

AGENDA

Regional Transportation Council Thursday, September 14, 2023 North Central Texas Council of Governments

**1:00 pm Full RTC Business Agenda
(NCTCOG Guest Secured Wireless Connection Password: rangers!)**

Pledge to the United States and Texas Flags

- 1:00 – 1:10**
1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda**
☒ Information Minutes: 10
Item Summary: Members of the public may comment on any item(s) on today's agenda at this time. If speaking, please complete a Speaker Request Card, available at the meeting, and provide it to the North Central Texas Council of Governments designated staff person. A maximum of three (3) minutes is permitted per speaker. At the conclusion of this item, no further opportunities for public comment will be provided for the duration of the meeting.
Background: N/A
- 1:10 – 1:15**
2. **Approval of August 10, 2023, Minutes**
☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 5
Presenter: Gyna Bivens, RTC Chair
Item Summary: Approval of the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes contained in [Electronic Item 2](#) will be requested.
Background: N/A
- 1:15 – 1:20**
3. **Consent Agenda**
☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes : 5
 - 3.1. **Transportation Paid Education Campaigns for Fiscal Year 2024**
Presenter: Amanda Wilson, NCTCOG
Item Summary: Staff will seek the Council's support of a recommendation to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Executive Board for the approval of funding up to \$1,540,700 for Transportation Paid Education Campaigns that will initiate in Fiscal Year 2024.
Background: Since 2014, the NCTCOG Executive Board has been authorizing annual large-scale advertising purchase and placement initiatives for the Transportation Department. The education campaigns are for Public Involvement for multiple projects, the Congestion Management Program, Drive Aware North Texas, Look Out Texans, the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP), Car Care Awareness, Local Air Quality Projects, the HOV 2+ Incentive Program (GoCarma), Air North Texas, and Clean Cities/National Drive Electric Week (NDEW). Flexible Funding for Public Involvement/Notifications is for possible unanticipated costs that may arise, such as

a specialized public meeting series that may need notifications posted. Efforts will be funded in a combination of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funds, Transportation Planning Funds (TPFs), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, Federal Transit Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Local Funds, and RTC Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in lieu of cash match. Education campaigns will be in multiple languages and may be presented through out-of-home advertising, print, screen, online, audio, and social media mediums. [Electronic Item 3.1](#) provides more detail.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative

3.2. **Application to the Environmental Protection Agency Diesel Emissions Reduction Act 2024 Program**

Presenter: Jason Brown, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to open a Call for Partners to public and private fleets and submit an application to pursue funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program.

Background: To address medium and heavy-duty diesel vehicle and equipment emissions and protect public health and air quality, EPA is authorized under DERA to offer funding assistance to accelerate the upgrade, retrofit, and turnover of the legacy diesel fleet. Eligible activities include the retrofit or replacement of existing diesel engines, vehicles, and equipment with EPA and California Air Resources Board (CARB) certified engine configurations and verified retrofit and idle reduction technologies. The DERA program will offer funding up to \$3 million per application from Region 6. The North Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) will apply on behalf of public agencies and private fleets in the Dallas-Fort Worth nonattainment region. For the past several years, NCTCOG has successfully applied and been awarded for replacing and updating diesel vehicles and equipment like school buses, fire trucks, refuse trucks, terminal tractors, airport support equipment to cleaner diesel and alternative fuel vehicles and equipment. Upon approval of RTC, staff will open a Call for Partners for private sector and public agency fleets with the intent to develop a public-private partnership proposal to EPA. The application packet is due to EPA by December 1, 2023. If NCTCOG is awarded the funding, recipients will be funded through a rebate reimbursement. This initiative is an extension of clean vehicle efforts listed as Weight-of-Evidence in the

current State Implementation Plan. [Electronic Item 3.2](#) provides additional details.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

1:20 – 1:35

4. Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 15

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

1. Denton County Transit Study Recommendations ([North Central Texas Council of Governments - Denton County Transit Study \(nctcog.org\)](#))
2. Public Meeting for the Eastern Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties Transit Study ([Eastern Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties Transit Study - PublicInput](#))
3. Director's Response to the Public Comments Received During the August Regional Transportation Council Meeting
4. Latest Regional Transportation Council Comments on the Unified Transportation Program ([Electronic Item 4.1](#))
5. Public Meeting for Forest Hill Drive
6. Upcoming Public Meeting for Fair Park (www.publicinput.com/fairparklinks)
7. High Speed Rail in Texas: Recent Public Meeting and News ([Electronic Item 4.2](#))
8. Getting Projects to Letting
9. Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>)
10. Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
11. September Public Meeting Notice ([Electronic Item 4.3](#))
12. Public Comments Report ([Electronic Item 4.4](#))
13. Recent News Articles ([Electronic Item 4.5](#))
14. Recent Press Releases ([Electronic Item 4.6](#))

1:35 – 1:45

5. 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Karla Windsor, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) with information on the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program and request approval to apply for candidate projects. Applications are due to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) by September 28, 2023.

Background: On July 5, 2023, USDOT announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity to solicit applications for RCN funding. This \$3.353 billion program combines Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program funds through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with Neighborhood Access and Equity Program funds through the Inflation Reduction Act. Eligible entities (as the lead applicant) may submit no more than three applications for Community

Planning Grants, two for Capital Construction Grants, and one for Regional Partnership Challenge Grants. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for a project that removes, retrofits, or mitigates transportation facilities which create mobility, accessibility, and/or economic development barriers to community connectivity and vitality. Staff will present a proposal to submit an application to pursue funding for four pedestrian caps:

- Klyde Warren Park (Phase 2)
- Southern Gateway (Phase 2)
- Interstate Highway 30 Farmers Market: Three Fingers
- McKinney State Highway 5

The request for the RTC's action is based on coordinated and strategic efforts among partners to optimize success for the candidate projects. Assuming the projected timing for application development, requests to receive a letter of support from the RTC, by agencies submitting their own applications, should be submitted to Nicholas Allen by Thursday, September 14, 2023, at nallen@nctcog.org. [Electronic Item 5](#) contains more details.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Safety

1:45 – 1:55

6. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle Round 5**

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Amy Johnson, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of Transportation Development Credit (TDC) allocations for successful applicants from the fifth round of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Policy Bundle funding opportunity.

Background: Recommendations in the Mobility 2045 Update consist of policies, programs, and projects reflecting the region's priorities and support Mobility 2045 goals. As construction of infrastructure projects alone cannot achieve the goals of the plan, a voluntary list of policies available for adoption by local agencies was designed to encourage the development of alternative, strategic solutions. By voluntarily adopting 50 percent of these policies, participating agencies may receive TDCs to offset local funds for federal transportation projects. MTP Policy Bundle applications have been completed and reviewed. Staff will present a recommendation for distributing available TDCs to successful applicants as identified in [Electronic Item 6.1](#). Additional details provided in [Electronic Item 6.2](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality, Safety

1:55 – 2:05

7. **Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant Program: Approval of North Central Texas Council of Governments Applications**

☒ Action ☐ Possible Action ☐ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Ernest Huffman, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will request approval of North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG's) submission of Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant Program applications.

Background: In October 2022, staff briefed the Council on the Notice of Funding Opportunity under the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Program (<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SMART>). The grants in this second year of the SMART Program are planning grants of up to \$2 million. SMART grants in later years will fund implementation of projects developed by planning grant awardees. Planning grant applications are due on October 10, 2023. A local match is not required. Staff is preparing a SMART planning grant application for Unmanned Traffic Management. This will work as a funding mechanism for Phase Two of the North Texas Airspace Awareness Pilot recently presented. More information is available in [Electronic Item 7](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Roadway, Safety

2:05 – 2:20

8. **Regional Transit Version 2.0: Planning for Year 2050**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 15

Presenter: Michael Morris, NCTCOG

Item Summary: The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Director met with selected transportation authority cities concerned that cities often take their local transit issues to the Texas Legislature bypassing opportunities closer to home for resolution. Staff is recommending the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) initiate a comprehensive transit study focused on advancing transportation authority city communication on common concerns, greater transportation authority collaboration between agencies and additional attention on expanding transit services to areas with transit needs, therefore, the consideration of Transit Version 2.0.

Background: It is being suggested that the RTC initiate a comprehensive transportation partnership initiative that addresses seven programs:

- Request the RTC to develop a more aggressive transit legislative proposal like it has done in the past.
- How can the transportation authorities increase membership?
- Are there economies of scale that create cost savings among the transportation authorities maintaining Board independence?

- Demographic growth is growing faster outside transit boundaries. How do transit agency cities develop better tools to capture market share?
- Improve Transit Board teamwork, where needed, redirecting legislature requests.
- Explore membership loyalty transit fare programs and maintain revenue benefits.
- Pursue resolution of the transit authority/city paradox.

[Electronic Item 8.1](#) contains correspondence from cities following the meeting with the NCTCOG Transportation Director. [Electronic Item 8.2](#) contains the draft white paper laying out the intent of the effort.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Administrative, Transit

2:20 – 2:25

9. North Texas Electric Vehicle Update

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: -5

Presenters: Amy Hodges, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will give an update on the number of registered electric vehicles (EVs) in Texas and North Texas and provide updates on upcoming EV-related programs and events.

Background: The North Central Texas Council of Governments has been the host organization for Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities (DFWCC), a United States Department of Energy (DOE) initiative to reduce total energy impacts in the transportation sector since 1994. As part of this effort, DFWCC queries electric vehicle registration data from the Department of Motor Vehicles and makes this information available online for stakeholders at www.dfwcleancities.org/evsintexas. This data is essential to the region's ability to prepare for vehicle electrification and associated infrastructure. Additionally, staff will give an update on upcoming programs and events, including the Texas Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan, Oncor's EVolution, the Regional EV Infrastructure Working Group, and National Drive Electric Week (NDEW). NDEW is a nationwide celebration to highlight the benefits of EVs, including the important role they play in improving the region's air quality. DFWCC has hosted the Dallas-Fort Worth NDEW event since 2011. [Electronic Item 9](#) provides additional details.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

2:25 – 2:35

10. 2023 Ozone Season Update

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Chris Klaus, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide an update on the status of the 2023 ozone season including exceedance days, current design values, and future impacts facing the region.

Background: The Dallas-Fort Worth nonattainment area is currently classified as "moderate" for the 2015 ozone standard with an attainment deadline in 2024 based on 2021, 2022, and 2023 monitor data. Preliminary monitor data indicates the area has

failed to attain the 2015 standard and will likely be reclassified to “serious” in the future. A draft air quality plan for the “moderate” nonattainment has been prepared by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Staff comments on the TCEQ draft plan is included as [Electronic Item 10](#). In addition, the Dallas-Fort Worth nonattainment area is currently classified as “severe” for the 2008 ozone standard with an attainment deadline in 2027. Attainment will be based on 2024, 2025, and 2026 monitor data. An air quality plan is currently under development by TCEQ. It is anticipated to be available for public comment in November.

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Air Quality

2:35 – 2:45

11. **2022 Transportation Safety Performance Report**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information Minutes: 10

Presenter: Sonya Landrum, NCTCOG

Item Summary: Staff will provide an update on items included in the 2022 Safety Program Performance Measures Report.

Background: The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Safety Program Performance Measures Report provides an annual report on the performance of various NCTCOG safety programs, projects, and statistics such as regional crash and fatality data, top 10 contributing factors for regional crashes, county-level crash rates, attendance statistics for Traffic Incident Management Training courses, Roadside Assistance Program statistics, an update on the Regional Roadway Safety Plan development, as well as updates on the Texas Department of Transportation/Metropolitan Planning Organization Task Force and Friends of the Safety Committee. Additional information is provided in [Electronic Item 11.1](#). The 2022 NCTCOG Safety Program Performance Measures Report is included as [Electronic Item 11.2](#).

Performance Measure(s) Addressed: Safety

12. **Progress Reports**

☐ Action ☐ Possible Action ☒ Information

Item Summary: Progress Reports are provided in the items below.

- RTC Attendance ([Electronic Item 12.1](#))
- STTC Attendance and Minutes ([Electronic Item 12.2](#))

13. **Other Business (Old or New):** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of interest before the group.

14. **Future Agenda Items:** This item provides an opportunity for members to bring items of future interest before the Council.

15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for ***1:00 pm on October 12, 2023, in the Transportation Council Room.***

MINUTES**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
August 10, 2023**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) met on August 10, 2023, at 1:00 pm in the Transportation Council Room. The following members or representatives were present: Bruce Arfsten, Dennis Bailey, Rick Bailey, Adam Bazaldua, Elizabeth Beck, Gyna Bivens, Alan Blaylock, J.D. Clark, Ceason Clemens, Dianne Costa, Michael Crain, Theresa Daniel, Jeff Davis, Andy Eads, Gary Fickes, Renee Franklin (representing Michael Evans), George Fuller, Raul Gonzalez, Barry Gordon, Mojoy Haddad, Clay Lewis Jenkins, Ron Jensen, Brandon Jones, Jesse Moreno (representing Cara Mendelsohn), Ed Moore, Omar Narvaez, Manny Ramirez, Jim Ross, David Salazar, Chris Schulmeister, Jeremy Tompkins, T. Oscar Trevino Jr., William Tsao, Chris Watts, Chad West, Cheryl Williams (representing Duncan Webb), and Michele Wong-Krause.

Others present at the meeting included: Vickie Alexander, Carli Baylor, Natalie Bettger, Brandi Bird, Alberta Blair, Stephanie Boardingham, David Boski, Jack Carr, Don Carroll, Molly Carroll, Angie Carson, Clarence Daugherty, Bob Dubey, Chad Edwards, Irby Foster, Carmen Garcia, Rebekah Gongora, Christie Gotti, Tony Hartzel, Amy Hodges, Joel James, Amy Johnson, Zachary Joseph, Travis Kelly, Dan Kessler, Ken Kirkpatrick, Tracey Knight, Dan Lamers, Christopher Lee, Eron Linn, Paul Luedtke, Dillon Maroney, Kit Marshall, Jon McKenzie, Erin Moore, Abigail Morradian, Michael Morris, Jeff Neal, Donald Parker, Michael Peters, John Polster, James Powell, Ezra Pratt, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Randy Richardson, Tito Rodriguez, Kathryn Rotter, Gwen Schaulis, Walter Shumac, Devon Skinner, Randy Skinner, Gary Slagel, Toni Stehling, Shannon Stevenson, Lauren Trimble, Victor Vandergriff, Jennifer Villaire, Caroline Waggoner, Brian Wilson, Casey Wright, and Susan Young.

1. **Opportunity for Public Comment on Today's Agenda:** This item allows members of the public an opportunity to comment on agenda items. Regional Transportation Council Chair Duncan Webb asked if there were any public comments. Irby Foster spoke on Agenda Items 4, 5, and 6. Written comments were provided and can be found in the Public Comments Report provided in the "Public Comments Report" on the Director's Report on the agenda.
2. **Approval of July 13, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the July 13, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 2. Oscar Trevino, Jr. (M); Theresa Daniel (S). The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda.
 - 3.1. **Local Match for Traffic Signal Initiatives:** Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to utilize RTC Local funds to support the local match requirement for the Regional Traffic Signal Enhancement Program was requested. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project 11616 supports traffic signal initiatives and is funded with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds, State and local funds fulfill the match requirement, and local governments have provided some local match to support location-specific signal projects. North Central Texas Council of Governments staff requested use of RTC local funds in the amount of \$200,000 to support additional local match needs, including support for the regional-wide

traffic signal equipment inventory, and to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program, and other administrative/planning documents as needed.

A motion was made to approve Item 3.1 on the Consent Agenda. Elizabeth Beck (M); Chad West (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Orientation to Agenda/Director of Transportation Report:** Michael Morris informed the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) about the insights to the quarterly report (Electronic Item 4.1) for the performance measures on the transportation system post COVID, and the induced roadway demand by returning to pre-COVID congestion levels. Michael mentioned that Rebekah Gongora provided a summary of approved transportation and air quality bills in Electronic Item 4.2. Michael briefed the Council on communication between the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Texas Department of Transportation in Electronic Item 4.3 and noted that action would be requested in Item 5. He mentioned that a letter was received from the Federal Communications Commission in regard to North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG's) interest in the bandwidth to be used for safety and autonomous vehicles. At each RTC member's seat was a blue-sheeted item (4.13), referring to a press-release on the High-Speed Rail. NCTCOG has begun project development activities on a segment connecting Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth, ultimately allowing seamless travel from Fort Worth to Houston. With Amtrak taking the lead in the Dallas-to-Houston segment, there is an opportunity to integrate these two corridors into one common vision – High-Speed Rail Version 2.0." Mayor Parker, City of Fort Worth requested a press release, and NCTCOG is working with the Mayors of Arlington and Dallas. Amtrak recently announced at-grade service from Dallas-Fort Worth to the East Coast via Atlanta. Michael mentioned that the Multipollutant Air Quality Improvement Strategies Workshop would be held on August 14, 2023, to discuss strategies to help the State of Texas meet the ozone standard (Electronic Item 4.5). He briefly went over the Auto Occupancy/High-Occupancy Vehicle Quarterly Subsidy report with more information provided in Electronic Item 4.6. Michael noted that communication has been received from Marc Williams, TxDOT Executive Director, on the managed lanes built on State Highway 183. Ceason Clemens with TxDOT requested to speak on Item 3, TxDOT/MPO Communication, on the Director's report by reiterating that TxDOT stands on ten percent and TxDOT is following House Bill 20, which says discretionary decisions are based on the biennial budget. Ceason added that it's easy to jump to the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) while trying to compare the two, essentially, it's ten percent of the biennial budget that was approved of \$37 billion, therefore \$3.74 billion of Category 12 funds will let for the next two years. There is a disagreement that Ceason feels will be worked out in time regarding the decrease on the internal document regarding the three funding of up to \$288 million of new funding towards United States (US) 380 and SPUR 399 this UTP update and brings both of the corridors to \$1.3 billion dollars. We need a lot more money than that. The Commission does recognize that it is a corridor of interest and is working towards it but it will take several Unified Transportation Program (UTP) cycles to obtain full funding. Ceason wanted to reassure everyone that the project development process is not slowing down on US 380. There's an environmental document that has the clearance on three of those, the fourth environmental document is scheduled for next month that will allow TxDOT to start right away on the McKinney bypass in Princeton, and shortly after that with the right-of-way and engineering fully funded. Ceason assured the RTC members that this is not slowing down TxDOT with the expectation of the project to advance on schedule. The remaining items were not presented.

5. **2024 Unified Transportation Program and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:** Christie Gotti presented proposed changes to the Regional 10-Year Plan Update including a funding exchange to advance the Interstate Highway 30 Canyon project, and other Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) projects statewide. This item was presented at the July Regional Transportation Council RTC meeting for information and was presented in August with minor changes for action. Texas House Bill (HB) 20 requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) develop 10-Year plans using performance-based planning and project selection methods, including projects funded with Category 2 (MPO selected), Category 4 (TxDOT District selected), and Category 12 (Texas Transportation Commission [TTC] selected) and updated annually in conjunction with the development of TxDOT's Unified Transportation Plan (UTP). Principles for the development of the Regional 10-Year Plan were presented in July but it was noted that staff held on to the RTC's normal principles of looking at the system and ensuring that the first few years of projects are fully funded. There are projects that are not fully funded but they are in the later years of the 10-Year Plan and staff will continue to work on those projects. The expectation is to fully fund existing projects before funding new projects while focusing on projects letting in the next 2-3 years. Historical allocations of Category 2, 4, and 12 funds since 2017 were provided, including some changes that were made since the May draft UTP listings were released to the regional funding allocations for Category 12. There was a \$480 million decrease in Category 12 funding on two projects, US 380 and Spur 399 in Collin County, bringing the regional total for Category 12 down to \$3.6 billion and total overall allocation funding for Category 2, 4, and 12, down to \$9.4 billion. A proposed Category 2/Category 12 funding exchange introduced at the June 2023 meeting was covered. There is currently too much Category 12 funding slotted statewide in the first few years of the UTP. To help resolve this issue, the region was asked by TxDOT Headquarters to trade out Category 12 funds on the IH 30 Canyon project in 2025 and replace that funding with Category 2 and Category 4 funds. An initial trade was proposed by the State, but NCTCOG staff proposed the following: Category 2 funding would be removed from four projects: 1) State Highway (SH)199 in Tarrant County (\$70 million), 2) SH 360 at Randol Mill in Tarrant County (\$70 million), 3) United States 380 in Collin County (\$150 million), and Spur 399 in Collin County (\$100 million) and placed on the IH 30 Canyon project. Category 12 funds would replace Category 2 funds removed from those projects. The RTC took action in July 2023 to approve the funding exchange noted above, and also directed staff to identify projects that had Category 12 funding reduced between the May 2023 and July 2023 UTP draft listings and to send TxDOT a letter relaying the RTC's position that funding should be formula allocated (i.e., more Category 2 and less Category 12). Staff notified RTC and Surface Transportation Technical Committee members on the two projects that had Category 12 funding reductions between the May and July 2023 draft UTP listings: 1) TIP 13070/CSJ 0135-15-002 (US 380 from JCT US 380/West University (West of McKinney) to JCT US 380/East University (East of McKinney) – reduction of \$128,804,305 and 2) TIP 552/SCH 0047-10-002 (Spur 399 from SH 5 to US 380 – reduction of \$361,039,376. Michael presented the policy elements discussed with the RTC at its July 2023 meeting. It was noted that TxDOT continues to underfund Category 2 and overfund Category 12, which resulted in Legislative hearings in 2023. This UTP was the first time Category 12 exceeded legislative limits in the draft UTP. Staff supported the proposed Category 2 and Category 12 trade to maintain commitments (even though it is working against Policy for more Category 2 funding). In regard to the recent loss in revenue from the draft to the proposed final UTP, staff's recommendation was to approve the trade and ensure that any projects that were previously funded with Category 2 and are part of Category 2/Category 12 trade do not have Category 12 removed in a future UTP and stated that the legislative intent of HB 20 will need to be clarified in the future. Michael explained that

the debate before the RTC was not whether the Commission could change the funding amount provided in Category 12, because they can since the Commission chooses those projects, nor was it that the region did not receive more money, it certainly did, nor is there a crisis situation between the RTC and TxDOT because the partnership is fine. Michael further explained that the deal was made based on the region receiving \$3.602 billion in Category 12 funding and staff's recommendation to the RTC was based on the information provided to staff from TxDOT and as staff to the RTC, he could not contradict any funding agreement that was previously approved by the RTC without its consent. Michael added that TxDOT should have notified the RTC that the funding amount had changed and asked the RTC if it was still in agreement with the deal. Ceason Clemens, District Engineer, TxDOT noted that the region has always been good partners with TxDOT and asked if the RTC would have made the agreement with the new funding amount. Ceason also added that the project swap provides a good opportunity to help advance the IH 30 Canyon project. Michael reiterated that there would not be a change to the agreement that permits IH 30 to proceed.

Maps showing the 10-Year Plan projects, their statuses, as well as other major capacity projects in the region were presented. TxDOT Public Involvement on the 2024 UTP began in July 2023 and continued in August 2023, and TTC approval of the 2024 UTP is anticipated in August 2023. Electronic Item 5.1 included additional information about the Plan, the previously approved Category 2/12 funding exchange to advance the IH 30 Canyon project, and the reduction of proposed Category 12 funds since the May 2023 draft listings. Electronic Item 5.2 contained the proposed list of planned projects for the Regional 10-Year Plan. Electronic Item 5.3 contained the 10-Year Plan projects that have let or been completed. Electronic Item 5.4 contained the previously requested letter to the TTC about the distribution of formula allocated Categories 2/4 vs. Category 12 funding.

A motion was made to approve the 10-Year Regional Plan project listings, which included the Category 12 Clear Lanes amounts under the Commission's selection authority as reflected in the July draft of the UTP for the following two projects: 1) US 380 (TIP 1307/CSJ 0135-15-002, and 2) SPUR 399 (TIP55287/CSJ 0047-10-002), and to administratively amend the TIP/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other planning/administrative documents as needed to incorporate these changes. Andy Eads (M); Brandon Jones (S).

Following several comments from RTC members expressing concern regarding the removal of Category 12 funding and the lack of a commitment from TxDOT Headquarters regarding funding for US 380 and Spur 399, a "friendly amendment" was offered by Mr. Trevino to the motion to direct staff to transmit correspondence to the Texas Transportation Commission requesting the Commission's intent regarding funding for US 380 and Spur 399 in future iterations of the UTP. Judge Eads declined to accept the "friendly amendment". Mr. Trevino then made a formal motion to amend the original motion to add a direction to send additional communication to the Commission regarding its intention for US 380 and SPUR 399. T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (M); Ed Moore (S). Andy Eads, Barry Gordon, George Fuller, and Chris Watts voted against the motion to amend. The motion to amend was approved.

A vote was then taken on the motion as amended which was approved. Barry Gordon, Chris Schulmeister, and John Muns voted against the motion. Clay Lewis Jenkins abstained. The motion as amended passed.

6. **Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program:** Jeff Neal presented a request for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of projects to be submitted for funding consideration through the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. This \$5.575 billion program solicits project applications for three funding opportunities: the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Grants Program (MEGA), the Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects Grant Program (INFRA), and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (RURAL). The MEGA program will provide \$1.8 billion in funding for major projects too large or complex for traditional funding programs. The INFRA program will provide \$3.1 billion in funding for highway, bridge, freight, rail, intermodal, and marine transportation projects of regional and national significance. The RURAL program will provide \$675 million in funding supporting projects to improve/expand rural area surface transportation infrastructure for increased connectivity and enhanced safety and reliability. Applications are due on August 21, 2023. Three projects will be submitted, including a resubmittal of the Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity Project under both the INFRA and RURAL Grant programs, with all non-federal and federal funding amounts and sources identical to last year's MPDG application. The second project is a unique and transformative project regarding improved physical and technological infrastructure connections to and from the Alliance Texas Intermodal Hub in north Fort Worth. Various features like the State Highway (SH) 170/Intermodal Parkway direct connectors are shown with updated funding amounts including more Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) in addition to \$11 million in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds to support the purchase of electric vehicles, contributions on the federal and non-federal side, and private partners contributing the majority with a new total cost of \$261,823,699. The third project, US 81/287 North Tarrant County Reconstruction Project, is requesting MEGA grant funds in addition to funds already identified through 2023/24 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) funds to build all proposed corridor improvements as a single construction phase. United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) grant opportunities considerations over multiple programs includes candidate selection impacted by eligible applicants, submittal limits, readiness, merit criteria, and previously submitted projects but making sure to keep the East/West balance. The FY2023/2024 MPDG application deadline for Grants.gov is August 21, 2023, and NCTCOG Executive Board endorsement is anticipated for August 24, 2023. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 6.

A motion was made to approve the allocation of previous and new Regional Transportation Council funds for the 1) Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity Project – \$12,530,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds and 4,270,000 Transportation Development Credits (TDCs), same as FY22 INFRA/RURAL, and 2) the Alliance Smart Port Deployment and SH 170 Connections Project – \$11,000,000 in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) Denton County funds for six electric hostler vehicles and charging infrastructure, \$23,400,000 in STBG funds for engineering/ROW/Construction (SH 170) and signal optimization (Intermodal Parkway), and 2,680,000 TDCs as federal match for engineering/ROW (SH 170) and signal optimization (Intermodal Parkway). Approved funding would enable pre-construction activities to proceed, regardless of MPDG award, and the motion also included a request for any new funds from local/TxDOT partners, as specified. Finally, the motion would approve proposed projects to submit for funding consideration through FY23/24 MPDG Program and allow staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program/Surface Transportation Improvement Program, as well as other planning/administrative documents, to include proposed projects if selected for FY23/24 MPDG awards. Manny Ramirez (M); Dianne Costa (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Ratification of Transportation Improvement Program Modifications:** Michael Morris requested ratification of revisions to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) added late to the August 2023 TIP modification cycle at the request of Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Dallas, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other planning and administrative documents with TIP-related changes. TxDOT requested that six projects from the Regional 10-Year Plan be added. TxDOT requested this action in order to potentially expedite the projects from FY2027 or later into FY2024 or FY2025. Advancing some of the projects to earlier fiscal years is an administrative TIP change, some of the projects required changes to scope or funding to make them consistent with the Mobility Plan or the pending 10-Year Plan updates associated with the 2024 Unified Transportation Program. The six modifications, provided in Electronic Item 7, have been reviewed for consistency with the Mobility Plan, the air quality conformity determination, and financial constraint of the TIP, and received public involvement with the 10-Year Plan. were.

A motion was made to approve the ratification of revisions to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) added late to the August 2023 TIP modification cycle at the request of TxDOT Dallas was requested, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and other planning and administrative documents with TIP-related changes. Theresa Daniel (M); George Fuller (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Census Bureau Urban Boundary Update: Federal Transit Administration Designation Recipient Selection and Metropolitan Planning Organization Designated Status:** Ken Kirkpatrick requested for approval for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to serve as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) designated recipient for the McKinney-Frisco Urbanized Area. US Census Bureau updates to urban areas resulted in McKinney-Frisco Urbanized Area being expanded and renamed on December 29, 2022. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/FTA updated transportation management areas on June 5, 2023, for McKinney-Frisco (New), Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, and Denton-Lewisville. The McKinney-Frisco urbanized area needs to select a designated recipient by September 30, 2023, for apportionments beginning Fiscal Year 2024, that will be selected by the Governor, or designee (TxDOT) in cooperation with public transportation providers and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The duties of the designated recipient will have principal authority to administer and provide oversight of FTA funds and make FTA funds available to eligible projects and entities. Staff recommended North Central Texas Council of Governments to serve as the designated recipient. The cities of McKinney and Frisco, by Council action, approved the recommendation that NCTCOG serve as the FTA designated recipient. Electronic Item 8 contained additional details.

A motion was made to approve the North Central Texas Council of Governments to serve as the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration funds for the newly designated McKinney-Frisco Urbanized Area.

Dianne Costa (M); George Fuller (S). The motion passed unanimously.

9. **2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program Development Kickoff:** Christie Gotti briefed the Council on the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process, expectations, and upcoming meetings. A new TIP is developed every two years through a cooperative effort between the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), local governments, and transportation authorities. The process includes reviewing all existing

projects and gathering information on additional locally funded projects of regional significance; making needed revisions to existing project scopes; schedules, and/or funding; then sending off to TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their review and approval. In order to streamline the process, meeting to discuss projects will be staff from appropriate departments, fiscal managers to answer questions about expenditures, agreements, and invoicing, as well as TxDOT staff will be present to help set realistic expectations and answer questions about the process. Christie highlighted that regarding project status updates, staff will request start and end dates in the following format: estimated dates (month and year) if phase has not been started/completed, actual dates (month and year) if phase has been started/completed, and dates provided must be realistic given the realities of project implementation steps as well as provided when the local match will be available. The status of agreements is another area Christie emphasized, that Advance Funding Agreements (AFA) with TxDOT are up to date, interlocal agreements with NCTCOG are reviewed, and invoices are timely. The TIP development is a large modification cycle, being a great venue for requesting changes to project scope or limits, funding changes, and changes to implementing agency. To summarize the process with focus areas: timely implementation of projects, requests for projects to be placed in the first year of the new TIP (FY2025), closing out completed projects with Regional Toll Revenue funds, and soliciting information on regionally significant projects being implemented with local funds. The schedule is as follows: meetings with implementing agencies (between August and October 2023), development of TIP listings and document (between August 2023 and February 2024), draft listings for Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) (information in March 2024), draft listings – Regional Transportation Council (RTC) information, public meeting, and final listings and document for STTC action (April 2024), final listings and document for RTC action (May 2024), submit final document to TxDOT (Summer 2024), anticipate TxDOT Commission approval for Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (August/September 2024), and anticipate federal/State approval for STIP (October/November 2024). Dan Kessler encouraged STTC members to take the TxDOT local government contracting course.

10. **Intermodal Transportation Hubs for Colleges and Universities Study**

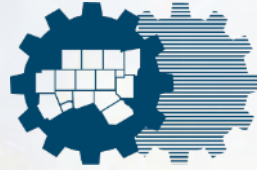
Recommendations: Shannon Stevenson briefed the Council on the completion and key recommendations from the Intermodal Transportation Hubs for Colleges and Universities Study. The Intermodal Transportation Hubs for Colleges and Universities was launched in March of 2022 to investigate the potential for mobility hubs on and around college and university campuses throughout North Central Texas. The main deliverables were a Regional Mobility Hub Catalog and University of North Texas Mobility Hub Strategy. The study assessed existing and future transportation and demographic conditions around campuses to provide recommendations for mobility hub phasing, funding, and implementation. The project advisory committee held regular meetings in October 2022, on the campuses of the University of Texas in Arlington, Dallas College Cedar Valley Campus, and University of North Texas in Denton for on-campus public engagement. The survey was designed to understand the travel patterns, needs, and experiences on and around campuses, and the opportunities and barriers for mobility hubs with over 1,200 responses from a variety of campus affiliates. The methodology for siting all types of campus mobility hubs on and around campuses includes demographic and travel pattern data, transportation indicators, such as transit services, bike infrastructure, and parking facilities, and consideration of campus trip generators that could create demand for mobility hubs, such as residence halls, sports facilities, and other student activity centers. Funding and implementing mobility hubs' key principles included partnership, incrementalism, adaptability to changing conditions, and prioritization of equity and

affordability. In depth opportunities and recommendations are covered in the Funding Strategies and Implementations report. Next steps include following up with campuses and local governments on potential mobility hub projects, and being available for planning, funding, and implementation coordination and assistance based on study recommendations. For more information, go to [North Central Texas Council of Governments - Intermodal Transportation Hubs for Colleges and Universities Study \(nctcog.org\)](#). Electronic Item 10 included additional information about the process.

11. **Unmanned Aircraft Airspace Awareness Pilot Program**: Ernest Huffman presented the North Texas Unmanned Aircraft Airspace Awareness Pilot Program, shedding light on its crucial aspects. The initiative aims to enhance pilot safety and promote transparency by addressing the challenges posed by unmanned aircraft in the region. This comprehensive program offers valuable insights for pilots and provides local governments with free application software and training. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has meticulously selected proposals from three distinguished companies to deliver a sophisticated toolset that empowers residents and businesses to engage in safe aerial activities. The tool offers real-time data on potential risks, local advisories, emergency alerts, and advanced flight planning features. Ernest highlighted that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) doesn't govern drone usage directly, prompting the need for this pilot program. NCTCOG's initiative bridges the gap by prioritizing safety and transparency. To achieve this, the vendors' solutions offer browser-based visualization and monitoring of airspace within jurisdictional territories. These tools facilitate the creation and dissemination of localized advisories for various operators, including governmental, commercial, and recreational users. The selected vendors bring with them essential capabilities, including the integration of diverse technology solutions and regional sensor data. This approach ensures a comprehensive platform that not only keeps the community informed about rules, regulations, and potential hazards but also fosters engagement. A significant aspect of this engagement is the incorporation of a live operational map on the official www.northtexasuas.com website, allowing seamless communication with the community. The pilot program spans two years, with a clear roadmap for its phases. In the initial phase, NCTCOG and participating cities will receive licenses for the platforms, enabling them to incorporate Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operations and promote platform adoption among citizens. The subsequent phase focuses on data sharing among platforms, thereby enhancing the overall airspace management capabilities in the region. For cities to participate, two designated points of contact (POC) are required (please select POC and send contact information to Ernest at ehuffman@nctcog.org by August 28, 2023. Each city will receive at least one free license from the providers, working closely with them through workshops and training sessions. The immediate next steps include identifying points of contact, attending vendor workshops at the end of August, selecting vendors for each city, obtaining licenses, and undergoing vendor training. Ernest drew attention to the upcoming regulatory change. Starting September 16, 2023, all drone pilots must adhere to the [Remote ID rule](#), requiring the broadcasting of the drone's location data. Recognized Identification Areas (FRIAs) are designated zones where drones can operate without Remote ID equipment. Ernest also announced an informative workshop that will be on August 11, 2023. This virtual event covers basic rule requirements, compliance strategies for government agency fleets, details about FRIAs, and the application process. Another briefing on the subject will be given at the next North Texas UAS Safety and Integration Task Force meeting from 10am to 12pm CST on August 29. All details were provided in Electronic Item 11.

12. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Policy Bundle Round 5:** Amy Johnson presented results from the fifth round of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Policy Bundle, including the plan to distribute available Transportation Development Credits (TDCs). The MTP is a blueprint for the region's transportation system that responds to the region's goals and guides expenditure of federal and State funds with recommendations for programs, policies, and projects. The Policy Bundle takes 20 policies out of the plan, advances regional priorities, and rewards qualifying entities with TDCs. Amy briefed the Council on the process for the review of local government policies and recommendations for distribution of TDCs. Due to the Mobility 2045 Plan being updated, there are new policies included such as Comprehensive Air Quality Action Plan (CAP), Sustainable Tire Recycling, Equity, Asset Management, and Street Connectivity. Scoring has also changed, so TDCs are now allocated by points, and there are multiple points available for most policies. There were 17 applicants in Round 5 and 16 proposed awardees met requirements with a total of 26 million TDCs recommended to award. The remaining schedule is as follows: action will be requested at the August 25, 2023, STTC meeting and the September 14, 2023, RTC meeting, and formal notification of awards are anticipated in September/October. Electronic Item 12 included a draft recommendation for TDC distribution for successful policy bundle participants.
13. **Progress Reports:** Regional Transportation Council attendance was provided in Electronic Item 13.1 and Surface Transportation Technical Committee attendance in Electronic Item 13.2.
14. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.
15. **Future Agenda Items:** There was no discussion on this item.
16. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Regional Transportation Council is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Thursday, September 14, 2023, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.



NCTCOG PRESENTATION

Transportation Paid Education Campaigns for Fiscal Year 2024

AMANDA WILSON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

THE THREE E'S FOR EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

Engineer - Develop initiative

Educate - Inform the audience on initiative

Enforce - Make sure initiative is being implemented



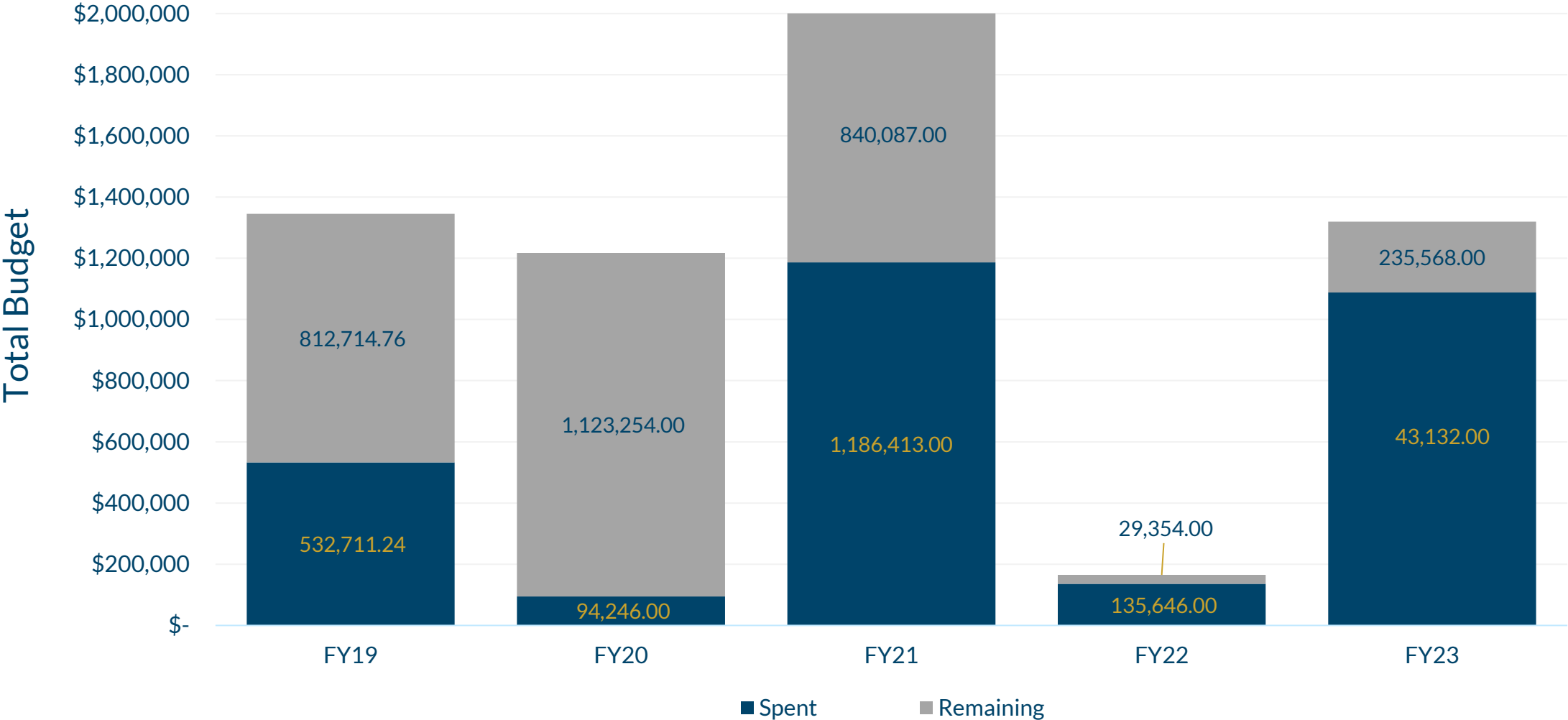
EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS OVERVIEW

Education campaigns for Transportation Initiatives allows for:

- Lower Media Buy Rates
- Increased and Targeted Audience Reach
- Increased Website Traffic and Engagement
- Greater Public Participation
- Cross Communication for Campaigns
- Improved Efficiencies with Media Outlets



EDUCATION CAMPAIGN BUDGET OVERVIEW FROM 2019-2023



EXAMPLE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE MEASURES SUMMARY– TRY PARKING IT

Goal: Increase the number of North Texas commuters that visit and create an account on the TPI website. Increase the number of users that actively track their alternative commute information on the TPI website.

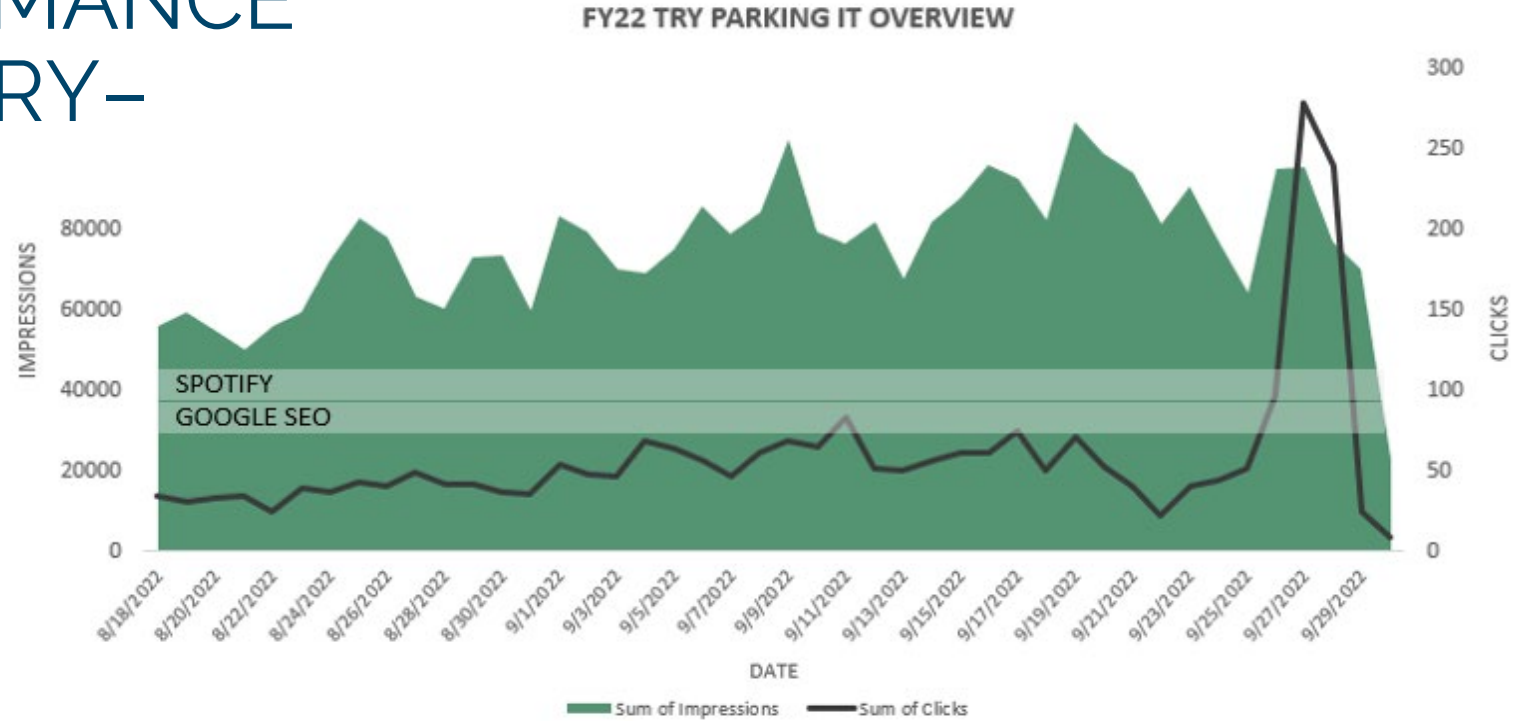
Strategy & Audience Breakdown:

Commuters (drivers and passengers) in North Texas ages 18 and up.

Future Recommendations:

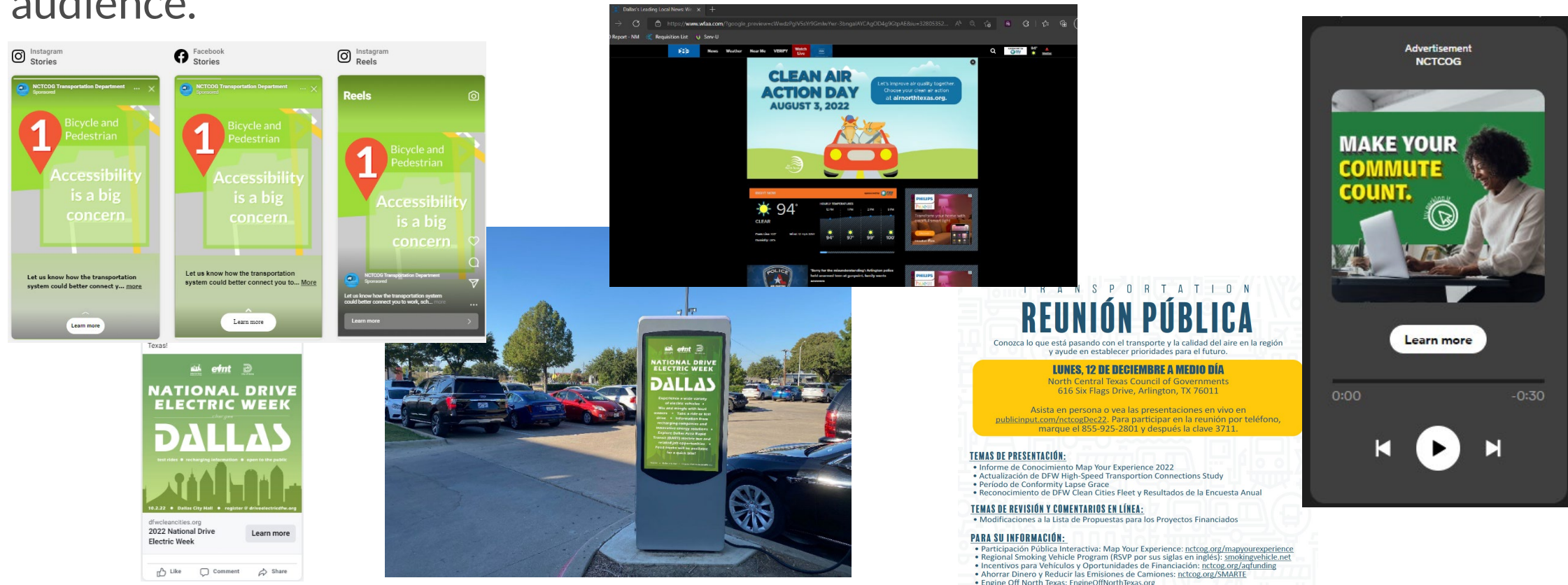
- Encourage TPI team to research with public involvement (PI) staff on chambers of commerce outreach as well as potential chamber memberships
- Continue paid outreach on Spotify to strengthen audience and analytics in FY23. Recommend a three-month minimum for streaming component of the campaign.
- Research opportunities for additional languages to promote Try Parking It.
- Continue improving Google Ads campaign set up for Google SEO and Google display options in advance of FY23 Try Parking It campaign. Set up meeting with a Google Business representative as needed.

