](#)
- [Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Programs All-Electric Grant \(TxVEMP\)](#)
- [Lights Out! Resources: Social Media Toolkit and Customizable Flyer](#)
- [DOE Energy Co-Benefits of Bird Friendly Buildings Webinar](#)
- [Sustainable Communities Accelerator Network](#)
- [NOAA Nature-Based Solutions Webinar Series](#)
- [Energy and the Economy: Meeting Rising Energy Demand Conference](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

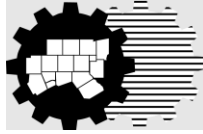
9. **Participant Roundtable.** Participants will have an opportunity to share activities happening in their communities/organizations to identify areas for collaboration and sharing sustainability programs or success stories.

Cory Heiple, City of Carrollton – Carrollton finalized their sustainability plan draft, which will be going to council soon. They are also continuing to work on and wrap up their LEED for Cities application.

Rosaerlinda Cisneros, City of Dallas – Dallas is closing out work on their Comprehensive Environmental & Climate Action Plan (CECAP) for this year and moving into work for next year. They recently partnered with Sierra Club and other organizations to weatherize 7 low-income homes and are anticipating a reduction of 10-40% in bills as a result of these projects. Dallas is also finalizing a contract with Dallas College to offer two EV related courses targeted at those with electrician licenses.

Kylie Wieder, City of Grand Prairie – Grand Prairie is just starting to dip their toe in sustainability and is looking at getting the city council and mayor involved.

Lindsay Graf, City of Plano – Plano is continuing to dive into the Charging Smart Designation and is planning for the installation of EV chargers. They are also starting to implement their residential composting program.



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Alex Pharmakis, City of Farmers Branch – Farmers Branch is working on upgrading their SolSmart designation to Gold, as well as continuing to work on LEED for Cities. They are starting work on their 2023 greenhouse gas emissions inventory and are hoping to continue updating on a four-year cycle. Farmers Branch also recently used grant funding to add an F-150 EV truck to their fleet and are currently allowing different departments to test it out. Finally, Farmers Branch plugged the Urban Sustainability Development Network as a good resource and opportunity to network with others.

Lauren Betz, City of Cedar Hill – Cedar Hill is still working on getting their library LEED certified. Their ISD was recently awarded a few electric school buses and are in the process of getting them out.

Avery Pesek, City of Fort Worth – Fort Worth is using EECBG funding for an energy efficiency and conservation plan for municipal facilities. They are continuing their work with green spaces and are in the process of replacing water meters with more efficient technology. Fort Worth is also pursuing a contract to set up landfill gas capture.

Anna Clark, Cooksey Communications – Cooksey shared that they have seen a gap in knowledge between sustainability professionals and those they serve and would like to speak with anyone facing this challenge. They also offered to help anyone interested with connecting with private sector partners.

Larry Howe, Plano Solar Advocates – An inquiry was made about the Regional Climate Action Plan and whether it was moving forward, which NCTCOG confirmed.

10. **Future Agenda Items.** Suggestions for future agenda items.

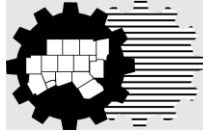
NCTCOG sought feedback from the group on what topics they are interested in following for the upcoming legislative session. Topics included energy efficiency, virtual power plants, climate action plans, and distributed energy resources. NCTCOG also requested input on potential presentation topics for future meetings. The group suggested presentations on the Department of Energy's Better Buildings program, sustainable procurement, making the business case for sustainability, and the health impacts of improved sustainability. Yarcus Lewis with the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank and Meghna Tare with UTA were both requested as future speakers.

11. **Next Meeting Date.** The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. This meeting will be held online via Microsoft Teams. [Add to calendar.](#)

Upcoming meeting dates for 2025

- April 30, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. – In-person at NCTCOG Offices
- July 30, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. – Online

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12. Adjournment.

Cory Heiple (City of Carrollton) made a motion to end the meeting. Avery Pesek (City of Fort Worth) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Corinne Buckley at (817) 704-2510 or cbuckley@nctcog.org.

If you plan to attend this public meeting and you have a disability that requires special arrangements at the meeting, please contact Ashley Barnett at (817) 695-9231 or abarnett@nctcog.org at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made to assist your needs.

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