FY22 Budget: \$30,000



EDUCATION CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND EXAMPLES

Media procurements and placements are monitored and adjusted based on the current market environment and a campaign's key message(s) and target audience.



TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Purchase and Placement of Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives for FY2024					
Program Name	Funding Source	Funding Amount	Match Source	Match Total	Total
Public Involvement	TPF/STBG/ FTA/EPA/RTC Local	\$ 254,700	TDCs	45,940	\$ 254,700
Congestion Management Program	STBG	\$ 400,000	TDCs	80,000	\$ 400,000
Drive Aware North Texas	STBG	\$ 300,000	TDCs	60,000	\$ 300,000
Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety (Look Out Texans)	STBG	\$ 80,000	TDCs	16,000	\$ 80,000
RSVP, Car Care Events, Local Air Quality Projects	STBG	\$ 56,000	TDCs	11,200	\$ 56,000
HOV 2+ Incentive Program (GoCarma)	STBG	\$ 60,000	TxDOT	\$15,000	\$ 75,000
Ozone Season Emissions Reduction Campaign (Air North Texas)	CMAQ	\$ 205,000	TDCs	41,000	\$ 205,000
Clean Cities/National Drive Electric Week	STBG	\$ 130,000	TDCs	26,000	\$ 130,000
Flexible Funding*	STBG/CMAQ/ TPF/FTA/RTR/ LOCAL	\$ 40,000	TDCs/TBD	10,000	\$ 40,000
OVERALL TOTAL		\$ 1,525,700		290,140	\$ 1,540,700

*Specific funding source, including match source, will be determined by the project(s) using the Flexible Category, and could also include RTC Local.

Total up to \$1,540,700 to cover paid education campaign expenses for approval. Campaigns in the table above are included in the FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program, which was approved by the RTC and Executive Board.



PROPOSED ACTION

Support an RTC Recommendation to NCTCOG Executive Board to Approve Funding up to \$1,540,700 for Education Campaigns for Transportation Initiatives that will initiate in FY2024 such as:

- Try Parking It and One Day a Week

- Drive Aware North Texas

- Look Out Texans

- HOV 2+ Incentive Program (GoCarma)

- National Drive Electric Week

- Ozone Season Emissions Reduction Campaign (Air North Texas)

- Report Smoking Vehicles Program

- Car Care Events

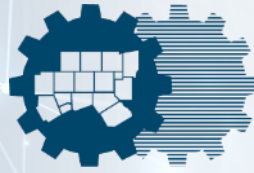


CONTACT US



Amanda Wilson
Senior Program Manager
(817) 695-9284
awilson@nctcog.org





NCTCOG PRESENTATION

Application to the Environmental Protection Agency Diesel Emissions Reduction Act 2024 Program

Regional Transportation Council

September 14, 2023

Jason Brown,
Principal Air Quality Planner

Funding Application Summary

Funding Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
National Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program

Call for Partner	North Texas Diesel Emissions Reduction Call for Partners
Project Types	Replace Onroad and Nonroad Diesel Engines/Vehicles/Equipment; Install Locomotive Shore Power, EPA Verified Idle Reduction (See Slides 3, 4)
Available Funding	Up to \$3 million per EPA application; \$14 million total for EPA Region 6
Call for Partner Applicants	Private Fleets and Companies; Public Entities such as Local Governments
Priority Project Locations	10-County Ozone Nonattainment Area*; Area of Air Toxics Concern**
Clean Fleet Policy	Must Adopt RTC Clean Fleet Policy or Similar

*This includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, and Wise counties.

**This includes Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant counties. Source: [2022-2023 DERA Priority County List](#)



Eligibility and Scoring Criteria

North Texas Diesel Emissions Reduction Call for Partners

Characteristics	Rebate Program Purpose: Reduces administrative burden as compared to a subgrant program.	
	Competitive application process Purpose: Choose the best activities for our region.	
Eligibility	Operate in Required Geographic Area	
	Clean Fleet Policy Adoption Purpose: Reserve Funding for Fleets that are Engaged Beyond Grant Opportunities; Consistent with RTC Adoption of Clean Fleet Policy	
Scoring Criteria	Criteria	% of Total Score
	Cost Per Ton NO_x Emissions Reduced Purpose: Maximize Emissions Reductions	65%
	Rebate Recipient Oversight Criteria Purpose: Balance Project Benefits with Administrative Burden	25%
	Priority Project Location Criteria Purpose: Preference to Projects Operating in Environmental Justice areas and Disadvantaged Communities	5%
	Project Resilience and Workforce Development Criteria Purpose: Preference to Projects with Ability to Protect Funded Investments; Prepare the Workforce for the Project	5%

Schedule

Milestone	Date
STTC Recommendation of RTC Approval	August 25, 2023
RTC Approval	September 14, 2023
Open Call for Partners	September 15, 2023
Call for Partners Applications Deadline	October 20, 2023
Executive Board Approval	November 16, 2023
EPA Application Deadline	December 1, 2023



Action Requested

Per Recommendation of STTC on August 25, 2023:

Approval of NCTCOG to Pursue Funding from the EPA DERA Program and Authorizing Staff to:

1. Open Call for Partners to Public and Private Fleets
2. Submit an EPA Application(s)



Contact Us



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Air Quality Planner

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Trey Pope
Air Quality Planner

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Jason Brown
Principal Air Quality Planner

Jbrown@nctcog.org | 817-704-2514



Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager

Cklaus@nctcog.org | 817-695-9286





TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

August 15, 2023

J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman

W. Alvin New
Commissioner

Robert C. Vaughn
Commissioner

Alex Meade
Commissioner

Steven D. Alvis
Commissioner

Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888

Dear Mr. Morris:

I have received your August 7, 2023 letter regarding the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

I'd like to clarify information regarding funding of the US 380 Corridor project. At no time has the Commission taken action to remove funding from US 380. In fact, a significant amount of funding has been allocated to the corridor and additional funds are being proposed to be added. In June, when the draft 2024 UTP was presented to the Texas Transportation Commission (Commission), an additional \$288.5 million was proposed to be included for the US 380 Corridor project improvements. This brings the total proposed funding to-date on the corridor to \$1.3 billion. A significant portion of funding for the region has been provided through Commission discretionary funding.

Furthermore, the current funding levels included in the proposed 2024 UTP do not impact right of way acquisition on the US 380 corridor and these efforts can continue to proceed as allowed with current environmental approvals. The significant funding on this corridor only serves to strengthen project development activities.

We strive to increase funding on important regional corridors like US 380, while also addressing the many other strategic needs statewide, including in the north Texas region.

I have provided a more thorough response on the Commission's use of Category 12 funds to your Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Chair in my letter dated August 15, 2023. You may refer to that letter, along with the material that you have previously seen on this topic.

To effectively address the regional and statewide transportation needs we face in north Texas, we must have mutual trust and confidence in a solid partnership with the RTC. We hope to continue and build upon the longstanding collaborative relationship that our organizations have enjoyed, and that Texans have benefited from. We will appreciate your help toward that end.

Sincerely,



J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission

cc: Texas Transportation Commission
The Honorable Gyna Bivens, Chair, Regional Transportation Council, Mayor Pro Tem,
City of Fort Worth
Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
Brian Barth, P.E., Deputy Director for Program Delivery, TxDOT
Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Director for Planning and Administration, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
David M. Salazar, Jr., P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Noel Paramanantham, P.E., Paris District Engineer, TxDOT



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

August 14, 2023

The Honorable J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy body for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, met on August 10, 2023, to consider approval of the Regional 10-Year Plan in connection with TxDOT's draft 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). There was much discussion at the RTC meeting that highlighted the importance of the long-standing positive relationship between the Commission and the RTC on implementing a wide range of improvements to the transportation system in the DFW region.

The RTC took action to approve the 10-Year Regional Plan project listings, which included the Category 12 Clear Lanes amounts under the Commission's selection authority as reflected in the July draft of the 2024 UTP for the following two projects: 1) US 380 (TIP 13070/CSJ 0135-15-002, and 2) Spur 399 (TIP 55287/CSJ 0047-10-002).

In addition to approval of the project listings, the RTC authorized the Chairperson to send an additional communication requesting the Commission express its funding intent regarding the US 380 and Spur 399 projects for future iterations of the UTP in the spirit of the Commission and RTC's partnership to advance projects. This early insight is being requested of the Commission to aid impacted local governments in communicating expectations to their constituents on these two critical projects.

This letter supplements the RTC's previous comments on the draft 2024 UTP. The RTC looks forward to a continued partnership with the Commission and TxDOT to address the transportation needs within the DFW region and the State. Please contact Michael Morris, P.E. at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Gyna Bivens, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth

KK:aa

August 14, 2023

cc: The Honorable W. Alvin New, Commissioner
The Honorable Robert C. Vaughn, Commissioner
The Honorable Alejandro G. Meade III, Commissioner
The Honorable Steven D. Alvis, Commissioner
Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Executive Director for Planning and Administration, TxDOT
Brian Barth, P.E., Deputy Executive Director for Program Delivery, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
David M. Salazar Jr., P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Noel Paramanantham, P.E., Paris District Engineer, TxDOT
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG



TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

August 15, 2023

J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman

W. Alvin New
Commissioner

Robert C. Vaughn
Commissioner

Alex Meade
Commissioner

Steven D. Alvis
Commissioner

The Honorable Gyna Bivens, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth
P.O. Box 5888
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888

Dear Chair Bivens:

Thank you for your August 3, 2023 letter regarding the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

The UTP, as required by statute, is developed to guide the development and construction of transportation projects throughout the state. The program, which covers a 10-year period and is updated annually, includes defined funding categories such as Categories 2 – Metro and Urban Corridors, 4 – Statewide Connectivity, and 12 – Strategic Priority which you discuss in your letter.

Category 12 funding is an important tool the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) may use at its discretion to address our state's many and varied needs. The TTC gives careful consideration in determining how best to distribute these funds. The Texas Transportation Code §201.9991(d) provides that the TTC "... may make discretionary funding decisions for no more than 10 percent of the current biennial budget of the department." The department applies this constraint at the time of contract award. The amounts provided for Category 12 throughout the proposed 2024 UTP are based on 10% of the projected biennial budgets to help the department manage this constraint and are consistent with state law.

While Category 12 funds are used in the discretion of the Commission; in reality, these funds contribute significantly to local and statewide priority projects that also include formula funds (Category 2, 4, 5 and 7).

Throughout the state, our districts are working hard to develop these much-needed projects. Unfortunately, when projects that carry a significant amount of local formula funding fail to advance, TxDOT must work with our MPOs to rebalance our various fund sources to ensure projects stay on schedule.

To minimize future need for rebalancing or trading of funds between funding categories, we are asking MPOs across the state to ensure the timely delivery of their local formula programs. This will promote the effective expenditure of the federal and state funds that our elected officials have provided for us to put to work.

I hope this letter helps reaffirm our commitment to work with the RTC on our shared goal of advancing priority projects in a timely manner; and I hope it also clears up misinformation regarding how we work to ensure that our use of discretionary funding complies with state law. Thank you again for your letter. If you have additional questions regarding this matter, please contact Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Director for Planning and Administration at (512) 305-9512.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission

cc: Texas Transportation Commission
Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
Brian Barth, P.E., Deputy Director for Program Delivery, TxDOT
Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Director for Planning and Administration, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
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Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

August 7, 2023

The Honorable J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, NCTCOG is submitting the following comments for the record regarding the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

As you know, MPOs develop 10-Year Plans using performance-based planning and project selection methods, and include projects funded with Category 2 – Metro and Urban Corridors, Category 4 – Statewide Connectivity, and requests for Category 12 – Strategic Priority funding. The Dallas-Fort Worth MPO was asked to help TxDOT resolve a situation in which Category 12 funding exceeded the 10 percent legislative cap by trading Category 12 funds on the IH 30 Canyon project in 2025 with Category 2 funds. That trade affected two projects in Collin County. The first draft of the proposed 2024 UTP project listings that was communicated in May 2023 included \$480 million in Category 12 Clear Lanes funding for two projects in Collin County that was later removed in the July 2023 draft. While it is clearly in the TTC's purview to adjust project funding recommendations, the adjustment occurred to the same projects that just helped to balance Category 12 allocations in the first two years of the UTP. The Dallas-Fort Worth MPO requests that those funds be reconsidered and placed back on those projects as we operated in good faith to solve the Category 12 conflict.

Both Collin County projects have significant right-of-way and coordination needs in order to proceed to implementation. Removal of such significant levels of construction funding sends a message about the project priority. These corridors exist in a county with significant population and economic growth, which is encroaching upon the anticipated corridor alignments. It is important to advance both projects to implementation as expeditiously as possible to ensure that the right-of-way and neighborhood consensus can be preserved before the adjacent land is developed in a way that impedes the roadway implementation.

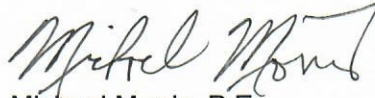
These two projects are in suburban areas that are rapidly urbanizing. The US 380 project in particular serves as a significant statewide connection. As noted above, it is imperative that the project proceed quickly in order to secure land needed to build the needed roadway connection.

Finally, as noted in the August 3, 2023 letter from the RTC to the TTC (copy enclosed), we request that the TTC rebalance Categories 2, 4, and 12 funds to avoid trading funds and over-programming Category 12 in the future. Long term, if Category 12 funds continue to be programmed at 20 percent, but only 10 percent of funds can proceed in a 2-year period statutorily, projects will be delayed.

August 7, 2023

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program. The Dallas-Fort Worth MPO looks forward to a continued partnership with the TTC and TxDOT to address the transportation needs within the DFW region and the State. Please contact me at (817) 695-9241 or mmorris@nctcog.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Morris".

Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation

CG:aa

cc: The Honorable W. Alvin New, Commissioner
The Honorable Robert C. Vaughn, Commissioner
The Honorable Alejandro G. Meade III, Commissioner
The Honorable Steven D. Alvis, Commissioner
Gyna Bivens, Chair, Regional Transportation Council, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth
Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
Brandye Hendrickson, Deputy Executive Director for Planning and Administration, TxDOT
Brian Barth, P.E., Deputy Executive Director for Program Delivery, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
David M. Salazar Jr., P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Noel Paramanantham, P.E., Paris District Engineer, TxDOT



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

August 3, 2023

The Honorable J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.
Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Bugg:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, the RTC has taken action to transmit this correspondence to you. This will also be transmitted to the record regarding the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP).

As you know, MPOs develop 10-Year Plans using performance-based planning and project selection methods, and include projects funded with Category 2 – Metro and Urban Corridors, Category 4 – Statewide Connectivity, and requests for Category 12 – Strategic Priority funding. Texas Transportation Code §201.9991(d), created by HB 20 (84R), requires the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) to allocate no more than 10 percent of the current biennial budget of the Department to Category 12. The proposed draft 2024 UTP allocation of Category 12 funding exceeded the 10 percent cap. To help resolve this issue, the DFW region was asked by TxDOT to trade Category 12 funds on the IH 30 Canyon project in 2025 and replace the funding with Category 2 funds. This trade helps TxDOT balance out the over-programming of Category 12 in the first two years of the UTP.

The RTC requests that the TTC rebalance Categories 2, 4, and 12 funds to avoid trading funds and over-programming Category 12 in the future. Long term, if Category 12 funds continue to be programmed at 20 percent, but only 10 percent of funds can proceed in a 2-year period statutorily, projects will be naturally held up and/or complicated trades will be necessary. Administrative oversight and tracking of such trades that are not completed until 3-10 years in the future create logistical complications that would be unnecessary if the funds were instead assigned to formula allocated categories like Category 2 and 4.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program. The RTC looks forward to a continued partnership with the TTC and TxDOT to address the transportation needs of the DFW region. Please contact Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments at (817) 695-9284 or mmorris@nctcog.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gyna Bivens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gyna" being more prominent than the last name "Bivens".

Gyna Bivens, Chair
Regional Transportation Council
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth

Chairman Bugg
Page Two

August 3, 2023

RG:kw

cc: The Honorable W. Alvin New, Commissioner
The Honorable Robert C. Vaughn, Commissioner
The Honorable Alejandro G. Meade III, Commissioner
The Honorable Steven D. Alvis, Commissioner
Marc D. Williams, P.E., Executive Director, TxDOT
Ceason Clemens, P.E., Dallas District Engineer, TxDOT
David M. Salazar Jr., P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer, TxDOT
Noel Paramanantham, P.E., Paris District Engineer, TxDOT
Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, NCTCOG



The Transportation Policy Body for the North Central Texas Council of Governments
(Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Region)

August 25, 2023

Mr. David Bartels
Director of Planning and Program Development
Federal Transit Administration, Region VI
819 Taylor Street, Room 14AO2
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Dear Mr. Bartels:

RE: Request for Class of Action Determination for the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Project in Fort Worth, Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Dallas in Tarrant and Dallas Counties, Texas

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) in Arlington, Texas would like to initiate the environmental review process for the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Project (the Project), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementing regulations, and related environmental requirements. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) would serve as the lead federal agency. NCTCOG would serve as the local project sponsor and joint lead agency. This letter is to request a determination by FTA on the NEPA Class of Action for the Project.

The Project is a new, exclusive double-tracked guideway for high-speed rail from downtown Fort Worth to downtown Dallas, a distance of approximately 31 miles. The horizontal alignment generally follows Interstate Highway (IH) 30 right-of-way through Tarrant and Dallas counties (see Enclosure 1). The Project would begin at an underground station in downtown Fort Worth immediately west of the existing Fort Worth Central Station. The alignment would head south and turn east under the IH 35W/IH 30 interchange and align with IH 30 to emerge from the tunnel east of Beach Street. The alignment would continue within the IH 30 right-of-way between Beach Street and Cooper Street, then descend into a tunnel near Center Street. The alignment would continue underground under the IH 30/State Highway (SH) 360 and IH 30/President George Bush Turnpike (PGBT) interchanges. After crossing under IH 30/PGBT interchange, the alignment would emerge from the tunnel on the south side IH 30, west of Belt Line Road. The alignment would be elevated over Belt Line Road and cross over to the north side of IH 30, west of Loop 12. At Hampton Road, the Project would turn to the northeast to align with Main Street. After crossing the Trinity River and IH 35E, the guideway would turn south and follow Hyatt Regency Hotel Drive/Hotel Street and connect to the proposed elevated Dallas high-speed rail station.

August 25, 2023

As proposed, the Project includes the construction of two stations; one in downtown Fort Worth and another near AT&T Way in Arlington; both of these platforms would be underground. On the east end (in Dallas), the Project would connect to the proposed platform/station to be built as part of the Dallas to Houston High-Speed Rail line, which received a Record of Decision from the Federal Railroad Administration in September 2020.

Additionally, a maintenance facility will be required. Several candidate locations have been identified and will require further study (see Enclosure 1). The locations of other ancillary facilities, such as traction-powered substations and necessary fire/life/safety requirements, will be addressed during the development of preliminary engineering.

The Project alignment and mode are the result of an alternative analysis conducted between April 2020 and July 2021. On July 8, 2021, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the independent transportation policy body of NCTCOG that oversees the metropolitan transportation planning process as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth region, approved the recommendation of IH 30 as the alignment. Subsequently, on February 10, 2022, the RTC approved high-speed rail as the mode for the Project. The Project is included in Mobility 2045 – 2022 Update (see Enclosure 2). The final report documenting the alternative analysis is available on the Project website at: www.nctcog.org/dfw-hstcs under the "Project Information" tab.

The purpose and need for the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Project is to create high-speed passenger rail service connecting downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth with other high-speed rail service to improve mobility and create more high-speed travel choices in the metropolitan area, as well as the State of Texas. Enclosure 3 is a draft purpose and need statement for the Project.

While the Project would be predominantly within existing public rights-of-way, the Project would have potential environmental effects to the built and natural environs. Enclosure 4 is a table outlining environmental considerations (e.g., potentially affected resources, effects, mitigation). While some environmental resources would be affected, an initial assessment by NCTCOG indicates potential negative impacts associated with the Project are not expected to be significant and/or can be mitigated. As such, NCTCOG believes an Environmental Assessment would be the appropriate class of Action under NEPA.

Sincerely,



Michael Morris, P.E.
Director of Transportation

SW:cmg

Enclosures:

1. Location Map
2. Mobility 2045 – 2022 Update references
3. Draft Purpose and Need Statement
4. Summary of Potential Environmental Effects

Enclosure 1. Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Project Location Map



Source: HNTB, 2023

options. Stakeholders and the public are collaboratively shaping the broader economic development vision for East Lancaster, which will influence the follow on multimodal, access management, and context-sensitive street and streetscape designs.

TR2-004: State and National Transit Connections Program

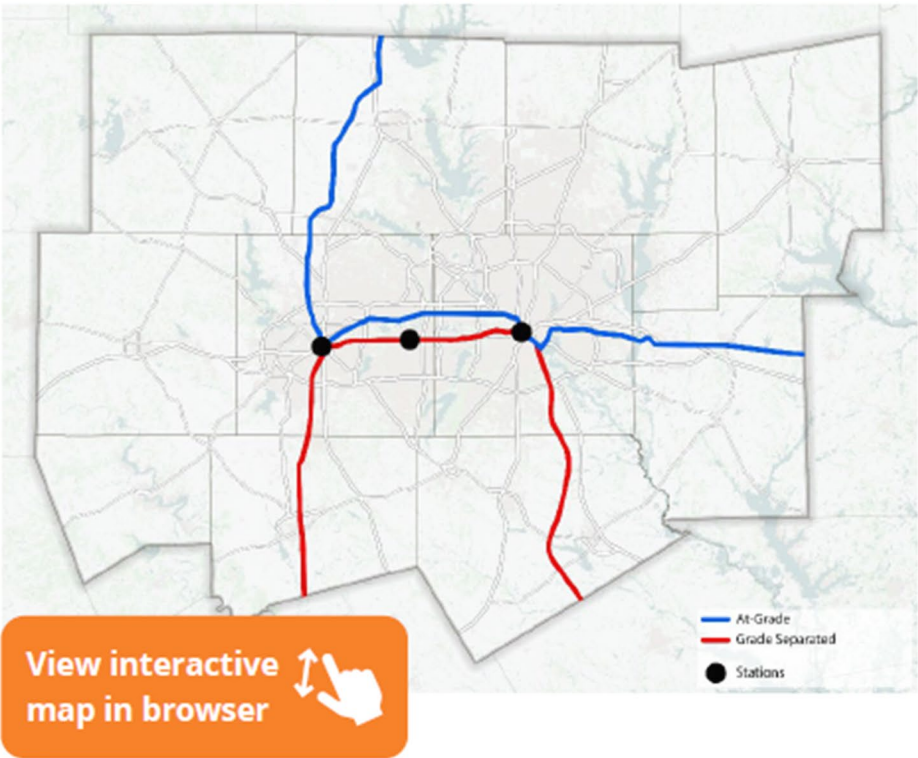
Transit also links North Central Texas to neighboring regions, the rest of Texas, and the nation. Existing services include intercity bus and intercity rail via Amtrak. The Mobility 2045 Update includes plans for high-speed transportation service that will connect North Central Texas to other regions.

High-Speed Transportation

The North Central Texas region has been identified as a potential hub for passenger rail routes serving distant regions. Federal and state plans indicate a need for high-speed passenger rail service to, through, and within the region. Corridors traveling through North Central Texas include proposed service to Oklahoma City; Austin; San Antonio; Houston; Shreveport, Louisiana; and Little Rock, Arkansas. Planning is progressing for some of these corridors. With new high-speed technologies such as maglev (magnetic levitated trains) and hyperloop advancing rapidly, some of these corridors could utilize a technology other than high-speed rail.

Four corridors are proposed: 1) Dallas to Houston, 2) Oklahoma City to South Texas, 3) Fort Worth to Shreveport, and 4) Fort Worth to Dallas. Recommendations for the Mobility 2045 Update include at-grade and grade-separated high-speed transportation service within the region, as identified in **Exhibit 6-30**.

Exhibit 6-30: High-Speed Transportation Recommendations



The Regional Transportation Council determined the most effective and efficient plan for the region would provide a seamless service—a “one-seat” ride—for passengers, meaning passengers would not be required to transfer to reach their destination.

High-speed passenger service within North Central Texas is not intended to be a stand-alone service; rather, service within the region is an integral component of a larger statewide and potential national network.

The Dallas-to-Houston corridor has been identified as having the most potential for grade-separated high-speed passenger rail service. An effort led by the private sector has analyzed the corridor for environmental impacts, alignment options, station locations, and

funding options. The region’s high-speed rail recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 6-30**.

The proposed corridor extending from Oklahoma City to South Texas also exhibits high ridership potential, particularly segments south of Fort Worth. Initial planning indicates a need for at-grade higher-speed passenger rail service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City. From Fort Worth southward, the appropriate high-speed technology is yet to be selected through future planning efforts. However, this corridor has been identified as a grade-separated high-speed transportation corridor viable for high-speed rail, maglev, or hyperloop technology. Additional analysis is needed to refine the corridor alignment, specific high-speed technology, and service types.

Planning for the proposed corridor extending eastward from Dallas to Shreveport, Louisiana indicates a need for higher-speed at-grade passenger services.

Within the North Central Texas region, both at-grade high-speed passenger rail and grade-separated high-speed transportation rail is recommended from Fort Worth to Dallas. The grade-separated high-speed rail service in this corridor, recommended to follow the IH 30 alignment for a majority of the distance, includes three stations, per Regional Transportation Council policy, in downtown Fort Worth, Arlington, and downtown Dallas as identified in **Exhibit 6-30**. Additionally, the Regional Transportation Council approved the Phase 1 study recommendations, which included a travel time of 20 minutes or less between downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth, to provide fast and reliable travel regardless of traffic conditions. By connecting the identified grade-separated high-speed transportation corridors, a “one-seat” ride could potentially be achieved from South Texas to Houston through North Central Texas. The region supports the development of one-seat/one-ticket high-speed transportation connectivity between Fort Worth, Arlington, Dallas, Houston, and South Texas through the Dallas station. Should regulatory, environmental, financial, or other challenges prohibit the

timely development of a one-seat/one-ticket connection through the Dallas station, the region will support and coordinate with high-speed transportation system implementers to develop a cross-platform transfer solution for all passengers that is as close to a one-seat/one-ticket connection as possible.

Cost estimates for grade-separated high-speed transportation within North Central Texas are provided in **Exhibit 6-31**. The Fort Worth-to-Austin and Dallas-to-Houston corridors will be funded through private-sector initiatives. The Fort Worth-to-Dallas project will be funded through a public-private partnership.

Exhibit 6-31: Cost Estimates

ID	From	To	Distance	Private	Public	Total
			(within MPA)	Revenue Sources (\$millions)		
1	Johnson/Hill County Line	Fort Worth	38	\$7,100	\$0	\$7,100
2	Fort Worth	Dallas	32	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
3	Ellis/Navarro County Line	Dallas	41.6	\$5,100	\$0	\$5,100
Totals			111.6	\$14,200	\$2,000	\$16,200

MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area

TR2-005: Transit Enhancements and Mobility Improvements Program

The Transit Enhancements and Mobility Improvements Program supports optimizing the lifespan and utilization of existing transit assets by prioritizing the following in the transit system: safety improvements, capacity-expansion projects, coordinated services, accessibility improvements, and technology integration. Optimization of existing transit assets will enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of the transit system while continuing to support transit as a mode of choice for the region.

E. Mobility Options: Public Transportation

Policies

MTP Reference #	Public Transportation
TR3-001	Public transportation needs should be met by existing transportation authorities and providers through a comprehensive, coordinated, and cooperative approach to maximize existing transportation resources. Alternative implementation approaches may be necessary if existing transportation authorities and providers are unable to provide needed services in a timely manner (consistent with Regional Transportation Council Policy P09-03).
TR3-002	Work with the region's existing public transit providers to ensure a seamless multimodal transit system through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamless connections • Coordinated fare structure • One-stop access to services • Standardization of assets, technologies, and service characteristics that promote interoperability • Improved interaction between public, private-for-profit, and private-nonprofit transit providers (consistent with Regional Transportation Council Policy P09-03) • Elimination of gaps in service to establish a minimum level-of-service • Service expansion
TR3-003	Existing and future public use rights-of-way should be monitored for appropriate public transportation service.
TR3-004	Transportation authority members who receive funds for the implementation of projects that promote transit accessibility will be required to pay back funds, as determined by the Regional Transportation Council, should the entity choose to not continue as a member of that authority.
TR3-005	Support the planning and development of high-speed rail to, through, and within the North Central Texas region by leading project development efforts and coordinating with federal and state initiatives as appropriate.
TR3-006	Maximize the efficient use of public transportation resources in North Central Texas, including public, private-nonprofit, and private-for-profit providers of services.
TR3-007	Implement safety, management and operations, and multimodal system integration projects and programs as appropriate.
TR3-008	Establish policies and procedures that encourage and reward coordination.
TR3-009	Support efforts to make accommodations for rail and other public transportation services to major events centers during special events.
TR3-010	Support efforts by transit authorities to secure funding through local, state, federal, and other sources for the development and implementation of public transportation, including the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant Program.
TR3-011	Establish policies fostering high-speed rail system interoperability resulting in a "one seat" ride system operation to, through, and within the North Central Texas region.
TR3-012	Establish policies encouraging regional access by identifying grade-separated high-speed rail station locations in downtown Fort Worth, Arlington, and downtown Dallas.

MTP Reference #	Public Transportation
TR3-013	Support the planning and development of sustainable land uses near grade-separated high-speed rail station locations by coordinating with the cities of Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas.
TR3-014	Support the planning and development of sustainable land uses near at-grade higher-speed rail station locations by coordinating with the cities' hosting stations.
TR3-015	Support investment of general-access public transportation service that addresses existing and forecasted transit needs/demand in communities. Support and promote the integration of transportation services through shared technology, transit policy, or other means.

Programs

Community Access Transit Program	
Reference	TR2-001
Background	This program includes demand-response public transportation services that link people to employment and job training, community services, life-saving medical care, and life-enriching activities. It also incorporates federal programs that support community access transit, including job access and reverse commute under the Urbanized Area Formula Program and the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program.
Related Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability of transportation options for people and goods. • Ensure all communities are provided access to the regional transportation system and planning process.
Related Policies	TR3-001; TR3-002; TR3-006; TR3-008; TR3-010
Implementation	Conduct needs assessments, planning, and service design activities to determine capital and operational characteristics and funding details for service. Through public and private agencies, implement service as needed in communities throughout the region through 2045.
Performance Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adopted regional public transit-human service transportation coordination plan that meets federal and state requirements. • Percent of population, including low-income households, persons with disabilities, older adults, and children with access to transit service to commerce, jobs, healthcare, and other services. • Number of persons engaged in planning and education activities for community access transit.
Cost Estimate	\$2,907,600,000

State and National Transit Connections Program	
Reference	TR2-004
Background	This program includes public transportation service, including high-speed rail, linking the North Central Texas region to neighboring regions and the State of Texas.
Related Goals	Improve the availability of transportation options for people and goods.
Related Policies	TR3-002; TR3-005; TR3-011
Implementation	Conduct needs assessments, planning, and service design activities to determine capital and operational characteristics and funding details for service. Through public and private agencies, implement service to connect outside the region as needed through 2045.
Performance Dimensions	Average daily number of routes linking the region to outside destinations.
Cost Estimate	\$16,200,000,000

Transit Enhancements and Mobility Improvements Program	
Reference	TR2-005
Background	The diverse projects in the program include improvements to safety and security, capacity, operations, technology, and accessibility that increase the efficiency of the region's transit system and support transit as a mode of choice for the region's residents and visitors.
Related Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability of transportation options for people and goods. • Support travel efficiency measures and system enhancements targeted at congestion reduction and management. • Ensure all communities are provided access to the regional transportation system and planning process.
Related Policies	TR3-002; TR3-006; TR3-007; TR3-008; TR3-009; TR3-010
Implementation	Conduct needs assessments, planning, and design activities to determine parameters and funding details for enhancements and improvements. Through public and private agencies, implement enhancements as needed through 2045.
Performance Dimensions	Annual number of transit enhancement and mobility improvement projects.
Cost Estimate	\$540,000,000

Enclosure 3. Draft Purpose and Need

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections project is to create a safe, convenient, efficient, fast, and reliable alternative to existing ground transportation travel options by providing a high-speed passenger rail service on an exclusive guideway connecting the two largest downtowns in the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States.

Project Needs

Existing and future transportation issues to be addressed by the project include:

- Continued population and employment growth in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and the state will result in increasing travel demand and place greater pressure on existing transportation services and infrastructure
- Existing transportation network and services have unreliable and lengthy travel times
 - The existing roadway system is increasingly congested
 - Travel times on the existing roadway system are highly variable
 - Travel times on the existing passenger rail system are lengthy
- Creation of more transportation choices
- Seamless connectivity to other planned high-speed rail systems in the state
- Support for economic development opportunities by providing additional access to employment, education, entertainment, health, and shopping for residents of, and visitors to, the region and the state

Enclosure 4. Summary of Potential Environmental Effects

Resource	Potential Environmental Issue	Potential for Environmental Effects		
		High	Medium	Low
Land Use and Zoning	The Project would operate primarily within existing roadway right-of-way and/or would be adjacent to a freight railroad. It is not anticipated that the Project would cause significant changes in land use. NCTCOG has been coordinating with the cities, major stakeholders, and large property owners regarding development plans along the alignment. The land use/zoning near the two proposed stations is currently zoned commercial/retail and would support development around the stations.			X
Land Acquisition and Displacements	NCTCOG does not anticipate significant impacts to private properties; the Project would be primarily within existing roadway right-of-way. Near the proposed portal, west of Belt Line Road, land would need to be acquired and could require the displacement of two businesses. As the alignment transitions from IH 30 to Main Street, property would need to be acquired and may displace a city of Dallas impound yard and up to seven homes and five businesses. East of the Trinity River, the alignment would impact the Dallas County jail/court complex along Riverfront Boulevard. NCTCOG has been in discussions with the county; Dallas County is currently evaluating options to relocate this complex to another location in the city. A specific site for a maintenance facility has not been selected and could require additional land acquisition and displacements; a site will be identified and recommended as part of the preliminary engineering design process.		X	
Socioeconomics and Economic Development	The proposed station locations in Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas would support new economic development opportunities associated with a station.		X	
Neighborhoods and Community Facilities	The Project generally follows an existing roadway right-of-way and/or would be adjacent to a freight railroad. The Project would not separate or divide neighborhoods. There are no community facilities near the Project; therefore, it would not adversely impact any community facilities.			X
Parks and Recreational Sites	The proposed Project alignment is adjacent to Gateway Park, Tandy Hills Nature Area, Stratford Nature Area, Randall Mills Nature Area, Trinity River Greenbelt, and Martyr's Park. All of these parks are either adjacent to IH 30 or a freight railroad. No property acquisition from these parks is anticipated. Additionally, the Project would cross over a new proposed park in west Dallas/within the Trinity River levees. NCTCOG has been coordinating with the city of Dallas and the nonprofit developing this new park to avoid and/or minimize effects.			X
Historic and Archeological	In downtown Dallas, the alignment would be adjacent to several nationally listed historic resources, including West End Historic District, Dealy Plaza Historic District, and Dallas Union Station, as well as traversing over the Houston Street Viaduct. Additionally, there are several historic-age structures adjacent to the Project in Dallas, including the Triple Underpass (railroad bridge over Elm, Main, and Commerce Streets), Cadiz Pump Station, and the Cadiz Street underpass. The Project would not directly impact these resources; however, there could be visual effects. The area is highly urbanized and adjacent to existing freight and passenger railroads, two Interstates, and urban mid- to high-rise development. Coordination with local historical commissions and the Texas Historical Commission will be required to confirm historic status/eligibility and affects.		X	
Section 4(f)	A draft Section 4(f) evaluation will be included in the NEPA document. As noted in this table, there are numerous parks and historic properties along the alignment. Additional engineering details and findings from the noise, vibration, and visual assessments are needed, as well as coordination with local governments to determine if there is a use of a Section 4(f) resource. If a use of a Section 4(f) resource is identified, alternatives to avoid and/or minimize impacts and measures to mitigate will be developed and considered with the goal of attaining a de minimis determination.		X	
Noise and Vibration	The Project is not expected to significantly increase noise or vibration levels. The Project would be operating primarily within existing roadway right-of-way and/or would be adjacent to a freight railroad which already creates high levels of noise/vibration. Noise and vibration analyses will be conducted. If expected levels exceed federal guidelines, mitigation will be proposed.			X
Visual and Aesthetic	Except for the area from Hampton Road to Main Street, the Project would be adjacent to an existing Interstate or freight railroad. The elevated section of the Project from west of Belt Line Road to the Dallas high-speed rail station would introduce new visual elements. A visual impact assessment will be conducted and, if needed, mitigation proposed.		X	
Air Quality	Both Tarrant and Dallas counties are within the 10-county severe nonattainment area under the 2008 ozone standard and the nine-county moderate nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone standard. Because the Project would be grade-separated from all roadways and railroads, it would not increase traffic delays for motor vehicles nor increase air pollution.			X
Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficient Populations	There are numerous Census block groups along the alignment with above average populations of low-income and/or minority persons; however, no disproportionate and/or adverse effects to environmental justice populations are expected because the Project is primarily within an existing roadway right-of-way or adjacent to an existing freight railroad. As part of its public engagement efforts for the project, NCTCOG has and will continue to actively reach out to these communities and their elected representatives to seek input on potential impacts. Additionally, information about the project has been prepared in both English and Spanish and meeting notices include an option to provide an interpreter.			X
Transportation Effects	The proposed guideway for the Project would be completely separated (no at-grade crossings) with all other roadways and rail lines; therefore, the Project would not impact the operations of any roadway, transit line, and/or freight rail or impact pedestrian/bicycle circulation; however, some modifications to roadways and access to properties may be needed to accommodate the guideway.			X

Resource	Potential Environmental Issue	Potential for Environmental Effects		
		High	Medium	Low
Water Bodies and Floodplains	The Project would cross several major water bodies and floodplains associated with the West Fork Trinity River, Sycamore Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Village Creek, Johnson Creek, Mountain Creek, and the Trinity River. These crossings have been previously disturbed with the construction of the Interstate. In Dallas, the Project would be elevated over the Trinity River and its associated levees which would require Section 408 coordination/permitting with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, this section of the Trinity River is still classified as navigable; however, the effort was abandoned after a failed bond election in 1973.; therefore, coordination with the US Coast Guard would be required.			X
Biological Resources and Ecologically Sensitive Areas	The Project would operate primarily within existing roadway right-of-way and/or adjacent to an existing freight railroad. The majority of the alignment is within areas that have been previously disturbed and developed for transportation or urban development. Two areas where biological impacts may occur are along I-30 at the Loop 12 interchange and where the alignment leaves the IH 30 right-of-way, east of Hampton Road and west of North Edgefield Avenue in West Dallas. Potential impacts to wetlands could occur around the IH 30/Loop 12 interchange and would require a wetland delineation, coordination with the USACE, and likely a Nationwide Permit, while potential impacts to forested habitat could occur along the segment between Hampton Road and North Edgefield Avenue. Potential impacts in both of these areas are anticipated to be minimal.			X
Regulated Materials	The Project would operate primarily within existing roadway right-of-way and/or would be adjacent to a freight railroad. In west Dallas, regulated material sites associated with displaced businesses could occur and would be assessed during the development of the NEPA document. If needed, mitigation would be proposed.			X
Utilities Conflicts	Potential utility conflicts are expected. NCTCOG will coordinate with utility providers during the development of the preliminary engineering plans to identify and assess any major conflicts.		X	
Energy	The Project would be powered by electricity via overhead catenaries. While this may increase energy consumption, no adverse effects are anticipated.			X

TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC MEETING

SEPT. 11 · NOON · 616 SIX FLAGS DR. ARLINGTON, TX 76011

PRESENTATIONS

North Texas Airspace Awareness Pilot Program

NCTCOG staff will present on the North Texas Aircraft Airspace Awareness Pilot program. This program includes details impacting pilots and how local governments can receive free application software and training. Staff will also provide information on selected proposals to provide a tool that will enable residents and businesses to fly safely and receive live data on potential risks, advisories for local events or emergencies, and other flight planning features.

Transit Strategic Partnerships Program

The Transit Strategic Partnerships Program, formerly known as Transit Call for Projects, is a competitive grant program that funds innovative transit projects supporting services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations from public agencies looking to directly implement service and those seeking partnership with an existing transit provider. Proposed projects must be in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington and Denton-Lewisville Urbanized areas. The May 2023 Cycle for proposal submission has closed, and staff has reviewed and evaluated each proposal by their ability to address: needs of transit dependent populations, strategic value, sustainability, stakeholder collaboration, and recommendations from existing plans and studies.

FY23 Public Transportation Funding: Program of Projects

NCTCOG staff will present proposed transit projects funded by the Federal Transit Administration through the final award of Fiscal Year 2023 funds for the following four programs: Urbanized Area Formula, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, State of Good Repair, and Bus and Bus Facilities. This input opportunity meets the federal requirement for public participation in Programs of Projects. Please note DART hosts their own public meeting and can be contacted directly for more information.

Texas Electric Vehicle Registration Update

As the host agency for Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities, the North Central Texas Council of Governments purchases electric vehicle (EV) registration data from the Department of Motor Vehicles and makes this information available online for stakeholders at www.dfwcleancities.org/evsintexas. Staff will give an update on the state of EV registration in Texas and North Texas as well as an update on upcoming programs and events related to EVs.

ONLINE REVIEW & COMMENT (NO PRESENTATION)

Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Rail: Entering the Environmental Stage
publicinput.com/nctcogSept23

Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects
publicinput.com/nctcogSept23

For special accommodations due to a disability or for language interpretation, contact Jackie Castillo at 817-695-9255 or jcastillo@nctcog.org at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

*Need a ride to the public meeting?
 Request a \$6 roundtrip ride from the DFW CentrePort Station to NCTCOG with the Arlington Transportation app!
 Download the app at:
arlingtontx.gov/ondemand.*

Attend in person, watch the presentations live at publicinput.com/nctcogSept23, or participate via phone by dialing 855-925-2801 then code 1577.



RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience:
nctcog.org/mapyourexperience

Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP):
smokingvehicle.net

Vehicle Incentive & Funding Opportunities:
nctcog.org/aqfunding

Engine Off North Texas (EONT):
engineoffnorthtexas.org

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WEBSITE, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The public comments report is in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and amended on Nov. 10, 2022.

This report is a compilation of general public comments submitted by members of the public from Thursday, Jul. 20 through Saturday, Aug. 19. Comments and questions are submitted for the record and can be submitted via Facebook, Twitter, fax, email, online and in person at the monthly RTC meeting.

This month, public comments were received on a number of topics across social media platforms and via email. Comments related to safety were in the majority.

In addition, comments can be submitted through Map Your Experience, the Transportation Department's online mapping tool. The tool allows users to drop a pin on a location in the region and leave a detailed comment. The tool received 12 new comments related to roadways and bicycle and pedestrian needs. You can view these new comments as well as past comments by visiting

<http://nctcoggis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourceReporter/index.html?appid=b014e6d39b604b3ca329d9094ed1e9e2>.

Air Quality

Facebook –

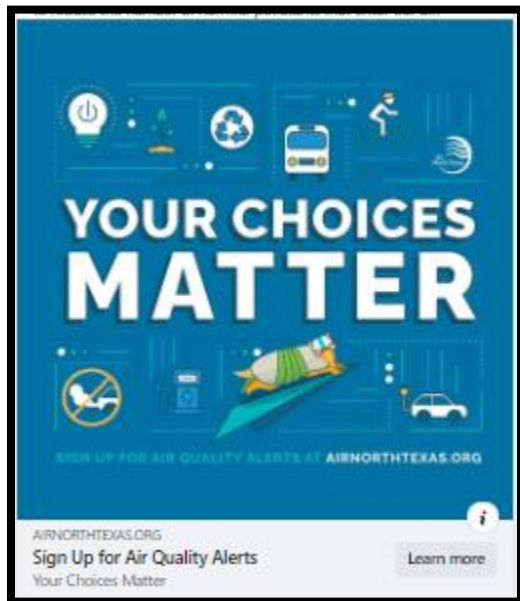
1. Join Air North Texas in improving North Texas air quality. Learn how to reduce the number of harmful pollutants that enter our air. — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Ole clay talking weather — The Ghost of Lenny (@Lennydivici2)

Facebook –

1. Join Air North Texas in improving North Texas air quality. Learn how to reduce the number of harmful pollutants that enter our air. — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Ok 7 weeks later and this shows again in my feed. NCTCOG Transportation Department - Please share YOUR choices that matter. Rather than just telling other people how to live. — Rob Dentremont

NCTCOG Transportation Department: Do you lead by example or do you just tell OTHER people how they should live? How about publishing a list of transport-to-the-office methods and a head count for each method? — Rob Dentremont

Email –

1. Ryan Becker

Here is a question for the meeting - I've also posted as a comment on the public forum, but wanted to ensure it was addressed so including here:

What measures are being taken to address the issue of illegally modified vehicles on the road that have had their catalytic converters removed, resulting in the release of toxic emissions that are 100 times higher than those of compliant vehicles? I have reported multiple instances through the "Report a Smoking Vehicle" program, but it is unclear whether any action is being taken against the violators. Unfortunately, it is impossible to reach anyone by phone for more information about this program. Additionally, I have emailed jbrown@nctcog.org, amoffa@nctcog.org, and cklaus@nctcog.org, but I have not received any response. Given the growing population in North Texas, residents are increasingly concerned about breathing clean air.

Response from NCTCOG Transportation Department:

Thank you for reaching out to us with your concerns about illegally modified vehicles on our roadways. We take this very seriously and appreciate any and all feedback from the public regarding such items.

The Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP) is designed to educate and inform drivers about vehicles that emit visible smoke from their tailpipes and encourage drivers to have these vehicles diagnosed and repaired, if needed. As you point out, this is an air quality issue with potentially detrimental consequences to health. When a smoking vehicle report is received through RSVP, a letter is mailed to the registered vehicle owner to make them aware that their vehicle was seen smoking and inform them of the importance of getting it repaired.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments administers RSVP but does not have the authority to enforce and cite motorists that have been reported through the program. Through past collaborative efforts and conversations with local law enforcement agencies, we have emphasized that a smoking vehicle can be a citable offense under the Texas Transportation Code.

In addition, vehicle emissions control tampering can be reported to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at tampering@epa.gov. More information about tampering enforcement by the EPA can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/national-enforcement-and-compliance-initiative-stopping-aftermarket-defeat-devices>.

Please continue to report smoking vehicles through the RSVP website or by phone (817-704-2522) so we can further educate the public about the impact to our air quality. Every report matters and goes towards improving the air in our region.

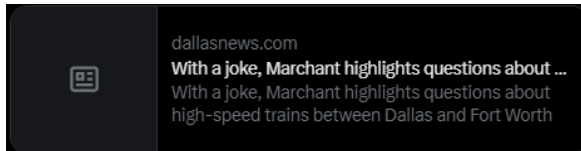
High- Speed Rail

Twitter –

1. Stop reinventing the wheel and just build HSR between Dallas and FW @NCTCOGtrans — Eric (@EricTheTexan)
2. Transportation Director at @NCTCOGtrans says Japanese high speed rail could come between Dallas and Fort Worth BEFORE Dallas to Houston and he is working to make it happen! 4:30pm! City of Arlington is on board seeking a station for the entertainment district. 6pm!! NBC5! @NBCDFW_— Ken Kalthoff (@KenKalthoffNBC5)



3.



— Matthew Marchant (@MatthewMarchant)

Email –

1. Brandon Eaton

I would like to ask for any update on a potential Passenger Rail Station to DFW / Dallas Love Field / Downtown Dallas from Frisco TX. While I understand from attending multiple

Frisco City Council events that Frisco will not ever have a DART Station (Unfortunate), my hope is that you would agree that a Passenger Rail Station in Frisco would be a win / win situation for both the residents of Frisco / surrounding area as well as for the local economy.

Thanks for your time and feedback!

Response from NCTCOG Transportation Department:

Thank you for your question about the possibility of rail service to Frisco. We appreciate your interest in the subject and willingness to take the time to provide feedback.

We too have noticed a potential opportunity for rail service at Frisco. NCTCOG completed a study of the Irving-to-Celina corridor in 2021 that confirmed the need for rail ridership through Frisco. The text of the final report from the study are available at: <https://nctcog.org/getmedia/6d9a4734-e5a7-446b-b3d5-d3e1856c09e0/I2F-Rail-Corridor-Report-09302021.pdf>. The recommendations from that study were then adopted into Mobility 2045—2022 Update (<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/mtp/mobility-2045-2022-update>), the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

In short, the study examined the possibility of using the corridor operated by BNSF to run commuter rail between Celina and Irving. This service would likely consist of Diesel Multiple Units, like those used by the Denton County Transportation Authority's A-Train or Trinity Metro's TEXRail, which would be incompatible with DART's Light Rail network. A station at Downtown Carrollton would prove access to Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (via the Silver Line) and Love Field (via the Green Line and the linking bus service from Inwood/Love Field station). Overall, the study projected a satisfactory level of ridership, especially as traffic congestion in the Dallas North Tollway is expected to worsen over the next twenty years.

Unfortunately, the study also identified some significant obstacles. Perhaps the greatest of these is the question of what entity would take charge of the corridor and provide funding. The enormity of the capital and operating investment represented by a rail corridor means that no transit agency is likely to construct one unless the communities it runs through are willing to make a substantial long-term funding commitment, usually through membership in the agency. The Irving-to-Celina corridor runs through the jurisdiction of two existing transit agencies and a large swath of territory—including Frisco—that is not a member of any transit agency. Since a) joining a transit agency

generally means committing a portion of the city's sales tax collections, b) the amount of sales tax that a city can collect is capped by the legislature at 2%, and c) the communities that are not yet in a transit agency are already using their sales tax allotment for other purposes, it is not possible to advance this project using the approach other passenger rail projects have traditionally taken.

We have not given up on the corridor. We will continue to look for ways to advance this service. However, the reality is that the absence of a reliable funding strategy and institutional support make it unlikely that this corridor will advance as soon as we would like.

Thank you again for your interest.

Phone Call –

1. Martin Bernard

Mr. Bernard said the Amtrak Eagle Train used to go through Arlington, but its route was recently moved north. He said he had a few issues with the change and would like to point out how wasteful it is. He would like to see Amtrak make a stop at CentrePort Station.

Response from NCTCOG Transportation Department:

Amtrak service was moved from the Union Pacific (UP) mainline to the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) line by negotiations among the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Amtrak, UP, BNSF Railway (BNSF), and TRE. The TRE line is more suitable for passenger service due to the upgraded track and existing passenger service running on the line, rather than the UP mainline that runs through central Arlington. The change allows the Amtrak service to access the Fort Worth Central Station more efficiently since it does not need to travel through the Tower 55 Control point, which saves time, minimizes operational disruptions, and increases on-time performance.

Freight

Facebook –

1. Trucks Can't Stop on a Dime. Big Rigs Need More Time. Allow for more time and space for truck to come to a halt. — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Lies – Melissa Gaston

2. Are you kidding ! Happy to park on a shoulder or on the back of a store, no parking availability and you talk about some utopia, drumming in la-la land. By the way 80% of trucks have clean idle accepted even by crazy cauliflower state ! New trucks pollute less than a older pickup truck, I have data for that if you interested in the truth. — Edit Keri (Facebook Message)

Instagram –



1. — @nctcogtrans

There's other cars too, not just meth and you — @j_d_boyle

Public Involvement

Facebook–

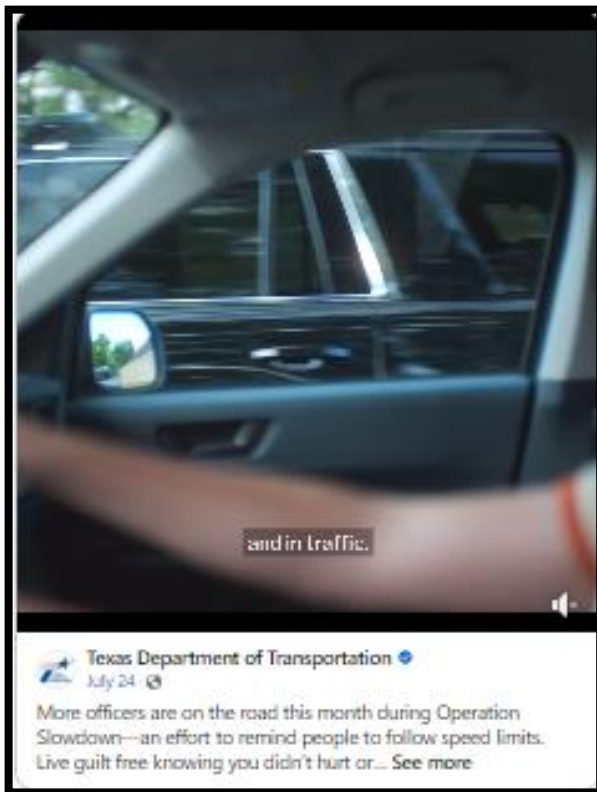
1. Clean air projects, DFW Discovery Trail, and more for review/comment. — NCTCOG Transportation Department



Here is my online input:
How many NCTCOG employees bike to work...or carpool...or take mass transit?
You know - lead by example, practice yourselves what you would have the masses do.
— Rob Dentremont

Safety

Facebook –



1.

— NCTCOG Transportation Department

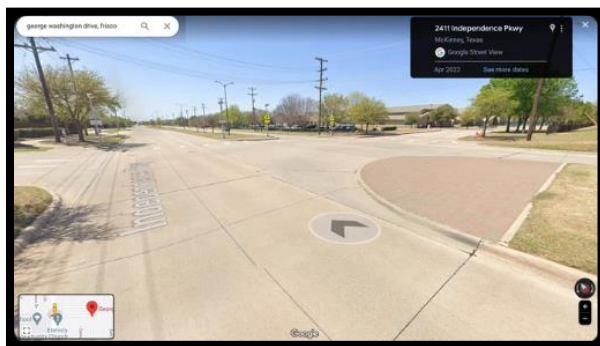
I think I saw this guy today! — Katy Walch

Twitter –

1. Here's what the intersection where the child was killed looks like

I would say that @NCTCOGtrans and @CityOfFriscoTx bear responsibility

<https://dallasnews.com/news/2023/08/09/child-struck-killed-by-car-near-frisco-school-on-first-day-of-class-police-say/> — confusing iceberg metaphor (@PhillipTKingston)



Oh, this is the borders with @CityOfMcKinney a pox on them all — confusing iceberg metaphor (@PhillipTKingston)

We can design these intersections so much better. Even just using seasonal traffic cones to alert and funnel —Tarrant County Burning 🟠 (@sportsidiocracy)

I enjoyed the vast majority of serving in elected office, but one of the parts that bothers me to this day is trying to comfort the parents of dead pedestrians and knowing that I probably couldn't significantly change road design — confusing iceberg metaphor (@PhillipTKingston)

This road is designed for one thing: speed. Shameful — Commissioner Lucarelli, ANC 4D03 (@cmoney_htx)

When crosswalks are a checkbox on the roadway design checklist and not an actual factor in the design. They're made to fit whatever roadway design the engineer came up with, and the engineer was thinking about the cars. — Marcus Ashdown (@SseboAshdown)

I imagine the posted speed limit is 45 but those looks like 65 mph roads. Really depressing how dangerous Texas roads are for everyone — burlington throat factory (@RickScampini)

2. "[a parent] had been thinking about buying his [10th grade daughter] a bicycle so she can take herself to school. He is reconsidering following the crash." This is NOT freedom. Shame on @NCTCOGtrans, @CityOfFriscoTx & @TxDOTDallas for prioritizing traffic flow over safety.

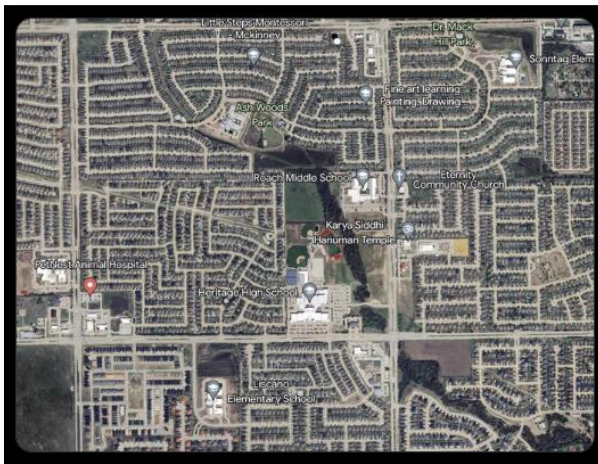


Posted speed limit never matters; Independence Pkwy is designed for speeding cars.

- 🚗 ~12ft lanes (same as highway)
- 🚗 straight unbending road
- 🚗 no stop signs
- 🚗 no speed bumps/tables
- 🚗 no chicanes, trees, or bulb-outs to add friction for drivers
- 🚗 no (or barely visible) crosswalks



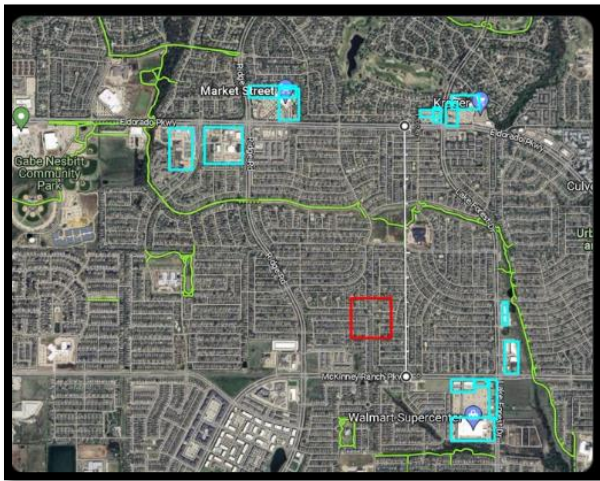
I hope parents reject anything short of real traffic calming
 City will predictably resist such measures in name of "cost & traffic flow". Instead, they'll spend money on school speed enforcement, which does nothing for safety of other community amenities outside school hours.



In addition to fixing current dangerous roads, @CityOfFriscoTx & @CityOfMcKinney can still prevent dangerous mistakes in new developments. Example: saving public ROW b/w priv homes for 1 trail enables 100s of kids to safely bike to school & 100s fewer cars on road to crash with.



Many don't know I lived 1 month in McKinney @ friend's house (red) Cul-de-sacs prevent speeding & heavy traffic, but lack of cut-throughs for 🚶 & 🚲 made trips to edge of 1mi subdivision even longer. 🚲 trails recreational but didn't connect to most destinations (blue)



From a distance, subdivisions seem walkable to those who don't walk. But

- 🚶 no cut-thrus at culs-de-sac
- 🚶 no crosswalks (aside from major intersections 1mi apart)
- 🚶 businesses oriented away from sidewalk
- 🚶 no sidewalks along driveways into retail center



— Hexel (@hexel_co)

Toll Roads and Lanes

Twitter –

1. 📍 We are here this morning at the third annual North Texas Infrastructure Summit! Kicking off the summit with a panel on the importance of offering diverse transportation options that cater to the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
@NTxCommission — TEXpress Lanes (@TEXpresslanes)



Where?? — herb(@foster_irby)
What's the location? — herb(@foster_irby)

2. Shout out to @NTxCommission for putting together today's #infrastructure summit! We're discussing everything from rail & transportation planning to the Texas energy grid and meeting the state's future water needs. Lots of issues to address in TX as the population & economy grow. — Brett Sebastian (@Brett4WallerCo)



3. We had a great day talking infrastructure at the 3rd annual @NTxCommission infrastructure summit. Today's program illustrated why public-private partnerships are critical to Tarrant County's incredible economic success.
#infrastructure #leadright — Manny Ramirez(@MannyRamirez_TX)



3. Using the @GoCarmaTeam app is the only way to receive HOV toll discounts on the LBJ, NTE, NTE 35W TEXpress Lanes! #DFWTraffic #BackToSchool — TEXpress Lanes (@TEXpresslanes)



Transit

Twitter –

1. Mentions competing visions from @TrinityMetro and @NCTCOGtrans. Talks about Trinity Metro bus rapid transit. Says our public transit is uninspired. Says DART moves the entire population every week — Harrison Mantas 🌟🇺🇸 (@HarrisonMantas)

2. Attn @TxDOT & @NCTCOGtrans, to solve congestion alternatives must be made available through investments in:

- fast, frequent, & reliable interconnected regional & local #transit
- walkable communities where the necessities of daily living are a 15min walk not a 15min drive away — Loren S. (txbornviking)



Email –

1. Trish Donaghey

With recent construction on roads in unincorporated Collin Co. plus a few fatal wrecks near the Branch-Culleoka bridge, there have been hours of gridlock stopping traffic on the 3 bridges that cross over Lake Lavon from Branch, TX to Lucas, TX. As you know, there has been recent explosive house building and population growth in this area. One of the gridlock work-arounds has been to take CR 444 from FM 982 to FM 392, then north to McKinney. CR 444 really needs a lot of work: it has virtually no shoulders and no markings, a few blind curves and the road slopes toward the non-existent shoulders! Could this short road be improved AFTER the other construction by Branch Grocery on FM 546 is completed?

Response from NCTCOG Transportation Department:

Thank you for contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department. This is a county road that we don't have much information on. However, I think Clarence Daugherty, the county's Director of Engineering, would be better able to answer this question. See his contact information below:

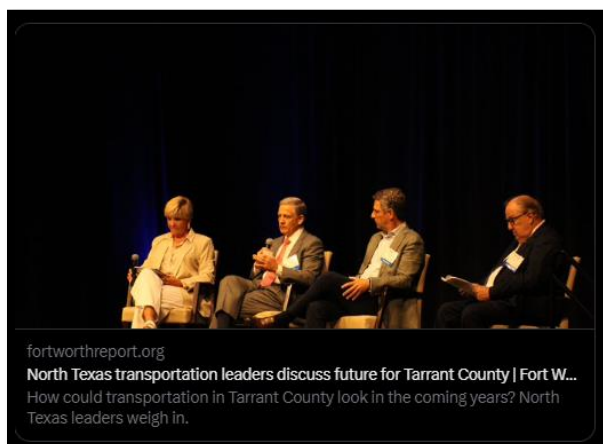
Clarence Daugherty, P.E.
Collin County Director of Engineering
4690 Community Ave., Suite 200
McKinney, TX 75071
Phone | 972.548.3728
cdaugherty@collincountytx.gov | www.co.collin.tx.us

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Other

Twitter –

1. It was an honor to moderate @NTxCommission's 3rd annual Infrastructure Summit discussing leveraging public-private partnerships to support collaborative infrastructure growth & development. @HillwoodDevelop @NCTCOGtrans Read more from @FortWorthReport — Betsy Price (@BetsyPriceftw)



August 2, 2023

Gyna Bivens, Chair Regional Transportation Council
616 Six Flags Dr, Arlington, Texas 76011

Mr. Irby Foster, 2811 Bonnywood Lane, Dallas, TX 75233

RE: Agenda Items 4, 5, 6

Priorities: FY2024 Draft UTP 2024, Regional TIP.

Honorable Chair Bivens, Honorable Members,
Irby Foster, Dallas. In Instagram @texashighwayadvocate

While we want to fund future projects, lets review existing needs not funded in the \$100 billion UTP and TIPs. I seek the members' support for funding issues.

1. Repair overhead lane indicator arrows on interstates 30, 35, 20 in Tarrant County. TXDOT Fort Worth recently turned them off. Studies show overhead lane indicators are a great tool in reducing congestion.
2. Fund & Install overhead signs Left Lane for Passing Only leaving metropolitan areas. Stop camping in the left lane.
3. Install "Left Lane for Passing Only" signs on all interstates and state highways. In the cities, install slower traffic keep right signs.
4. Fund repairs to unworking street lighting in the City of Fort Worth. I-30 from Las Vegas Trail to Montgomery St. has not worked in years. \$2 million?
5. Fund repairs North Texas wide to existing malfunctioning interstate underpass street lighting. All communities in the RTC need funds to upgrade underpass lighting to LED. We have 1000s of underpass lights out in the DFW region on interstates and highways.

6. Install high mast tower lighting @ 183 @ 360; I-35W the south freeway, I-45 south of Dallas. Fund continuous roadway lighting I-20, I-30 Dallas, FW and Loop 12 in Irving.
7. Fund and demand TXDOT restore lighted overhead guide signs on interstates, particularly in areas of frequent poor weather events. Follow the AASHTO 2017 standard.
8. Fund and demand TXDOT improve continuous street lighting practices, to actually build continuously lighted roadways. Follow the AASHTO standard, stop leaving out underpass lighting.
9. Provide funds to go back and complete continuous street lighting where the project was not continuously street lighted but should have been. Southern Gateway Project in City of Dallas for example. 7 underpasses and exit ramps without lighting.
10. Fund Interstate entrance ramp metering signaling. TxDOT does it in Houston on the north freeway. Lets do it here. Its shown to reduce congestion.
11. Fund & require that TxDOT provide work zone street lighting on all construction projects. 183@ Loop 12 in Irving, I-360 @ I-30 Arlington, are examples of no work zone lighting. Follow the AASHTO lighting warrants that requires work zone street lighting.

Thank you



Irby Foster

WFAA

THE IMPACT OF SPEED CAMERAS ON SERIOUS TRAFFIC CRASH INJURIES

Critics say it's a way for local governments to make easy money, but officials say it's about preventing crashes, and ultimately saving lives.

By Tashara Parker, Makenzie Kenny

DALLAS — Anyone who drives in North Texas knows it can be a struggle, especially when we're not all doing our part to keep each other safe.

Can you guess what the biggest problem is on our roads? Speed.

Police departments all across our region say it plays a huge role in serious and even deadly accidents.

And it's not just a problem here, which is why the use of speed cameras is becoming more common across the country. But not here in Texas, after [a 2019 law](#) banned the use of cameras that catch people speeding or running red lights and issuing them fines.

Where they are in use, they snap pictures of speeding cars and use their license plate to send a ticket in the mail.

Critics say it's a way for local governments to make easy money, but officials say it's about preventing crashes, and ultimately saving lives.

Our verify team looked into if they actually do. [Here's what they found:](#)

[The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) says control studies suggest crashes drop around 20-25% with the use of speed cameras.

[The Department of Transportation](#) shows it's highly effective on interstate highways and other freeways, lowering injury crashes by up to 47%.

With or without speed cameras, police departments are doing what they can to fix the issue.

Just last month, Fort Worth Police [ramped up traffic enforcement](#) after a jump in driver complaints. The department wrote more than 12,000 citations over six months for speeding and reckless driving.

From Frisco to McKinney, police have stepped up patrols in response to excessive speeding and racing along multiple highways.

We want to know what you think: Would you support speed cameras going up in North Texas if it meant saving lives?

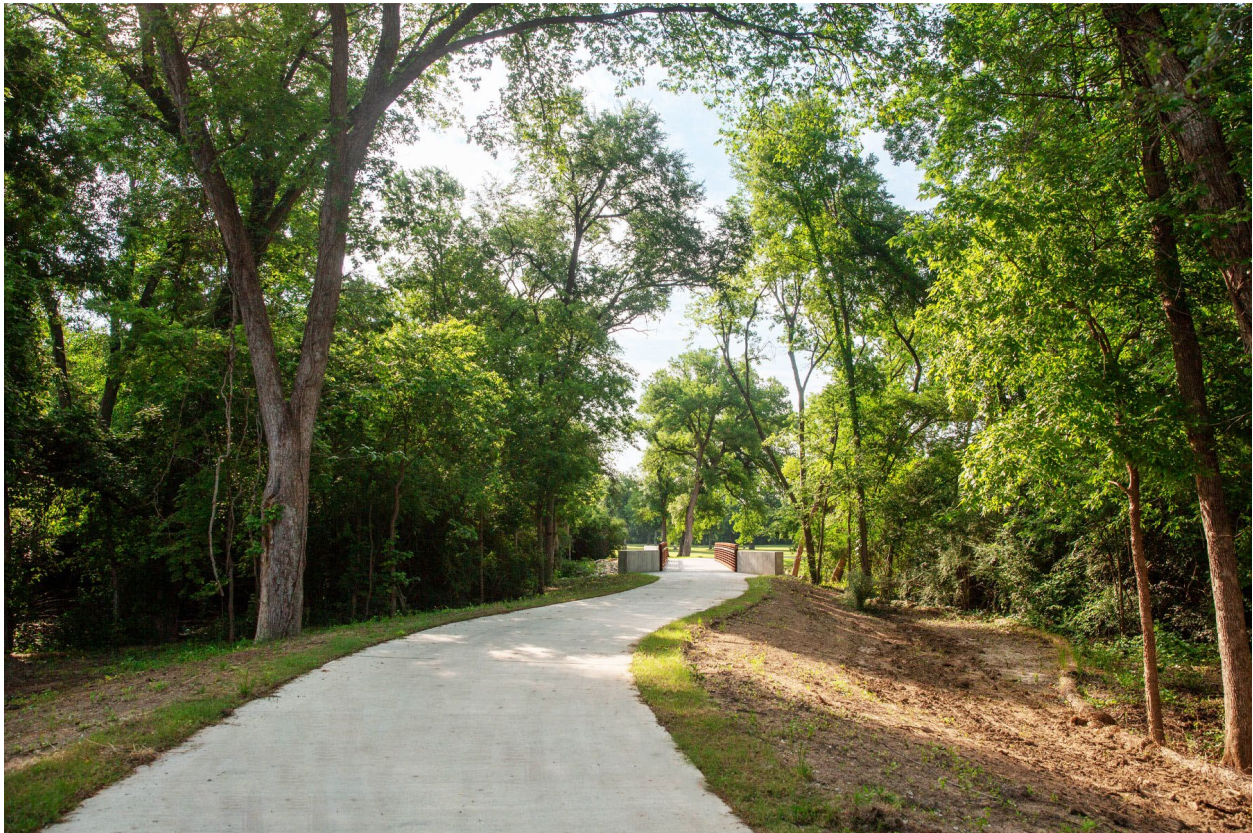
THE LOOP COMES FULL CIRCLE

In 2014, a small band of business and civic leaders began working on a project that would create a 50-mile loop of hike and bike trails around Dallas. Nearly 10 years and \$90 million later, they're approaching the finish line.

By Christine Perez

In the fall of 2014, Dallas commercial real estate executive Jeff Ellerman was out cycling with his longtime buddy, oilman Larry Dale, when he had an epiphany. “We had meandered through the Design District and got to the Trinity Skyline Trail on the river bottom,” Ellerman says. “It’s beautiful with great views of the city, but it’s a chasm that has separated the haves and the have-nots forever. And we said, ‘This is ridiculous. You have miles of opportunity to the north and the south.’”

Not long afterward, Ellerman ran into Mike Rawlings, the then-mayor of Dallas, and talked with him about the need for an expanded trail system. Rawlings agreed and said it would take a public-private partnership—and thanked Ellerman for volunteering to lead the effort. “Larry and I talked about how good Dallas has been to us from a business standpoint,” Ellerman says. “We decided this would be our gift back to the city.”



Shady Path: The Trinity Forest Spine Trail connects White Rock Lake and East Dallas to South Dallas and the Trinity River Trail System.

Dallas had been working on a master trail system that would connect neighborhoods to transportation hubs and economic centers, and miles of new trails had been constructed. But the plan was missing an overall strategy and some critical links. “It was a spaghetti map of trails that would never get built because the city had no money,” Ellerman says. “It would take private leadership.”

He and Dale figured it made more sense to create an unbroken trail around the city. They formed the Circuit Trail Conservancy (since renamed The Loop Dallas) and pulled together a board that had the wherewithal to make it happen. Founding members were Linda Owen, who led the development of Klyde Warren Park; Joseph Pitchford, managing director of development for Crescent Real Estate (which played a key role in getting the park off the ground); Philip Henderson, the driving force behind the Katy Trail (who passed away last December); Rosewood Property Co. President Rick Perdue; and Dallas investor Mike Terry. In 2020, Pitchford rolled off the board, and Russell Glen Co. founder Terrence Maiden and AT&T executive Vana Parham were added.

With partners that now range from the City of Dallas and TxDOT to Dallas County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and NCTCOG, the team developed plans for The Loop Dallas. It involves adding 11 miles of new trails to 39 miles of existing trails to create a continuous 50-mile pathway. The first of five planned connectors opened this past May. Two additional links are under construction. The whole project is expected to finish in about three years.

“At this point, 99 percent of people don’t know anything about it, because we’ve kept a relatively low profile and kept our heads down,” Ellerman says. “But 10 years from now, everybody in the entire region will know The Loop. It will be a destination. It will be an active transportation system. It will be a legacy asset for the City of Dallas.”

An Abundance of Obstacles



Hi Line Connector: An urban link taking the Katy Trail through Victory Park and the Design District to the Trinity Strand Trail.

Before planning could even happen, funding had to be secured. Leveraging their connections, Ellerman, Dale, and other board members raised about \$10 million from private donors,

including Lyda Hill. The next step was accessing public support. A big win came in 2017 when \$20 million in bond funds were approved. All told The Loop Dallas has secured \$75 million in public funding, including \$10 million from Dallas County and \$11.5 million from the Sports Arena TIF, and more private donations for a total of \$90 million. The project is expected to cost about \$120 million.

A game-changing moment came in 2019 with the hiring of Philip Hiatt Haigh as executive director. Prior to joining CTC, he led the reelection campaign of Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and served as director of public policy for the Dallas Regional Chamber, among other posts. He currently is vice chair of TxDOT's bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee, District 1 representative on the City of Dallas' Environmental Commission, and a Dallas County Trail and Preserve Program board member.

"I was a little hesitant because it was a new organization that didn't have any full-time staff," Hiatt Haigh says. "I was convinced by the reputations of the board members, their commitment to the project, and their expertise. Larry, for example, has a ton of experience with right-of-way issues. He talked us through how to get our first agreement with a Class 1 freight line. With a railroad that has been on the ground for more than 100 years, we were able to steward an agreement to pass a trail underneath their tracks."

"Our biggest priority once the trails are open is to make sure they are safe and accessible. And that means we want activity on them."

Philip Hiatt Haigh | Executive Director, The Loop Dallas

Ellerman says he vastly underestimated the challenge of overcoming right-of-way issues. "If you're dealing with farmland in southern Oklahoma, it's one thing," he says. "But we're in an urban environment building a linear park. There are a million encumbrances and stakeholders—Oncor and all the utilities, the railroads, TxDOT, the Corps of Engineers—the amount of people Philip deals with on a daily basis is astounding. With a 50-mile trail, one right-of-way issue can screw everything up."

To help fine-tune the plan, The Loop has relied on design consultants TBG, Halff Associates, SWA Group, and Simon Engineering and Consulting. Hiatt Haigh is also focused on programming and working with Friends of the Katy Trail, Friends of Santa Fe Trail, and other such organizations to maintain various sections of trails, which are city-owned. "Our biggest priority once the trails are open is to make sure they are safe and accessible," he says. "And that means we want activity on them."

The Loop Dallas also is funding Dallas Off Road Bike Association's work to operate and maintain Creekside Park, a 50-acre mountain biking area accessible via the Trinity Forest Spine Trail. Located about four miles from downtown near Tenison Park Golf Course and scheduled to open before the end of the year, it will include about five miles of trails and a separate skills park, all geared toward beginner and intermediate riders.

The Loop

The new, 50-mile system will allow riders and hikers to travel from White Rock Lake to the Trinity Forest, around to the Trinity River, and then through the Design District and Victory Park, all without ever leaving a trail.



Illustration by: Aidan Yetman-Michaelson

50: Total miles of The Loop upon completion, with 39 miles of existing trails linked by 11 miles of newly built trails.

\$43M: Amount of money secured in 2019 from private donors, City of Dallas bond funds, Dallas County, and TxDOT.

\$42M: Additional public funds that have been raised for The Loop, with three projects now under construction.

5.7M: Pedestrians and cyclists currently using City of Dallas trails, according to Dallas Park and Recreation trail counters.

50:1: For every \$1 invested in trails, research shows that Dallas receives a \$50 ROI in economic impact.

‘Connecting Dallas with Dallas’

Beyond the recreational opportunities, supporters are hopeful about what the project will mean to the city’s southern sector, as two-thirds of the investments in new trails are south of Dallas. Among the brightest possibilities is what The Loop Dallas is doing near Parkdale Lake. Surrounded by about 110 acres east of Fair Park—closer to the city than White Rock Lake—Parkdale is the largest urban parkland dedication in Dallas since 1937. A joint venture between Oncor Electric Delivery, the City of Dallas, and The Loop

Dallas, it allows for the completion of the Trinity Forest Spine Trail and creates a green connection between the neighborhoods there, White Rock Lake, and the Great Trinity Forest. “Our mantra is ‘connecting Dallas to Dallas,’” Ellerman says.

The final phase of the Trinity Forest Spine Trail is a collaboration between The Loop Dallas, TxDOT, the City of Dallas, and Dallas County. To help win federal funds, this component was expanded to include a new Lake June Bridge that connects to two DART light rail stations. “We moved from thinking, ‘OK. How do we make this trail work?’ to ‘Why don’t we stitch back together Pleasant Grove and this area and connect everyone to the forest and to The Loop?’” says Hiatt Haigh.

Economic development possibilities are not lost on The Loop team. One only needs to look at what two high-profile projects have meant for surrounding real estate properties and businesses. Over the past decade or so, estimates put the economic impact of the Katy Trail at \$1 billion and Klyde Warren Park at more than \$300 billion.



New Walkway: The Hi Line Connector includes the city's first mid-intersection crossing, at Oak Lawn Avenue and Hi Line Drive.

Ellerman, one of the region’s top tenant rep brokers, knows a little bit about what office users are looking for. And trails are emerging as a key desirable amenity and commuting option, he says, adding that such access was a consideration in Goldman Sachs’ decision to build a new campus on Field Street near Victory Park. (Landowner Hunt Realty recently selected Hillwood Urban to develop the \$500 million project.)

The campus will be close to a signature trailhead called The Loop Plaza. It links the Katy Trail to the new Hi Line Connector, running through Victory Park and the Design District to the Trinity Strand Trail. Infrastructure improvements include new lighting, upgraded

traffic and pedestrian signals, and a 12-foot-wide path for bike riding, running, and walking. It also includes the city's first mid-intersection crossing at Oak Lawn Avenue and Hi Line Drive. From Interstate 35-E to Houston Street and under the DART/TRE rail line, Victory Avenue will be reconstructed to separate bicycle and pedestrian areas from vehicle traffic.

"For me, it's kind of like Christmas time, when you've got a really great present you want to give to someone."

Jeff Ellerman | Board Chair, The Loop

As the dream of The Loop approaches reality, Ellerman is reflective about how far the project has come. "It's a connector," he says. "I view it as a highway system, similar to LBJ. It will have all these feeders, as neighborhoods and apartments and office buildings want to connect to it. It will be built out over decades.

"For me, it's kind of like Christmas time, when you've got a really great present you want to give someone," he says. "You're excited, but you haven't given it to him yet. I feel like we've got something that people don't know about yet, but everyone will find out about it and will enjoy it for years to come."

Born to Ride

Why CBRE Vice Chairman Jeff Ellerman became a driving force behind The Loop.

Growing up in the Chicago suburb of Northbrook, Illinois, Jeff Ellerman and his brothers frequented their hometown Schwinn store. By the time they were in high school, the siblings graduated to road bikes and thought nothing of going on extended day trips. "We had bike packs, and we'd ride about 75 miles to 100 miles a day on the back roads up to the lakes in Wisconsin," Ellerman says. "This was well before cell phones and GPS; it was so much fun. Several years later, I did the same thing in Colorado." Ellerman left Chicago to attend SMU, fell in love with Dallas, and decided to stay. His office tenant rep career has taken him from Fults Co. and Cawley International to The Staubach Co. and CBRE, where he now holds a top executive post in the world's largest commercial real estate firm. Through the years, he has negotiated more than 50 million square feet in deals valued at more than \$30 billion. Ellerman has kept up with his biking regimen to stay in shape and owns a Specialized Bicycles carbon road bike, a Giant Bicycles mountain bike, and a Trek electric mountain bike. He rides both here and in Aspen, where he has a second home. Locally, his go-to destinations are White Rock Lake and the Skyline Trail, which now runs from the Trinity River to Irving. "I love being outdoors and riding; it gets my head right," he says. "It's a way for me to decompress and think and be grateful for the life I have." That sense of gratitude inspired Ellerman to take on the challenge of leading the effort to develop The Loop in 2014. "This city has been good to me," he says.



Parkdale Lake: *Oncor's donation of the lake and adjoining 110 acres will allow for the completion of the Trinity Forest Spine Trail.*

DCTA DISCUSSES NEXT STEPS FOR COLLIN COUNTY RIDES PROGRAM

By Colby Farr

The [Denton County Transportation Authority](#) is taking steps to assume control of the [Collin County Rides program](#), but it may not be ready by Oct. 1 when services are slated to expire.

To ensure continuation, [Dallas Area Rapid Transit](#) is being asked to consider extending its contract for the program past Oct. 1 until the end of January, transportation authority [CEO Paul Cristina](#) said during a [July 27 board of directors meeting](#).

“When this first came up, the message was, ‘Hey this’ll go very quickly, all these pieces are in place,’” Cristina said. “The dominoes will just start to fall, and we’re looking at an Oct. 1 start date. As we start to have these conversations we say, ‘This is a little more complex than we were thinking.’”

The gist

Cristina presented information on the program’s status during a discussion-only item on the board’s July 27 agenda. A staff presentation showed the transportation authority’s proposal for continuing the program and a potential timeline for assuming control.

“At this point we are comfortable saying we can assume service no later than Feb. 1 of next year assuming all the pieces get into place,” Cristina said.

Zooming in

The transportation authority’s proposal anticipates up to three years of services offered in Allen and Fairview at an estimated cost of \$1.6 million. Under the proposal, three taxis would operate between 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Rider eligibility requirements and fare structure would remain the same, according to the presentation.

The Regional Transportation Council approved [\\$1.8 million earlier in July for continuation of the program](#). The funds are made up of local council funds matched by Allen and Fairview, and federal grant funds.

The transportation authority has also requested funding for a full-time employee to oversee the program, according to the presentation. That request is still pending with the [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#).

What’s next?

The transportation authority had not yet received funding agreements from the Council of Governments. The board of directors may take action on funding agreements and interlocal

agreements in August, Cristina said. If not, the timeline for assuming control of the program will be pushed back.

“DCTA has not committed in writing to anything,” he said. “We’ve been in these conversations from a regional partnership perspective and an open mind as we try to see how this works for DCTA, but no contract has been signed yet.”

NORTH TEXAS HAS BEEN PREPARING FOR TRUCK CRASHES INVOLVING HAZARDOUS MATERIAL FOR DECADES

By Brian New

PLANO (CBSNewsTexas.com) — Every day, thousands of 18-wheelers loaded with hazardous material drive through Dallas-Fort Worth—most without incident.

But when one is involved in crash, the impact is often great.

Around 5 a.m. Wednesday morning, a tanker truck carrying unleaded fuel lost control, flipped, and caught on fire on U.S. Highway 75 in Plano. Emergency responders elected to let the fuel fire burn rather than to risk contaminating the local sewer system by dousing it with water.

As a result, all northbound lanes of the busy highway were closed for more than seven hours.

North Texas officials have been concerned about crashes involving trucks carrying hazardous material for decades.

In the 1980s, local city leaders who were concerned about a potential chemical spill in densely populated areas came up with designated hazmat routes.

At the time, these designated routes put trucks carrying hazardous material on the outer loops of Dallas and Fort Worth, such as I-635 around Dallas, I-820 around Fort Worth, as well as U.S. 75—north of I-635, the location of Wednesday's crash.

Over the next four decades, the population of North Texas exploded from three million to eight million residents, yet the designated hazmat routes have stayed the same.

Dan Kessler, the assistant director of transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, said that despite the population growth, the current designated routes remain the best options.

"I think the thing to remember—and this is the part that is hard to understand—is we don't have a lot of other options. We don't have a continuous further outer-highway loop," Kessler told the CBS News Texas I-Team in a May 2023 interview.

Over the past 40 years, many North Texas cities along the designated hazmat routes have invested heavily in hazmat response teams.

Roughly six miles from Wednesday's crash is Plano Fire Station 5, home of one of the region's largest hazmat teams. It is strategically located near multiple hazmat routes.

In 2019, the City of Plano also put into service a new state-of-the-art hazmat apparatus, known as "the Bus."

In the past decade, according to federal transportation data, there's been 266 crashes involving trucks loaded with hazardous material that resulted in monetary damages in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton counties.

Crashes with reported monetary damages indicate there was an impact on the environment and community. These crashes involving trucks carrying hazardous material totaled \$5.8 million in damages.

However, Kessler said the frequency of accidents involving these trucks is remarkably small and credits the steps North Texas leaders have made over the past four decades as a key part of the reason.

COUNCIL ACCEPTING PUBLIC INPUT ON 10-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR DFW

By Colby Farr

Dallas-Fort Worth residents have until Aug. 8 to provide input on the [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#)' regional 10-year plan along with several other transportation initiatives.

What you need to know

Each year, the [Regional Transportation Council](#) approves an updated version of the regional 10-year plan, which identifies major projects in the area. A list of projects slated for progress between 2024 and 2033 is available [online](#). The plan includes projects located throughout Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties.

At the same time, the [Texas Department of Transportation is accepting public input](#) on its own 10-year plan. The 2024 [Unified Transportation Program](#) features \$100 billion in funding for transportation projects across the state. TxDOT is accepting public input until 4 p.m. Aug. 7.

The council of governments is also accepting public input related to several projects and funding opportunities meant to enhance air quality in the metroplex. Staff also provided an update on the [D-FW Discovery Trail](#) and Community Gardens Program Guide initiative.

Get involved

Staff from the council of governments hosted a meeting about the initiatives, which can be viewed [online](#). Meeting materials and presentations can be viewed online until Aug. 8. Residents can submit a comment or question in the following ways:

- Email nctcogJuly23@publicinput.com
- Call 855-925-2801 (enter code 6357)
- Text "nctcogJuly23" to 855-925-2801
- Send a fax to 817-640-3028
- Send a letter to P.O. Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005-5888

DCTA WANTS TO MODERNIZE SERVICES WITH ITS \$90M IN CASH RESERVE FUNDS

By Juan Betancourt (Denton Record Chronicle)

Denton County Transportation Authority leadership is looking into the future of its transportation service as they discussed possible plans to retire diesel buses, replace A-train rail carts and modernize service fleets, thanks to the agency's more than \$90 million in cash reserve funds.

DCTA leadership discussed details about the funds during the long-range financial discussion plan at the July 27 DCTA Board of Directors meeting.

Paul Cristina, DCTA chief executive officer, told the board the long-range financial plan is for the agency to compete for federal grant money four years from now.

"This long-range financial plan tells us that we need to have a long-range fleet replacement plan because what we hear from transit agencies is that in order to get federal discretionary money for fleet replacement, we have to have alternative fuel vehicles," Cristina said.

Sherrelle Evans-Jones, DCTA's chief financial officer, told the board that the cash revenue estimate amount was from the last audited financial statement.

"This team could make the decision that we started with the first amount plus carving some of the \$99 million off to begin to build that balance," Evans-Jones said last week.

Although Evans-Jones stated \$99 million at the meeting, but she did not respond to requests for clarification on the total amount by Thursday afternoon.

Cristina also recommended the board vote on next year's \$70 million proposed budget at the August 24 board meeting.

Ridership between April through June

As of July 27, there have been 2.1 million commuters who used DCTA transportation services, which include bus routes, A-train and GoZone services.

The July 27 agenda memo shows bus ridership between May through June has decreased due to the reduction of the University of North Texas bus services that was implicated on May 15 as the semester ended for students.

The July 27 DCTA report showed the bus route ridership numbers between April and June.

There were 165,842 bus riders in April — 79,338 in May — and 35,864 in June. According to the agenda memo, June's bus trips were substantially below 54.8% from the previous month.

Compared to GoZone, 74,633 commuters used the service in April — 77,010 in May — and 71,434 in June. According to the agenda, GoZone's trips were 7.2% below last month's total.

The report shows the A-Train service had 20,003 riders in April — 19,196 in May — and 17,879 in June.

While DCTA's A-train ridership has declined over the summer, June's 2023 A-train boardings were 22.2% greater than last year's 14,636 monthly average train riders.

According to the April, June and July DCTA Board of Directors meeting agenda report, ridership services between January and July have increased steadily from last year.

DALLAS CAN'T WAIT ANOTHER 80 YEARS FOR THIS TRAIL, NATIONAL NONPROFIT DIRECTOR SAYS

By Plamedie Ifasso

Earlier this year during a tour of a trail on Coombs Creek, Trust for Public Land Texas State Director Robert Kent noticed a family of four walking through the heavily forested area.

With one child walking and another in a stroller, the parents were trying to maneuver their way through a road with a railroad crossing, no dividing lines and no sidewalks as cars whipped by.

"They're trying to navigate their way down this road, which if you go back 80 years ago, the city said it was going to be a trail," Kent said. "We talked to them, the Hernandez family, and they were walking to the grocery store. The Hernandez family can't wait another 80 years for this trail to happen."

Trust for Public Land is creating a network of parks and trails along Five Mile Creek in Oak Cliff. The Five Mile Creek Greenbelt will feature a 12.9-mile trail starting at the Westmoreland DART Station, end near the Joppa Preserve and connect to the city's existing trail network.

The national nonprofit knew it needed more than just trails and purchased 125 acres of land along the creek to build three new parks. The 1.8-acre South Oak Cliff Renaissance Park was the first to open in November 2021 and connects South Oak Cliff High School to the nearby Cedar Crest Trail.

Located by Paul Quinn College, Judge Charles Rose Park sits on 40-acres of land and is currently under construction. The last park in Glen Oaks, Woody Branch Park, will span 82-acres and is scheduled to be completed in 2025. Each park will be owned and managed by the Dallas Park and Recreation Department once it's finished.

On top of the new greenspace, the greenbelt will connect residents to two universities, two light rail stations, three hospitals, 17 parks, 10 schools and more than 100 bus stops.

"We'll connect along the trail through the parks, and it really showcases how the parks we're working on are supposed to be emeralds on a necklace," Kent said. "The trail is the band, and the parks connect along it."

The organization is still in the design and fundraising phase of the estimated \$75 million project. Trust for Public Land recently received a \$6.4 million grant through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program from the U.S. Department of Transportation that will fund the design and engineering of the 12.9-mile trail. The nonprofit has raised about \$28 million so far.

Once it's completed the design, Trust for Public Land will have a shovel-ready project and conduct public sessions throughout the Dallas area. The completion of the Five Mile Creek Greenbelt is contingent on funding, but the organization is shooting for a deadline of 2030.



The Five Mile Creek Greenbelt will create a network of parks and trails along Five Mile Creek and connect to existing city trails.

The nonprofit plans to start construction on the section of the trail between Westmoreland Station and US-67 first since most of its funding resources have been poured into that area including a \$15.4 million grant from the North Central Texas Council of Governments and an anticipated \$8 million grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. Kent expects to see more activity and momentum around that section in the next 12 to 24 months.

Growing up in Lake Highlands by the White Rock Creek Greenbelt, Kent spent his Saturdays riding his bike up and down the trail to White Rock Lake with his dad and didn't realize how unique that experience was in Dallas.

Half of the 186,297 residents living within the creek's watershed [have](#) access to a park or trail within a 10-minute walk of home, and overall, [73% of Dallas residents](#) have access to a park or trail within a 10-minute walk from home.

While the city has increased its park and trail access and grew from having 58% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a trail five years ago, Dallas still lags behind other major cities, Kent said.

"It's below the national median of 78%," Kent said. "It's below our peer cities like Plano which is 80% and far below nation leading cities like Minneapolis-St. Paul; Irvine, California and Cincinnati, Ohio, that are all in the 95%-plus range. We've got a ways to go."

Established in 1972, Trust for Public Land [works](#) from main streets to mountaintops to ensure close home access to the outdoors. The national nonprofit began looking through old city plans a few years ago and found the 1944 Bartholomew Plan which called for a network of parks and trails across the city including a trail along Five Mile Creek. But nearly 80 years later, many of the promised trails south of the Trinity River were never built.

The organization picked up the torch in 2019 and collaborated with landscape architecture firm TBG Partners to recreate, renovate and update the masterplan.

Around the same time the agency was looking at Five Mile Creek, South Oak Cliff High School principal Dr. Willie Johnson reached out about his vision to turn the vacant lot near the school into a park.

“We got to talking with him and the community, and that turned into a six-month community engagement process where we went through a series of public meetings,” Kent said. “We did a pop-up park at the park as well. (We) invited everyone who lives within a 10-minute walk, about 7,000 people, to come participate in that process (and) got input on what (they would) like to see if this site was converted into a park.”

Trust for Public Land wants to be responsive to the on-the-ground feedback it hears from the community throughout the entire project. For South Oak Cliff Renaissance Park, residents told the nonprofit they wanted to see environmental benefits from the park and a place to exercise and conduct outdoor instruction. The site features a garden with native plants, exercise equipment, an outdoor classroom, WiFi and play-structures for kids of varying ages, another request from neighbors.

One concern that repeatedly came up was safety, so the organization placed a series of security cameras and motion-activated solar-powered lights throughout the park.

Over the next six to 12 months, Trust for Public Land will learn residents’ priorities for its last park site, Woody Branch Park, develop a design and fundraise to build it. The nonprofit will continue to factor safety concerns in its designs, Kent said.

“Safety is always something that comes up,” Kent said. “We focus on the safety response through design. There’s something called CPTED, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, and that’s a design principle that architects use when they’re designing projects to make sure that they’re designed to be safe. Additionally, we’ll have solar powered lights and install security cameras when necessary.”

The agency is also building a committee comprised of community representatives who will guide the project, be involved in the design process and make key decisions. The organization asked local officials and stakeholders like Paul Quinn College and the University of North Texas at Dallas to nominate individuals and plans to connect with homeowner associations as well, Kent said.

Once the greenbelt is completed, Trust for Public Land wants all Dallas residents to have the ability to enjoy the outdoors.

“In the last 10 years, we’ve seen this naissance of trails all across the city except here in Oak Cliff,” Kent said. “My dream and Trust for Public Land’s dream is once this trail is finished, it’s going to be this top-tier quality amenity that benefits Oak Cliff, just like everyone else in Dallas has, and helps the city be happier, healthier, more connected, more equitable and more resilient.”

HOW DALLAS-FORT WORTH BECAME AMERICA'S BOOMTOWN

By Tasha Tsiaperas

Imagine San Diego, San Jose, New Orleans, Pittsburgh and Boise all rolled up into the same metropolitan area.

Zoom in: That would give you a sense of just how many people now live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area's major cities, which aside from the titular pair also include Arlington, Plano and Garland.

The big picture: Dallas-Fort Worth is one of the country's fastest growing metropolitan areas.

- The region [added more people](#) than any other U.S. metro between 2021 and 2022, with 170,396 new residents.
- Climate change, which is [driving extreme heat](#) and other hazardous weather, is so far not slowing growth in Dallas — [or other cities at heightened risk](#).

Zoom out: Texas is [one of six states](#) benefiting from a massive southward wealth migration, which is pulling the U.S. economic center away from the Northeast.

Driving the news: Business expansion and relocations are fueling the Dallas region's growth, putting it on track to overtake the Chicago area and become the [third-most-populous](#) metro within the decade.

- The area is thriving because of its major airport, highway and rail access and central location.
- It is also home to a number of major universities, producing a high-skilled and diverse workforce.
- Plus, a lack of natural barriers like waterways and mountains means plenty of room to expand.

The intrigue: Dallas remains the area's anchor, but its power is slipping as [outlying cities boom](#).

Still, Dallas is critical to the broader region's success, says Mike Rosa, senior vice president of economic development for the Dallas Regional Chamber.

- "It is important that the core city, the branded city, is healthy and vibrant and has a positive ring to it. That helps a Frisco. That helps a Plano," Rosa tells Axios.

By the numbers: 265 businesses have either relocated or expanded to Dallas-Fort Worth since 2020. Dallas accounted for 59 of those moves.

- Among the biggest: Caterpillar, which last year relocated its headquarters from suburban Chicago to [Irving](#).
- Irving, a suburb near DFW Airport, has seen more than 20 business expansions and relocations in the past three years.

Meanwhile, Fort Worth added 19,000 residents between July 2021 and July 2022, more than any other single U.S. city.

- The city's population hovered [just below 957,000](#) last year, and it drew more than 40 business relocations and expansions.
- Late last year, Fort Worth-based Bell Textron was [awarded](#) a U.S. Army contract worth up to \$1.3 billion to build new long-range assault aircraft.

What they're saying: Fort Worth has long been more blue collar than Dallas, with more emphasis on manufacturing and transportation businesses than finance and real estate.

- The city attracts new companies because of its identity, says Robert Sturns, director of economic development for the city of Fort Worth.
- "We have a definable character. We're Cowtown," Sturns tells Axios. "That's not something we shy away from."

What's next: Dallas-Fort Worth is on track to be the only U.S. metropolitan area to house two cities with populations over 1 million in the next five years, as people and companies seek profit, opportunity and room to grow.

HOW AND WHEN WILL THE EPA CLEAN TOXIC SLUDGE SITE IN NORTH TEXAS SUBURB?

The Delfasco Forge property in Grand Prairie is leaking chemicals that can damage fetuses and cause cancer.

By Sarah Bahari



The Environmental Protection Agency will detail its plan to clean the Delfasco Forge property at a public meeting Thursday. The site has leaked toxic chemicals to dozens of Grand Prairie homes. (Google Maps Street View)

The Environmental Protection Agency will address its plan to clean an [industrial site leaking cancer-causing chemicals](#) to dozens of Grand Prairie homes this week.

The agency has scheduled a public meeting Thursday to discuss its investigation of the site, abatement strategy and timeline.

Roughly 80 homes in the predominantly low-income Burbank Gardens neighborhood are contaminated by [toxic chemicals discarded by defense contractor Delfasco Forge](#). In 2018, the 1.1-acre property [was placed on the Superfund National Priorities List](#), which includes some of the nation's most-polluted sites.

Tests have shown that trichloroethylene, or TCE, which is a degreaser, contaminated the soil, bled into the groundwater and vaporized into the air. Delfasco Forge — which made practice bombs for the Navy and Air Force and machinery during the 1980s and '90s — used TCE to clean equipment.

[In addition to causing cancer](#), TCE can cause heart defects in developing fetuses and damage the liver, kidneys, respiratory, immune and central nervous systems in adults. Pregnant women are among the most vulnerable.

The Grand Prairie plant, at 114 N.E. 28th St., closed in 1998. In 2008, Delfasco Forge filed for bankruptcy, in part because of liabilities from the contamination.

At a [public meeting in 2022](#), several residents questioned whether enough was being done, and quickly enough, to address the public health hazard.

“This is my family. This is my home, my neighbors,” said one resident who did not identify herself, adding that several family members have fallen ill with various diseases. “We are citizens here being neglected. This is gross negligence.”

Federal and state authorities have acknowledged anger with the slow-moving process but said the timeline is consistent with this type of toxic site.

Previously, the EPA said cleanup will likely begin sometime in 2024. For now, the agency and the Texas State Department of Health Services urged residents to request a free vapor mitigation system be installed in their homes.

However, many in the neighborhood are renters, and homeowners must approve the mitigation systems.

The public meeting is 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Shotwell Life Center, 2750 Graham St., in Grand Prairie. Presentations will be in English and Spanish.

JENNINGS-MAY ST. LOUIS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAGUED BY NOISY RAILROAD CROSSINGS, HALTED TRAINS

By Cristian ArguetaSoto



A train sits halted on Morningside Drive on July 20. According to Jennings-May St. Louis neighborhood association president Angela Castillo Blochowicz, the trains stopped, blocking busy intersections 33 times from February to July 2023. Her journal noted that from July to Aug. 7, the train halted traffic another 7 times. (Cristian ArguetaSoto | Fort Worth Report) Since 2019, Sandra Clark, her partner, Scotty Scott, and their two toddlers often lose sleep to the sound of railroad crossing bells in the Jennings-May St. Louis neighborhood.

“In 2019, we moved to May Street, but before then, we lived on Rosedale where the ambulances and the police cars go all night. We had a newborn, so when we saw the train, we didn’t think it would bother us,” Clark said. “It bothered us a lot. It was every night and very loud. And if and when it stopped, they would blow their horn super loud for extended periods of time.”

Every second of sleep counts when you’re working, raising two toddlers and maintaining a household, Clark said. She is currently training to be a counselor — at her internship, she can work from home or at her office, but taking client calls has become more and more difficult for Clark.

Sometimes, the railroad crossing bells ring from mid-afternoon one day, through the night and into the morning — leaving residents with the audio burned into their minds.

The train, which crosses through Morningside Drive on the west side of Interstate 35, wreaks havoc on residents' daily lives. In February 2023, neighborhood association president Angela Castillo Blochowicz began journaling every time the train stopped.

In her journal, she noted the train stopped for 16 hours from Feb. 25 to Feb. 26. On March 10 and May 16, the train blocked the road for more than 24 hours, she noted in her journal.

"It's 24-plus hours these trains are sitting there. It is relatively new. I want to say within the last year and a half because I've lived there my whole life and there have always been trains, but they've never been stopped like this," Castillo Blochowicz said.

Other residents and nearby workers [have issues with the trains, too.](#)



Waste management company Service Waste Inc., is located on both sides of West Jessamine Street, so workers often climb over stopped trains to get to and from their lunch room and work area. "It stays pretty much all day. We're not supposed to be crossing, but these guys want to get work done," assistant manager Less Perez said. "We used to have a contact at the city that we would be able to call, but over the years, we lost connection with them." (Cristian ArguetaSoto | Fort Worth Report)



A truck waits near a stopped train on July 20. Outside of traffic disruptions, Jennings-May St. Louis residents agree railroad crossing bells may be the biggest issue. Often, the bells ring throughout the night and disrupt people's work and sleep schedules. For Clark and her partner Scott, lost sleep time cannot be made up between work and raising their raising their 1- and 4-year-old kids. (Cristian ArguetaSoto | Fort Worth Report)



A train sits stopped on July 20. When the train stopped on July 11, residents noted a fire truck had to reroute because of a stopped train. Castillo Blochowicz said stopped trains affect more than just Jennings-May St. Louis residents. (Cristian ArguetaSoto | Fort Worth Report)

Clark said she's had to be more mindful of her schedule living near the train — but the sounds are harder to faze out.

"I feel like the ambulances and stuff kind of became more background noise eventually at Rosedale, but the train is very obnoxious," Clark said. "It just disturbs the peace and the balance of life."

Both Clark and Castillo Blochowicz proposed the city build overpasses or underpasses for the train to alleviate traffic congestion; both, however, are lost on what to do about the noise.

NORTH TEXAS COMMISSION TO HOST INFRASTRUCTURE SUMMITS



The North Texas Commission will host its third annual North Texas Infrastructure Summit on Wednesday (Aug. 9) at the Hurst Conference Center, 1601 Campus Drive.

The event will feature a variety of speakers and panel discussions highlighting critical infrastructure and how it impacts the economic development in North Texas. More information is available on the [NTC website](#).

Here is the program schedule:

- 8:30 am – Summit Begins
- 9:00 am – **Breakfast Keynote**
 - **Growth Demands a Mobility System of Choice**
 - This panel discussion will explore how current and future transportation infrastructure and emerging technologies, aiming to identify strategies that shape a forward-thinking and efficient mobility ecosystem. Panelists from the public and private sectors will share insights on the importance of offering diverse transportation options that cater to the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
 - Moderator:
 - Betsy Price, Former Mayor of Fort Worth
 - Panelists:
 - Michael Morris, NCTCOG
 - Alberto Gonzalez, Cintra US President
 - Russell Laughlin, Hillwood
- 10:00 am – **Opening Panel – Legislator Discussion on Texas Energy**

- The opening panel will discuss the importance of safe and reliable energy supply infrastructure to the state's economic growth. They will dive into the public policy priorities that have taken center stage in the last three years to promote growth and efficiency while maintaining reliability and capacity.
- Moderator:
 - Marc Rodriguez, The Office of Marc A. Rodriguez
- Panelists:
 - State Senator Kelly Hancock
 - State Senator Nathan Johnson
- 11:00 am – **Breakout Sessions**
 - **The Rising Cost of Water Resources**
 - This session focuses specifically on the challenges and opportunities related to water resources in North Texas. Experts from government agencies, water utilities, and the private sector share their expertise and experiences in addressing these challenges and maximizing the potential benefits of water resources for economic development.
 - Moderator:
 - Thomas Haster, Freese & Nichols
 - Panelists:
 - R.J. Muraski, North Texas Municipal Water District
 - James Hill, Tarrant Regional Water
 - Brooke Paup, Texas Water Development Board
 - **Building the Next Generation – Infrastructure Workforce**
 - This session highlights the importance of the workforce needs in the infrastructure sector to continue to promote economic growth in North Texas. Speakers from academic institutions, professional organizations, and the private sector share their perspectives on the current state of the engineering workforce and how to address the industry's challenges.
 - Moderator:
 - Justin Reeves, Lockwood, Andrews, and Newnam
 - Panelists:
 - Stephen Pape, School of Manufacturing & Industrial Technology, Dallas College
 - Stephen Mattingly, University of Texas at Arlington

- Brian O'Neill, Westwood Professional Services
- 12:00 pm – **Lunch Keynote**
 - Adriana Cruz, Office of Governor Greg Abbott, State Economic Development Office
- 1:00 pm – **Afternoon Panel**
 - **Advanced Air Mobility**
 - This session introduces the emerging field of advanced air mobility and explores its potential impact on the North Texas region. Speakers from the aerospace industry and government agencies share their perspectives on how this new technology can contribute to economic growth and infrastructure development.
 - Moderator:
 - State Representative David Cook
 - Speaker:
 - Ben Ivers, Director, Autonomous Systems Regulatory Affairs, Boeing
 - Dan Dalton, Vice President, Global Partnerships, Wisk
- 1:45 pm – **Breakout Sessions**
 - **Charging the Future of Transportation**
 - With a flood of money and incentives from the federal government, paired with new consumer demands, this panel will discuss the emergence and impacts of electric vehicles on economic development.
 - Presenters:
 - Jose Correa, Kimley Horn
 - Jennifer Deaton, Oncor
 - Buzz Smith, The EV-angelist
 - **Rising Cost of Going Vertical**
 - This session focuses on the factors driving rising construction costs in North Texas and explores potential solutions to address this challenge. Speakers from the construction industry and government agencies share their insights on reducing costs and promoting sustainable infrastructure development.
 - Moderator:
 - Gary Aanenson, CORE Construction

- Panelists:
 - Steven Normand, CORE Construction
 - Pending*
- 2:30 pm – **Afternoon Keynote – They are big, and they picked Texas, Why?**
- Moderator:
 - Mayor Rick Stopher, City of Irving
 - Panelists:
 - Beth Bowman, Irving Las-Colinas Chamber of Commerce
 - Robert Allen, Fort Worth Economic Development
 - Pending*, City of Dallas
- 3:30 pm – End of Summit

FORT WORTH REPORT

NORTH TEXAS TRANSPORTATION LEADERS DISCUSS FUTURE FOR TARRANT COUNTY

By Juan Salinas II



Betsy Price (left), Russell Laughlin, Alberto Gonzalez, and Michael Morris hold a discussion during a North Texas Infrastructure Summit at Hurst Conference Center on Aug 9, 2023, in Fort Worth. (Juan Salinas II | Fort Worth Report)

Public-private partnerships will drive future growth in the region, transportation expert Michael Morris said.

“We throw our name badges away, and we focus on outcomes. We are not focused on ourselves. So if we can work together to get some really nice outcomes, this region just works together as a team to do that,” Morris, director of transportation of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, said.

During North Texas Commission’s third annual Infrastructure Summit in Hurst on Aug 9, leaders discussed how collaboration with public and private sectors will be key for growth in North Texas.

Former Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price moderated a panel with Morris; Russell Laughlin, an executive vice president at [Hillwood Corp.](#); and Alberto Gonzalez, [Cintra](#)’s U.S. region CEO.

The biggest obstacle that could delay the development changes reshaping Fort Worth and North Texas is the lack of leadership from local government officials, Gonzalez said.

“Understanding that a timely decision is better than a perfect decision when it’s too late,” Gonzalez said.

He pointed to how the pressure to rework the transportation system will continue to grow. Fort Worth has seen the most growth in the North Texas region, adding nearly 20,000 new people, according to [data released](#) by the North Central Texas Council of Governments in May.

“If you want to stay ahead of the curve, you need to make timely decisions,” Gonzalez said.

The private sector needs to take more risks on projects that could improve development around the region, Morris said.

Morris pointed to the [long development process](#) of Panther Island as an example.

“Panther Island is going to be an economic development jewel that may never be repeated again in and around downtown Fort Worth,” Morris said.

During the keynote, Morris also said high-speed rail between Fort Worth and Dallas is moving forward.

“You’re not going to have mega-regions without a great foundation of high-speed rail,” Morris said.

Laughlin sees a huge opportunity for North Texas to be ready for the next generation of transportation public-private partnerships.

“We have an infrastructure that will allow us to lead the nation in the adoption and mobility innovation,” Laughlin said.

SOUTH DALLAS HAS A TRAFFIC PROBLEM

There isn't enough of it. Two guys with big brains say the highways funnel all the money north.

By Matt Goodman

A real estate consultant named Paul Carden was invited to Fair Park in late April to share an idea that is anathema to most Texans: vehicle congestion can sometimes be good.

He spoke on a stage in the Centennial Building during the [EarthX](#) conference over Earth Day weekend, not the setting one would expect for advocacy of idling vehicles. But congestion, he said, is why some neighborhoods can attract businesses and others cannot.

Carden, a vice president at real estate firm Venture Commercial, wore jeans and a blazer and spoke with the enthusiasm of a teacher who has been begging the administration for years to teach this elective. His stage partner for the afternoon was Caleb Roberts, an urban planner at a company called Gap Strategies who delivered a complementary sermon with a quick smile after each point. Roberts cued slides that showed how highways eliminate some destinations before they create others decades and miles away, by shifting congestion—and investment—to new parts of town, leaving older parts behind. On screen popped photos of the vibrant, dense 1950s-era neighborhoods just south of downtown Dallas that were later gouged by interstates 35 and 45. Then he summoned pictures of North Dallas from the same period, showing empty fields and then the businesses that filled them.

Roberts is not from Dallas, and the two had never worked together. But a mutual friend tapped them for the EarthX presentation because their messages fit: highways serve cars, not necessarily neighborhoods and the people who live in them.

The duo's talk occurred about four weeks before the Dallas City Council gave its final vote on the [future of I-345](#), the 1.4-mile stub of elevated highway between downtown and Deep Ellum that connects Woodall Rodgers, Central Expressway, and interstates 30 and 45. While some have advocated for tearing down the aging highway and restitching the city's streets, others have made the case that working-class folks in South Dallas need I-345 to get to their jobs.

Carden and Roberts asked the room to look at South Dallas differently. Its western border is the Trinity River. The Great Trinity Forest is its southern boundary, and Interstate 30 is the north. Seen in its geographic context, South Dallas looks like a peninsula that should hem in traffic and draw associated development. Instead, though, I-45 and I-345 bypass the area, starving the peninsula of activity.

"The more people who travel through there, the more businesses they can have. That is opportunity. That is wealth creation," Carden said. "But 345 is separating the traffic that would go from South Dallas and patronize those businesses and draining it to North Dallas."

Roberts had seen this same export of vitality in his hometown, Milwaukee. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation was pushing to expand Interstate 43 through the center of the city, decades after the highway's construction had wiped out more than 8,000 homes in a majority-Black neighborhood called Bronzeville. Roberts helped organize an effort to stop the expansion.

Years later, after moving to Dallas, he saw parallels in I-345, another urban freeway that gobbled up land and sent people and commerce elsewhere. (He now lives just a few blocks from the highway.)

South Dallas lies 2 miles east of downtown, with Fair Park near its center. Segregationist policies in the 1950s triggered White flight and brutal bombings as it became a majority Black community. Its street grid was [cut in two by Interstate 30 in the 1960s](#), separating it physically from East Dallas. Most of its land sits in two ZIP codes, 75210 and 75215. About 21 percent of residents in 75215 have a commute of at least 35 minutes, according to the Census. In 75210, that jumps to 41 percent. The U.S. Department of Agriculture considers five of the eight Census tracts within these boundaries to be “low-income and low-access” areas, meaning lots of people in poverty who don’t have easy access to healthy food.

Meanwhile, a highway system just to its west sends 178,000 people away from South Dallas every day, according to traffic counts by the Texas Department of Transportation. “That traffic is money that is literally going right out of South Dallas on an overpass, straight into the wallets and the opportunity of those living in North Dallas,” Carden said.

Compare that to Mockingbird Lane and Inwood Road, both about 6 miles to the north. Carden told his audience that in 2019, before the pandemic changed traffic patterns, more than 43,000 cars traveled along Mockingbird each day. Inwood attracted 55,000. The busiest road in South Dallas is Robert B. Cullum Boulevard, where 25,000 cars cruise past a McDonald’s, Walgreens, and Fiesta at the edge of Fair Park, basically the only national retailers in the neighborhood. It’s also one of the few major streets in South Dallas that isn’t mirrored by the highway.

Cesar Chavez Boulevard shoots into downtown but handles barely 10,000 vehicles per day. Harwood Street also goes directly into downtown, but it accommodates only about 2,500 cars a day. Botham Jean runs along the riverfront and goes into the Cedars, carrying 11,000 cars a day.

Roberts and Carden’s argument isn’t so much that traffic counts alone will transform South Dallas or that the neighborhood needs a bunch of national chains. Instead, all those cars show what the neighborhood is up against, how easy it is for retailers to go a few miles north to what Carden calls the “path of least resistance.” In South Dallas, the lots are small and owned by many different people and companies, which can make assemblage difficult. Plus, there aren’t enough humans—on feet or in cars—to compete. So all the money just goes a few miles up the highway.

Congestion had been the buzzword at Dallas City Hall for weeks before Carden and Roberts took that stage. TxDOT needed the Council’s support for its plan to tear down I-345 and rebuild it in a trench. Organizers had prodded the state for more than a decade to study removing the freeway and replacing it with a boulevard and a reconstituted street grid, arguing that doing so would free up land for economic development and housing. Their belief is that Dallas can grow and keep housing affordable through density, that adding more people to the center of the city would create neighborhoods that won’t require long commutes.

Today, that appears unlikely. The state argued that its traffic counts showed congestion would increase by 40 to 50 percent if a boulevard were to replace the highway, a horror movie of cars and trucks crammed into four-lane city streets. Few on Council pushed back, and TxDOT got its OK to build a 10-lane freeway in a canyon.

Meantime, South Dallas still has the same economic and structural challenges after decades of segregationist policies and disinvestment. It also still has an enormous opportunity all its own.

Highway builders see those long commutes out of South Dallas as proof that residents there need the freeway to reach their jobs. Carden sees things differently. Because of the freeway, South Dallas has so much underutilized land that it could transform to accommodate new housing, jobs, and retail without ever “touching a blade of single-family,” which is by far the dominant residential style in the neighborhood.

But change is afoot in South Dallas. TxDOT recently removed a freeway that ran through the community. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard flew over the old U.S. 175 S.M. Wright highway. The state has removed the road and returned its right of way to at-grade, which will eventually develop into a north-south boulevard. (TxDOT was comfortable with the adjacent I-45 absorbing the traffic; I-345 doesn’t have a similar relief artery.) S.M. Wright also cut the western boundary of South Dallas in two, much like Interstate 30 did further north. The hope is that the boulevard could begin to piece the neighborhood back together.

Parking lots at Fair Park [are being turned into a community park](#) that is accessible to the neighborhood, without fencing. Of course, that is leading to what, on the surface at least, looks like a standard real estate play. A Dallas firm recently scooped up 17 buildings on Exposition Avenue, near Fair Park’s main entrance. This often leads to gentrification and displacement, with aging residents getting pushed out. A [recent analysis of Zillow data](#) found that home prices in 75215 increased more from 2016 to 2023 than all but two ZIP codes in the state.

Just down the block, however, the old neighborhood is showing signs of flickering back to life. The nonprofit Forest Forward is working to revitalize the [historic Forest Theater](#), which was once the cultural heart of the neighborhood. The city is helping finance a specialty clinic that will take over the old Forest Hospital, one of just five Black hospitals in the 1960s.

Counteracting decades of redlining and other tools of racism will take time. And putting I-345 in a canyon will continue to siphon off money to the north. South Dallas’ best hope might be that the region’s growth creates enough congestion for everyone.

U.S. 380, SPUR 399 FUNDING: HEY TXDOT, WHERE'S OUR \$490 MILLION?

Collin County Commissioners want assurance there will be no construction delays based on money

By Susan McFarland

As Collin County growth explodes, money for infrastructure is critical.

That's why alarm bells went off when commissioners learned TxDOT removed \$490 million in funding for U.S. 380 and Spur 399 right-of-way projects.

Clarence Daugherty, director of engineering for the county, said the funds were included in the May draft of the 2024 Unified Transportation Program, TxDOT's 10-year plan to guide transportation development across the state. But, when the [proposed final draft](#) came out, the amount was reduced by \$129 million and \$361 million for U.S. 380 and Spur 399, respectively.

In hopes of a TxDOT commitment to return the money and ensure there are no construction delays, commissioners, during their regular meeting Aug. 7, unanimously [voted to send a letter](#) to the Texas Transportation Commission as [part of public input](#) regarding the proposed draft.

"The 2024 UTP proposes to reduce funding from two projects on new rights-of-way in Collin County, which totals \$490 million," according to the letter. "We urge the Texas Transportation Commission and TxDOT keep full funding on U.S. 380 and Spur 399 in Collin County."

Related: [Collin County commissioners eye \\$683 million bond election](#)

The letter explains the May draft of the 2024 UTP included \$610 million on U.S. 380, but the final UTP only includes \$481 million for the project.

The May draft also had \$638 million on Spur 399, but the final UTP includes \$277 million, a combined net loss of \$490 million between the two.

"That is a real problem to us," Daugherty said, explaining that Spur 399 around McKinney National Airport already has right-of-way purchases taking place.

"I suspect the McKinney bypass will be the second, and there's no guarantee that they're going to put that money back or put it back in time," he said. "So the concern is they do all the right-of-way ... and when it comes time for construction, the funds won't be there."

Commissioners voiced concern in the letter that major segments of U.S. 380 during peak hours are already operating at a level-of-service "F," an "A through F" analysis with "F" meaning roadway traffic volumes are greater than the capacity of roadway.

"So we are already behind in providing the improvements necessary for reliable mobility," according to the letter.

Also expressed in the letter, lack of support from the TTC in funding, "especially in light of the county's sustained phenomenal growth."

Related: [Expansion for Collin County highway complete; thoroughfare now open for traffic](#)

Commissioner Duncan Webb, a board member of the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition, said a letter was also being drafted by the DRMC about the funds being removed.

"This is not just a Collin County issue, this is a regional issue," Webb said. "We just happened to be the recipient of this bad news versus other parts of the Metroplex."

Webb reiterated what Daugherty said, that Spur 399 is already set for construction.

"Our region specifically, Collin County, is being penalized ... It has the potential to be devastating if this funding is not put back in place pretty soon because as our director of engineering said, Spur 399 is the first project," Webb said. "So this could be really devastating to the city of McKinney and our whole region, if this funding doesn't get put back, maybe not this year but next year."

An emailed statement from TxDOT said the UTP is reviewed and updated annually, and projects the size of the U.S. 380 and Spur 399 corridors often take more than one UTP update to receive full funding.

The statement said development efforts on both projects remain on schedule.

"Pre-construction activities for these corridors, such as right-of-way acquisition and detailed engineering, are fully funded by the Texas Transportation Commission," the statement read. "These pre-construction activities will take multiple years to complete, which allows time for construction funding to be identified."

AS TALKS ABOUT DALLAS-HOUSTON HIGH-SPEED RAIL RESURFACE, WHAT ABOUT A FORT WORTH LINE?

By Eleanor Dearman

A top North Texas transportation official has hopes for a high-speed rail [connecting Fort Worth and Dallas](#), perhaps even before the much discussed line between Houston and Dallas.

Texas Central and Amtrak on Wednesday announced a potential partnership to advance a high speed rail project that could mean a trip between Dallas and Houston in less than 90 minutes. The North Central Texas Council of Governments sees [potential to include Fort Worth in the planned route](#) and is proposing stations in Fort Worth, Arlington and Dallas, in addition to the stop in Houston.

Dallas-Fort Worth [leads the nation in population growth](#), and Tarrant County is growing faster than Dallas County.

“Why would you want the end of the line to be in Dallas County and then everyone has to transfer to the TRE, which would take an hour, or transfer to some other mode of transportation,” said Michael Morris, the director of transportation for the council.

The rail between Houston and Dallas would also include a stop at a Brazos Valley Station in Grimes County between College Station and Huntsville, according to Texas Central.

Next steps include an environmental review process for the Dallas to Fort Worth segment by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration that must be finished within a year, Morris said.

Plans for the Houston to Dallas rail have been in the works for years. Opponents have been skeptical about its chances and have raised concerns related to land rights, the process lacking transparency and possible costs to taxpayers.

Morris suggested the Fort Worth project could be finished sooner. The shorter line could be open for people while the longer Houston line is being built, he said.

“Let’s get into this environmental phase, and let’s put on the table in September of 2024: ‘Hey Texas Central Partners, maybe the first line you want to build is from Dallas to Fort Worth. It’s only 30 miles and it would really showcase your system as you’re building the longer segment,’” Morris said.

Morris touted the possibility of travel between Texas A&M University and its law school in Fort Worth, and travel between Houston and Arlington for Astros-Rangers baseball games.

THIS 13-MILE HIGHWAY STRETCH IS GETTING A REVAMP THAT COULD SHORTEN YOUR TRIP TO DFW AIRPORT

By Jess Hardin

North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners is revamping the Northeast Loop 820/Airport Freeway corridor.

Funding for the \$414-million project was finalized Friday, according to the private developer North Tarrant Express. Equity participants Cintra and Meridiam will fund the project. It will not require taxpayer money.

Construction will start by the end of the year and is expected to be completed by 2027. Most of the construction will take place at night.

The expansion will add a regular lane in each direction along Northeast Loop 820 from Interstate 35W to the Texas 183/121 split. [This stretch was ranked](#) 23 on Texas A&M's list of the state's most congested roadways.

It will also add a TEXpress lane in each direction along Airport Freeway between Northeast Loop 820 and Industrial Boulevard in Euless. This stretch is ranked 57th on the state's most congested roadways.

"Traffic volumes have continued to increase alongside the explosive population growth in Tarrant County," said Jose Espinoza, CEO of North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL APPROVES 10-YEAR PROJECT LIST FOR DFW

By Colby Farr

The [Regional Transportation Council](#) approved its regional 10-year project list for highways throughout Dallas-Fort Worth during an [Aug. 10 meeting](#).

The action came after discussion among council members about an apparent reduction in proposed funds for US 380 and Spur 399 projects in Collin County.

What you need to know

Each year, the transportation council approves a set of projects that is then approved by the [Texas Transportation Committee](#) as part of the state's [Unified Transportation Program](#). The list of projects includes descriptions and funding sources broken down into several categories.

About \$480 million in total was removed from the projects between the May and July drafts of the Unified Transportation Program, according to a Regional Transportation Council presentation.

Funding proposed for a portion of US 380 showed about \$610 million in a May draft of the program. An [updated draft presented for public comment in July](#) only proposed about \$481 million for the same project.

The Spur 399 project had about \$638 million of proposed funding in the earlier draft, but that total fell to about \$277 million in July.

A closer look

The [US 380 project](#) is estimated to cost more than \$810 million to construct. The project is slated to begin accepting construction bids in 2027 or 2028.

The [Spur 399 project](#) is estimated to cost about \$938 million and is expected to begin accepting construction bids in 2032.

Funds for both projects were reallocated to the IH 30 Canyon project in Dallas to rebalance the state's funding categories, according to the presentation. More funds were expected to be added to the projects as part of a deal between TxDOT and the council, but they were not present on the latest draft.

What they're saying

[Michael Morris](#), the transportation director of the [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#), said the loss of funding doesn't hurt the ability to buy land for right of way on those projects.

If Morris had had a choice, he would have picked different projects to lose funding, he said.

"In this particular case with all the meetings that we've had, my fear is that we're going to lose 380," he said.

[McKinney Mayor George Fuller](#), who sits on the council, said the two projects were essential for the region and community. The thought the projects may further be delayed is "devastating," he said.

To lose ground on the project after four years of battle in the community is tough; without commitment that the project will continue to happen, it will erode confidence, he said.

"I totally understand the concept that we're not going to need construction funds [until] [20]26, [20]27," Fuller said. "But ... they've made the shift without any kind of commitment identifying that this has been changed and modified in this plan for this reason."

Despite the loss in funding on those projects, this year's transportation program includes about \$288 million more than the previous year.

[Denton County Judge Andy Eads](#) made a motion to approve the project list and funding as it appears in the final draft of the state's transportation program. If TxDOT is coming to the table with more money than before, the council should proceed with the terms as described in the program in the spirit of partnership, Eads said.

"We've all been around long enough to know that there's lots of proposals and lots of drafts," he said. "There's usually a final submittal of what the deal terms are, and partners may start a negotiation with one dollar amount in mind, and things develop. Sometimes it's out of the hands of the parties that are doing the negotiations."

The council approved the motion with an amendment directing [Chair Gyna Bivens](#) to ask for additional communication from the state's transportation committee regarding intentions for the projects.

The Texas Transportation Committee is slated to meet at 10 a.m. Aug. 16. Its agenda includes consideration of approving the 2024 transportation program.

BETSY PRICE: PRIVATE INVESTMENT HAS TRANSFORMED MOBILITY IN NORTH TEXAS. LET'S FINISH THE JOB.

By Betsy Price

Born and raised in the Metroplex and in my years as mayor of Fort Worth, I have watched this region grow and lead the nation in economic development and innovation. More people move to our cities daily as we provide good jobs and deliver high-quality education. The North Central Texas Council of Governments predicts 11.2 million people will call this region home by 2045.

As our population grows, demand for more roads and better transportation solutions also increases. When I first took office as Fort Worth mayor, public-private partnerships were used to meet infrastructure challenges and demands. These partnerships are proven investment tools, previously approved by the Legislature and administered by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Leaders across the Metroplex collaborated to meet the demands of a rapidly growing region, and to maximize connectivity and sustainability.

Today, however, major transportation projects across North Texas are delayed and unfunded. Congestion continues to worsen. The answer to this problem lies not in new taxes. Instead, we should return to proven methods to build roads that benefit our communities. Many projects come to mind, but one stands out: the North Tarrant Express (NTE), constructed as a public-private partnership under an agreement with the state. I saw firsthand the development of the NTE managed lanes system in Fort Worth and Tarrant County. Handling more than 600,000 trips a day, the NTE network not only works, it was delivered years ahead of schedule and created thousands of jobs for our communities.

Most recently, the North Tarrant Express network celebrated the opening of a newly improved segment that delivers the latest in mobility technology and innovation. This is the 7-mile portion of NTE I-35W connecting downtown Fort Worth and Alliance Airport. This vital corridor will serve Hillwood's AllianceTexas, a 27,000-acre, master-planned, mixed-use development responsible for contributing more than \$100 billion in economic impact to the region.

Another NTE segment that is just as critical is the section that serves as a major artery to the south entrance of the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. However, this Midtown portion of the NTE SH 183 is incomplete. It's a link in the efficient movement of drivers and cargo to and from the airport and, clearly, its improvement must be completed. This is now all the more urgent given the major expansion planned for DFW Airport, soon to be the world's busiest. Further, the NTE always offers drivers the choice to travel on its managed lanes or on the non-tolled lanes.

Without these needed safety and capacity improvements to this segment of SH 183 from Reliance Parkway to MacArthur Boulevard, North Texas businesses will suffer and our communities will be vulnerable to dangerous bottlenecks.

Importantly, these NTE improvements would be funded entirely by the private sector and constructed by local contractors – at no construction cost to Texas taxpayers.

Transportation is fundamental to the economy and our daily lives. We need vast improvements on our roadways. Continued private investment, rather than more taxes, is the best way to address this need and to keep pace with rapid growth in Fort Worth and the entire region.

Waiting does not fix the transportation problems of today or prepare us for the transportation of tomorrow. The time to act on the North Tarrant Express is now.

CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE PLANS TO EXPENSIVE DALLAS D-2 SUBWAY POSSIBLE

Streetcar connection receives support from downtown business leader with subway on hold.

By Ken Kalthoff

Some Dallas leaders are already promoting new plans since the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Agency, DART, announced the long-planned downtown subway is off the drawing board for now.

DART has removed the so-called “D-2” second downtown rail path from the agency’s 20-year financial plan.

A much less expensive option, discussed in the past, could be a streetcar link through the downtown area.

A streetcar serves Oak Cliff and the Bishop Arts area and crosses the Trinity River to the edge of downtown.

“I think that it’s really important to have public transportation more accessible actually,” said transit rider Lauren Koben.

The McKinney Avenue Trolley serves Uptown Dallas but stops at the northern edge of downtown.

“I would love to connect that with the Bishop Arts trolley through downtown. And in many ways, putting D-2 on the proverbial back burner opens this conversation up,” said Downtown Dallas Inc CEO Jennifer Scripps.

The downtown business group is already making efforts to advance a streetcar plan, Scripps said.

Dallas has just one subway station now, beneath the City Place building on the Central Expressway.

The D-2 subway was a \$1.7 billion plan to dig another tunnel under downtown with several stations to the surface.

It was based on much higher ridership before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“And now we’re seeing about 68% to 70% of that ridership return. What is the best use of those funds,” said DART spokesman Gordon Shattles.

Some of the savings will go toward added security with more DART police officers and 100 new blue-shirt security people.

“I think that’s a plus because we have lot of riff-raff on the train that shouldn’t be riding the train. So, I feel like that will help us,” DART Rider Tamikia Thompson said.

The agency is also spending more to improve cleanliness on buses and trains.

"We have cleaners in the central business district that join on and off those trains and clean them throughout the day. So, as opposed to just being cleaned at the beginning and end, they're cleaned in the middle as well," Shattles said.

Thompson said that is a needed improvement, as well.

"I think that will be good for DART, people just riding the train because nobody wants to ride a dirty train with all this trash on it," she said.

Station platforms on the older red and blue line stations have also been extended to allow longer trains with more cars. That will allow additional capacity on all trains passing through the existing single downtown path if ridership demand does return.

Scripps said DART leaders made a presentation to leaders of the downtown business group about the changes this week.

"It seems like they're taking a very pragmatic approach while ridership recovers post-pandemic. And this plan for D-2 isn't the best use of resources currently. It's not to say it can't come back." Scripps said.

The existing Oak Cliff streetcar is a greatly reduced segment [from plans](#) that were [suggested years ago](#).

[At one point both a streetcar](#) on the surface and a subway below ground were envisioned for downtown paths.

A streetcar path could be designed to serve a planned new Dallas Convention Center and a possible high-speed rail station.

High-speed rail is back in consideration with the announcement last week that government-backed Amtrak has joined with Texas Central, the private high-speed rail development company for a planned route from downtown Dallas to Houston.

Scripps said the experience of streetcars in other cities is exciting to downtown Dallas business people.

"Streetcars have proven to be good generators for street-level activity. They provide retail opportunities and they're really excellent for tourism. So, those are all things that downtown would love to see. It could be a real amenity," Scripps said.

Lauren Koben said more public transportation options would be good for other riders.

"Get people out of their cars. I think that's really better for our city," Koben said.

DART is still building the Silver Line rail connection between Plano and DFW Airport that some North Dallas residents tried to stop.

PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO MOVING HIGH-SPEED RAIL TOWARD COMPLETION

NCTCOG study examines opportunities to bring high-speed service to region, connect riders to Houston

Aug. 15, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) – Imagine boarding a train in Tarrant County and being transported to Houston in less than two hours, bypassing the traffic along the region's major highways and the potential backups that may occur.

This vision is closer to reality thanks to separate high-speed rail projects that could ultimately connect to form a system that will allow people to travel from Fort Worth or Arlington to Houston without changing trains.

Last week, Amtrak and Texas Central Partners announced a plan to work together to study moving forward with the long-planned high-speed rail line to Houston, with a station in the Bryan-College Station area.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is moving ahead on a plan to bring high-speed rail service to the Interstate Highway 30 corridor, connecting Fort Worth and Arlington to Dallas and the planned high-speed rail line to Houston

NCTCOG studied 43 potential alignments and a series of potential high-speed technologies as part of Phase 1 of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study. High-speed rail along the IH 30 corridor emerged as the preferred method to connect people from throughout the region to the planned Dallas-Houston route. The DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study will move into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) portion of Phase 2 in September, focusing on route alignment, possible station locations and potential social and environmental impacts. This environmental process is expected to be completed in a year and will include opportunities for the public to provide input on priorities.

"We applaud the partnership between Amtrak and Texas Central Partners to connect North Texas and Houston with innovative technology," Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker said. "Extending high-speed rail along Interstate Highway 30 is key to ensuring Fort Worth residents can continue to travel reliably as the region grows and traffic increases. With the collaboration of our North Texas neighbors, as well as the North Central Texas Council of Governments and our federal and private-sector partners, high-speed rail can be more than just a vision. It can become reality."

Dallas-Fort Worth has a population of more than 8 million people and stands to eclipse 11 million by 2045. This type of growth necessitates an embrace of innovative transportation options to preserve and enhance the region's quality of life. Connecting two of the country's largest metropolitan areas with high-speed trains that move in excess of 200 mph could improve safety and reliability while fostering even greater economic growth.

Arlington Mayor Jim Ross sees high-speed rail as a transformative technology that can help move people through the region and can complement the current transportation network.

"Arlington is excited to partner in the effort to bring high-speed rail to our region," Mayor Ross said. "North Texas remains one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country with no sign of slowing down. This requires continued creativity, including examining new ways to move

people. Adding high-speed rail as an option for people to get to Arlington, whether they live or work here, or are visiting our world-class Entertainment District, would be revolutionary.”

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG’s purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 228 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 19 school districts and 24 special districts. For more information on NCTCOG, visit www.nctcog.org.

DALLAS TO GET BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR ROADWAY PROJECTS IN NEW TXDOT PLAN

By Teresa Gubbins

The state of Texas is investing \$142 billion in transportation infrastructure, including \$11.5 billion for roadway projects around Dallas-Fort Worth.

That \$142 billion also includes a \$100 billion 10-year statewide roadway construction plan with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

The Dallas District projects will include:

- Projects along US 380 in Collin County, \$288 million, complementing approximately \$1 billion previously dedicated to US 380
- Reconstruct I-30 Canyon between I-35E and I-45 in Dallas County, \$524 million
- Reconstruct US 80 in Mesquite between Town East Boulevard and Belt Line Road, including the interchange with I-635 in Dallas County, \$220 million
- Improvements along the I-35, I-35E, and I-35W corridors in Denton County to include breakout interchanges, new frontage roads, and capacity improvements, \$163 million
- Projects in Kaufman County, total \$263 million, including \$25 million to widen portions of Interstate 20 and \$101 million to widen SH 205

It's part of the 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) proposed by TxDOT, estimated to be \$15 billion more than the 2023 UTP, with the State of Texas providing a majority of the funding.

The UTP is a planning document that guides the development of transportation projects across the state.

The \$142 billion designated for 2024 will cover development & delivery projects, right of way acquisition, engineering, routine maintenance contracts, and UTP construction funding. We're totally getting a LOT for our money.

And don't think we won't see some ROI: An analysis by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute says the \$10 billion-plus average annual investment programmed in the UTP over the next 10 years is expected to bring an estimated \$18.8 billion per year in economic benefits which include increased labor income and business output, as well as the addition of 70,500 direct and indirect jobs.

Gotta spend some to make some.

Many of the projects in this plan are roadway segments identified on Texas' 100 Most Congested Roadways list.

Texas Clear Lanes congestion-relief projects will see an increase in funding, supporting \$66.7 billion total investment for completed, under-construction, and planned non-tolled projects since 2015.

Funding for rural projects also increased to \$19.2 billion, up from \$2.2 billion in the 2016 UTP.

Projects are selected by TxDOT and local transportation leaders based on effectiveness in addressing criteria such as safety, pavement condition, capacity, and rural connectivity, with opportunities for public input at the both the state and local levels.

FORT WORTH REMAINS ONE OF FEW MAJOR CITIES WITHOUT A CLIMATE ACTION PLAN. WHERE DOES IT GO FROM HERE?

By Haley Samsel

As researchers analyzed how 50 U.S. cities propose to reduce the impact of climate change, they found the most detailed plan in a surprising place: Dallas, Texas.

Brookings Institution, a nonpartisan think tank, ranked Dallas first in an [analysis of climate action plans](#), rating the city above the likes of Boston, Portland and San Francisco. Dallas adopted [its strategy](#) to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency in 2020, leading to the creation of the [Dallas Environmental Commission](#) in 2021.

“The city did a really good job of ensuring that the plan allowed the community to have a voice and have the opportunity to shape priorities,” said Kathryn Bazan, who chairs the commission charged with helping to implement the plan.

Thirty miles west, Fort Worth is missing from the Brookings report. The city had no plan for researchers to examine.

Of the top 25 largest cities in the U.S., Fort Worth is one of three that has not adopted a long-term plan to reduce its carbon footprint, achieve sustainability goals or address the challenges posed by climate change.

Soon, it will stand alone. Officials in [Jacksonville](#) and [El Paso](#) are developing climate resiliency strategies of their own.

City officials, including Mayor Mattie Parker, point to a growing list of master plans addressing [urban forestry](#) and [open space](#) as a sign that Fort Worth is taking environmental issues seriously. Parker has made the expansion of parkland and open space [a priority](#) of her second term.

“A green space focus will knit all of these different plans together and build a better community,” Parker said. “What role does the private sector play, and what other partnerships do we need to form?”

In 2019, the city outlined its approach to environmental issues in its [first environmental master plan](#), which included strategies to minimize Fort Worth’s contribution to air pollution, improve water quality and reduce litter citywide.

However, the 218-page report didn’t include specific goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and made two references to climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions trap the sun’s heat as they blanket the planet and lead to global warming over time, according to the [United Nations](#).

[\[PDF: Fort Worth 2019 Environmental Master Plan\]](#)

While Fort Worth isn’t likely to create its own climate strategy, the city is eager to be part of a regional climate action plan led by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, said assistant code compliance director Cody Whittenburg.

The council of governments, which includes members across 16 counties, is pursuing a \$1 million [climate pollution reduction grant](#) through the Environmental Protection Agency that will kick off planning next spring. After the plan is developed, cities such as Fort Worth will be eligible to apply for more federal funding to reduce emissions, Whittenburg said.

Parker, City Council members and City Manager David Cooke have been supportive of this effort, he added.

“To tackle a problem like climate pollution, it’s going to take everyone working together,” Whittenburg said. “If there is this perception that the city of Fort Worth is not doing enough or is not making any progress in this space, I think maybe there’s an opportunity that we can do a better job with outreach and a better job of education to get that message out.”

The city’s lack of explicit climate goals has earned criticism, especially as leaders navigate concerns over air pollution and negative health outcomes in [heavily industrialized portions of southeast Fort Worth](#). City leaders issued permits to industrial facilities near homes, creating environmental injustice in the area, Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club leader Mary Goodman told City Council members in August.

“Environmental justice is to address the decisions made long ago. From what I see, Fort Worth is not listening to the people who are affected by these decisions,” Goodman said. “Fort Worth needs to have an environmental justice plan that envisions meeting citizens’ needs and we need to correct mistakes of the past.”

Lessons from climate plans

The federal government has [poured billions](#) into infrastructure and energy efficiency projects over the past two years. The policy shift got researchers at the Brookings Institution thinking: Are local governments prepared to accept funding and turn it into reductions of greenhouse gas emissions?

Cities that have shown their ability to execute on environmental goals are going to be ready to hit the ground running and take advantage of “once-in-a-generation funding,” said Joseph W. Kane, a fellow at Brookings Institution focused on water infrastructure and transportation.

[\[PDF: Brookings 2022 City Climate Action Plan Report\]](#)

“The feds are going to see that, and (cities) are going to get more money as a result,” Kane said. “Places that don’t have their act together, they’re leaving money on the table and they may not be able to get that money in the same way in the future.”

Kane and fellow researcher Caroline George found that while many cities have adopted climate action goals, their plans lack funding and clear benchmarks for measuring progress. Cities often have limited budgets to pay for infrastructure repairs and environmental staff, Kane said.

“We saw the gaps pretty much everywhere around funding and financing. Places can pay lip service to a lot of this stuff and make all these bold commitments ... but where are the durable and sustainable resources behind that?” Kane said. “That’s a big question in a lot of places.”

Cities across the country could benefit from conducting an honest assessment of their current capacity to reduce carbon emissions, according to the Brookings report.

Other recommendations include establishing a regional network to coordinate pollution strategies and developing a skilled environmental workforce to improve the city's infrastructure. Dallas-Fort Worth is already ahead in this respect, George said, because the North Central Texas Council of Governments is building an [inventory of sources and types](#) of greenhouse gas emissions across the region.

The Dallas plan stood out because it includes a schedule for revisiting goals and tracking progress over time, George said. The schedule keeps the city honest and accountable to residents on how they're actually reducing emissions over the next 20 or 30 years, she said.

"We didn't really evaluate so much the quality of the pledge itself, but more the structure within the plan to help them achieve what they were aiming to do," George said. "There were a lot of mechanisms for that in the Dallas plan."

Bazan, the chairwoman of the Dallas Environmental Commission, said it was crucial for Dallas City Council to appoint a body of community members focused on implementing the climate action plan.

She has seen its impact firsthand. Following a [zoning code change](#) championed by members of the environmental commission, concrete batch plants can only be built in industrial manufacturing districts following several opportunities for public comment.

"Climate impacts will have the largest impact on marginalized community members if there's not anybody on the local level willing to fight for them," Bazan said. "When the community has a concern and they can't get the attention of the city, we are the people they can reach out to and connect them with the right people."

The success she's seen in Dallas can be replicated in other communities, such as Fort Worth, but progress takes long-term commitment and citizen involvement, Bazan said.

"Climate change won't be solved accidentally," she said.

Where Fort Worth goes next

Fort Worth leaders have traditionally stayed away from appointing oversight committees, like the environmental commission in Dallas, thanks to the city's small government ethos, Whittenburg said. But that doesn't mean the city isn't paying attention to environmental challenges, he said.

Over the past four years, Fort Worth has crafted a strategy for conserving open space, budgeted more dollars for [litter pickup and street sweeping](#) and begun drafting an urban forestry master plan to preserve tree canopy.

Once City Council members [approve the 2024 budget](#) in September, the city will also create an environmental services department for the first time. Previously, staff working on solid waste pickup, litter cleanup, air quality monitoring and environmental investigations were housed in the code compliance department. Aside from paying a new department director's salary, the city expects the reorganization to have little impact on the overall budget.

Looking ahead to next year, Whittenburg said city staff are pursuing a U.S. Department of Energy grant to create an energy efficiency and conservation plan for city facilities and operations. Up to \$785,490 in federal funding would go toward energy audits on certain facilities to inform energy and cost saving decisions, according to a [June 27 memo](#).

About 50% of the city's operational energy comes from renewable energy sources, Whittenburg said.

"That was a win," he said. "It's really important to find that business case and bring people to the table for that financial piece as well, to show how costs can be conserved and saved through energy conservation."

Support from Parker and other council members has buoyed the city's environmental efforts, Whittenburg said. During an April seminar with the nonprofit Trust for Public Land, Parker said she sees additional opportunities for Fort Worth to lead the way on [conserving open space](#) beyond its current program. Voters [approved \\$15 million](#) in bond funding for acquisition of undeveloped land.

Fort Worth needs a "true citywide conservation fund" that could serve as a public-private partnership for companies to donate land, Parker said. Several organizations focus on land conservation, but the city could create a land bank with the help of a private sector board that works in tandem with the parks and recreation department, she said.

City leaders have a sense of urgency to preserve open space, she added.

"This is really hard for any mayor to accept, but we're not going to be here forever," Parker said. "We're here for a period of time to make our city better, and I have a priority to create policies and standards that are long lasting that any mayor who comes next will want to adopt and keep the torch going further, because that's how you protect our open space and our parkland."

Fort Worth has to forge its own path to achieving environmental goals, even if it varies from other parts of the country, Whittenburg said. He has heard conversations about how Fort Worth should try to be more like other cities.

"I might challenge that to say that sometimes it's not right or wrong, but it's different," Whittenburg said.

HIGH-SPEED RAIL PURSUED FOR DALLAS TO FORT WORTH

Key planner says Fort Worth leg could be completed before Dallas to Houston.

By Ken Kalthoff

Video: [Separate high speed rail projects could lead to easier DFW travel](#)

The idea of high-speed passenger rail service between Dallas and Houston received new support this month from government-backed Amtrak.

Michael Morris, the leading North Texas transportation planner said Thursday that he is working to see a proposed Dallas to Fort Worth leg built first.

"I think it has the chance to open much faster," Morris said.

Morris is the Transportation Director with the North Central Texas Council of Governments which is based in Arlington.

The city of Arlington, in between the two largest North Texas cities, is also on board, pursuing a high-speed rail stop.

"It's real to us. We've been working on it for several years. We're serious about it. We're continuing to work on it," Arlington Transportation Director Alicia Winkelblech said.

Sports stadiums and other attractions make Arlington's entertainment district a regional destination.

Arlington has "on-demand" vehicles for public transportation but it does not have traditional mass transit.

"So something like high-speed rail provides a fast efficient high-speed solution for people to get to Arlington," said Winkelblech.

The Japanese technology envisioned for Dallas to Houston high-speed rail has been planned for years to extend to Fort Worth, too.

Morris said the Fort Worth leg could have environmental approval in 13 months.

"Dallas Fort Worth goes first. Market it to the world as you're building the section to Houston," Morris said.

The public right of way along I-30 is the preferred route for the DFW high-speed rail.

The planners said an Arlington station along I-30 could be linked to DFW Airport and the Arlington sports venues with some type of above-ground automated transportation system.

"That's definitely something that we're exploring because you can only do so much with all the vehicles on the ground," Winkelblech said.

Morris said completing the DFW route could help boost the long-term goal of eventually connecting high-speed rail through College Station on the Dallas to Houston leg with Austin and San Antonio.

But Morris said he is most concerned with the booming North Texas region, where planning like this is necessary, with a million new residents arriving every 7 years.

“We’re at 8.2 going to 11.5 million people. How would you not think your conversation today isn’t critical to our future,” Morris said.

There is still strong opposition to the Dallas to Houston high-speed rail plan from communities in the middle but no organized opposition has surfaced to the Dallas to Fort Worth plan.

Arlington residents do not pay taxes to DART or the Fort Worth T transit systems.

That is what has blocked traditional Arlington mass transit in the past.

Morris said talks are also underway on how Arlington would contribute to big transit projects in the future.

DALLAS MUST GET EVERY PENNY OF FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS

The city cannot build the future on local taxes alone.

Dallas Morning News editorial

Dallas is an aging city, and there is little question that taxpayers here [will never be able to pay enough from property and sales taxes alone to catch up](#) with the backlog of maintenance that we have.

[Residents complain, and rightly so, about our streets,](#) sidewalks, alleys and traffic lights, [among any number of other concerns](#) that, every bond program, we chip away at even as more potholes open up and more sidewalks crumble.

For that reason, we are supportive of a plan from Mayor Eric Johnson to set up a working group to coordinate efforts to capture as much money as Dallas can from three key federal infrastructure programs.

Johnson has set up any number of task forces around a variety of issues. And while we worry about the goal and purpose of some of these task forces, and whether they are duplicating work better done by city staff, this one appears much needed and correctly set up.

It will be led by Alan Cohen, who has done important work leading the Child Poverty Action Lab. Cohen gave us assurances that he is working closely with leaders in City Hall with the goal of coordinating efforts to leverage existing city funds to win the greatest share possible of available federal funds.

The money at stake here comes from the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed in November 2021, to invest in water, roads, high-speed internet, bridges and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, among other areas. There is also money from the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act that could come to Dallas.

Cities that are prepared are going to get a greater share of these funds. As Cohen told us, this isn't a one-off opportunity like a bond program. It is a chance to improve the city's overall infrastructure for coming generations.

Cohen estimates Dallas' potential share of formula funds at around \$4 billion. That adds up to about four bond programs if we borrow to the hilt.

The city cannot afford to miss out on getting every penny we can capture. For that reason, having an organized approach, with a focused working group, makes a lot of sense.

It will work best if it is wholly connected to the ongoing work of city staff and aligned with our strategic plans. The working group must also ensure that elected representatives are delivering input from their constituencies.

Cohen has offered assurances that he is already prioritizing that coordination.

With that, we wish him luck. Dallas needs this effort to be successful to secure a bright and prosperous future.

DALLAS SUES NAVY, AGAIN, WITH HENSLEY FIELD REDEVELOPMENT PLANS IN LIMBO

City once again suing to get the U.S. Navy to finish cleaning the contaminated former Naval airfield.

By Everton Bailey, Jr.

Dallas is once again suing to try to force the U.S. Navy to finish cleaning up a [contaminated former Naval airfield](#) after the military branch has blown its previous deadline to clear the site by seven years.

Dallas is seeking damages and a firm timeline in a lawsuit filed this month saying the Navy has breached the terms of a 2002 legal settlement agreement to have the soil and groundwater at Hensley Field clean by 2017. The city says [its plans to redevelop the 738-acre property that borders Mountain Creek Lake in southwestern Dallas](#) are in limbo indefinitely as the cleanup effort drags on with no apparent finish line and as the contamination continues to diminish the land's market value.

The city says the Navy has given [no definitive timetable on when the site will be clear of contaminants](#) such as pre- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS. The compounds can be hazardous to humans and studies have shown that they could lead to increased risks of cancer, liver damage, pregnancy complications, birth defects and other health effects, [according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

"The United States has failed to keep multiple binding promises to remediate the significant environmental contamination caused by its decades-long use of the Hensley Field site," the city said in an Aug. 2 complaint filed with the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. "As a result, Dallas cannot implement its master plan that contemplates the reuse and redevelopment of the Hensley Field site into a vibrant mixed-use community for more than 12,000 residents and 12,000 jobs."

The 2002 settlement agreement stemmed from a lawsuit the city filed the year before over the property's environmental concerns following decades of military use. City officials said last December that the Navy's cleanup costs were at \$92.4 million, but Hensley Field wasn't close to getting approval from state and federal environmental regulators that the conditions would meet residential standards.

The city said in the complaint that as long as the toxic chemicals remain at the site, Dallas' property rights are being infringed upon.

"By causing and failing to remediate significant environmental contamination, the United States has deprived Dallas of the economically viable or beneficial use of the Hensley Field site, which constitutes a taking by the United States of the property," the complaint said.

Navy spokesman Bill Franklin said the military branch declined to comment on questions from The Dallas Morning News including on the current status of the cleanup, citing the ongoing litigation. Court records show a legal response has not yet been filed in the case and the deadline to submit one is Oct. 3.

The city bought the Hensley Field site in the late 1920s and leased it to the U.S. Army to train reserve pilots. A naval reserve air station was built in 1941, administration of the field was transferred to the Navy in 1949, and the air station remained operational until it closed in 1999.

Parts of Hensley Field today are used for a random assortment of city storage, including [old police squad cars](#) and [Confederate-era monuments](#).

The Navy agreed in a 2002 court settlement with Dallas to pay the city more than \$18 million and clean up the site by 2017. Remediation efforts to clean the soil have concluded and been approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, according to the city last year. But groundwater contamination still hasn't been fully addressed.

The City Council last December approved a 20-year plan estimated to cost around \$390 million to turn Hensley Field into a new walkable community with more than 6,800 new homes, over 12,000 jobs, new parks and waterfront trails, a marina, a possible film studio and other amenities.

Aircraft maintenance hangars built in the 1940s and 1970s, military officers' houses from the 1930s and a 1-acre cemetery that has been around since the mid-1800s are historic sites at Hensley Field there that could be preserved or repurposed, according to the [master plan](#).

According to the latest lawsuit, the Navy asked the city to create the redevelopment plan in January 2019 to help guide the remediation work.

City Manager T.C. Broadnax said Dallas plans to keep working with the Navy to clean the site as the legal dispute continues.

"We appreciate all of the U.S. Navy's efforts to remediate the site for the past 20 years," Broadnax said in a statement. "We are confident that we can reach an agreement on the final phase of the project that ensures Hensley Field can be safely developed into a premier community offering mixed income housing, recreation, commercial space, and more."

EPA CONTINUES TO MONITOR 53 MILES OF NORTH TEXAS WATERWAYS AFTER GARLAND PAINT PLANT FIRE

Residents should still avoid contact with the waterways, Kaufman County officials said Friday.

By Isabella Volmert

After a large [fire at a Garland paint factory](#), the Environmental Protection Agency is continuing to monitor 53 miles of North Texas waterways for contaminated runoff.

The detection of [water contamination](#) has decreased throughout the week, however, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the EPA said in an [update provided by Kaufman County officials Friday](#). Authorities are testing water samples at 10 locations on Duck Creek and the East Fork of the Trinity River in Dallas and Kaufman counties.



The Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality are monitoring 53 miles of North Texas waterways for contaminated runoff following a large fire at a Sherwin-Williams paint factory in Garland. (The Environmental Protection Agency)

The fire at a Sherwin-Williams paint factory, at 701 S. Shiloh Road, took 16 fire units to put out. Foam retardant from the plant's fire suppression system entered the stormwater system and surrounding creeks. The EPA has said there are [no "major impacts" to public health](#).

The cause of the fire has not been determined.

Some dead fish were found in the affected waterways, and some residents have found a smell coming from stagnant water, authorities said. Residents should still avoid contact with the waterways, Kaufman County officials said Friday.

"Your safety is our priority," Steve Howie, the county's emergency operations coordinator, said in a [news release](#). "We appreciate your cooperation in heeding the warnings of possible contamination by avoiding any tributary leading to the East Fork of the Trinity River until officials give the 'all clear' for contact with those waterways."

Water was pumped out of the affected creeks, the EPA said, and dams were constructed to mitigate the spread of contaminants. EPA spokeswoman Janie Acevedo-Beauchamp said Friday that more than 1 million gallons of water were removed from the waterways and sent to a disposal site.

Acevedo-Beauchamp said responders are flushing some of the waterways with freshwater and expect to conduct a final flush Monday. All dams should be removed by Sunday.

Additionally, the water in the East Fork of the Trinity River is safe for agricultural use again, Kaufman County authorities said. Donna Simmons, a county spokeswoman, said hay growers in the county were previously concerned they might have to stop watering their crops.

Simmons said the EPA deemed the water safe for irrigation use.

WFAA

RESIDENTS SHARE EXCITEMENT OVER NEW GROCERY STORE IN EAST DALLAS NEIGHBORHOOD – ONCE A FOOD DESERT

Paula Joy Kindred was the very first person in line outside the El Rio Grande Latin Market at 6:00 a.m. Friday, Aug. – four hours before it opened.

By Stacia Wilson

DALLAS — After facing food desert conditions for years, those living in an East Dallas neighborhood are finally seeing some relief. On Friday, Aug. 18, a brand new grocery store moved into the neighborhood.

"We're excited, this is such a beautiful store, and I can't wait to see what it looks like on the inside," said Paula Joy Kindred.

She was the very first person in line outside the [El Rio Grande Latin Market](#) at 6:00 a.m. – four hours before the new supermarket opened its doors to hundreds of new customers.

"The whole new adventure is what I guess I'm hoping to see, it's a great location too," said Kindred.

For the first time in years, 3035 N. Buckner Boulevard is a location where people can go to buy fresh food.

The supermarket fills a dire need for the area. Located just north of Interstate 30, the neighborhood lacked nearby resources for fresh food. It was a personal issue for the store's CEO Hamdy Shalabi, who grew up in the area.

"As this neighborhood has a stigma for being in a rough side of town, I believe that it is not a rough side of town. I think it's people that want to be respected, and we will achieve a phenomenal store," said Shalabi.

He and his family came up with the concept to combine their middle eastern heritage with the cultural traditions of fresh Latino foods. Shalabi's daughter, Tayma, is proud of what her family has accomplished.

"It feels like a full circle moment where they are able to come back and give back to the community that raised them and build something that they lacked when they were younger, which is an amazing supermarket," said Tayma Shalabi.

At over 59,000 square-feet, the supermarket includes a pastelería, or pastry shop that offers delicious sweet breads, a palapa, or juice bar, and beloved Mexican desserts like tres leches cake. All items that are right up Kindred's cooking alley.

"I'm a competitive cook, so I love to cook, and I love all the different Latin flavors and recipes," she said.

For shoppers like Zaida Salazar, it's about providing the nutrition their family needs at an affordable cost.

"I wanted to just check it out the good prices and everything, and I am going to recommend some people to come back too," said Salazar.

With almost half a million Dallas residents currently living in food deserts, the Shalabi family believes more affordable and reachable supermarkets are a step in the right direction.

“We know how it feels to spend your all your paycheck on some groceries, and we just want to make it accessible to everybody,” said Tangela Shalabi.

WITH \$45M MORE FLOWING TO EAST LANCASTER REDEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION COULD START BY 2027

By Sandra Sadek

Dirt could be moving along the East Lancaster corridor as early as 2027, as state and federal funding continues to flow into the project.

Efforts to revitalize East Lancaster Avenue, also known as SH 180, and the surrounding area recently benefited from an injection of \$45 million. In late June, Fort Worth [received \\$20 million](#) for the redevelopment of the East Lancaster corridor from the federal government's [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program](#), also known as the RAISE grant.

East Lancaster also saw a \$25 million increase in [state dollars](#) approved Aug. 18 by the [Texas Transportation Commission](#). This additional money will supplement the already allocated \$50 million, bringing the total state investment in the project to \$75 million.

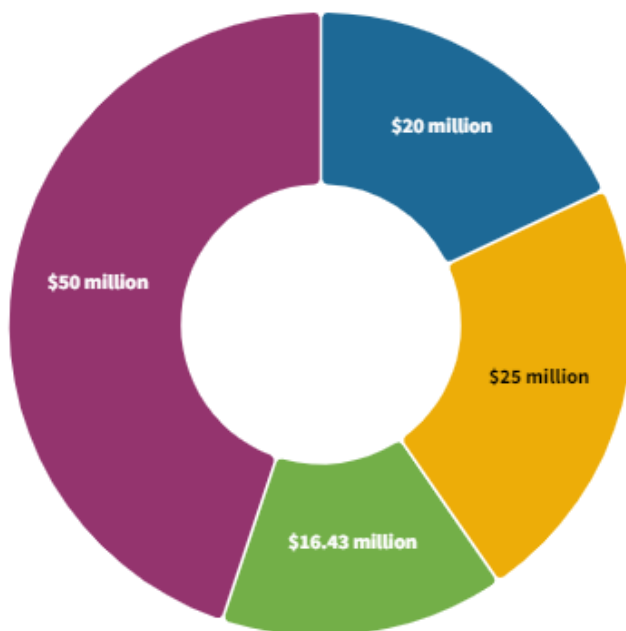
"It's certainly going to help move the project forward in a major way," said Jeff Neal, senior program manager at the North Central Texas Council of Governments. "We know the city of Fort Worth is working tirelessly right now with the community to come up with a preferred alternative."

In total, \$111.43 million of the project's total \$182 million price tag has been allocated. The remaining funds will be obtained from future Texas Department of Transportation plans, Neal said.

Funds continue to flow to support the revitalization of East Lancaster

In total, \$111.43 million has been allocated toward the project's \$182 million price tag.

■ RAISE Grant ■ Texas Department of Transportation's 2024 Unified Transportation Plan ■ City of Fort Worth
■ Texas Department of Transportation's 2023 Unified Transportation Plan



The federal money will fund the design, right-of-way, environmental evaluation and reconstruction that will turn about 6.5 miles of East Lancaster Avenue between Pine Street and Interstate 820 into a corridor that can fit many forms of transportation. The RAISE grant application was led by the council of governments and the funds must be dedicated by September 2026.

The additional \$25 million from the state will help rehabilitate the state highway from Tierney Road to Interstate 820. That money will be available between 2028 and 2033.

“It’s almost like layers on the cake. We’re nearly to the top now,” Neal said. “The RAISE grant (and Unified Transportation Plan are) certainly an important layer of that big cake.”

Final design plans for the redesign and redevelopment of East Lancaster will be presented in the city of Fort Worth’s [Eastside Transportation Plan](#), a [comprehensive roadmap](#) that will shape land use, safety and transportation across the area. That plan is expected to be finalized this fall.

“The city, in essence, gets double the bang for its buck,” said Karla Windsor, senior program manager for the Council of Governments.

Michael Shedd, president of the [East Fort Worth Business Association](#), said the recent additional investment in the corridor is a step in the right direction toward progress.

“We know it’s not going to be an instant overnight change along that corridor,” Shedd said. “Everyone is letting out a little bit of a sigh of relief that, ‘Oh my gosh, this is happening,’ without getting their hopes up too high.”

Shedd also noted residents have supported change in the area for a long time. Several property owners signed a petition back in 2019 to form a [public improvement district](#). In such a district, property owners pay an additional tax that goes toward improving public safety in the area and encouraging redevelopment.

“The property owners over there have already been contributing a great deal of money in an effort to revitalize that area,” Shedd said. “They have made it very clear that they want to do their part to clean up and revitalize that corridor.”

DOZENS RALLY AGAINST DEVELOPER-FRIENDLY PLAN FOR NE DENTON AT CITY COUNCIL

By Christian McPhate (Denton Record-Chronicle)

“Ruralness ...”

“A quietness ...”

“A stillness ...”

Driving along Hartlee Field Road toward Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center and the city’s mountain bike park evokes the words of northeast Denton resident Anne Beckmann. Beckmann spent 23 years there, growing up with a peace that she told City Council members is unique to the northeast Denton area.

Beckmann wasn’t speaking only for herself but also for her parents and other people who have spent decades there, “building their forever homes little by little, creating a place that their children and grandchildren can enjoy safely and have peace.”

Tuesday night, she joined dozens of residents who attended the Denton City Council meeting to voice their disappointment with a council that Beckmann said [“didn’t care about community wishes and chose to ignore concerns that went against a certain agenda.”](#)

“I saw a city consultant that was paid a lot of money in order to produce a biased and misleading presentation,” Beckmann continued. “And then a hasty vote that led to a majority of City Council choosing an option that is completely against the steering committee’s vision statement for sustainability, preservation of rural character and ecological conservation.

“I left highly disappointed in my city and stressed for the future of this area, and all of Denton if this is how decisions are made.”

Older people, middle-aged people, younger people, families with children — nearly all wore red shirts. The red shirts represented the red dots of what the majority of the residents did not want when they placed them on the images of multifamily and high-density development at the city’s two [in-person vision meetings](#) earlier this year.

“If you go through with this development, you will not only be destroying crucial habitat for wildlife, including bald eagles, river otters and monarch butterflies, to name a few,” Beckmann said. “You will also be destroying the peace of the residents in the area and reducing their quality of life immensely.

“And you will rob all of Denton of the opportunity to have public green space, a refuge away from the city and their busy lives.”

The plan

For eight months now, these same residents have taken part in the city’s small area plan for northeast Denton. They helped to shape a vision statement that reads in part:

“Our vision for northeast Denton is to maintain a sustainable community that prioritizes environmental preservation, preservation of historic spaces and healthy recreation, while still honoring the rural character of the area.”

It keeps the zoning rural with homes on 2 to 5 acres and protects and preserves the area, as recommended by Denton’s [2040 Comprehensive Plan](#).

Tuesday night, Ned Woodbridge, one of the Northeast Denton Area Plan steering committee members, offered Mayor Gerard Hudspeth and the rest of council a reminder of what the Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan actually says about preserving the area:

“As much of Denton is characterized as rural and agricultural land that possesses a character of Denton’s past and natural environment that is cherished, conservation development is recommended as the primary means of managing the interface of the development and undeveloped land. Conservation development is an approach to the design of rural residential subdivisions which is highly suited to agricultural fringe areas where the retention of rural character and open space is desired.”



The 2040 plan specially calls for protecting the rural character and open space at the city’s edge, promoting conservation development in rural areas and “expand the network of protected rural open space including floodplains and stream corridors through open space in conservation easements and through land dedications, voluntary conservation easements, land trusts and parks.”

The North Central Texas Council of Governments, Woodbridge said, rated northeast Denton with the highest score for ecological importance in the entire 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"This is a critical asset to be preserved," Woodbridge said. "There are many other areas on the west side of town that are far less ecologically important and available for the city to build out. Look there for the growth.

"We emphatically request that you change the direction given to city staff on Aug. 1 that calls for denser development of northeast Denton. Instead, follow the vision statement, approved by the steering committee based on community input, which is vastly different than the direction given. Stick to the dictates of the comprehensive plan."

Speaker after speaker, nearly all in red shirts, appeared for their four-minute public comment to reiterate that council members aren't listening to them, that they ignored what the residents wanted and what the northeast Denton steering committee had envisioned. They clapped and cheered after each speaker, though only a few of them were allowed to speak.

Bridget Marshall said she saw a disappointing "lack of integrity" in the small area plan process. She claimed it wasn't a refinement of Denton's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as Marshall said they were repeatedly told by city staff and the consultants, who Chief of Staff Ryan Adams said were being paid \$200,000.

"Instead, it is an expensive attempt to circumvent the current zoning laws and the comprehensive plan for the benefit of investors and developers," Marshall said. "This is appalling."

Kate Landdeck, who helped get fellow residents to wear red shirts, reminded council members that the [people of Denton "have spoken clearly and loudly about what they want for this area."](#)

"I am an optimist," Landdeck said. "I believe that people are basically good. I've always believed government, especially local government, serves the people. I believe that enough people spoke up, the city staff and the City Council would listen. The past eight months of the Northeast Denton Area Plan process have made me doubt these things."

Tranquility disturbed

Two days after the council meeting, Beckmann, Woodbridge, Marshall and other residents from Tuesday night gathered on a ranch where they met with city staff earlier this year to give them a tour of northeast Denton, to show them why it was important to preserve and protect.

They showed them the scenic Hartlee Field Road and the ecology of the area. For example, the riparian habitat — the land and vegetation that borders rivers and creeks — provides natural flood control and prevents erosion, helps clean the drinking water and, as Beckmann mentioned Tuesday, is "crucial to federally threatened and migratory bird species."

Off the side of the small blacktop road, near a pond and shaded from the 109-degree day, the rurality, the stillness, the quietness was easily felt in spite of the heat. Located next to a floodplain, in the midst of the Cross Timbers, the ranch was once part of Hartlee Field Ranch, now known as Carter Ranch. It offers a view of what Denton County once looked like, before all the master-planned special districts and market-rate apartments started arriving.

“The thing that bothers me the most is we’re looking at huge growth in apartments south of here on [Loop 288] and certainly west of here on the loop,” said Reid Ferring, a geologist who lives in the area and was on the tour. “We’re seeing phenomenal growth. That plays into the [increased] traffic in this area, but it also raises a basic question about what kind of quality of life are we going to offer all these people that live in these dense apartment complexes? Where do they get a Central Park? We have all these other parks in Denton but no plans for this part of Denton.”

Stuart Birdseye, a former city spokesperson who is now with Denton Municipal Electric, said earlier this year that approximately 50 multifamily projects were in the pipeline for Denton.

Residents gathered Thursday morning claimed that Orion & Nanban, a Dallas investment firm known for market-rate apartments, [plans to develop apartments on the Hartlee Field Ranch property](#), probably where the historic World War II hangars and the grass airstrip are located since it’s the only flat part.

Orion & Nanban has said it is considering a community of 1,300 to 1,800 homes.

Over on Hartlee Field Road, a sign in front of Hartlee Field Ranch reads, “Say No to Orion & Nanban Apartments.” Other signs read, “Save Hartlee Field Road.”

Marshall said that another reason why Denton’s density is so high is due to an inaccurate standard. She pointed out that the city’s standard for 1 acre is 32,000 square feet, according to the [development code](#), while everywhere else, such as Dallas, it’s 43,560 square feet.

“The usage of [total] acreage to calculate the number of houses is another density-increasing trick,” Marshall wrote in a Thursday night email. “As we explained this morning, the city’s calculations don’t deduct the unbuildable land like retention/detention ponds, floodplains, ESAs, utility easements, roads, etc. The resulting density will vary widely between developments due to the variations in unbuildable land; no two parcels are alike

The fight

A couple of years ago, the northeast Denton residents developed their own small area plan after their council member suggested that they create one. They said that city staff ignored it and decided to create their own with community input that the council would ignore in early August.

“The NE Denton Area Plan proposed by the consultants resembles nothing like the one we submitted, and doesn’t incorporate any of the features we proposed,” Marshall said in an email Thursday.

On Tuesday night, residents reminded council members that they are a voting force. They have the money and the will to get council members out of office if they don’t adhere to their oath of office and represent the people who voted for them.

Two days later, Marshall and the others seemed somewhat disheartened yet determined to fight. They’ll have a chance to do so on Oct. 17, when the council holds another joint meeting with the Planning & Zoning Commission to discuss the Northeast Denton Area Plan.

They said they know it will be difficult one, given that three of the council members — Chris Watts, Joe Holland and mayor Hudspeth — were given thousands in campaign donations by development PACs such as the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas and the Dallas Builders Association, according to campaign finance reports.

Watts and Hudspeth have said such donations don't affect their decisions. However, [City Council member Paul Meltzer wrote](#) in a pitch to the council in March 2022, "it undermines that [public] confidence when we see thousands of dollars flowing into political campaigns from interested parties like Texas Realtors, Apartment Association of Greater Dallas and Texas Association of Builders," in an April 4, 2022, Record-Chronicle report.

Northeast Denton residents felt some of that public confidence was undermined at the early August joint meeting with the council and Planning & Zoning and again at the Tuesday night council meeting.

As Landdeck told the council Tuesday, "Your actions two weeks ago was evidence that your priorities are with large out-of-town investors and developers rather than the people you swore to serve."

FAKE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS RAISE DFW AIR QUALITY CONCERN

Some air quality experts fear widespread fraud in the state's emissions testing program may add to DFW's dirty air. On Friday, two state employees were arrested, accused of aiding stations running fake inspections.

By Scott Friedman, Eva Parks and Edward Ayala

The Texas Department of Public Safety remained tight-lipped Monday about the identities of [two employees arrested late last week on charges](#) that they protected vehicle emissions stations, suspected of falsely passing cars.

The DPS has declined to release the employees' names or the names of nine others arrested and detained in the investigation, conducted by the Texas Rangers. The DPS said the two agency insiders took money in exchange for helping stations avoid detection as they faked emissions tests, and that the investigation is ongoing.

Meanwhile, some air quality experts question whether the widespread emissions inspection cheating **NBC 5 Investigates** has exposed in recent months is piling on more pollution in Texas cities.

Since May, the DFW area has experienced more than 30 days of unhealthy levels of ozone causing concerns, especially for people with asthma and other lung conditions.

And, as **NBC 5 Investigates** has learned, four months after we revealed that millions of cars may be bypassing emissions checks, Texas still has not implemented a software fix that could help cut the fraud.

To understand why there are concerns about fake inspections impacting air quality, we took a closer look at one emissions station connected to the ongoing DPS investigation.

In June, **NBC 5 Investigates** set out to find that state-licensed inspection shop known as South Side Inspections.

Texas DPS records said we should find South Side at 2719 Romine Avenue in Dallas. But when we went to that address, we discovered the street number doesn't exist. Instead, it's a parking lot next to a snow cone stand, where they didn't know anything about state inspections happening.

"If you're not a customer, you can't even come in our parking lot and do anything," a manager at the snow cone stand told us.

One day in June, we sat nearby and watched that parking lot for an hour. We didn't see inspections happening either. But during that hour, state records showed South Side reported inspecting 33 vehicles -- about one every two minutes.

The records showed in less than five months the shop has issued inspections for more than 56,000 vehicles. There have been 55 days when South Side cranked out more than 500 inspections in a single day, according to the records.

Law enforcement investigators told us numbers like that are a red flag because they said it's not possible for a small shop to turn out legitimate inspections that fast.

On Friday, the Texas Rangers served a search warrant tied to South Side Inspections at another address on Romine Avenue. The DPS has declined to provide the exact location.

The agency said it detained four people, in addition to the two DPS employees arrested, and said five other people were arrested in April in connection with the investigation.

Earlier this year **NBC 5 Investigates** reported a group of Travis County fraud investigators believes as many as five million Texas cars falsely pass emissions tests each year, at shops that take cash under the table.

“Obviously, it’s outrageous. It’s a disgusting story to hear about because it really is taking away health protection from the entire community,” said William Barrett, national senior director, advocacy, clean air, with the American Lung Association.

Barrett worries some of the cars that falsely pass are cars that would fail a real emissions test.

“When these exhaust systems are not working the way they’re supposed to, or if they’ve been tampered with, they can produce tens to hundreds of times the harmful emissions that they’re supposed to,” Barrett said.

That creates more ozone, a corrosive gas that can cause something like a sunburn in your lungs. Ozone is the main ingredient in the smog we see on “ozone action days” that leave some people struggling to breathe.

“I can immediately tell that the air is different,” said Cynthia Rabb who has asthma, with a long family history.

Last year, Rabb’s 34-year-old daughter died suddenly of asthma-related complications.

“I think about her every day. I miss her. I would have easily exchanged my life for her to be here with her sons,” Rabb told **NBC 5 Investigates**.

Rabb is now raising her daughter’s two boys who also suffer from asthma and said they feel it too when there is summer pollution.

“I just feel very out-of-control and I just don’t feel right,” said Success Rabb, who is 10 years old.

Cynthia can’t believe there are people who would take money in exchange for faking emissions tests designed to protect people’s health.

“They’re not thinking about who it hurts, you know, people don’t think about that unless it happens to them or somebody in their family,” Rabb said.

As **NBC 5 Investigates** has reported, the state’s emissions testing computer system, overseen by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) does capture data that shows when shops may be cheating.

The system can see signs that an emissions analyzer has been plugged into a surrogate car, or into a simulator that mimics a car’s on-board diagnostic system.

But when potential fraud is detected, the system is not programmed to stop the inspection in real-time and prevent the vehicle from getting a false passing report.

In April a TCEQ spokesperson told us, "To stop an inspection in real-time at the station when patterns in inspection data indicate potential fraud, the emissions inspection analyzer software would have to be modified. This change would be a joint project between TCEQ and DPS".

In April, DPS Director Col. Steve McCraw pledged to put pressure on the TCEQ to change its software, saying he was frustrated with the amount of inspection fraud state troopers have to police.

McCraw said he believes the solutions lie in the hands of the TCEQ.

"I'm confident they want the same thing as we do. And I can assure you that both of us will be working towards that end," McCraw said in the April interview.

But months later, the TCEQ has not re-programmed the analyzer software.

Neil Carman, Texas air program for the Sierra Club believes the state should have acted faster.

"This looks very bad for the state environmental agency to be allowing fraud to take place in its Clean Air Act regulatory program," Carman said.

Carman believes the fraud undermines a central part of the state's plan to comply with federal air quality rules.

"The challenges that TCEQ has are really immense, but still I think the agency could have fixed this problem a while ago," Carman told **NBC 5 Investigates**.

Records we obtained show as far back as 2016 The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) suggested that the TCEQ address the software issue.

In a memo commenting on TCEQ air policy plans an official at the NCTCOG recommended the TCEQ eliminate fake inspections, "...by updating software to abort test if the VIN (vehicle identification number) manually entered does not match the VIN read by the analyzer."

Officials at the NCTCOG said in recent years they have not been able to get an explanation for why TCEQ hasn't made software changes that would stop fake inspections in real-time.

"When you say you can't, what does that mean, why can't you? Is it because of funding? Is it because the program is too complicated?" said Chris Klaus, senior program manager for air quality management at the NCTCOG.

TCEQ Chairman Jon Niermann declined NBC 5's repeated requests for an interview. In an email, Niermann told us he is now talking about software changes with the DPS.

Niermann said, "Director McCraw and I discussed some of the potential challenges to implementation, including legal and administrative concerns. These may also include novel challenges; TCEQ is reaching out to other states to understand their capabilities for discussion with DPS. Moreover, any solution will have limitations. For example, we expect that some number of scans may be misidentified as fraudulent, inconveniencing innocent vehicle owners and inspectors."

Niermann added that he is "...not in a position to comment..." on requests the agency may have received years ago to change the software before he became chairman.

As for when a fix might happen, Niermann said "We do not yet have a project timeline."

Cynthia Rabb hopes they will move faster.

“They need to be a little bit more serious about the situation of what the air is doing to people that have lung conditions,” Rabb said.

Every week state records show more shops conducting seemingly impossible numbers of inspections.

We tried to reach the man listed in DPS records as the owner of South Side Inspections, the shop we couldn't find near the snow cone stand.

We couldn't get through on the phone number the company gave the state, and our emails and text messages were not returned.

State records show the company also listed a mailing address at a home in Waxahachie.

We watched that address too, during the same hour we had a camera near the snow cone stand parking lot. We didn't see inspections happening at the house either.

We reached out to the homeowner, and through an attorney, she denied any connection to South Side Inspections.

DPS reports we obtained show the woman once owned a different state inspection business, where last summer, DPS auditors found she conducted more than 5,000 fraudulent emissions tests.

NBC 5 Investigates reached out to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which oversees the state inspection program to ask if the agency has concerns about the number of fake inspections in Texas.

The agency said in a statement that extensive fraud in a testing program can prevent a metro area from meeting federal air standards. The statement said the EPA is committed to working with states to address these challenges.

In a statement, the DPS said the Texas Rangers continue their investigation stemming from South Side inspections and expect to make more arrests.

STATE OF TEXAS ALLOCATES \$11.5 BILLION FOR DFW ROADWAYS, INCLUDING DALLAS AND COLLIN COUNTIES

The plan will have impacts on several Dallas-Fort Worth roadways in places including Collin County, Dallas County, Kaufman County and Denton County.

By Spencer Brewer

The State of Texas has earmarked \$142 billion for transportation infrastructure, including more than \$11.5 billion for DFW roadways.

Gov. Greg Abbott announced the record investment, which includes the unanimous adoption of the \$100 billion, 10-year statewide roadway construction plan with the Texas Department of Transportation for transportation projects. The plan will have impacts on several Dallas-Fort Worth roadways in places including Collin County, Dallas County, Kaufman County and Denton County.

About \$288 million will go toward additional projects along U.S. 380 in Collin County, complementing approximately \$1 billion previously dedicated to US 380. About \$524 million will fund the reconstruction of I-30 Canyon between I-35E and I-45 in Dallas County.

Another \$220 million will be used to reconstruct U.S. 80 in Mesquite between Town East Boulevard and Belt Line Road, including the interchange with Interstate 635 in Dallas County. The state has earmarked \$163 million for improvements along the I-35, I-35E and I-35W corridors in Denton County to include breakout interchanges, new frontage roads and capacity improvements.

\$263 million will go toward various projects in Kaufman County, including \$25 million to widen portions of Interstate 20 and \$101 million to widen State Highway 205.

“Thanks to our booming economy, Texas has achieved a major milestone in our transportation infrastructure with this record \$142 billion investment that will strengthen our roadways and build a next-generation transportation network,” Abbott said in a prepared statement. “Through this record transportation investment project, the State of Texas will further improve roadway congestion and safety to meet the growing needs of Texans in our large metros, rural communities and everywhere in between.

In February, Governor Abbott announced the Texas Department of Transportation’s proposed 2024 Unified Transportation Program, estimated to be \$15 billion more than the 2023 UTP. With the state providing a majority of the funding, the 2024 UTP includes a total investment of over \$142 billion for all development and delivery projects, right of way acquisition, engineering, routine maintenance contracts and UTP construction funding.

The over \$10 billion of average annual investment programmed in the UTP over the next 10 years is expected to bring an estimated \$18.8 billion per year in economic benefits, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute’s analysis. These benefits are a result of increased labor income and business output, as well as the addition of 70,500 direct and indirect jobs.

“This plan will help the lives of all Texans for years to come as we work to move people and goods safely and efficiently in our rural, urban, and metropolitan areas,” TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams said in a prepared statement. “TxDOT is already putting these resources

to work with a record number of projects aimed at improving safety and saving lives on our roadways."

FORT WORTH'S LANCASTER AVENUE SECURES MORE STATE MONEY FOR UPGRADES, REVITALIZATION

City, state and federal entities have so far committed a combined \$111 million to the road project, which aims to transform East Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth.

By Matt Houston

FORT WORTH, Texas — A transportation project designed to transform East Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth is now 60% funded.

The Texas Transportation Commission this month promised to allocate another \$25 million to the idea. Local, state, and federal entities have so far committed \$111 million to the project, which the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) said will cost \$182 million.

Workers would reconstruct Lancaster Avenue from Pine Street to Interstate 820, making the corridor safer and more useful for bikers and walkers. Engineers have not yet decided what the final project will look like, though stakeholders have discussed adding dedicated lanes for mass transit, bigger crosswalks and high-tech stop lights.

"Right now, that's a roadway where you feel like you've gone back in time," NCTCOG senior program manager Jeff Neal said. "The idea is to find a way to make that corridor more conducive to the kind of activities the community really wants for that area."

Neal and others believe the infrastructural investment will lure developers who've mostly ignored the area for decades.

"You'll have a corridor that looks and functions so much different than it does today," Neal said. "It's something tangible that can make developers say, 'That's really something.'"

For decades, Lancaster Avenue was the primary connector from Dallas to Fort Worth. The road was also part of Bankhead Highway, considered the nation's first paved highway to stretch from coast-to-coast.

"The history of East Lancaster is very auto-centric," said Dan Haase, who lives off the road in the Central Meadowbrook neighborhood. "It doesn't serve that purpose anymore."

Motels and bars that thrived during the Bankhead Highway's heyday still line Lancaster Avenue. Signage along the road reflects the time period.

But, long-hauling patrons stopped using the corridor and patronizing nearby stores when Interstate 30 opened as a turnpike in 1957.

Traffic on Lancaster Avenue slowed, but its six lanes remain ill-fitted for pedestrians who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.

"It hasn't changed a whole lot," said Haase, who's lived in the area for 40 years. He jokes that when the road becomes less important, it will become more useful.

"I want to write that chapter," he said. "Let this be more of a street that serves the neighborhood than serves the motoring public that no longer uses this route."

Stakeholders have the resources they need to move forward with pre-construction activity on schedule, Neal said. Workers could begin rebuilding the road as early as 2026, he added.

"If we can get that (remaining) money, we're ready to go," Neal said.

GROCERY DELIVERY MAY NOT REDUCE DRIVING AS PROPONENTS CLAIM, DATA SHOW

Is grocery delivery a "sustainable practice, or congestion generator and environmental burden?" a new paper asks.

By Kea Wilson

Is grocery delivery a "sustainable practice, or congestion generator and environmental burden?" a new paper asks.

Online grocery delivery service — once hailed for its potential to reduce emissions and driving — may actually increase both in some circumstances, a new study finds.

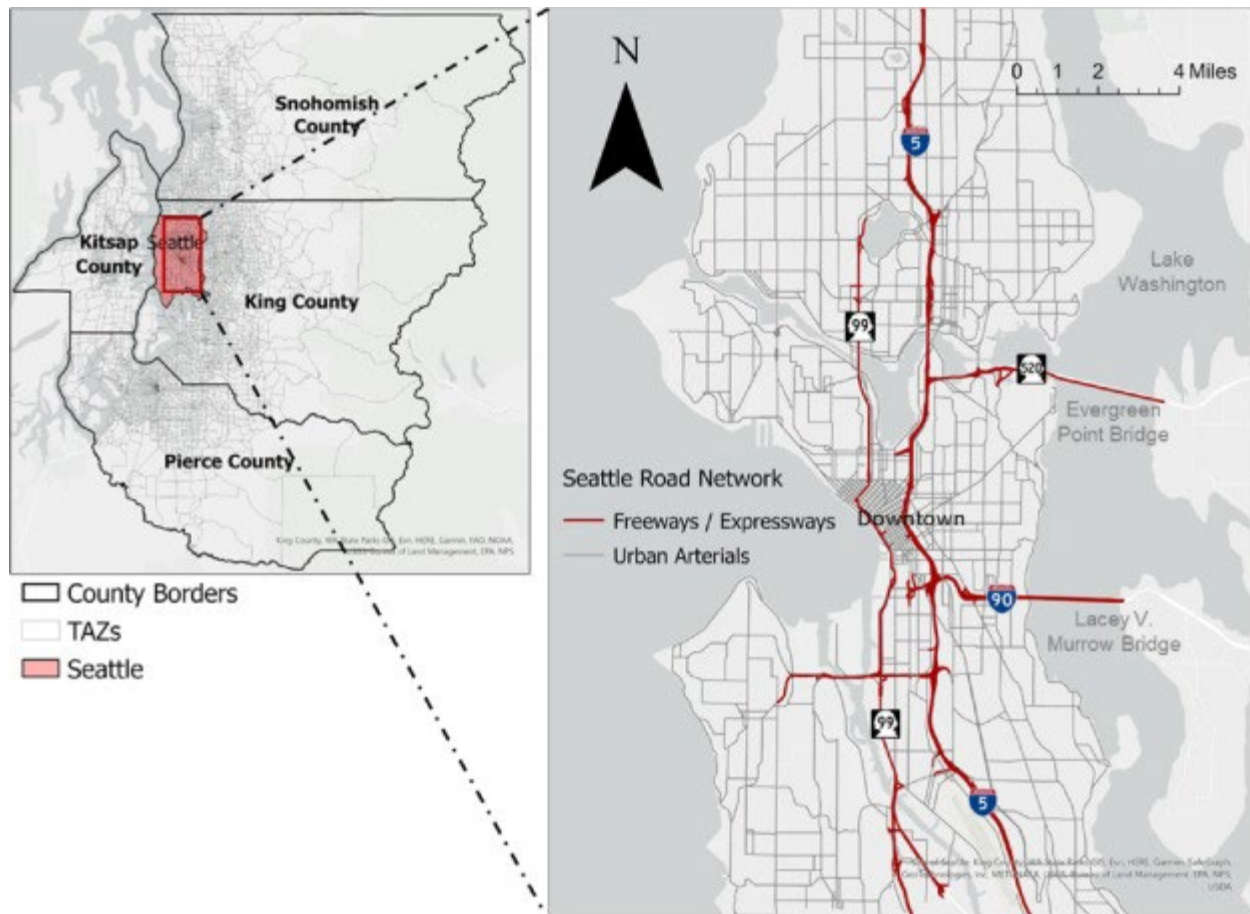
In a [recent paper](#) published in Transportation Research, analysts at Carnegie Mellon used household travel data from Seattle to model how congestion, emissions, and driving patterns would change if more residents shifted from doing grocery shopping themselves to using a service like Instacart, Amazon Fresh, or Walmart+ to do it for them.

Though the concept of getting food brought straight to your door has existed for [well over a century](#), today's legions of lanyard-wearing gig economy workers are a far cry from the milkmen on horse-drawn carriages of yesteryear, particularly as online services surged in popularity during the pandemic. The researchers say that the virtual grocery biz increased its market share sixfold between August 2019 and June 2020, and that researchers "believe this shift in demand for online groceries will continue to grow after the pandemic subsides."

The impact of that potential shift, though, has gone largely unexamined by city governments — and whether it will match up with city priorities like reducing car travel isn't clear.

"We were wondering; is it really more efficient to have a centralized system where Amazon or Uber Eats or someone else is delivering our groceries?" said Corey Harper, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering and the co-author of the paper. "Or is it better to have everyone doing their own thing? How does human behavior affect this? If delivery is free, will people get groceries three times a week instead of once? If I want to bake a pie and I don't have cinnamon, will I just order it by itself from Amazon instead of waiting for my next trip to the store, and create a vehicle trip that wouldn't have otherwise occurred?"

Harper and his colleagues didn't assume that grocery delivery schemes would surely slash the number cars on the road just because a truck is *theoretically* capable of servicing multiple homes in one go, saving each resident from having to make a separate trip. Unlike some previous research on the topic, they also didn't assume that residents would always shop at the market around the corner rather than the specialty co-op that sells that one kind of bread they like across town, or that small, locally owned groceries in neighborhoods would even have the resources to support a crew of in-house delivery workers, or be willing to list themselves on a gig economy platform. They even modeled how the time of day that customers place their online orders might impact local travel outcomes, the proliferation of electric vehicles throughout the delivery fleet, and whether customers would *replace* a weekly, in-person supply run with an identical online order, or just *complement* an in-person trip with a flurry of one-off shipments for a handful of items.



A map of the study area.

And perhaps most important, they didn't assume that Seattleites made *dedicated* trips to the grocery store and back without stopping anywhere else, rather than tacking a grocery run onto the journey home from work, school, or another destination.

With that dizzying array of variables in mind, the researchers found that grocery delivery wasn't necessarily a slam dunk for reducing emissions *or* the number of cars on the road. Some of the scenarios produced by the model reported potential peak-hour CO₂ reductions of as much as 0.9 percent, while others reported *increases* in emissions of as much as 4.9 percent. Vehicle hours traveled, meanwhile, could dip as much as 4.2 percent ... or increase as much as 6.3 percent, depending on the specifics how people shop.

To make grocery delivery live up to its true potential and not make U.S. streets *more* polluted, congested and car-dominated, the study authors recommended that governments and grocery stores work together to incentivize consumers to at least order their goods from the closest supermarket, as well as imposing higher fees on frivolous shipments of, say, single jars of cinnamon, and lower ones on a complete week's worth of food. They might also use discounts to incentivize customers to accept grocery deliveries outside of peak travel hours, rather than guaranteeing that they'll get their goods in under an hour even if the streets are snarled with cars.

And while the study authors didn't focus heavily on *car-free* solutions to the grocery delivery

problem — think hiring bike deliveristas and building the infrastructure to keep them safe, transit-oriented supermarkets, and great zoning and community development policies that put walkable mini-markets on every corner — they did have one piece of VMT-reducing advice for U.S. shoppers.

"Grocery delivery has its place, and I think there are ways to encourage better uses of it," added Harper. "But if you can buy your own groceries on your way home, then yes, you should definitely do that."

WFAA

NEARLY 2,000 MILES OF DALLAS' WATER MAINS ARE STILL CAST IRON AND UNDER STRESS IN THESE HOT CONDITIONS

On Monday, a 12-inch cast-iron pipe laid in 1957 broke alongside I-35E near Inwood, which flooded a service road.

By Matt Houston

DALLAS, Texas — After a 12-inch cast iron pipe turned a feeder road alongside Interstate 35E into a lake on Monday, the City of Dallas revealed to WFAA that 1,955 miles of its water mains are still cast iron -- a sign that 38% of that infrastructure consists of aging, outdated pipes.

According to a city spokesperson, Dallas has 5,050 miles of water mains, and the city spends between \$120 to \$160 million every year to rehabilitate and replace water and wastewater mains.

Per the spokesperson, the investments allow the [water infrastructure](#) to function with minimal disruption during peak demand.

The city wouldn't elaborate on why the pipe burst, but plumbing and utility experts told WFAA that heat is likely to be the culprit.

Lee McFarland of Herndon McFarland Plumbing has been servicing the metroplex for 28 years.

He replaces cast iron piping underneath residential homes frequently.

"It was very popular in the late 1950s," McFarland said. "It carried on through a residential environment into the mid-1970s."

Laying cast iron took a nosedive because Texas' soil was so moisture-sensitive.

When there isn't much of it, the soil shrinks and puts pressure on pipes.

"Leaks, separations--the drier the conditions, the more of a problem it's going to be," McFarland said.

With temps hanging out above 100 degrees regularly and rarely any rain in the forecast, any cast iron pipe will face stress.

Add high water demand and it could lead to a massive break. That's what the City of Fort Worth experienced along Lancaster Avenue last week when a 30-inch pipe turned the street into a geyser.

[Per the Star-Telegram](#), there have been 378 water main breaks in 2023, with over a third of them coming in the last 30 days. Roughly 90% of those breaks have come from aging cast iron pipes

Many North Texas homes built before the mid-1970s may have cast iron piping, too.

Due to all the excavation, replacing it can cost between \$10k and \$70k, depending on square footage.

McFarland said the cheapest thing you can do is water your foundation and hope this weather gets cooler sooner rather than later.

DALLAS PARKING CODE IS BAD FOR TRAFFIC, HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We are losing annual property tax revenue in favor of parking lots. This has to change.

By Chad West



Global cities prioritize other necessities and amenities over parking. It's time for us to modernize our antiquated parking system, writes Chad West. (Smiley N. Pool / Staff Photographer)

Dallas has made massive economic strides over the last half-century. As we've grown into one of the world's leading cities, we've evolved in terms of business, infrastructure, public safety and the arts. It's time we also reform how we look at urban planning.

The lowest hanging fruit begging to be modernized is the antiquated parking code, much of which has existed since circa-1965. Global cities prioritize other necessities and amenities over parking. It's time for us to join them.

In any scenario, when you compare a city priority to "ample" parking, parking always loses.

Consider housing, for example. One of Dallas' most important and urgent priorities is to ensure we meet the housing needs of the new residents moving in, while helping our current residents stay in their homes. The Child Poverty Action Lab's spring 2023 report, "Rental Housing Needs Assessment," estimates that the city has a 33,660-unit rental supply gap for residents making around \$40,000 per year, and this number is projected to increase to 83,500 by 2030. When a developer must include excess parking spaces at \$10,000 per surface space or \$30,000-\$60,000 for garage spaces, these costs are passed along to the tenants, further deterring opportunities for affordability. When weighing housing needs against ample parking, housing wins out as a priority.

What about a clean city with breathable air? Dallas residents have also told us that a healthy environment is a priority. Ample parking encourages more driving versus use of public transit, walking or cycling. Thousands of residents weighed in on the city's Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan, and it has become a guide for all policies in the city. The plan's goals — such as tree canopy coverage and cleaner air — are contradictory to wide swaths of parking lots and increased traffic on the road.

What about being a financially responsible city? Mayor Eric Johnson has stated his priority to provide a significant tax rate reduction to property owners, which is critical in districts like mine to help stem the tide against displacement and gentrification. To meet his goal while ensuring that city services are not eroded, we must seek another source of revenue. Adding gentle density and infrastructure to surface lots will inevitably increase their value and help bridge the revenue gap that we need to keep services sufficient even after a tax rate reduction.

According to data from the Dallas Central Appraisal District, a typical surface parking lot in downtown generates \$2.50 per square foot in property taxes. Whereas two recent developments in downtown, Amli Fountain Place at \$86.38 per square foot and the East Quarter at \$47.82 per square foot, generate significantly more. There are probably hundreds of millions of dollars worth of annual property tax revenue that we are leaving on the table in favor of parking lots. That revenue could be used to lower residents' taxes without a drop in city services.

A few of Dallas' base code requirements for parking are no-brainer fixes, such as the requirement for builders to provide a parking spot for each bedroom in an apartment complex. For example, a 300-unit apartment complex with 450 bedrooms must have 450 parking spaces even if the extra bedrooms are used for children or home offices. Hotels are also typically overparked, with smaller hotels being required to provide parking for each hotel room.

But other code changes are more complicated. We need to be thoughtful about our city's priorities surrounding historic preservation and how parking plays a role. Parking reductions are used in places like Bishop Arts and Lower Greenville, for example, as a tool to preserve older structures. Thus, a blanket elimination of parking minimums across the city could be harmful in these situations unless other incentives are in place to encourage preservation of our ever-dwindling historic assets.

But these one-off situations should not slow down the overall reforms. Along with four of my City Council colleagues, I filed a memo in September 2019 directing city staff and the City Plan Commission to reopen and modernize the parking code, and we did so again this summer. To date, reform discussions are still stalling in one of the Plan Commission's subcommittees. We owe it to our residents, current and future, to no longer let the antiquated parking code hinder other city priorities, and to move these reforms forward now without further delay.

Chad West is a Dallas Council member for District 1. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News

FRISCO'S WADE PARK PROJECT GETS OK FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN

First phase of construction would include a shopping center, offices and urban residential units.

By Steve Brown



Developers who own the former Wade Park site in Frisco have received initial approvals for a new development plan. (Contributed / JVP Managements)

Frisco's stalled Wade Park development moved a step closer to a restart with approval of new development designs by the city's Planning and Zoning Commission.

Work on the [\\$2 billion mixed-use project](#) on the Dallas North Tollway halted in 2017.

Current owners of the building site have rebranded the project as [The Mix](#) and are seeking Frisco's approval for revamped development plans on 112 acres of the property.

"We believe it will lead to a better development and benefit the city of Frisco and its residents," said property owner JVP Management's Tim Campbell. "We'd like to start building this year. As soon as we can get through this process with the city, we are moving forward."

[The first phase of the development](#) at the tollway and Lebanon Road would include about 100,000 total square feet of retail space, a 120,000-square-foot medical office building, urban living units and part of a planned central park. The developers say construction on the project's initial phase will take about three years.

New zoning approved Tuesday night by Frisco's planning commission would increase the number of residential units allowed on the entire property to almost 3,300, including both apartments and townhomes.

About 2 million square feet of office space, 375,000 square feet of retail and two hotels would also be allowed.

Under the new zoning, 46% of the property would be used for residential construction — more than in previous Wade Park plans.

Developers said the increase in residential construction was needed to offset the cost of dealing with the massive excavation left along the tollway by the [previous Wade Park builders](#).

They plan to fill the huge hole with a more than 2,200-space underground parking garage that will serve the project at an estimated cost of more than \$150 million.

"I am in support of increasing the residential mix," Commissioner Ed Kelly said. "I'm happy to see it finally come together."

Planning and Zoning Commission members voted unanimously in favor of the development changes. The new zoning must still get approval from the City Council.

"We'd love to see this get started sooner than later," Commissioner Jon Kendall said. "I'm OK with the increased residential units because it's right along the tollway — there is a need for housing in this specific area. We want this project."

New York-based JVP Management [took control of the property in 2019](#), after previous developers defaulted on loans, leaving uncompleted buildings and a 6.8-acre hole.

Construction on Wade Park [started in 2014](#), with plans to build a series of high-rise offices, hotels and apartments on 175 acres. But the previous developers ran into financial difficulties and work on the development came to a halt. Since then, the property has languished — an eyesore on what was once billed as Frisco's "\$5 Billion Mile."

The site is across the tollway from several successful Frisco projects, including the [Dallas Cowboys' Star](#), [Frisco Station](#) and [The Gate](#).

NEW STATE LAW ALLOWS WALKING ON ROADS WHEN SIDEWALKS ARE BLOCKED OR UNSAFE

The law restricting pedestrians from walking on roads has been revised to let pedestrians use roadways in certain situations.

By Alejandra Martinez



A pedestrian walks on East Stassney Lane in Austin on Feb. 15, 2021 during a winter storm that blanketed Texas in snow and ice. During the same storm, Plano police arrested and charged a man with illegally walking on a roadway. The charges were dropped but the arrest helped spark a change in state law. Credit: Miguel Gutierrez Jr./The Texas Tribune

As Texas faced frigid temperatures during a February 2021 winter storm and snow and ice made sidewalks and roads impassable, 18-year-old Rodney “R.J.” Reese was arrested by Plano police officers for walking on a road while heading home from work.

The Black teen was charged with a Class C misdemeanor, accused of violating a section of the state’s transportation code that makes it illegal to walk on a roadway if there is a sidewalk — a law that will change on Sept. 1.

Body camera footage from the day of Reese’s arrest shows that the sidewalk and the neighborhood street were both covered by ice. Social justice advocates alleged that Reese’s arrest was racially motivated, according to [news reports](#).

Charges against Reese were dropped after he spent a night in jail. Jennifer Chapman, a public information officer at the Plano Police Department, said that police officers involved in Reese’s

arrest followed all department policies when they responded to a 911 call about a man walking in the winter storm in a T-shirt, stopped the teen and detained him.

But the incident spurred Texas lawmakers to reexamine the law that led to Reese's arrest and pass [House Bill 1277](#).

Under the existing law, pedestrians must walk on the left side of the road, facing oncoming traffic if there's no sidewalk available. HB 1277 allows pedestrians to walk on roadways facing oncoming traffic if sidewalks are obstructed or unsafe.

State Sen. [Royce West](#), D-Dallas, who sponsored the bill, said the law will disincentivize police officers from "messing with" people of color.

"The only thing [Reese] was guilty of is walking while Black, walking down the street while Black," West said, adding that he hopes the new law will "reduce the chances of people being targeted because of the color of their skin when it's 20 degrees outside and they're walking down the street."

Potholes, fallen trees, pools of water and weather conditions can all make sidewalks unusable, said Savannah Kumar, a staff attorney for the ACLU of Texas.

"Unfortunately, we see restrictions on the use of public streets and spaces used to criminalize people's harmless actions such as when they are simply stepping onto a street," Kumar said. "The law simply can't be rigid about where pedestrians can move — especially when road conditions are dynamic."

Brian L. Owsley, a law professor at the University of North Texas at Dallas, said state legislators must balance concerns for both pedestrian safety and pedestrians' need to get from one location to another. He said that police officers should apply "common sense and discretion" in enforcing laws rather than strictly adhering to the letter of the law.

"This is about sensible policing," said June Jenkins, president of the [Collin County chapter of the NAACP](#), which supported HB 1277.

After a legislative session, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement requires [a minimum of 40 hours of training](#) for all licensed peace officers, including county sheriffs and deputy constables, to inform them about new laws they will be responsible for enforcing. Plano police said that the department's legal advisor will provide new law training to their officers beginning in September.

Chapman said the Plano Police Department has made policy changes after Reese's arrest like requiring a supervisor's approval for most arrests for Class C misdemeanor offenses — minor crimes like traffic violations that are punishable only by a fine and rarely lead to an arrest.

TRANSIT IS KEY TO NEAR SOUTHSIDE'S WALKABLE, CONNECTED LIFE. LET'S SUPPORT ITS GROWTH | OPINION

By Mike Brennan

As a vibrant, rapidly growing community with thousands of residents and workers, [Fort Worth's Near Southside](#) is constantly evolving and adapting, always benefiting from a collaborative spirit among neighborhood stakeholders. Every day, the Near Southside community works together to create a special district, delivering a major boost to Fort Worth's economy and high-quality experiences for residents, workers and visitors.

The work of our organization, Near Southside Inc., is truly a labor of love. From our recent grand opening of [Fire Station Park – designed for skateboarders](#) and other neighbors of all ages and abilities – to our ongoing recruitment of small businesses, we strive to build a better tomorrow.

An essential objective in this effort is to improve connectivity for Near Southside residents, medical innovation district workers, state-designated cultural district visitors and neighborhood businesses and their customers.

A big part of what keeps this Near Southside community connected is public transportation. Our residents prefer a walkable community and enjoy traveling around town without the cost and hassle of owning and operating private vehicles.

Many of us enjoy the ease of [ZIPZONE — an on-demand rideshare service](#) — because it is easy to use and is much more economical than Uber or Lyft. With ZIPZONE, we can ride to local businesses or medical appointments or to meet up with a friend. ZIPZONE also takes us to Fort Worth T&P Station, where we connect with TEXRail to Grapevine, DFW International Airport or Dallas via the Trinity Railway Express.

A major project in the works to benefit our district and the city is the upcoming [TEXRail extension](#). Work is under way to connect TEXRail from Fort Worth T&P Station to a new station in the medical district. About 50,000 workers in the area will benefit from this new public transit option, as will the residents of several neighborhoods who will be able to choose public transit for medical appointments, visiting someone in the hospital or commuting to work.

Other enhancements include ongoing bus stop improvements, which debuted in the Near Southside. These attractive passenger shelters with solar lighting add appeal to the bus stops, and we'll be happy to see those installed elsewhere along busy bus routes.

As a regular transit rider, I enjoy the freedom of low-cost and hassle-free public transportation on Trinity Metro. My time on ZIPZONE, bike share or the bus is always more enjoyable and productive than time spent behind the wheel or searching for parking.

We often see other Near Southsiders posting on social media about how important public transportation is in their lives. For example, Candice Lester says about ZIPZONE, "My mom has been using it, and I helped her set it up. Super easy and affordable for her set budget."

Dusty Wood says he used Trinity Metro's Fort Worth Bike Sharing "for the first time at the skatepark opening and several times since then. Very easy to use and affordable!"

And here's some real talk from Allester Vintees, about ZIPZONE: "It's saved my skin so many times! The cars are super and I never have to worry about the awful experiences I've had with (private ride share company) drivers. I just hope they can expand it more, so more people can benefit."

In addition to these everyday trips, transit provides safe, reliable rides to our popular Near Southside events, including ArtsGoggle and [Friday on the Green](#). Attendees can park for free at Fort Worth T&P Station and ride ZIPZONE or convenient buses to these community celebrations, making them even more enjoyable.

As the Near Southside and Fort Worth continue to grow rapidly, the demand for more transportation options grows as well. I've seen firsthand how Trinity Metro's new leadership has a fresh perspective on making the rider experience better and providing the services the community wants. This level of growth will come with funding challenges, and I hope our region finds ways to support these services to improve lives through increased mobility and access.

Mike Brennan is president of Near Southside Inc., which advocates for the Fort Worth neighborhood.

COPPELL CITY COUNCIL PLANS TO EXTEND WORKFORCE TRANSIT PROGRAM

By Arianna Morrison (Star Local Media)

Coppell City Council met on Tuesday, Aug. 22 to provide direction on the extension of a partnership with Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Lyft for workforce transit.

In partnership with DCTA and Lyft, the city of Coppell started a workforce transit test program for Coppell businesses on Oct. 1, 2019 because businesses struggled to attract employees due to transportation challenges. The one-year program was established to study trends and gauge the need for a long-term solution to workforce transit in Coppell.

Even though the program started off slow, it started to gain momentum in Dec. 2019 and steadily increased until March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Since then, the Coppell City Council approved a one-year extension to the contract with DCTA three times and the current interlocal agreement is set to expire on Sept. 30, 2023.

Mindi Hurley, director of community development with the city of Coppell, said that ridership continues to increase and is being utilized by a larger number of companies. The service is being utilized seven days a week across different shift times throughout the day.

When the program began, ridership was concentrated on the west side of town, but now individuals are using it to get to work on the east side of town. Residents are also relying on the service for access to work at business locations in Coppell.

Staff is requesting to extend the interlocal agreement with DCTA until Sept. 30, 2024 to extend the program an additional year so city staff can continue to analyze ridership trends and data in the hopes that utilization will grow even more as employees learn about the program, Hurley said.

Lyft will continue providing all mobility services and DCTA will administer the contract and provide all administrative and operational services associated with the program.

City council was agreeable to the extension and staff will bring the interlocal agreement back for a formal vote at the next Coppell City Council meeting. All transit stops and ridership costs will remain the same and there are no changes to the existing service.

DENTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY \$50.3M BUDGET APPROVED WITH 7 NEW POSITIONS

By Colby Farr

The Denton County Transportation Authority provides transportation services to the public in the greater Lewisville and Denton area. Services include the A-train commuter rail and the Denton Connect Bus. (Courtesy Denton County Transportation Authority)

The [Denton County Transportation Authority](#)'s fiscal year 2023-24 operating and capital budget includes funding for seven new positions and about \$35 million for capital improvements and maintenance.

What you need to know

The [board of directors](#) approved the budget during its [Aug. 24 meeting](#). The budget will take effect Oct. 1, projecting about \$76.2 million in revenue and about \$50.3 million in expenses.

Budgeted expenses include more than \$11.5 million for bus operations, according to a staff presentation. Another \$17 million was budgeted for operating the [A-Train service](#).

Seven new positions have been budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year. Six positions will serve as coordinators throughout the organization, [Senior Budget Manager Jane Filarowicz](#) said. The seventh position is a planning and development analyst role.

The positions include:

- Accounting coordinator
- Grants/budget/compliance coordinator
- Help desk coordinator
- Payroll and benefits coordinator
- Planning and development analyst
- Rail operations coordinator
- Security systems coordinator

Diving in deeper

About \$35.7 million has been budgeted for capital improvement and maintenance projects across the transportation authority's services. Projects will be funded by cash, the transportation authority's capital reserves and money from other sources.

The board approved funding for multiple projects, including:

- Fuel tank maintenance at the Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility in Denton

- Bus maintenance
- Fleet replacement
- Rail maintenance
- Refreshed server infrastructure

Also on the agenda

The board also heard updates from staff about potentially expanding the transportation authority's A-Train service to downtown Carrollton. The board examined a study's findings, provided feedback and looked at next steps for moving forward.

Staff also presented information about the [GoZone On-Demand service](#)'s performance in 2023. The board will consider authorizing a contract renewal for the ride-sharing service during its Sept. 28 meeting.

The service reported about 18,000 riders in October 2022 in Lewisville, according to a staff presentation. About 21,000 riders were reported in July.

Ridership in Highland Village has more than doubled in 2023; more than 900 riders were recorded in July 2022, according to the presentation.

More information about GoZone's performance can be found on the transportation authority's [website](#).

MILLIONS IN STATE FLOOD FUNDING COULD BE HEADED TO THESE TARRANT COUNTY CITIES

By Haley Samsel

Fourteen flood reduction projects in Tarrant County will be eligible for millions in state infrastructure funds after Trinity River officials finalized their regional plan in June.

The [Trinity Regional Flood Planning group](#) formed in 2020 as part of an effort to create Texas' first statewide flood plan in the wake of Hurricane Harvey's devastating impact on the Gulf Coast. The group's target region encompasses the entire length of the Trinity River basin, from Dallas-Fort Worth down to Liberty County near Houston.

The inaugural state flood plan, set to be adopted in September 2024, is crucial for cities like Fort Worth and Arlington that lack local dollars to fund massive investments in stormwater infrastructure. To be eligible for grant funding from the state's flood infrastructure fund, a flood mitigation project must be recommended by the regional planning group.

Last November, the Trinity group [adopted an initial plan](#) that recommended seven projects for future funding opportunities. All were located in North Texas, with four in Dallas County and three in Tarrant County.

Nine months later, Trinity River officials have increased the number of recommended flood mitigation projects to 56. Most are in the Dallas-Fort Worth region, with six in Arlington, four in Fort Worth, three in Westworth Village and one in Dalworthington Gardens. The estimated price tag for Tarrant County's projects alone tallies about \$293 million.

"There's going to be more (recommended projects) in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, because that's where the vast majority of people live. That's where the vast majority of the infrastructure is," said Glenn Clingenpeel, the planning group's chair and a top leader at the Trinity River Authority of Texas. "But that in no way is meant to diminish the importance of our agricultural communities and our rural communities."

[\[MAP: TARRANT COUNTY RECOMMENDED FLOOD PROJECTS\]](#)

Fort Worth's priorities identified in the plan include improving stormwater conveyance in the Lebow channel along North Main Street; constructing new storm drainage at Zoo Creek near Forest Park; and two projects providing relief to the Linwood area [near West 7th](#), which has suffered from [ongoing flooding issues](#) over several decades.

In Arlington, two projects would focus attention on [Johnson Creek](#), which runs 13 miles between Interstate 20 and the West Fork of the Trinity River in Grand Prairie. Another project would focus on drainage and erosion improvements near Village Creek in west Arlington. The remaining three would make flood channel improvements at Bowman Springs Road and Little Road on the city's west side, near Lake Arlington, and an eastside neighborhood near the intersections of Arkansas Lane and New York Avenue.

If funded, the three projects in Westworth Village would replace a drainage channel along Ansley Drive and upgrade storm sewer systems along White Settlement Road and Pumphrey

Drive. Dalworthington Gardens' proposal would modify a dam at Elkins Lake to meet state environmental standards.

Each flood management proposal requires extensive studies and evaluations of potential negative impacts before it can be recommended in the plan, Clingenpeel said. Consultants spent months collecting new data to ensure that more proposals could be promoted and included in the regional plan, he said.

"There was a lot of technical work that had to happen, and a lot of coordination working with the sponsors and trying to get all that information," Clingenpeel said. "We were very successful in that we went from seven to 56. That's a huge increase in the number of projects we're able to include in the plan."

The latest version of the plan also recommends 507 flood risk studies aimed at providing up-to-date maps of 9,500-plus miles of the Trinity. Most rural communities lack detailed flood risk evaluations to help them understand the root causes of flooding and develop specific projects to reduce it, Clingenpeel said.

"There's a great desire to turn dirt, to build infrastructure, to make improvements that everybody can see and touch and feel and say, 'This is going to save lives and property,'" he said. "Before you do that, before you can hit a target, you have to aim."

Communities along the Trinity need more than \$1 billion to fully fund the plan — an unlikely outcome even with a historic state budget surplus.

This spring, state legislators [approved \\$1 billion](#) in funding for flood prevention statewide. While \$500 million of Texas' budget surplus will go toward coastal barrier projects and the "Ike Dike" in the Houston area, \$625 million has been set aside for the flood infrastructure fund.

Questions remain about how the Texas Water Development Board will [administer flood infrastructure funding](#) and what the application process will look like once the state plan is finalized next year, Clingenpeel said.

Clingenpeel sees the finalized plan as the beginning of a journey to reduce flooding in the Trinity River basin, not the end. The process is set to start all over again this fall, when Clingenpeel's group begins the process of the next five-year plan.

"We don't live in a static world, and nobody's done this before in terms of these large regional flood plans, certainly not on a state level," Clingenpeel said. "What we've done, I think, is build a very solid foundation of knowledge and networking that will allow us to continue to build going forward."

REGIONAL OFFICIALS CONSIDER TRAFFIC CHALLENGES FOR 2026 WORLD CUP. HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

By Sandra Sadek and Kaley Broussard (KERA)

This story, produced in collaboration with KERA, is part two of an ongoing series looking at how North Texas is preparing to host the 2026 World Cup. Read part one [here](#).

When visitors arrive in North Texas for the FIFA World Cup in 2026, they will find themselves heading to the AT&T Stadium in a variety of ways: classic transportation options such as shuttles, bikes and scooters as well as more novel methods like helipads and other emerging technologies.

For local officials planning the event, nothing is yet off the table.

The [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#), a regional planning organization, has been meeting with partners across the region for the last six months to identify and address road and transportation needs.

Among those priorities is how best to get people to Arlington's entertainment district. While the city has a publicly subsidized rideshare service, Via, it has no regional transit stops near the stadium.

At this time, there are many unknowns for Arlington and the surrounding region. It's difficult to put a price tag on the estimated costs of infrastructure improvements as no list of priorities has been established, said Karla Windsor, senior program manager for sustainable development with the Council of Governments.

"(Compared to building) a sidewalk in Frisco, it might be a million dollars more to build the same sidewalk in Fort Worth," Windsor said. "It's very unique to the utilities, to the right of way, constrained to existing signals, vegetation. We've got to dive a lot deeper into that to put those estimates together."

Getting all involved parties to agree on priorities and where to allocate resources is one of the many challenges ahead of the global event, said Natalie Bettger, senior program manager for congestion with the Council of Governments.

An initial plan identifying improvements around Arlington's Entertainment District will be presented to the [Regional Transportation Council](#) at its Sept. 14 meeting. The council will vote to adopt the plan in October.

The Jerry Jones Family and Dallas Cowboys announced they'll invest an [additional \\$350 million](#) into interior stadium improvements, with hopes to complete renovations by kickoff in 2026, according to the [Dallas Morning News](#).

As for how the region will tackle traffic and transportation, Bettger said, those plans will be unveiled later on in the process as the ball gets rolling and the location of each event North Texas is hosting is finalized.

A regional approach to transit brings innovation

[Monica Paul](#), executive director of the Dallas Sports Commission, is not too worried about the logistics of welcoming thousands of fans to the largest sporting event in the world.

Despite Arlington not having conventional public transit or train stops anywhere near AT&T Stadium, Paul said, past entertainment district-area events have set up the region for larger-scale events.

The most recent example is WrestleMania. Staff planned bus routes and drop-off points while collaborating with different rail systems. The two-night event in 2022 brought in more than 150,000 fans, [according to WWE](#).

“(We said), ‘OK, let’s start to put a smaller world transportation plan in motion just for WrestleMania, knowing the World Cup has many more people as well as many more days,’” Paul said.

Hosting a World Cup can cost millions when it comes to preparing and developing the infrastructure to welcome millions of visitors for a month. Qatar, the 2022 host country, reportedly [spent over \\$200 billion in preparation for the event](#), including overhauling its entire road network and constructing a rail system.

Affecting final decisions on how transportation will be handled at the upcoming World Cup is how many coveted FIFA events the region will score. Fort Worth city officials and FC Dallas have stated they’ll apply to [become a base camp host for a national team](#). Regional leaders are also vying to bring in the World Cup’s Referee Headquarters, International Broadcasting Center and a Fan Festival to the metroplex.

The four-day spectacle will be a regional draw regardless of the events, Paul said. She envisions World Cup travelers visiting the [National Soccer Hall of Fame](#) in Frisco or the Dallas Stars headquarters.

“I don’t think it’s all on one city’s shoulders. I think it’s one of the benefits, that we do have many cities and many counties that can enjoy this World Cup,” she said.

When it comes to guaranteeing teams, staff and fans can get to and from AT&T Stadium, there’s “a menu of options,” Windsor said.

The possibilities include using the Union Pacific Railroad line for regional passengers; repurposing lanes on interstates for expedited bus transport; or even employing helipads to move people.

“We may even dive into bikes, scooters or just how to use all of the modes to get people around internally and from external sites,” Windsor said.

The region’s World Cup planning will also benefit from experience hosting previous large-scale events, including the Super Bowl XLV in 2011 at AT&T Stadium — then known as Cowboys Stadium. With help from other agencies and event promoters, [NCTCOG designated dates](#) and times to repurpose the [managed lane](#) for bus travel and offered regional transportation passes to event-goers.

“That’s one thing we’ll work with our transit partners on, is trying to develop that pass that allows them to utilize the transit system to pretty much anywhere in the region that transit can go to,” Bettger said.



The North Central Texas Council of Governments will present recommendations for improvements around the Entertainment District in Arlington to the Regional Transportation Council on Sept. 14. (Sandra Sadek | Fort Worth Report)

Until the location of the final game is announced and final numbers of expected attendees set, planning for some parts of the World Cup will remain unknown. That also means costs for hosting the global event won't be completed until much later.

Paul said there are a number of tools available to offset some of the costs associated, including the Texas Major Events Reimbursement Program. FC Dallas will also be allowed to sell ten partnerships ahead of the event to generate additional revenue.

"We're just right now looking to know how many matches we're truly going to be hosting, if the International Broadcast Center will be here, how many FanFests — we are a larger region — and really try to collect a lot of the expenses so that we know what additional assets we may need or need to create to put in those packages and ensure that we're financially solvent at the end of this World Cup," Paul said.

More transit needed in Arlington

Getting World Cup attendees to AT&T Stadium will require working with the city of Arlington, whose residents have long pushed back against any type of conventional transit.

Arlington's options are limited, given the city's voters have thrice rejected attempts to use tax revenue to join a regional transit authority or create its own. The latest vote [was in 2002.](#)

Since then, the city government has looked for innovative ways — specifically cost-effective ones — to move people around the seventh-largest city in the state. Currently, the city offers a rideshare-like program through the company, Via. [The service](#) can get riders around town or to and from the CentrePort TRE station for \$5 or less.

The city also has a shuttle service dedicated to older adults, Handitran. Through a Federal Transit Administration grant, the city also hosts a pilot autonomous vehicle service run by May Mobility.

The Arlington Entertainment Area Management District runs [a trolley between participating hotels](#) and destinations within the entertainment district.

While Arlington may not have its own transit system in place, the Council of Governments said it does not believe that will impede the region's ability to move people around during the World Cup efficiently. In fact, Arlington has been supportive of transit to and from event venues during special events in the past, Bettger said.

Arlington City Manager Trey Yelverton said in an interview the city will continue looking at developing transportation options for the World Cup and beyond.

"Will (World Cup accommodations) be the thing that puts permanent type rail infrastructure in Arlington? I don't think that will be the case as I think we're going to meet the needs of the event, but we're also going to continue to innovate and grow technologies that move people but do so affordably over the long term," Yelverton said.

Despite some obstacles yet to be overcome ahead of the World Cup, the organizations involved in getting the metroplex ready are confident they will get the proper transportation in place in time before welcoming fans.

"The World Cup is special and the passion and the culture that comes along with it. ... This is going to be a different type of visitor and one that is very passionate about their soccer — or football," Paul said.

DALLAS TO FORT WORTH IN 20 MINUTES? WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT NORTH TEXAS' HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLAN

By Eleanor Dearman

North Texas officials are moving forward with their push for a high-speed rail linking Dallas and Fort Worth with a stop in Arlington, but don't expect to board a bullet train any time soon.

[A proposal by the North Central Texas Council of Governments](#), already years in the works, is moving into a new phase, which includes a deeper look at plans related to engineering, environmental impact, ridership estimates, operations and maintenance and costs. [The process is expected to span the next year and a half.](#)

The connection of Dallas and Fort Worth by a train that can reach 250 mph comes with a number of challenges, but could bring economic opportunities, said Allan Rutter, a senior research scientist at Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

"There's a lot to be said for the sort of economic benefits to both cities by the growth of each other, even though historically Amon Carter would never agree to that," Rutter said, referring to the legendary Star-Telegram publisher and Fort Worth booster who [would occasionally as a joke carry a sack lunch with him to Dallas rather than spend money there.](#)

The council is hosting a series of open houses starting Tuesday where members of the public can learn more about the project and offer suggestions.

The idea is to ultimately link the route to a proposed high-speed rail line that would connect Dallas and Houston in less than 90 minutes.

The route and travel time

The trip from Dallas to Fort Worth would take about 20 minutes along a route that follows Interstate 30.

The exact stops are still being studied, but the Fort Worth stop is expected to be near Fort Worth Central Station. In Arlington, an elevated station between North Center Street and North Collins Street or an underground tunnel station between AT&T Way and Ballpark Way are recommended, according to a report [outlining the findings from the first phase of the study.](#)

The Dallas stop would be south of downtown by the Interstate 30 and Interstate 35E interchange or beneath a station proposed as part of the Dallas to Houston rail being explored by Texas Central.

The Texas Central plan has been in the works for about a decade. It has faced pushback from opponents whose concerns include land rights and potential costs to taxpayers. Texas Central and Amtrak announced [a potential partnership on the route earlier in August.](#)

The North Central Texas Council of Governments, an association of local governments to help with regional development, seeks to extend that line to Fort Worth.

"Why would you want the end of the line to be in Dallas County and then everyone has to transfer to the TRE, which would take an hour, or transfer to some other mode of

transportation,” said Michael Morris, the director of transportation for the council, in a Aug. 11 interview with the Star-Telegram.

Texas Central and Amtrak declined to comment.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments recently applied for [a grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to help develop the potential Fort Worth to Houston route](#). The proposal, which Texans Against High Speed Rails obtained through an open records request and shared with the Star-Telegram, includes several letters of support from state and local officials, including Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker, Arlington Mayor Jim Ross, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins.

Potential challenges

One key question is how the rail would be funded, said Rutter, with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. He expects those discussions will happen in the study’s second phase. The private sector will likely get involved, but there are also federal dollars available that could help with the project, Rutter said.

The United States trails other countries on the construction of high-speed rails, though several projects are in the works, and Amtrak’s Acela runs [between Boston and Washington at 150 mph](#).

Rutter attributes that delay to the “steep price tag.”

“Other decisions or other choices have been made,” he said. “We’ve chosen to invest an awful lot of money into commercial aviation and giving people the freedom to have highways open up travel opportunities for both peoples and goods movement.”

Texans Against High Speed Rails has raised concerns about potential costs to taxpayers associated with the Houston to Dallas Project. Texas Central has previously said the project would be done without public funding, according to The Texas Tribune. But Texas Central and Amtrak said they’ve applied for federal grants to study and design the proposed project in a August news release announcing their potential partnership.

There are also questions of land rights and the physical construction of the Dallas to Fort Worth rail. For instance, it would likely have to be elevated given the soil type in North Central Texas and the need for a flat service, Rutter said. That can be expensive, but could also minimize the amount of space needed to build the project along I-30.

“We’re almost all in public sector right-of-way,” Morris said. “So there isn’t a big right-of-way element. We’re in the interstate 30 corridor, and we’ll just have to see if we can get consensus in the environmental process to move forward toward implementation.”

Were it to come to fruition though, the project could open new possibilities for the Metroplex as it booms.

“Now that comes with a price tag, but that kind of speed of travel between those two city centers could open up all kinds of possibilities for people to work in one city and live in the other, people to business between each other,” Rutter said. “It just might open up Fort Worth and Dallas to grow even closer.”

Waller County Judge Trey Duhon, president of the advocacy group Texans Against High-Speed Rail, said the group is not against high-speed rail in general, but that any project has to make sense and be feasible. He said it does seem strange to have a high speed rail connecting two cities that are only 30 to 40 minutes apart.

Questions he'd ask of the project include ridership projects, ticket prices and potential revenue. Ridership estimates are expected in the plan's second phase. Preliminary estimates of travel demand project 27,100 to 54,300 daily rail passengers, depending on the project's connectivity to other possible high speed rail routes, according to the grant proposal.

"Everybody should be transparent," he said. "Because if this is something that the taxpayers in Dallas-Fort Worth are going to underwrite, even if they're not directly impacted — like I've always said, it may not come through your backyard but it may go through your pocketbook — those people have a right to know how those numbers work," Duhon said.

No matter one's stance on a North Texas high-speed rail, there's still time for the project to come to fruition or fizzle out.

Morris said it's premature to outline a timeline to construction. Rutter predicted construction is still years away, at the very least.

Open Houses

- **Aug. 29** from 5-7:30 p.m. at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington)
- **Aug. 31** from 4-7 p.m. at the Fort Worth Central Station Community Room (1001 Jones St., Fort Worth)
- **Sept. 6** from 5-7:30 p.m. at the Tony Shotwell Life Center (2750 Graham St., Grand Prairie)
- **Sept. 7** from 4-7 p.m. at the West Dallas Multipurpose Center (2828 Fish Trap Road, Dallas)

NORTH TEXAS LEADERS RALLY FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL, ENVISIONS BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION LINK

By Donnie Tuggle

DALLAS-FT. WORTH, Texas (KBTX) -North Texas leaders are moving forward with plans for a high-speed train along Interstate 30, connecting the DFW Metroplex to the proposed Texas Central Dallas-Houston line.

Those same leaders say they would like to see a statewide system that would connect cities like Austin, San Antonio, Laredo, and even College Station.

They say they would like to have what's being considered as a one-seat ride, meaning instead of a single company having exclusive rights to the rail lines, it is envisioned that it would operate more like airports, which allow for many carriers. This would allow the traveling public to benefit from a competitive marketplace.

The [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#) is currently conducting studies and planning meetings to move forward to the next steps.

These efforts, while not new, have gained renewed momentum following [Amtrak and Texas Central's recent partnership announcement](#).

The formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study will kick off in September, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments is hosting four open house events to allow the public a chance to learn more about the project.

The NCTCOG says that in Phase 1 of the initiative, planners assessed high-speed transportation options, encompassing alignments and diverse high-speed technologies, aimed at improving travel between Dallas, Arlington, and Fort Worth. Currently, the progressing high-speed transportation endeavor connecting Dallas and Fort Worth has entered Phase 2. This phase concentrates on a sole corridor and specified station sites, with the objective of appraising potential social and environmental repercussions along the corridor.

Michael Morris, transportation director for the NCTCOG, says planners and engineers have designated the favored route, which is predominantly situated along Interstate Highway 30 connecting downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth, and includes a halt at the Arlington Entertainment District. At present, they are progressing with the preliminary engineering design of this alignment to facilitate the assessment of social and environmental impacts associated with the high-speed rail.

Morris says the high-speed rail line being studied in North Texas would provide connections with local transportation systems and link directly to future high-speed services, such as the planned Dallas-to-Houston high-speed rail line.

According to research conducted by the NCTCOG, the metropolitan region spanning 12 counties currently has a population of around 8 million people, with projections indicating the addition of more than 3 million individuals by 2045. The estimated population for 2045, surpassing 11 million, would represent a roughly 50% increase compared to 2018 figures.



Texas Central High Speed Rail Route(KBTX)

As far as Amtrak's and Texas Central's partnership, Morris says all options are on the table.

"I don't know if Amtrak and Texas Central Partners' holding company will be the final delivery mechanism between Dallas and Houston, but at least we're still alive, and we have submitted to Washington under the Corridor Identification Program. This partnership to connect Fort Worth, Arlington, Dallas, College Station, and Houston," Morris added.

Allan Rutter is with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. He says investments like this come at a major cost and are full of potential challenges.

"I think the main thing to remember is the high-speed rail is really expensive, uh, and trying to figure out how this, or any other developer, uh, finds the billions of dollars that are necessary to make it happen, gets it built, and gets it operating. Uh, that's the biggest hurdle these guys have."

But if accomplished, Rutter says having a high-speed train in College Station could have its benefits.

"I think it'd be useful and interesting to see how somebody plans on connecting to the university, given there's 70,000 students and a whole lot of activity. But when that happens and how that happens is a sort of open-ended question."

Morris added that the economic and convenience impacts of a project of this magnitude are limitless.

For example, attending a Cowboys game in Arlington, an Astros game in Houston, or experiencing the 12th man at Kyle Field could be as simple as a one-hour train ride to Houston or Dallas from College Station, as opposed to a two- to three-hour drive.

"You could have a one-seat ride from A&M University and College Station to the law school in Fort Worth without getting off the train. A&M University could recruit faculty potentially to come to teach at A&M University Medical School, veterinarians, and others who may live in Houston and in Dallas-Fort Worth, taking the high-speed rail to get to the campus. So once you start thinking of high-speed rail in what we call mega regions, you start noodling around other elements to build economies of scale with regard to these particular investments," said Morris.

Here locally, Brazos Valley Council of Governments Executive Director Michael Parks says they haven't received official communications about the partnership or project, but stress the importance of transportation and the need to listen to all stakeholders.

"I believe in great transportation systems, and I think if we were able to get somehow an Amtrak, that would be great. Um, it's just another feather in our cap for transportation mobility across the state. Um, but each area, each region has to decide for themselves," said Parks.

"I know that Texas is growing. Interstate 35, and Interstate 45 are full, and in the future, we're going to have to have conversations about how we move around the state. And so I hope that nothing is off-limits in terms of talking about it," Parks added.

The Houston-to-Dallas portion of the high-speed train has garnered significant pushback and resistance over the last decade, primarily concerns about [Texas Central's transparency, funding, and landowners' rights](#). Morris acknowledged these concerns and stated that they do not fall on deaf ears.

"To the credit of the two county judges in Waller and Grimes, they came and visited us about three weeks ago, and I thought that was really cool that they did that. We extended a path forward to them. We gave them a high-speed rail version 2.0. We told them we were hearing rumors that there may be an announcement in some form or fashion with regard to the high-speed rail service. I think we'll learn more about what the Federal Railroad Administration's interest is. We're more than happy to keep this vision alive and see what the future could be with regard to mitigating whatever the issues that occur in Grimes and Waller as well as advancing hopefully high-speed rail one day between our two mega-regions," said Morris.

When asked if Morris was concerned about the critics and criticism of the rail line, he says it's nothing he hasn't experienced before over his more than 30-year career.

"I've been doing this for four decades, and I can point to 20 projects that, you know, I was told would never happen, but you keep communicating. You keep trying to get grassroots support. You keep alleviating whatever the criticisms are and continue to work on gaining consensus. I think that's our responsibility in the public service, to continue to have those conversations," said Morris.

"I'm a very optimistic person, largely driven by the success of major transportation investments in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. You know, before I came here, the DFW Airport bond election failed, and now DFW Airport is the second busiest airport in the United States. Our transportation authority's first election, and in 1980, those elections failed, and now we have three very successful transportation authorities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region," Morris added.

High-Speed Transportation Open Houses

August 29, 5-7:30 p.m.

North Central Texas Council of Governments

616 Six Flags Drive

Arlington, TX 76011

August 31, 4-7 p.m.

Fort Worth Central Station Community Room

1001 Jones St.

Fort Worth, TX 76102

September 6, 5-7:30 p.m.

Tony Shotwell Life Center

2750 Graham St.

Grand Prairie, TX 75050

September 7, 4-7 p.m.

West Dallas Multipurpose Center

2828 Fish Trap Road

Dallas, TX 75212

What Will It Take to Build a Bullet Train in Texas?

A long-fought high speed rail project may be coming back from the dead — and what happens next could be instructive for other communities hoping to someday run trains in highway-dominated states.

By Amal Ahmed

For more than a decade, a private company called Texas Central has been promising, and struggling, to build a high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston, two of the state's largest cities. By 2020, the company boasted, Japanese-style bullet trains would take passengers 240 miles in about 90 minutes — less than half the time it would take to drive the same distance.

Needless to say, it didn't happen. Most of the land on the bullet train's proposed route is privately owned, and landowners weren't eager to sell, forcing Texas Central to fight an uphill battle to [gain](#) the power of eminent domain. The state legislature didn't seem enthusiastic about the project, either, even going so far as to [try to prohibit](#) the state's Department of Transportation from providing any financial assistance to the project. Then, in 2022, most of the company's staff and leadership [quietly departed](#).

"It gave every indication of going dormant — almost cicada-like," says Allan Rutter, a researcher at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

Cicadas, though, tend to come up for air every few years — and this month, the bullet train seemed to be on the brink of being revived, too. Texas Central [announced](#) that Amtrak is now partnering on the Dallas to Houston project, and will "seek opportunities to advance planning and analysis work ... to further determine [the bullet train's] viability."

This type of public-private partnership to build out major transit infrastructure is unique — and some advocates say it's a good sign that the bullet train stands a fighting chance of being built. The two groups have already submitted grant applications for federal funding to pay for analyses and design studies, taking advantage of the [\\$1.4 billion in federal grants](#) available for railway infrastructure under "Amtrak Joe" Biden's [signature](#) infrastructure spending bill.

Even if Texas Central and Amtrak *do* win federal funds, though, experts caution that some of the challenges that have already delayed the project might still persist. And how the Texas rail industry navigates them will be instructive for other communities hoping to someday run trains in highway-dominated states.

"In most states where this kind of service has succeeded, it's done so because the state itself has said, 'We'd like to invest in that,'" Rutter says. "[But] inter-city travel that's not highways is something that Texas legislators have not expressed an awful lot of interest in."

'Who's going to ride that?'

Prior to the post-war interstate highway buildout, inter-urban passenger rail actually *did* run between major Texas cities — and from 1936 until 1966, the Sam Houston Zephyr even [offered](#) trips between Dallas and Houston. But Rutter says that "with the advent of interstates and deregulated air travel, that meant passenger rail wasn't as useful, particularly for short distances."

Moreover, the outfits operating Texas' passenger rail industry were private companies that simply couldn't compete and with billions of dollars in public subsidies for expressways. As driving became convenient and quick, [ridership dropped](#), and the state of Texas handed most of its existing routes over to Amtrak by the 1970s. Today, Amtrak still operates the Texas Eagle between Chicago to San Antonio (through Dallas), but travelers from Houston and Dallas can only reach one another by car or intercity bus.



The Sam Houston Zephyr, 1956. Photo: [Texas History](#)

Advocates like Rick Harnish, the executive director of the High Speed Rail Alliance, say attempts have been made to revive passenger rail in Texas over the years. But many of those efforts were ultimately quashed when airlines [lobbied heavily against competition](#) for short-distance, high-frequency trips between major cities.

"There was a high-speed rail authority in Texas in the '90s," Harnish says. "Southwest Airlines put a lot of money into killing it. And Texas has decided that if we just keep adding more highway lanes, we will solve the congestion problem." *[Editor's note: [It won't.](#)]*

To make matter's worse, Amtrak's reputation in Texas isn't exactly stellar. There's only [one daily train](#) between Dallas and Austin, for example, and it takes about twice as long as driving. Delays are common as trains get stuck in major hubs like Chicago or St. Louis.

"Who's going to ride that? People who either just love trains or have no other choice," Harnish says.

The success of passenger rail in other U.S. communities, though, suggests that trains don't have to be a mode of last resort. The Dallas to Houston route is about the same length and distance as the much more popular [Acela Express](#) route between New York and DC, which reliably gets travelers between the two cities in under three hours. Texas Central and Amtrak estimate that, once built, the train between Dallas and Houston could be similarly successful, taking 12,500 cars off the highway daily while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel dependency between two cities that are currently major fossil fuel hubs.

Even if the bullet train gets built, though, Harnish says there will still be the issue of a lack of easy, expansive public transportation at each destination, unless Dallas and Houston start building it now.

"This should be the first leg of a network that combines high-speed rail and connects to local buses – so you can travel the state without a car," Harnish says.

The enduring appeal of riding the rails

Even without corresponding local transit investments, the high-speed rail network in Texas remains something of a moonshot. After the announcement, some state and local interests have [expressed](#) the same disdain for the project as in years past, including Jennifer Stevens of ReRoute, who accused Texas Central of not being "honest and transparent about the funding sources that are going to be required from taxpayers."

Other local leaders, though, are getting on board. Travis County officials, like Judge Andy Brown, have [called](#) for a stop in Austin, and the backers of [another, shorter high speed rail line between](#) Dallas and Fort Worth announced that it might even get built before Texas Central. Local officials working on the 30 mile corridor [have said](#) that being able to connect to a larger, state-wide system led by Amtrak could help ensure the success of their project, too.

"Clearly, the prospect of this service continues to be something that appeals to these urban areas," Rutter adds.

HERE ARE THE NEW TEXAS STATE LAWS THAT GO INTO EFFECT FRIDAY

Laws related to transgender athletes, homeowners associations and school library books are coming on Sept. 1.

By Sarah Bahari

A flurry of new laws will go into effect Sept. 1 in Texas.

State legislators passed more than 750 new laws, from a ban on gender-affirming care for transgender youth to taxes on electric vehicles. Here's a look at some of the most notable laws.

LGBTQ issues

Transgender health care ban: Texas will ban gender-affirming care, including medication and surgery, for minors. As part of [Senate Bill 14](#), the state will revoke medical licenses of doctors who [provide treatments like puberty blockers](#), hormone therapy or surgery to patients under the age of 18 "to transition a child's biological sex." Families have [sued the state](#) to block implementation of the law, arguing that it is unconstitutional.

Drag shows, sexually explicit performances: A new law criminalizes performers and businesses that host sexually explicit shows performed in front of children. While [Senate Bill 12](#) is intended to target drag shows, opponents have argued it could also criminalize ballet and cheerleading. Violators could face up to a year in jail, and businesses hosting performances deemed illegal could be fined \$10,000 for each violation.

Restricting transgender athletes: The [Save Women's Sports Act](#) prohibits collegiate transgender athletes from competing on college teams that match their gender identity. Athletes are required to compete on teams based on their "biological sex" stated on their birth certificate.

Related: [Fort Worth company accused of displaying nooses, white supremacy symbols](#)

Local government

Death star: This new Texas law overrides city and county ordinances that go further than state law. For example, many cities will no longer be allowed to require employers give water breaks to outdoor workers. A [handful of cities](#), including Houston and San Antonio, are suing to block [House Bill 2127](#). Opponents nicknamed the law "Death Star" due to the wide range of local regulations it could affect.

Ban on Covid mandates: [Senate Bill 29](#) bars local governments from issuing Covid-related mandates related to masks, vaccines and business shutdowns.

HOA discrimination: A new law will prohibit HOAs from discriminating against tenants based on their method of payment, such as Section 8 housing vouchers. The law came in response to [Providence Village Homeowners Association in Denton County](#), which tried to bar landlords from renting to people who paid with government housing vouchers.

Law enforcement, criminal justice

Fentanyl: Prosecutors will now be able to [pursue murder charges](#) against people who illegally manufacture or distribute fentanyl, leading to someone's death. The new law is one of a handful aimed at combating the [growing fentanyl crisis](#).

Street takeovers: The state will try to [curb illegal street racing and takeovers](#). A pair of House bills provides additional ways to prosecute illegal street racing and takeovers and allows law enforcement to impound vehicles of people who have been arrested for reckless driving exhibition or racing on the highway.

Progressive prosecutors: It is now easier to remove district attorneys who refuse to pursue cases involving certain state laws. The new law is in part a response to [various district attorneys across Texas](#) saying they would not prosecute controversial offenses related to abortion, elections and gender-affirming care for minors.

Schools

Book bans: Under this new law, [booksellers and vendors](#) will be required to assign ratings books with sexual content before selling them to school districts. Books deemed "sexually explicit" cannot be sold to school districts. Schools would also be required to get parental consent before a child could access "sexually relevant material" in the library. [Booksellers have sued to block the law](#), arguing that a "sexually relevant" rating could extend to health books, historical works, encyclopedias, dictionaries and religious texts.

Armed guards at schools: One new state law requires armed personnel at all schools. The change represents legislators' most significant response to the Uvalde massacre, where 19 children and two teachers were killed at Robb Elementary in 2022. But [Dallas ISD and other districts](#) say they do not have enough funding or workforce to meet the mandate.

Diversity, equity and inclusion ban: Senate Bill 17 [dismantles diversity, equity and inclusion](#), or DEI, offices, training and programs at public colleges and universities. This bill goes into effect January 2024, but several universities have already begun [complying with the law](#).

Chaplains in school: A new law would allow school districts to place [unlicensed religious chaplains](#) in schools. Volunteer chaplains would provide support, services and programs for students, according to the law. Districts must vote whether to implement the chaplain program within the next six months.

Driving and roads

New tax: Owners of [electric vehicles](#) must pay \$400 to register a new electric vehicle on top of other fees, as well as \$200 a year to renew registration. Owners of hybrids and gas-fueled vehicles do not pay such fees, but they do pay a 20-cent per gallon gas tax.

Changing speed limits: Under this new bill, the Texas Department of Transportation can temporarily change speed limits on portions of roads and highways due to construction or inclement weather. This comes in response to the [deadly 133-vehicle pileup](#) on Interstate 35 in Fort Worth in 2021.

Temporary license plates: Car dealerships will now keep metal license plates to give to people who buy vehicles, eliminating the need for temporary paper plates. The new law aims to [curtail widespread issues with fraudulent tags](#), which are made with false names, VIN numbers and addresses and can be difficult for police to trace.

Other notable laws

Tampon tax: Texas has repealed the [state sales tax on period products](#), diapers, baby wipes and other feminine hygiene and baby products.

Hair discrimination: [Discrimination based on hair texture](#) or hairstyle associated with race is now illegal. The new law is in response to high-profile incidents involving two Black high school students in the U.S. who were forced to cut off their dreadlocks or face consequences.

Medicaid for new mothers: Low-income mothers in Texas will receive a [full year of health insurance](#) after they've given birth under a new law that extends Medicaid benefits.

Houston elections: A new law will abolish the [Harris County elections administrator's office](#). The law turns over election oversight to the tax assessor and county clerk. The Texas Supreme Court denied a request from the county, home to the Democratic stronghold Houston, to stop the law from taking effect.

TARRANT COUNTY TO JOIN OTHER MAJOR TEXAS COUNTIES IN APPLYING FOR MILLIONS IN FEDERAL SOLAR FUNDING

By Haley Samsel



With electricity prices surging by 50% or more in Texas, more homeowners are considering an investment in rooftop solar to lower their utility costs. (Kristian Buus | Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

After more than [a month of back-and-forth debate](#), Tarrant County will join a coalition of urban Texas counties seeking federal solar funds through the Environmental Protection Agency's [Solar for All](#) program.

County commissioners narrowly approved the move during their Aug. 29 meeting. Republican Gary Fickes joined Democrats Alisa Simmons and Roy Brooks in a 3-1 vote, with Republican County Judge Tim O'Hare opposing the measure. Manny Ramirez, a Republican who represents northwest Tarrant County, was absent Tuesday.

"Joining this consortium does not obligate anybody to do anything. Joining this consortium gives people choices, and choices in America is what we all ought to be about," Brooks said. "We cannot stand alone when it comes to generating energy for the citizens of the state of Texas. We must join with others."

Established by the Inflation Reduction Act, the competitive grant program will give \$7 billion to communities across the U.S. with the goal of lowering energy bills and providing solar energy to

low-income and disadvantaged communities. The EPA will award up to 60 grants across the country, with Texas eligible for up to \$400 million.

In an [Aug. 8 report](#), Assistant County Administrator Russell Schaffner called Solar for All a “historic program” that could make tens of millions of dollars available to Tarrant County for solar investment and workforce development opportunities.

[mini-packet Commissioners-Court 20230829225200621Download](#)

Simmons introduced the idea of linking up with Harris County, Dallas County, Travis County, the city of San Antonio and a group of border counties last month. After the measure was [voted down in July](#), Tarrant County missed an Aug. 14 deadline to notify the EPA of its intention to apply, meaning the county cannot apply on its own for the grant, Schaffner said.

However, the county can still be part of the coalition’s application, which is due Sept. 26. Harris County will serve as the lead organization to submit an application to the EPA, while Dallas is taking the lead on North Texas elements of the project.

Tarrant County staff will work with community partners and Dallas County to establish solar project priorities for the region, according to the resolution. Applicants selected for the grant will begin receiving funds in 2024 and continue implementing the program over five years.

Simmons compared the Solar for All application to the county’s [acceptance of \\$408 million](#) from the American Rescue Plan Act, established to help communities economically recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Taking federal dollars for equity issues is not new for Tarrant County,” Simmons said. “This federal grant gives us a new revenue stream, and that’s what we should be looking for on this court.”

Despite their disagreements over many policy issues, Fickes said he agreed with Simmons’ points and would support the effort after initially opposing it in July. O’Hare said his vote against the grant program does not detract from his support of low-income families.

“You can be against this and still be for helping low-income families, and you can be against this and still be a patriotic American,” O’Hare said, referring to a speaker’s call for commissioners to fulfill their patriotic duties. “I personally have seen too many problems from real estate transactions and deals dealing with solar. That is undeniable.”

Nearly a dozen speakers rose to argue for and against applying for the Solar for All grant. Some questioned the reliability of [solar energy’s contributions](#) to the Texas electricity grid during power shortages. Kenya Alu, executive director of the Tarrant County chapter of [Citizens Defending Freedom](#), criticized the EPA program as a “socialist” taxpayer-funded initiative.

“Not only is this an expense that taxpayers should not be burdened with, but manufacturing solar panels and then disposing of them when they’re no longer in use does nothing for our environment,” Alu said.

Several other speakers said installing solar at the federal government’s expense would benefit the county’s bottom line. Potential projects include “community solar,” in which the county or a hired vendor would own solar facilities and sell the power to Oncor, offsetting electric costs and sometimes earning income, according to Schaffner’s report.

Other ideas include installing solar panels on critical county facilities, such as publicly owned housing, and passing the savings on energy costs to residents. Tarrant County could look to give tax credits to solar vendors, who would then pass that savings onto the homeowner, Schaffner wrote. The county can also consider providing residents with grants to purchase solar facilities on their own.

Brandy O'Quinn, a former TechFW executive and current leader of the [North Texas Electric Transportation Compact](#), said expanding solar and renewable energy will help Tarrant County attract businesses. The program will help low-income residents reduce utility bills that have surged because of extreme weather and climate change, O'Quinn said.

"More and more companies looking to relocate also want to know that communities are providing the available resources equitably to all residents, especially helping hard-working families offset the increased cost of living," she said.

Regardless of individual opinions on the value of solar, the money has already been allocated by the federal government, said Linda Hanratty, a longtime League of Women Voters of Tarrant County leader.

"As a federal taxpayer, I've paid my share of that," Hanratty said. "As a taxpayer, I want us to get our share."

2 YEARS AFTER FATAL I-35W CRASH, 2 TEXAS BILLS AIM TO IMPROVE WINTER ROAD TRAINING, TECH

The new laws tackle roadway speed limits and training. Some are appreciative of the changes, but they also say those involved have yet to be held responsible for the pileup.

By Zaeem Shaikh

More than two years later, Bobbie Gilbert struggles to grasp her brother's death.

Her brother, [Michael Wells](#), was on his way to work in Fort Worth during a deadly 2021 winter storm when cars began to skid on a two-lane tollway. Vehicles smashed together on the narrow, iced-over road, damming the interstate as traffic continued.

He was stuck and stranded, his family says, when an 18-wheel truck came barreling behind him, hitting his pickup then running on top of it.

Wells, 47, was among six people who died [Feb. 11, 2021, on the toll lanes of Interstate 35W](#), in one of the most destructive crashes in state history: 130 vehicles involved, and dozens of people injured.

Tiffany Gerred, 34; Tamara Mendoza Querales, 46; Christopher Vardy, 49; Aaron Watson, 45; and William Williams, 54, were also killed in the crash.

"It still seems unreal," Gilbert told *The Dallas Morning News* more than two years after the pileup.

On Friday, two bills that lawmakers say can stem the likelihood of a similar crash [will go into effect](#). The measures, passed this past legislative session, allow speed limits to be adjusted under hazardous highway conditions and require tollway operators working for private companies to have the same level of winter weather training as state employees. Training became a point of emphasis, and at times a sore spot, during a monthslong [National Transportation Safety Board investigation](#) into the deadly collision.

The board concluded that the crash's probable cause was the buildup of ice on the elevated stretch of the roadway.

It laid blame on the operator, [North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners](#) — a private business that built and manages the toll lanes — for its "insufficient" training and "deficient" road monitoring practices. NTE has said it was confident in the actions taken by the company that day, according to spokesman Robert Hinkle.

The company, Hinkle said, has made several steps to improve its winter maintenance efforts, strengthening their training and utilizing more advanced technology. Gilbert's family appreciates the changes, but they have filed a lawsuit against the trucking companies involved and NTE.

She believes the tollway operator has not been held responsible for its actions that day.

"You cannot put profit over safety," said Loren Klitsas, an attorney representing Gilbert's family. "You cannot put any consideration over safety ever. In this instance, they all did — all these defendants did."

Related: [Company failed to address ice on I-35W before 130-vehicle pileup that killed 6, NTSB says](#)

Treatment before crash

A decade ago, the [Texas Department of Transportation](#) signed an agreement with NTE to reconstruct the existing lanes and add two TEXpress lanes in each direction north of downtown Fort Worth leading up to Alliance Airport. Since then, NTE has been responsible for roadway improvements and maintenance, including during storms, while profiting from the tollway.

TxDOT has said these agreements, which place much of the cost on the private company, can accelerate the delivery of projects by as much as 15 years and improve traffic flow in one of the most congested roads in the state.

Two days before the crash, which occurred on a bridge near the East Northside Drive exit, NTE employees started anti-icing, or pretreating the roadway with a commercial brine.

If the pretreatment is ineffective and ice remains on the roadway, maintenance workers begin de-icing, which involves using chemicals, such as salt, gravel or even some liquids, to “help plow through whatever pack is there and break that bond,” said Richard Nelson, the coordinator of the winter weather management program of the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#). TxDOT has said pretreatment typically buys time in the early stages of the storm before future applications of chemicals become effective, according to NTSB.

The day before the crash, on-scene technicians began 12-hour shifts patrolling the roadway and adding salt and other minerals where they noticed ice, according to documents from NTSB. Fifteen technicians were on duty prior to the crash, the NTSB report said.

“The bridge locations are usually the ones that do get iced over first because... it’s elevated and you got all the wind going underneath so it tends to be colder on the pavement [and freeze before other stretches of road],” an NTE employee told NTSB investigators.

Employees used handheld thermometers, visual observation and brake-checking to decide whether areas needed de-icing, according to the NTSB report.

On-scene personnel are constantly adjusting their strategy and making decisions in real-time, Nelson said, making their training critical.

“Do I plow? Do I put chemicals down? How much do I put down?” Nelson said. “For them to make good decisions, having a foundation is important just so they understand what it is they’re doing.”

Tollway employees in November participated in annual one-day training event, known as the snow and ice rodeo. But a 2020 agenda of the rodeo didn’t mention what methods to use to assess road conditions, according to the NTSB. Employees later told NTSB investigators conflicting details, with some saying the training covered the topic while others said it didn’t; one employee said the date of the crash was their first time “actively participating in spot-checking.”

About 2 a.m. Feb. 11, conditions quickly began deteriorating after freezing rain pelted the roads.

The warnings began more than an hour later. A crash was reported 5 miles north of the eventual pileup, prompting nearby NTE signs to alert motorists about icy conditions.

A little after 5 a.m., employees drove through the crash site and didn't detect moisture or ice, the NTSB report said. None of the crew reported seeing any rain, freezing rain or sleet in the area before 6 a.m., investigators said.

More advanced weather technology could have helped in that situation, federal investigators said.

The most widely used tech around the country are environmental sensor stations, which measure a location's atmospheric and, most importantly, pavement conditions. (After the crash, NTE added 18 weather sensors in Dallas-Fort Worth; TxDOT as well as Oklahoma's Department of Transportation already had been using them.)

Related: [How can feds believe cars were going 100 mph in deadly 2021 Fort Worth pileup?](#)

'He didn't make it'

Gilbert remembers the day very clearly. She was working in Klitsas' law firm in Houston when Wells' wife called about an hour after the crash began — around 6 a.m., she said.

Gilbert sensed something was wrong. Her sister-in-law doesn't call her when she's at work.

Wells' wife asked if Gilbert heard from her husband.

"She just said, 'Mikey left to work at 6, but he didn't make it,'" Gilbert said. "'I've got his Find My iPhone, and it shows him at the accident site.'"

They heard of reports of the crash and then began calling several hospitals and police for any signs of Wells, said Klitsas, an attorney with Klitsas & Vercher.

Gilbert and her sister-in-law suspected Wells was unable to answer the phone because he was in the area trying to help others. That's what he would do, Gilbert said.

For example, one day Wells stopped on his way to work to help a woman change her tire, Gilbert learned after he died. Inside his office desk was a thank-you note from the woman.

So they waited and waited on [Feb. 11](#) in hopes of any sign of him. They didn't get one until they began watching a TV broadcast in Klitsas' office. A horrific scene had unfolded at the crash site: cars wedged together, some piled on top and others lodged under a tractor-trailer.

Through the hunks of metal, Gilbert spotted a familiar sight.

"Bobbie crumbled to the floor and said, 'that's Mikey's truck, that's Mikey's truck,'" Klitsas said. "And then we all realized what had happened."

For Klitsas, the case is personal. Gilbert has worked at his firm for more than two decades, and he has known her family for years, he said. Their lawsuit is one of several filed against NTE or trucking companies involved in the crash.

"The training and the preparation on behalf of the roadway companies was just ridiculous," Klitsas said. "It literally shocks the conscience."

What comes next

Since the crash, NTE completed the construction of the last leg of the I-35W project. The company has said it's made several steps to enhance its winter maintenance efforts, improving its training, increasing its fleet of maintenance vehicles, adding the use of a new forecast vendor and equipping vehicles with infrared thermometers as well as GPS devices and controllers.

Recently passed [House Bill 1885](#) allows the state to adjust the speed limit on roads in certain conditions, including times of adverse weather, congestion and construction. Transportation officials will be able to lower the limit by a max of 10 mph, one of the recommendations NTSB investigators made following the crash.

Highway sensors from NTE showed the average speed of the vehicles on the two-lane southbound tollway was 65 mph on the right lane and 82 mph on the left 15 minutes before the pileup.

"The deadly pileup on I-35W was an example of the kind of situation that could be made safer with variable speed limit systems," the author of the bill, State Rep. Terry Canales, said in a statement.

Related: [Texas' managed toll lanes can be deadly in ice storms](#)

Another bill that was passed, [House Bill 4797](#), requires employees of tollway companies performing treatment to complete training in the same manner as a TxDOT employees; TxDOT will provide its training material to help facilitate this measure.

State Rep. Ramon Romero Jr., a Fort Worth Democrat and author of the bill, said he believes both bills address flaws in TxDOT's partnership with NTE, but he doesn't believe it makes the roadway any safer. He said the narrow width of the tollway and the concrete barriers that separate it from general-use lanes on the right still make it prone to fatal crashes.

He said one of his former colleagues in the House told him, "Ramon, those people were in a trash compactor, and they had no way out."

At least a dozen lawsuits in Tarrant County court from the family members of the victims and survivors in the crash are still ongoing.

Just across the crash site is a plaque at Riverside Park in Fort Worth to honor the victims.

On the two-year anniversary of the crash, Gilbert was there with her sister, who went to a local florist and had six yellow flowers made to lay out at the plaque. Each of the flowers had the name of a victim from the crash written on a yellow tag. A red heart was beside Wells' name.

Gilbert plans to make the trip to Fort Worth and do this every year with her sister for all the victims in the crash and for her brother and best friend.

She added, "We want to make sure everybody that had a family member that died that day [has their loved one] remembered on the same day as well."



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Brian Wilson
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NCTCOG Beginning Transportation Study of Forest Hill Drive

Sept. 6 public meeting gives residents chance to provide input that could steer efforts to improve reliability, reduce congestion, decrease flooding

Aug. 31, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) – The North Central Texas Council of Governments is kicking off a roadway study in Forest Hill, Everman and Fort Worth that will analyze the issues and potential solutions on Forest Hill Drive between Lon Stephenson and Shelby roads.

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 6, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Forest Hill Convention Center, located at 6901 Wichita St. in Forest Hill.

The study encompasses a two-mile stretch of roadway through three cities – Everman, Forest Hill and Fort Worth – and includes two schools. It is intended to address flooding and stormwater impacts, while improving roadway safety and inventorying other issues affecting the area. The goal is to alleviate congestion through road widening while having the least impact on existing properties.

In addition, traffic signals are being upgraded and retimed on Forest Hill Drive near the Interstate Highway 20 frontage roads. Implementation of these recommendations is expected to address freeway backups in the area, which has been impacted by the \$1.6 billion Southeast Connector project. Additionally, traffic signals are being added to existing three and four-way stops.

The City of Everman Flood Study, conducted by Tarrant County and the City of Fort Worth, is also part of this comprehensive examination of the two-mile portion of Forest Hill Drive. The flood study is expected to be finished in early 2024.

Residents can share comments on the Forest Hill Drive Study by visiting www.publicinput.com/fhdstudy. Input can also be provided through an online comment tool, Map Your Experience. Please visit www.nctcog.org/mye and attend the meeting for more information.

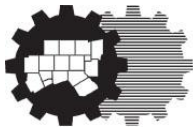
For special accommodations due to a disability or language interpretation, contact Taylor Benjamin at 817-704-5672 or tbenjamin@nctcog.org. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 228 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 19 school districts and 24 special districts. For more information on NCTCOG, visit www.nctcog.org.

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North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE
Contact: Brian Wilson
(817) 704-2511
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NCTCOG Hosting 4 High-Speed Transportation Open House Opportunities Beginning Aug. 29

Planners will address components of Phase 2

Aug. 23, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) -- Plans to link Fort Worth, Arlington and Dallas with high-speed rail are moving ahead, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments wants to hear what potential users of the system think. The formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study will kick off in September, and NCTCOG is hosting four open house events to allow the public a chance to learn more about the project.

The first open house is scheduled for 5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 29 at NCTCOG's Arlington offices. Subsequent open houses will be hosted at 4 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 31 at the Fort Worth Central Station Community Room; 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 6 at the Tony Shotwell Life Center in Grand Prairie; and 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7 at the West Dallas Multipurpose Center.

The open houses will encourage an open dialogue, similar to meetings held during the first phase of the study in 2021. A short video will discuss the project and presentation boards throughout each venue will explain different high-speed technologies and illustrate the recommended route.

During Phase 1 of the project, planners evaluated high-speed transportation alternatives, including alignments and various high-speed technologies, that could enhance travel between Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth. Now, the proposed high-speed transportation project between Dallas and Fort Worth is in Phase 2, focusing on a single corridor and identified station locations, with the goal of evaluating potential social and environmental impacts along the corridor.

Planners and engineers have identified the preferred route to be generally located along Interstate Highway 30 between downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth, with a stop in the Arlington Entertainment District. Currently, they are advancing preliminary engineering design of this alignment to support the social and environmental analysis of high-speed rail.

The high-speed rail line being studied in North Texas would provide connections with local transportation systems and link directly to future high-speed services such as the planned Dallas-to-Houston high-speed rail line.

The 12-county metropolitan area currently has a population of 8 million and is expected to add an additional 3 million-plus people by 2045. The projected 2045 population of over 11 million would be approximately 50% larger than in 2018. Implementation of high-speed rail technology will help alleviate the increase in highway congestion that is expected to occur because of the population growth.

High-Speed Transportation Open Houses

Date/ Time	Location
Aug. 29, 5-7:30 p.m.	North Central Texas Council of Governments 616 Six Flags Drive Arlington, TX 76011
Aug. 31, 4-7 p.m.	Fort Worth Central Station Community Room 1001 Jones St. Fort Worth, TX 76102
Sept. 6, 5-7:30 p.m.	Tony Shotwell Life Center 2750 Graham St. Grand Prairie, TX 75050
Sept. 7, 4-7 p.m.	West Dallas Multipurpose Center 2828 Fish Trap Road Dallas, TX 75212

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About the Regional Transportation Council:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for regional transportation planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974. The MPO works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. The RTC's 44 members include local elected or appointed officials from the metropolitan area and

representatives from each of the area's transportation providers. More information can be found at www.nctcog.org.

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North Central Texas
Council of Governments

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Brian Wilson
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Partnerships Key to Moving High-Speed Rail Toward Completion

NCTCOG study examines opportunities to bring high-speed service to region, connect riders to Houston

August 15, 2023 (Arlington, TEXAS) – Imagine boarding a train in Tarrant County and being transported to Houston in less than two hours, bypassing the traffic along the region's major highways and the potential backups that may occur.

This vision is closer to reality thanks to separate high-speed rail projects that could ultimately connect to form a system that will allow people to travel from Fort Worth or Arlington to Houston without changing trains.

Last week, Amtrak and Texas Central Partners announced a plan to work together to study moving forward with the long-planned high-speed rail line to Houston, with a station in the Bryan-College Station area.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is moving ahead on a plan to bring high-speed rail service to the Interstate Highway 30 corridor, connecting Fort Worth and Arlington to Dallas and the planned high-speed rail line to Houston.

NCTCOG studied 43 potential alignments and a series of potential high-speed technologies as part of Phase 1 of the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study. High-speed rail along the IH 30 corridor emerged as the preferred method to connect people from throughout the region to the planned Dallas-Houston route. The DFW High-Speed Transportation Connections Study will move into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) portion of Phase 2 in September, focusing on route alignment, possible station locations and potential social and environmental impacts. This environmental process is expected to be completed in a year and will include opportunities for the public to provide input on priorities.

"We applaud the partnership between Amtrak and Texas Central Partners to connect North Texas and Houston with innovative technology," Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker said.

"Extending high-speed rail along Interstate Highway 30 is key to ensuring Fort Worth residents can continue to travel reliably as the region grows and traffic increases. With the collaboration of our North Texas neighbors, as well as the North Central Texas Council of Governments and our federal and private-sector partners, high-speed rail can be more than just a vision. It can become reality."

Dallas-Fort Worth has a population of more than 8 million people and stands to eclipse 11 million by 2045. This type of growth necessitates an embrace of innovative transportation

options to preserve and enhance the region's quality of life. Connecting two of the country's largest metropolitan areas with high-speed trains that move in excess of 200 mph could improve safety and reliability while fostering even greater economic growth.

Arlington Mayor Jim Ross sees high-speed rail as a transformative technology that can help move people through the region and can complement the current transportation network.

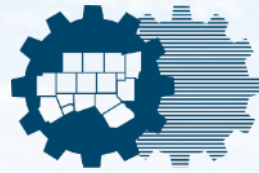
"Arlington is excited to partner in the effort to bring high-speed rail to our region," Mayor Ross said. "North Texas remains one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country with no sign of slowing down. This requires continued creativity, including examining new ways to move people. Adding high-speed rail as an option for people to get to Arlington, whether they live or work here, or are visiting our world-class Entertainment District, would be revolutionary."

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NCTCOG PRESENTATION

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES and NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

**Karla Windsor, AICP – Senior Program Manager
Regional Transportation Council
September 14, 2023**

NCTCOG Federal Grant Application Status Updates

Grant Program/Application (Project) Name	Applicant	Federal Award Request	Status
FY 23 Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) – Planning	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$5M	Pending – selection expected October 2023
FY 22/23 Charging & Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Program – Community	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$15M	Pending – selection expected October 2023
FY 22/23 Charging & Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Program – Corridor	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$70M	Pending – selection expected October 2023
FY 22 Corridor Identification & Development (ID) Program: Fort Worth to Houston High Speed Rail (HSR) Corridor	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$500K (“Step 1”)	Pending – selection expected November 2023
FY 23 Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) – Implementation	NCTCOG authored City of Dallas resubmitted	\$21.8M	Pending – selection expected December 2023
FY 23 Department of Energy/Transportation “Ride & Drive Electric”	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$1.5M	Pending – selection expected December 2023
FY 23/24 Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program: 1) Alliance Texas Smart Port – INFRA 2) US 81/287 North Tarrant County Reconstruction – MEGA 3) Dallas County Inland Port (DCIP) Multimodal Connectivity – INFRA/RURAL	NCTCOG authored/submitted (#3 resubmitted)	\$240.44M (total) 1) \$45M 2) \$80M 3) \$115.44M	Pending – selections expected between January/March 2024
FY 23 RAISE Grant: East Lancaster Avenue Complete Streets & Transit Technology	NCTCOG authored/submitted	\$25M	Awarded (\$20M)
FY 23 RAISE Grant: Cotton Belt/Silver Line Rail Trail Critical Sections	NCTCOG authored DART submitted	\$25M	Awarded - fully funded

FY23 Combined Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

FY23 combined NOFO for the **Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program**

Focus: restoring communities and improving access to daily needs by addressing transportation facilities that create barriers to mobility, access, and economic development

Two grant programs combined in RCN: ***Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)*** and ***Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE)***



Combined Structure

Three grant types under one combined NOFO:

Grant #1: Capital Construction Grants

- NAE & RCP
- **\$2.71B**

Grant #2: Community Planning Grants

- NAE & RCP
- **\$185M**

Grant #3: Regional Partnerships Challenge Grant

- NAE only
- **\$450M**
- **Only 3-5 applications awarded**

Candidate Projects – Neighborhood, Access, and Equity Program

Klyde Warren Park (Phase 2.0)

Southern Gateway (Phase 2.0)

Interstate Highway 30: Farmers Market/
Three Fingers

McKinney State Highway 5



Additional Criteria

Advancing a Neighborhood Access & Equity (NAE) Grant. No minimum or maximum amounts.

40 percent of the funds for the NAE program must be spent within Disadvantaged/ Underserved Communities (\$1.02B)

Minimum 20 percent local match unless within a disadvantaged community

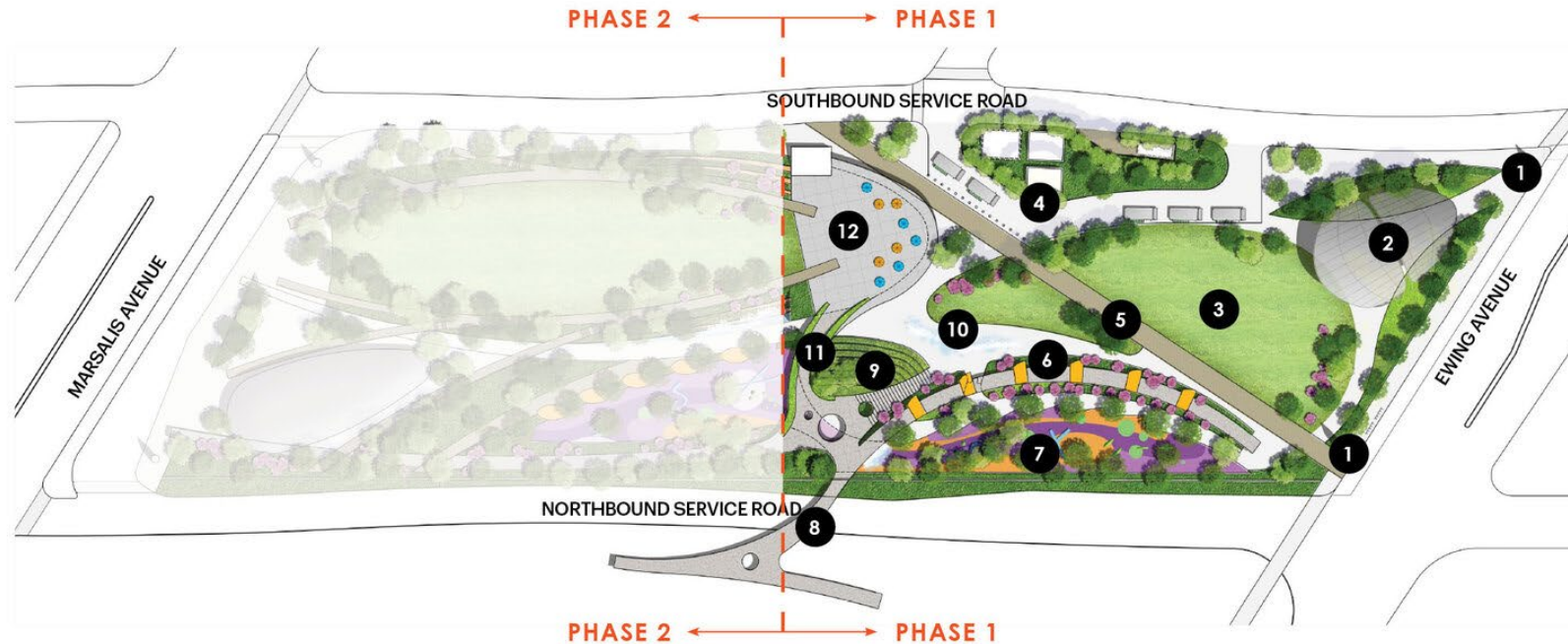
Strong focus on projects / transportation facilities that address **barriers** to community connectivity



Klyde Warren Park – Phase 2.0



Southern Gateway Deck Park– Phase 2.0



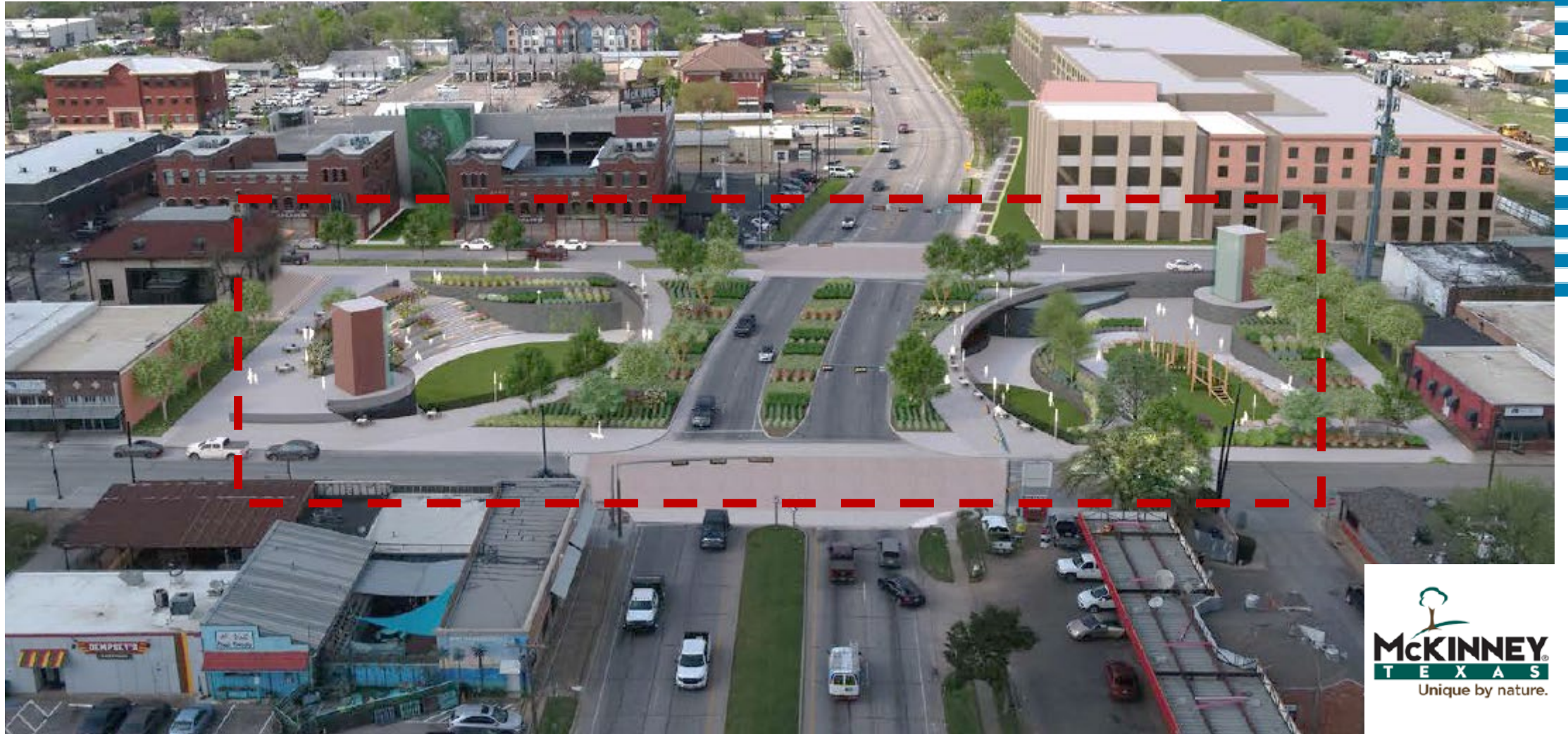
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|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Iconic Element | 4 Park Drive (Food Trucks) | 7 Play | 10 Water Feature |
| 2 Stage Pavilion | 5 12th Street Entrance | 8 Zoo Bridge | 11 Restrooms |
| 3 Lawn | 6 Escarpment Feature | 9 History Stairs | 12 Flex Building |



Interstate Highway 30: Farmers Market/Three Fingers



McKinney State Highway 5



Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program (RCN)						
	Federal (in millions)	%	Local (in millions)	%	Total (in millions)	Notes
McKinney SH5	1.60		550,000			\$1.6M (STBG) committed by RTC to begin Design \$550,000 City local funds for Utilities \$12.85M STBG to be requested of RTC
	12.85					
	15.00	50%				
Total	29.45	98%	550	2%	30	
Klyde Warren 2.0	36.80		12.9			\$36.8M (STBG) committed by RTC \$7.9M City funds existing + \$5M future funds (\$12.9M) \$1.3M Dallas County \$8.8M Private Funds
	20.00	25%	1.3			
			8.8			
Total	56.80	71%	23	29%	79.8	
Dallas Southern Gateway 2.0	7.00		15			\$5M Sen West budget riders / TxDOT-Federal Funds \$15M City of Dallas (2024 bond funds) \$5M RTR to be requested of RTC \$7M (STBG) committed by RTC, to be confirmed
	5.00		5			
	35.00	52%				
Total	47.00	70%	20	30%	67	
I-30 (Farmers Mrkt/Three Bridges)*	2.00		27			\$2M (STBG) committed by RTC for design \$27M City of Dallas \$6M New Cat 2 funds (NCTCOG) to be requested by RTC
	6.00					
	25.00	42%				
Total	33.00	55%	27	45%	60	
Grand Totals (Grant Request NEA funds)	95.00	40%				Grant "Ask" is 40% of the total costs and federal funds make up 70% of the projects
Total Funds	166.25	70%	70.55	30%	236.8	

*Assumes outside columns and bents.

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Schedule

July 5, 2023	RCN Notice of Funding Opportunity Released
August 25, 2023	STTC Action – RCN Grant
September 14, 2023	RTC Action – RCN Grant
September 28, 2023	RCN Grant Application Submittal Deadline (<i>Grants.gov</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Will submit September 27, 2023</i>
September 28, 2023	Executive Board Endorsement – RCN Grant



Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Requested Action

- RTC approval of:

Submittal of **the bundle of four pedestrian cap projects** for funding consideration through the Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods(RCN) Program

Allocation of \$19.85M of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, \$5M Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) and \$6M of Category 2 funds to advance the projects

Administratively amend Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) and Statewide TIP, as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project(s) if selected for an RCN Grant award



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Source: <https://gensler.com/projects/klyde-warren-park-2-0>



Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program

USDOT Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL): <https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law>
USDOT Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>

Policy Bundle TDC Recommendations

Entity		2023		Recommended 2023 TDCs*
		Policies	Points	
<u>Cities: Eligibility Requires Adoption of 10 Policies</u>				
City of Arlington	Medium	12	31	2,000,000
City of Dallas	Large	18	49	3,000,000
City of Farmers Branch	Small	10	22	750,000
City of Fort Worth	Large	13	37	3,000,000
City of Frisco	Medium	14	34	2,000,000
City of Garland	Medium	13	33	2,000,000
City of Grand Prairie	Medium	8	--	-
City of Irving	Medium	13	31	2,000,000
City of Lewisville	Small	12	34	1,000,000
City of McKinney	Medium	13	32	2,000,000
City of Mesquite	Small	11	28	750,000
City of North Richland Hills	Small	15	37	1,000,000
City of Plano	Medium	17	45	2,000,000
City of Richardson	Small	12	31	1,000,000
City of Terrell	Small	13	30	1,000,000
<u>Transit: Eligibility Requires Adoption of 5 Policies</u>				
DCTA	Medium	7	12	1,000,000
Trinity Metro	Large	6	11	1,500,000
Total				26,000,000

- Legend
- Did not apply
 - 2 Applied, but did not meet requirements
 - * TDC Allocations based on point tiers beginning in this round

TDC TIERS

AGENCY SIZE	BASELINE EFFORT UP TO 19 POINTS	ADVANTAGE TIER 1 20-29 POINTS	ADVANTAGE TIER 2 30+ POINTS
SMALL pop. up to 200,000	500,000	750,000	1,000,000
MEDIUM up to 800,000	1,000,000	1,500,000	2,000,000
LARGE over 800,000	1,500,000	2,250,000	3,000,000



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

MTP POLICY BUNDLE ROUND 5

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
COUNCIL





SEPTEMBER 14, 2023



MTP POLICY BUNDLE

-  Set of 20 policies from the MTP
-  Voluntary participation
-  Advances regional priorities like safety, air quality, transit
-  Rewards qualifying entities with TDCs

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CREDITS

-  Toll road investment ~a decade ago incentivized by federal government
-  Regional pot of TDCs available for use in the Policy Bundle Program
-  Substitute for required local match for federal projects
-  Frees up local cash to use for other priorities

Recommended TDC Allocations

*Full detail in Electronic
Item provided*

Total: 26,000,000

Agency	Proposed TDCs
Arlington	2,000,000
Dallas	3,000,000
Farmers Branch	750,000
Fort Worth	3,000,000
Frisco	2,000,000
Garland	2,000,000
Irving	2,000,000
Lewisville	1,000,000
McKinney	2,000,000
Mesquite	750,000
North Richland Hills	1,000,000
Plano	2,000,000
Richardson	1,000,000
Terrell	1,000,000
DCTA	1,000,000
Trinity Metro	1,500,000

SCHEDULE

DATE	DESCRIPTION
February 1	Round 5 Opens
March 31	Early Submittal Deadline
May 31	Final Deadline
July 28	STTC – Information
August 10	RTC – Information
August 25	STTC - Action
September 14	RTC - Action
September/October	Formal Notification of Awards

REQUESTED ACTION

Approve NCTCOG staff recommendation for distributing 26,000,000 Transportation Development Credits to successful Policy Bundle applicants as detailed in Reference Item 6.

CONTACT US

Metropolitan Transportation Plan



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TDCs and Transportation Improvement Program



Brian Dell

Principal Transportation Planner

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www.nctcog.org/policybundle



mobilityplan@nctcog.org



NCTCOG PRESENTATION

2023 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program: Application

Regional Transportation Council
Ernest Huffman
9.14.2023

SMART Program & Purpose

Program: Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation
([SMART](#)) Grant Program

Purpose: Demonstration projects using technology interventions to solve real-world challenges and build data and technology capacity and expertise in the public sector

Funding: \$100M/yr.

First year: 30-50 planning grants/\$2M maximum grant

Local match: None for planning grants

Later years: Implementation grants up to \$15M

Application Deadline: 10/10/23



2022 NCTCOG SMART Applications Status

Project 1 – North Texas Micro-Weather Infrastructure for Advanced Air Mobility

Description: Feasibility study to determine viability of regional solution for low altitude weather detection and reporting to support safe deployment of advanced aerial vehicles such as last mile drone delivery services and Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) vehicles

Status – Pivoted to a 2023 Submission with all Autonomous Vehicles as the focus and the City of Fort Worth as the Applicant.

Project 2 - Flooded Roads Information System

Description: Use advanced sensors and big data tools to improve prediction, identification, and reporting of flooded roadways.

Status – NCTCOG to pursue.

Project 3 - Traffic Signal Technology and Deploying AI based ATMS Platforms

Description: Leverage NCTCOG's recent survey of traffic signal equipment to identify, test, and evaluate detection and other technologies. Pilot and evaluate multiple platforms to optimize traffic signals.

Status – TxDOT to pursue.



2023 Proposed SMART Grant Application

Title: North Texas Minimum Viable Unmanned Traffic Management Infrastructure

Description: Feasibility study to determine viability of regional solution for minimum viable Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) Infrastructure to integrate into FAA UTM Key Site Locations

Location: Regionwide

Amount: \$2 million

Local match: None

Key Partners: UTM Key Site Signatories, Federal Aviation Administration, Hillwood, NASA, North Texas AAM Cohort and others

Benefits: Regionally owned and managed infrastructure that is required for drone operations to scale up to efficient Beyond Visual Line Of Sight (BVLOS) Services



2023 SMART Grant Schedule

August 8, 2023 **SMART Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Release**

September 14, 2023 **RTC Action**

September 22, 2023 **STTC Action**

September 28, 2023 **Executive Board**

October 10, 2023 **SMART Application Deadline – Grants.gov**



Request RTC Action

Submittal of North Texas Minimum Viable Unmanned Traffic Management Infrastructure for funding consideration through the **FY23 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Program (\$2M)**

Administratively amend NCTCOG and State Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP / STIP), as well as other planning and administrative documents, to include the proposed project if selected for a FY23 SMART Grant total award (\$2M)



Contact



Ernest Huffman

Program Manager

Aviation Planning and Education

Email: ehuffman@nctcog.org



Michael Morris
Executive Director, Regional Transportation Council
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Re: Regional Transit Study

Regional Transportation Council Board Members:

With the 40th anniversary of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the cities of Carrollton, Irving, Plano and Dallas believe this is an appropriate time for the region to revisit the strategic goals and desired outcomes of regional transit. Forty years ago, 14 area cities had a vision to develop a regional transit system and the development of the services and systems have been fulfilled to serve the needs and vision from 1983. The same year the Fort Worth area formed the Fort Worth Transportation Authority. In addition to DART, there are other transit agencies including Trinity Metro and DCTA who are also charged with providing transit services to meet the rapid growth of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Partnerships between these transit agencies such as the Trinity Railway Express, TEXRail, and A-Train, have demonstrated the importance of system connectivity and regional collaboration that enhances customer experience and drives ridership demand.

As member cities of a transit authority, we acknowledge and embrace that the growth of the region requires an efficient transit solution in order to provide predictable, cost effective, and reliable mobility for residents and businesses. We believe a comprehensive study is needed to assess the effectiveness of regional transit today and what regional transit should look like for the next 40 years. We request the study be commissioned by the Regional Transportation Council as the region's neutral transportation planner. The study must be conducted by a top tier, globally recognized consulting firm (McKinsey, Bain, Deloitte, etc.), to be completed prior to the next Legislative Session, if possible.

Specifically, we would like to request the study address:

- Needs analysis for service types
- Costs of agencies and potential efficiencies
- Membership categories and options
- Revenue commitments/contributions
- State of Texas ferry allocation
- Fares and revenue recovery philosophies
- Barriers to system growth

We member cities of a transit authority believe now is the time for this strategic look at transit solutions to ensure we are meeting the mobility needs of the Metroplex.

Sincerely,



Eric Johnson, Mayor of Dallas



John B. Muns, Mayor of Plano



Steve Babick, Mayor of Carrollton



Oscar Trevino, Mayor of North Richland Hills



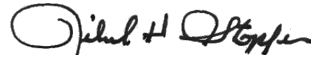
Wes Mays, Mayor of Coppell



Bruce Arfsten, Mayor of Addison



Mattie Parker, Mayor of Fort Worth



Rick Stopfer, Mayor of Irving



Terry Lynne, Mayor of Farmers Branch



Blake Margolis, Mayor of Rowlett



George Fuller, Mayor of McKinney



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REGIONAL TRANSIT VERSION 2.0: PLANNING FOR THE YEAR 2050

CONTEXT: The Transportation Authority – Member City Paradox

At its simplest terms the transportation authority produces a transit plan which meets its financial capacity over a fixed duration of time. Its tax rate is fixed, and it supplies transit services against that assumed forecast while managing annual fluctuations based on economic condition. It also includes revenues from other sources: State-zero funds, transit fare-small; advertising – smaller; and utility easement revenues – even smaller; and federal/Regional Transportation Council funds - significant.

While some sales tax is available to the cities, the cities also depend on variable property tax rates and annual budget requirements in state law. Any additional sales tax capacity is currently capped by state law. Cities have elected officials and transportation authorities have appointed board members, adding to paradox.

For both sides, funding limitations require hard decisions to be made annually - capital investments to be deferred, assets to be maintained and cutting of services to be considered. For cities, balancing the variety of essential services necessary with the demand of more diverse and growing community needs makes these decisions even more challenging.

Since DART collects a 1 cent sales tax, this paradox impacts DART the most. Half cent transit agencies are not immune to this pressure. The paradox occurs when city officials feel hard decisions are not made by the transit agency and going further, easy decisions on efficient service levels are not made either.

So, the problem occurs at the margin since most services are clearly needed. Could the transit authorities improve how they communicate their planning efforts to meet transit demand balanced with revenue forecasts, state of good repair requirements and debt obligations? Will this improved communication and more transparent planning result in a greater partnership between cities and authorities? In Transit Version 2.0, is it possible to better balance regional need for transit services with more localized city needs and demands?

Nationally, transit authorities that must get their budgets approved from higher sources, like legislatures and/or city councils, have significantly less revenue than those with fixed rate dedicated sources and this annual uncertainty can make long term funding of projects and services more challenging. In these cases, the paradox is adjudicated annually during the budget process as the city council or legislatures consider the funding challenges and priorities for a larger set of circumstances. This is the city budget model as well.

So recent transit policy discussions in fixed rate financial plans revolves around free fares, revenue reimbursements to cities and distribution of sometimes inefficient

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services. “I’ll take empty buses over no buses”, would be an example of the current problems.

What if the process was reversed? Review all the costs into the future, re-assess needs based on future growth and desired regional outcomes, pursue revenues, and propose a sales tax rate that meets the long-term need. Maybe a transit authority should pursue state revenues, not propose free fares, not reimburse cities in an ad-hoc manner, and pursue the benefits of new members. In addition, should attention be placed on debt payments, long-term service plans, capital asset inventories, new effective services, reduction in inefficient services and a modernized fare collection program. The consideration of lost opportunity costs inside and outside of transit is essential.

Increased communication can eliminate this paradox and this study is intended to assist. Knowing transit agency needs for state of good repair is critical. Our region depends on it.

Currently there is no evidence that a lower tax rate at DART is possible. If it is possible, what are the impacts to service, debt obligations and future service commitments. Understanding these impacts balanced with the future growth needs of the region would certainly assist in local elected officials and transit authority board members working more closely in unison to achieve mutually desirable outcomes. Doing so will reduce trips to the legislature. If this project is approved, transportation authorities and cities are committing to resolve differences here at home.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex will continue unprecedented growth over the next 20 to 30 years. Current projections forecast an influx of four million new residents to the region and an addition of three million jobs. This substantial growth will compound a seemingly insatiable demand for passenger and goods movement that has already exacerbated the limited capacity of the region’s streets and highways.

In light of this phenomenon, a regional transit study to explain Transit Version 2.0 will be undertaken to shed light on the critical transportation investments necessary and lost opportunity costs for other investments. Acknowledging that optimal use of public transportation provides more people movement capacity in less space and frees up roadway capacity for all other users, the study will consider the following scope:

1. Partnership models for public transit in the Metroplex
 - a. Operations implications and benefits
2. Potential ways to fund public transportation in the Metroplex, including membership vs. non-member models
3. Available funding sources at the regional and state levels

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4. Potential ways to better leverage the economic development benefits of public transportation investment to create incentives for people and companies to locate where there is a variety of transportation modes available
5. Policy considerations of the various governance and funding proposals
 - a. Enabling policy
 - b. Policy barriers or changes
 - c. Inclusion of Opportunity Costs

This effort is not intended to create a regional rail authority or change the independent authority of each of the three current transportation boards of directors.

Who:

Funded by the Regional Transportation Council. The proposed Policy Committee is RTC members from transportation authority cities and transit authority board members.

What: Seven Components of the Study

1. Legislative Categories of Study – Example Questions

Are there opportunities to get annual Texas Metropolitan Mobility Funds for regional rail operations?

Should 4A and 4B non-member cities be able to recruit employers from transportation authority cities?

2. What other legislative strategies could fund transit in new communities and create 4A/4B opportunities in transportation authority cities? How do transit authorities increase membership in transportation authorities or through their local government corporations? Is it better to change current RTC policy and increase the number of authorities?
3. Can the three transportation authorities work together more efficiently to lower transit costs and increase system ridership between systems? For example, can rail operation contracts be bundled for greater efficiency?
4. Demographic growth is higher outside transportation authorities than within. How can transportation authorities develop new tools with local governments to reverse this trend? Can more development be placed on near existing transportation stations increasing economies of scale and creating air quality benefits.
5. Improve Board teamwork to reduce bylaw issues. For example, Denton County Transportation Authority bylaws were recently brought to the Texas Legislature.

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6. Review fare collection strategies to increase ridership without lowering revenue. Are there membership loyalty opportunities?
7. Pursue resolution of the transit authority – city paradox described above, this would include the efficiency and effectiveness of different types of transit service. This would include agency cost, and efficiencies between transit authorities. Do the transit agencies have the correct tax rate to meet the needs discussed? Is it higher or lower? If transit agencies reviewed opportunity costs options would partnerships develop?

When:

The Executive Board meets in November 2023 and January 2024. The Regional Transportation Council meets monthly. The RTC will be briefed in September for information and proposed action in October 2023. The Executive Board will select the consultant. A committee of staff persons from the transportation authorities, cities, and NCTCOG will recommend a consultant.

The Executive Board will be requested to approve in November 2023 or January 2024. The legislative item will be completed by August/September of 2024 and the final report will be out in December 2024/January 2025.

Where:

The boundary of the 12-County Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary.

Why:

Transportation authorities have been going to the Legislature to solve local problems. These problems should be first solved by the respective Board of Directors. If unsuccessful, they should come to the Regional Transportation Council. This effort is to comprehensively address a series of regional and sub-regional transit questions. They are listed in the “What” section above.

How:

By a consultant team working for RTC members from transportation authorities and member cities of authorities. It will be coordinated by NCTCOG staff.

How Much:

Proposed \$1M+ in RTC local plus previous study reports. The reports are:

1. Regional Transit Coordination – 2002 (Prepared for DART by LKC Consulting Services, Inc.)
2. Regional Transit Initiative – 2004 (Regional Transportation Council)
3. Rail Transit System Review – 2006 (Regional Transportation Council)

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4. Rail North Texas/Texas Local Option Transportation Act – 2008 (Regional Transportation Council)
5. Recent Regional Rail Options by DART

Transit agency plans will be sent to the winning consultant as well.

A similar effort was done of NTTA several years ago, resulting in dozens of new initiatives. It was coordinated by a consultant for the 4 county Judges.

Source: NCTCOG, September 2023, Version 2



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



Regional Transportation Council



Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES

North Texas Electric Vehicle Update

Amy Hodges

Regional Transportation Council

September 14, 2023

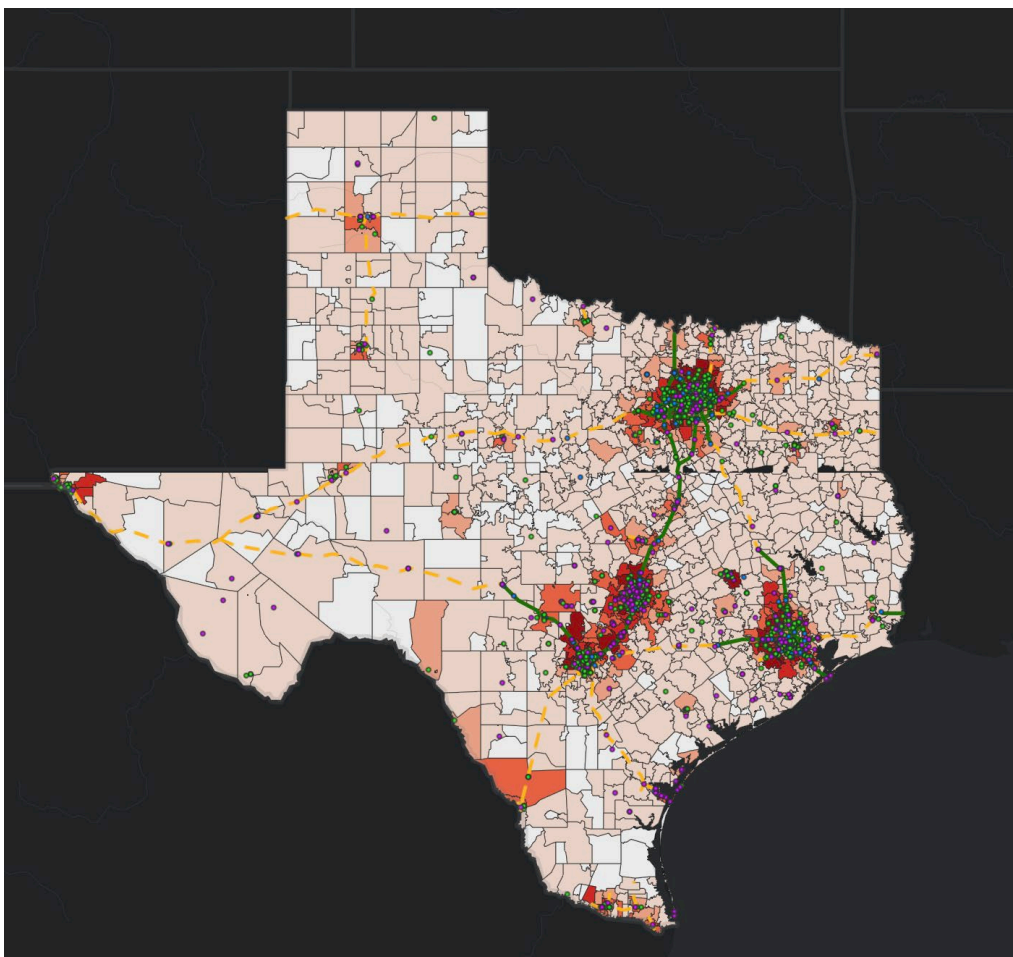
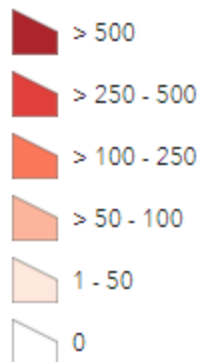
Texas Data And Trends

EV Charging Type

- DC Fast Charge
- Tesla
- Level 2

Zip Code EV Registration

Electric Vehicles



Source: NCTCOG



North Texas Electric Vehicle Update

EV Registration Data

Region	August 2022	August 2023	Increase
Texas	140,014	218,889	56%
Dallas-Fort Worth	49,783	81,093	63%
Austin	29,550	43,321	47%
San Antonio	13,960	21,102	51%
Houston	32,787	52,949	61%

Data Source: TxDOT DMV Registration; data as of August 29, 2023

Charging Sites Statewide (includes Tesla):

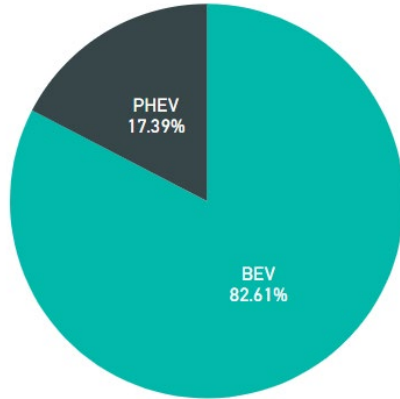
- 2,692 Level 2
- 426 DC Fast

www.dfwcleancities.org/evsintexas

www.dfwcleancities.org/evsinnorthtexas

North Texas Data And Trends

EV Technology



Top 5 EV Models

Tesla Model 3	20,926
Tesla Model Y	19,323
Tesla Model S	6,316
Tesla Model X	3,736
Chevrolet Volt	1,792



EV Registration Data

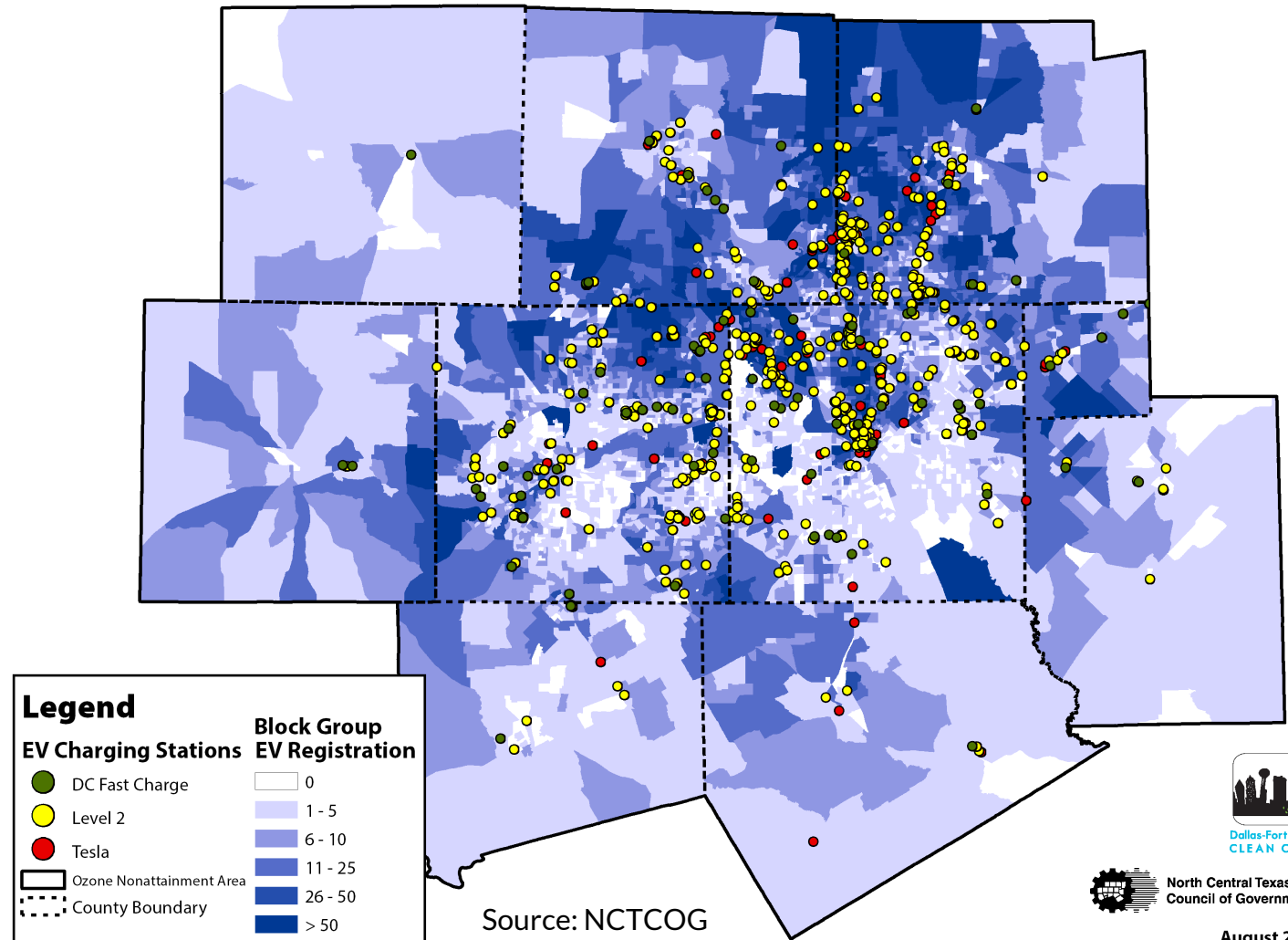
County	August 2022	August 2023	Increase
Collin	12,565	22,112	76%
Dallas	14,747	22,620	53%
Denton	8,942	15,208	70%
Ellis	634	977	54%
Hood	225	307	36%
Hunt	187	285	52%
Johnson	450	681	51%
Kaufman	426	878	106%
Parker	555	880	59%
Rockwall	781	1,176	51%
Tarrant	9,986	15,555	56%
Wise	124	194	56%

EV Adoption and Infrastructure Availability

EV Registration and EVSE in Ozone Nonattainment Area

County	Level 2 Plugs*	DC Fast Charge Plugs*
Collin	330	13
Dallas	676	59
Denton	137	31
Ellis	8	4
Johnson	16	2
Kaufman	16	7
Parker	4	3
Rockwall	10	6
Tarrant	409	42
Wise	1	1

*As of August 2023; Excludes Tesla Stations



National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Funding Impacts to Texas

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to Administer ~\$408 M Over Five Years to Deploy EV Charging in Texas

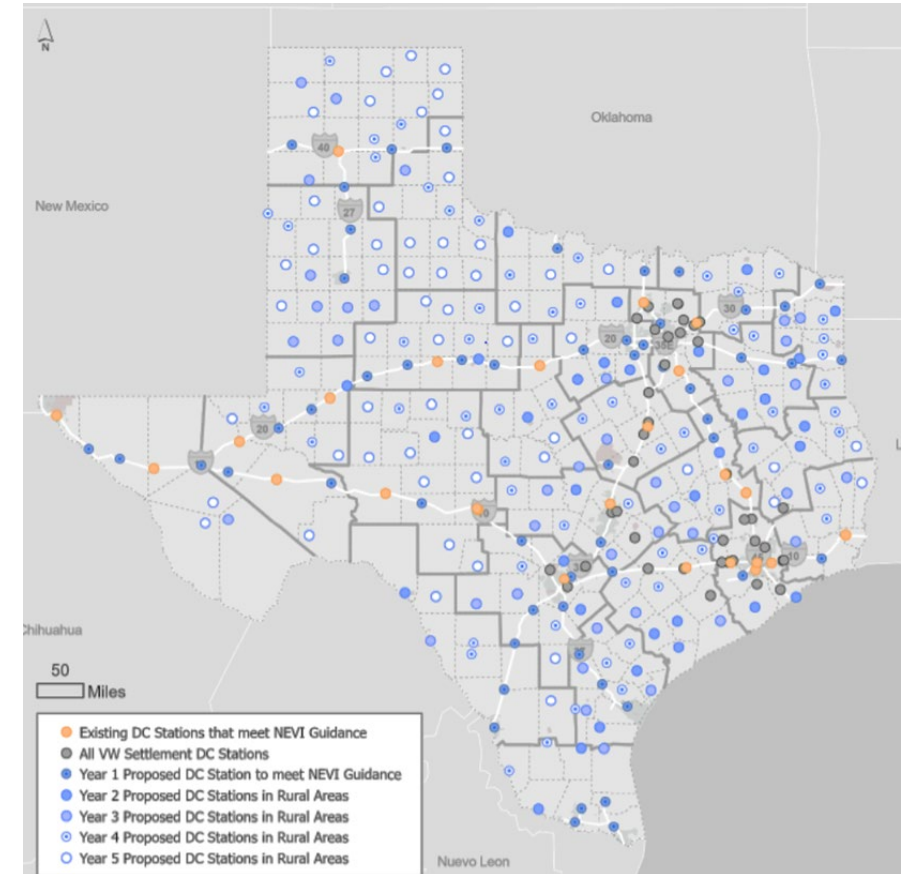
[Texas EV Charging Plan](#)

Phase 1: Install DC Fast Charging in Recommended Study Areas Along Designated Corridors

- One Qualifying Station Every 50 miles
- Competitive Grant Program Now Open
 - Applications due: October 16, 2023
 - [Texas electric vehicle planning \(txdot.gov\)](https://www.txdot.gov/electric-vehicle-planning)

Phase 2: Two Parallel Approaches

- Build Infrastructure in Rural Areas, Focused on County Seats
- Work with Metropolitan Planning Organizations to Build Infrastructure in Urbanized Areas
 - See Interactive Map to **identify new charging sites**, preferred charging types and provide comments



Source: TxDOT



Oncor's Electrification Efforts

Oncor's EVolution Program

- Ensure Adequate Infrastructure Planning for Fleets to Maximize Efficiency and Profitability
 - No Cost to Participate
 - Fleet Managers and Program Partners can Enroll!
 - [EVOLUTION \(oncor.com\)](https://oncor.com/evolution)



Oncor's Managed EV Charging Study

- EVolution Participants are Eligible to Participate
- Provides up to \$25,000 for Commercial Fleets to Work with Oncor on Peak Demand Shifting and Other Energy Efficiency Objectives
 - Participants Must Have 5 EV Chargers or at Least 2 Medium- Heavy-Duty EVs
 - Participants Must Attend Monthly Meetings
- Contact Joshua.Emeter@oncor.com for more information



Upcoming Events

Regional EV Infrastructure Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023, 2:00 – 3:30pm

NCTCOG Transportation Council Room

Register at [DFW Clean Cities Events](https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events)

Dallas-Fort Worth National Drive Electric Week

Sunday, October 1, 2023, 2:00 – 5:00pm

Tanger Outlets

15853 North Fwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177

Register and learn more at <https://www.dfwcleancities.org/ndew>



2022 National Drive Electric Week Event



Contact Us



Amy Hodges
Principal Air Quality Planner
ahodges@nctcog.org



Lori Clark
Senior Program Manager
& DFWCC Director
lclark@nctcog.org



**Dallas-Fort Worth
CLEAN CITIES**

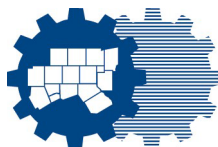


dfwcleancities.org



cleancities@nctcog.org





North Central Texas Council of Governments

July 17, 2023

Ms. Denine Calvin, MC 206
State Implementation Plan Team – Air Quality Division
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
PO Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

RE: Dallas-Fort Worth Moderate Area Attainment Demonstration SIP Revision for the 2015 Eight-Hour Ozone NAAQS (2022-021-SIP-NR)

Dear Ms. Calvin:

Please accept the following comments regarding the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) revisions to the Texas State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) nonattainment area for the 2015 eight-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) moderate classification: ***Dallas-Fort Worth Moderate Area Attainment Demonstration SIP Revision for the 2015 Eight-Hour Ozone NAAQS (2022-021-SIP-NR)***, proposed on May 31, 2023.

This effort results from the DFW moderate nonattainment area for the 2015 NAAQS of 70 parts per billion (ppb), consisting of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Tarrant, and Wise Counties, not attaining the August 3, 2021 attainment date. Based on 2018, 2019, and 2020 monitoring data, the DFW area did not attain the 2015 eight-hour NAAQS in 2020 and did not qualify for a one-year attainment date extension in accordance with the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA). On October 7, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a final notice reclassifying the DFW area to moderate nonattainment for the 2015 eight-hour ozone NAAQS. This reclassification was effective on November 7, 2022.

In response to EPA's reclassification, the area is now subject to the moderate nonattainment area requirements in the FCAA that the TCEQ is required to submit moderate classification attainment demonstration (AD) and reasonable further progress (RFP) SIP revisions to the EPA. The attainment date for a moderate classification is August 3, 2024 with a 2023 attainment year. The EPA set a January 1, 2023 deadline for states to submit AD and RFP SIP revisions to address the 2015 eight-hour ozone standard moderate nonattainment area requirements. We commend the TCEQ for devoting limited resources and quickly turning around this SIP for the 2023 attainment year.

Attainment Demonstration On-road Emissions Inventories, Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets, and Appendix E (Local Initiatives Submitted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments)

July 17, 2023

Part of the EPA's approval process of this SIP will be to consider the adequacy of Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB), based on the on-road emission inventories contained in the SIP narrative. Once declared adequate by the EPA, updated MVEBs are required for use in all subsequent transportation conformities. Due to the local responsibility and regional importance of transportation conformity to the implementation of long-range transportation plans, staff has reviewed the proposed SIP and concurs with the following:

- On-road mobile source NO_x and VOC emissions (Section 3.4.2, Table 3-5, page 3-12 and Table 3-6, page 3-13) and
- Resulting 2023 NO_x and VOC motor vehicle emission budgets of 71.34 tons per day and 38.21 tons per day respectively (Section 4.6, Table 4-2, page 4-9)
- Listing and description of local volunteer projects and programs (Appendix E: Local Initiatives Submitted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, pages 1-15)

These on-road emission inventories are developed using inputs from NCTCOG's Travel Demand Model and other local inputs, resulting in inventories based on the region's parameters. The development of these on-road emission inventories by NCTCOG staff and resources also minimizes the risk for an area the size of Dallas-Fort Worth, with transportation investments totaling \$148 billion. We appreciate the relationship with the TCEQ working together to develop emission inventories and various projects and programs implemented in the North Central Texas region.

NCTCOG continues to develop local area strategies to help improve air quality. These projects and programs are expected to be fully implemented by the nine-county 2015 ozone NAAQS nonattainment area by the end of 2023. The continued progress of these strategies will allow for additional air quality benefits to be gained with further reduction in pollution. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these local initiatives (Appendix E) and continued collaboration between our agencies to mitigate health and environmental impacts of pollution in the DFW region.

Photochemical Modeling

NCTCOG observed significant differences between what the forecasted photochemical modeling suggests (Table ES-2, page ES-3) as compared to what is happening at certain monitors:

- The TCEQ's photochemical modeling predicted that the DFW nine-county 2015 Ozone NAAQS Moderate nonattainment area would have a 2023 design value forecast of 73 ppb, with Frisco as the driving monitor.
- The Denton Airport South monitor is forecasted to have a design value forecast of 70 ppb. In comparison with the ongoing 2023 Ozone Season, the region's design value is at 78 ppb with Denton Airport South as the driving monitor (as of July 10, 2023).
- Most of the monitors are approximately 2 to 3 ppb difference between the ozone design value forecast in the SIP and their respective monitor design value (as of July 10, 2023).
- Significant modeling vs. monitor variances exists between Denton Airport South (around 8 ppb lower), Fort Worth Northwest (around 7 ppb lower), and Pilot Point (around 6 ppb lower).

July 17, 2023

If the SIP was proposed years in advance of an attainment deadline, these comparisons would not be timely due to the lag, but with this proposed SIP being in the same year as the modeling year, the comparison is much more appropriate.

Due to the results of TCEQ's photochemical model performance, we request a thorough, peer reviewed assessment of every component to determine why the following results are so significant. This state-predicted forecast is a critical tool for planning to ensure the implementation of the best strategies, quantify emissions reduction measures, and aid in reaching ozone attainment. It is understood that future case modeling is only an estimate and doesn't produce absolute values, however, such large differences between the modeled design value forecast and the region's observed monitor values is not acceptable.

After reviewing the 'Photochemical Modeling Performance Evaluation' (Section 3.5, pages 3-15 to 3-18) in the proposed SIP and the '2019 Modeling Platform Updates' presentation at the DFW Air Quality Technical Information Meeting on August 24, 2022, we understand that the model performance metrics meet EPA modeling guidance. Respectfully, we have the following observations and comments:

Even though the TCEQ's photochemical performance is within EPA's modeling guidance, it is significantly off from real-world observances, and we believe further evaluation is needed. TCEQ is applauded for a 15 percent normalized mean bias for all the monitors except the Cleburne Airport monitor, however, it still does not achieve desirable results. We recommend establishing more Texas-level or region-specific criteria rather than tweaking the EPA/national guidance.

The results contain a systematic under-prediction of the values in the photochemical model. We request a further assessment of the established modeling platform with any necessary updates/revisions to be done for future work.

NCTCOG is aware that the established base-year modeling platform will be used to complete the analysis for the 2026 analysis year for the 2008 ozone NAAQS Severe ADSIP. With the 2023 analysis year, which is almost a midpoint between the base year of 2019 and analysis year 2026, and seeing such large differences between modeling outputs compared to observed monitor values, we recommend a peer-based, bottom-up review of current modeling tools and assumptions. Concern is that such differences will be carried into the 2026 analysis year and automatically conclude attainment will be reached. Recent trend suggests that not to be the case.

Below is a matrix showing the anthropogenic emissions for analysis years from multiple ADSIP emissions inventories for the DFW 2008 ozone NAAQS 10-county nonattainment area. Despite the decrease in various sources of local emissions from 2006 to 2023, the ozone design value continues to be in an upward trend and is at 78 ppb (as of July 10, 2023). We understand that the

July 17, 2023

background ozone generally accounts for approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of the total ozone concentration, and the remaining one-fourth to one-third is locally attributable. Since we can only reduce so much more of the local contributions, we encourage the TCEQ to investigate this further and work with EPA to modernize/update parameters governing ozone transport and implement rules that would not subject regional airshed to reduce emissions they are not responsible for producing.

DFW 10-County Nonattainment Area Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) (tons/day)						
Sources	Analysis Years				% Change from 2006 to 2023	% Change from 2023 to 2026
	2006	2017	2023	2026		
On-Road Mobile	284.27	130.77	72.30	60.20	-75%	-17%
Non-Road Mobile	98.06	45.54	34.38	32.03	-65%	-7%
Off-Road Mobile	32.92	25.24	23.59	24.59	-28%	4%
Point (All sources)	57.55	54.80	42.34	42.00	-26%	-1%
Oil & Gas (Production & Drill Rigs)	80.07	13.87	3.61	1.86	-95%	-48%
Area	29.02	26.55	31.33	32.17	8%	3%
Total	581.89	296.77	207.55	192.85	-64%	-7%
DFW 10-County Nonattainment Area Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) (tons/day)						
Sources	Analysis Years				% Change from 2006 to 2023	% Change from 2023 to 2026
	2006	2017	2023	2026		
On-Road Mobile	116.50	64.91	38.74	33.27	-67%	-14%
Non-Road Mobile	64.69	34.01	42.68	44.12	-34%	3%
Off-Road Mobile	5.74	3.66	4.60	4.86	-20%	6%
Point (All sources)	50.44	47.38	23.53	23.56	-53%	0%
Oil & Gas (Production & Drill Rigs)	44.88	32.18	24.72	11.80	-45%	-52%
Area	290.46	236.70	265.77	275.73	-9%	4%
Total	572.71	418.84	400.04	393.34	-30%	-2%

Technical Information Meetings

NCTCOG requests the TCEQ to organize more engagement and information meetings for the DFW region allowing clear evolution of the technical outcomes, not only closer to the SIP proposal timeframe, but for results to not be a surprise to those outside TCEQ. The discussions should cover concluding results and summaries of the anthropogenic modeling emissions, ozone design values of base case, design values forecasted, etc. After completing the modeling platform assessment, the TCEQ is requested to perform scenario-based planning runs (such as zero-out runs on various emissions source categories, time-of-day analysis, etc.) and present these sensitivities at the technical information meetings as well.

Regional Air Quality

With the design value forecast for the 2023 analysis year at 73 ppb (3 ppb more than the EPA's 2015 Ozone NAAQS) and with EPA disapproving the existing contingency measures, a discussion on comprehensive control strategies and air quality programs will benefit the region. NCTCOG staff is evaluating existing emissions reductions strategies and hosting sessions for local governments and the public to solicit ideas for multi-pollutant emissions reductions strategies in the coming months. Any relevant information gathered from these meetings will be shared with the TCEQ.

It is disappointing that the TCEQ is not taking a stronger role in advocating and requesting dedicated monies through the Legislative Appropriations that is available for targeted air quality reductions:

Local Initiatives Project (LIP) and Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit, and Accelerated Vehicle Retirement Program (LIRAP) Regional task forces were funded under LIP and had made significant impacts. There still exists approximately \$176 million in Clean Air Account 151 which, if reappropriated back to nonattainment regions, would fund local emissions enforcement task forces to combat fraudulent vehicle emissions inspections, reduce, high emitting vehicles, and other air quality/transportation initiatives.

The Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) also has over \$2 Billion in dedicated revenue (fund 5071). Assuming half of this is appropriated to the DFW area and based on the cost per ton estimates in TCEQ December 2022 Biennial Report (\$8,787 per ton), a potential reduction of around 45 tons per day of NO_x and approximately 1.5 ppb of ozone is possible.

The attainment and maintenance of federal ambient air quality standards is vital for the region as well as the state. NCTCOG will continue to support the TCEQ to reach ozone attainment for the region and proposes a continuation of efforts and partnership through the reinstatement of a North Texas Clean Air Steering Committee as needed that NCTCOG would be willing to host and facilitate.

Ms. Denine Calvin
Page Six

July 17, 2023

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on TCEQ's revisions to the DFW ADSIP, as well as the continued partnership between our agencies. NCTCOG thanks the TCEQ staff for their time and resources spent attending public hearings to discuss SIP updates, and for their follow-up with comments and suggestions. NCTCOG staff is committed to continuing to implement projects and programs and collaborate with partners agencies to reduce emissions in the DFW region.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at cklaus@nctcog.org or (817) 695-9286.

Sincerely,

Chris Klaus

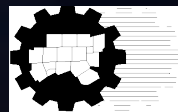
Chris Klaus
Senior Program Manager
North Central Texas Council of Governments

VT:bw

2022 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORT

Regional Transportation Council Meeting

Sonya J. Landrum
Program Manager
September 14, 2023



North Central Texas Council of Governments



2022 Safety Performance Measures Overview

- Federal Safety Performance Targets vs. NCTCOG Performance Targets
- Annual Safety Report Highlights
- Regional Roadway Safety Plan Focus Areas
- Statewide TXDOT and MPO Task Force

Annual Safety Report available here - <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/safety/transportation-safety>



Federal Safety Performance Targets - TxDOT vs. NCTCOG

Safety Performance Targets	2021 TxDOT Targets	2021 NCTCOG Targets	2022 TxDOT Targets	2022 NCTCOG Targets	2023 TxDOT Targets	2023 NCTCOG Targets
	1.6% Reduction		2% Reduction		Fatalities - See Note Injuries - 2%	
No. of Fatalities	3,687*	3,687*	3,563*	579.5	3,628.0*	590.4*
Fatality Rate	1.33*	1.33*	1.27*	0.755	1.38*	0.767*
No. of Serious Injuries	17,151	17,151	16,677	3,032.9	17,062.0	3,711.5
Serious Injury Rate	6.06	6.06	5.76	3.939	6.39	4.615
No. of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	2,316.4	2,316.4	2,367	594.7	2,357	637

Note: *2022 & 2023 Targets for TxDOT include new 50% reduction by 2035 targets for fatalities and fatality rate only.

2018 - 2022 Crash Statistics: 12-County MPA

2018 - 2022 Crashes						
County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-2022
Collin	13,215	13,950	10,271	12,380	13,820	11.63%
Dallas	49,733	55,261	48,294	55,367	54,551	-1.47%
Denton	11,770	12,188	9,554	11,403	11,957	4.86%
Ellis	2,811	2,798	2,841	3,302	3,228	-2.24%
Hood	725	798	708	804	812	1.00%
Hunt	1,470	1,364	1,362	1,781	1,604	-9.94%
Johnson	2,367	2,393	2,193	2,776	2,737	-1.40%
Kaufman	2,130	2,015	1,956	2,227	2,280	2.38%
Parker	2,221	2,201	2,036	2,640	2,525	-4.36%
Rockwall	1,417	1,591	1,424	1,751	1,864	6.45%
Tarrant	33,090	32,464	27,432	30,722	29,004	-5.59%
Wise	971	931	901	1,021	1,148	12.44%
Total	121,920	127,954	108,972	126,174	125,530	-0.51%

2018 - 2022 Fatality Statistics: 12-County MPA

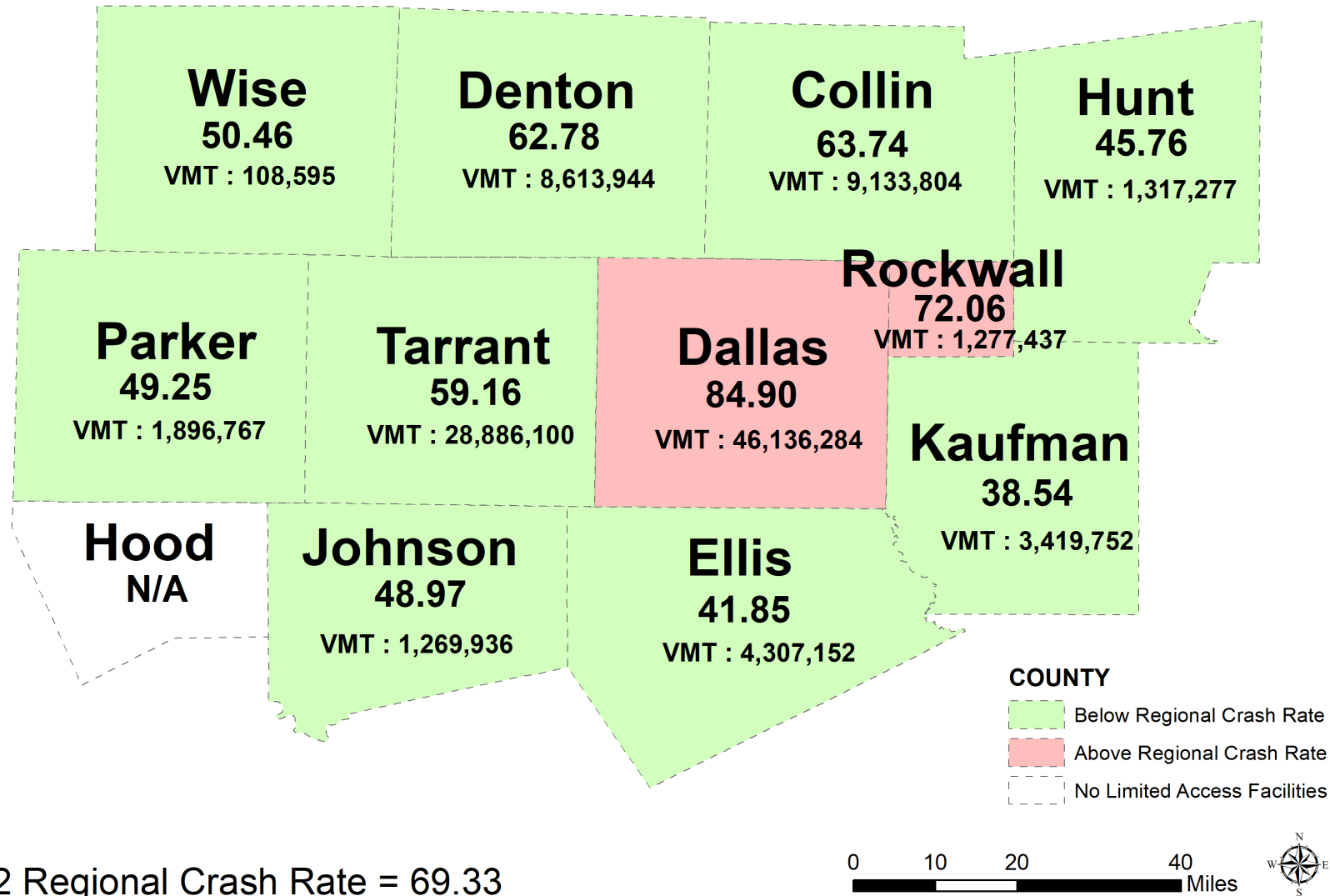
2018 - 2022 Fatalities						
County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-2022
Collin	45	53	64	51	77	50.98%
Dallas	295	271	333	354	355	0.28%
Denton	51	52	59	67	51	-23.88%
Ellis	16	27	49	36	33	-8.33%
Hood	5	12	10	13	11	-15.38%
Hunt	17	25	26	38	15	-60.53%
Johnson	23	39	20	39	37	-5.13%
Kaufman	25	32	33	36	25	-30.56%
Parker	29	26	21	28	15	-46.43%
Rockwall	8	2	7	10	7	-30.00%
Tarrant	169	171	189	228	215	-5.70%
Wise	16	14	11	21	23	9.52%
Total	699	724	822	921	864	-6.19%

2022 Contributing Factors – Serious Injury and Fatal Crashes

	Top Ten Contributing Factors — Limited Access Facilities Only	2021	2022
1	Speeding (Overlimit / Unsafe Speed / Failed to Control Speed)	32.21%	30.56%
2	Driver Related (Driver Inattention / Distraction in Vehicle / Drove Without Headlights / Road Rage / Followed Too Closely / Cell/Mobile Device Use (Talking / Texting / Other [0.28%])	13.96%	16.24%
3	Impaired Driving (Intoxicated: Alcohol/Drug / Had Been Drinking / Taking Medication / Fatigued or Asleep)	12.10%	11.89%
4	Failed to Drive in Single Lane	10.45%	10.33%
5	Faulty Evasive Action	8.35%	8.05%
6	Changed Lane When Unsafe	7.10%	7.34%
7	Pedestrian Related (Failed to Yield Right of Way to Vehicle)	5.24%	5.56%
8	Disabled in Traffic Lane	5.60%	3.63%
9	Wrong Way Driving (Wrong Way - One Way Road / Wrong Side - Approach or Intersection / Wrong Side - Not Passing)	1.42%	1.78%
10	Ill (Sick)	0.99%	1.14%

Note: Contributing Factor Analysis includes Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Contributing Factors on limited access facilities.

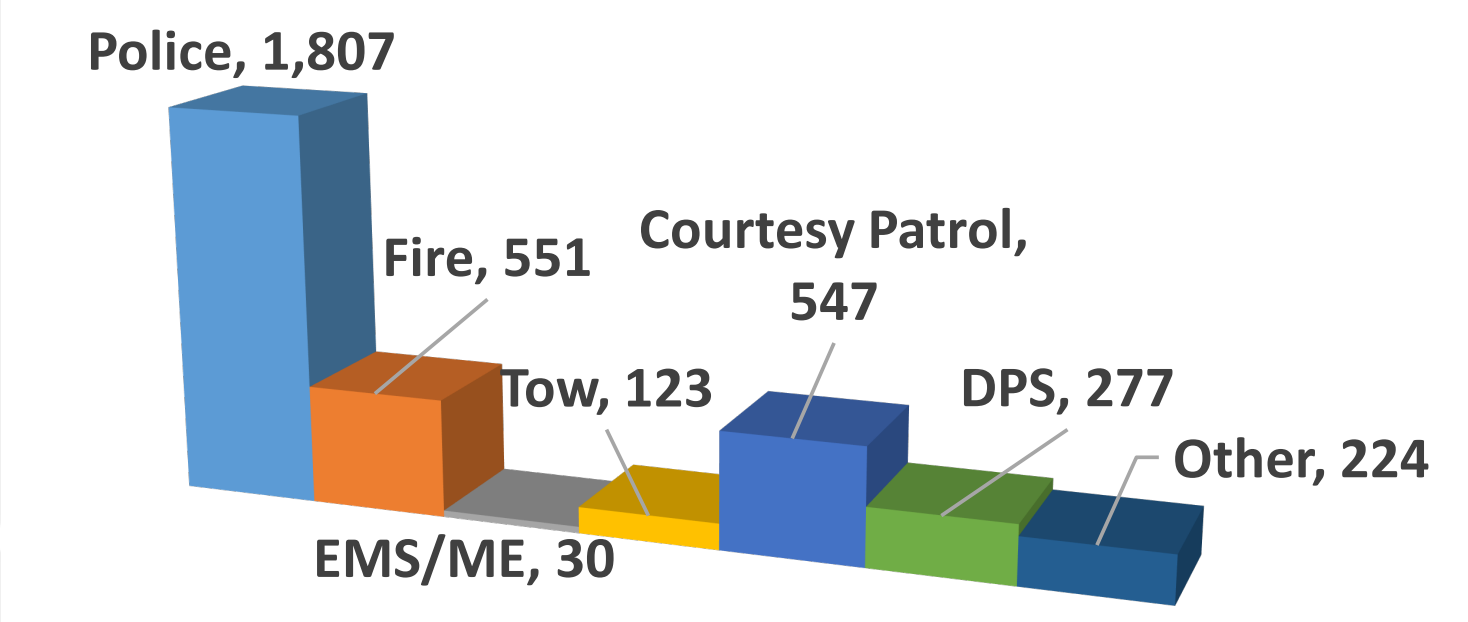
2022 Crash Rates By County



Note:
Crash Rates calculated for limited access facilities: IH, SH, and US mainlanes.

Traffic Incident Management Attendance

➤ **First Responders Training (2003-2022): 3,559 Attendees**



➤ **Executive Level Training (2005-2022): 1,173 Attendees**

Police	Fire	City Staff	Elected Officials	Public Works/ Strategic Services Transportation	Medical Staff	Other	Total (February 2005 - May 2023)
483	232	40	15	66	23	314	1,173

Regional Roadside Assistance Patrol Program

In 2022, Dallas/Fort Worth Area Roadside Assistance Patrols

provided:



68,416

Driver Assistance /
Stalled Vehicle



29,081

Courtesy Check /
Directions



5,219

Crash
Assistance



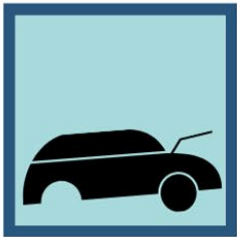
14,641

Debris
Removal



15,969

Protection to
First Responders



8,564

Abandoned
Vehicle Check

Total Combined Assists: 144,371

Note:

Data includes Dallas County, Tarrant County, and NTTA motorist assists combined.

2,481 assists were either not found, cancelled before a patrol vehicle arrived, or did not specify the service provided.

NCTCOG Regional Roadway Safety Plan

Approved by the Regional Transportation Council in March 2023

Regional Safety Plan Goals

- Eliminate fatal crashes from all modes of travel by 2050.
- Prioritize safety in roadway project selection and provide guidance on countermeasure development to partner agencies.
- Fund and implement safety projects and policies equitably to ensure safe transportation access for all road users.
- Work with partners to foster a culture of safety that utilizes the safe systems approach; and develop behavioral and educational countermeasures to address dangerous driving behaviors.
- Implement a proactive approach to roadway safety to identify problems before they occur.
- Work with police to effectively enforce traffic rules and traffic management professionals to improve quick clearance strategies.

Regional Safety Plan Emphasis Areas

- Speeding; Distracted driving; Impaired driving; Intersection safety; Bicyclist and pedestrian safety; Roadway and lane departures; Occupant protection; and Motorcycles
- Additional Areas of Concern - Wrong way driving; Crashes occurring at night; Younger drivers; and Older road users (65+)

Statewide TXDOT and MPO Safety Task Force

- Developed a five-year proposal to identify best practice, recommendations, and new ideas to reduce fatalities, injuries, and crashes.
- TxDOT committed \$50,000 to statewide MPOs to support safety efforts.
- Friends of the Safety Committee will continue to promote safety initiatives.

Required Annual TxDOT and MPO Performance Measures

Annual Performance Measures	Statewide Safety Task Force	Located in NCTCOG Safety Report
No. of Fatalities	TXDOT/MPO	Page 2
Fatality Rate	TXDOT/MPO	Page 2
Number of Law Enforcement Encounters During Grant-Funded or MPO Funded Activities	TxDOT/MPO	Future
Number of Safety Related Programs	TxDOT/MPO	Survey in Progress
Number of Education Related Programs	TxDOT/MPO	Survey in Progress

NCTCOG Safety Program Contacts

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Michael Misantonis

Transportation Planner

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NCTCOG Regional Crash Fact Sheet (Calendar Year 2022)

1. The Fatality Rate on North Central Texas (12-county) roadways for 2022 was 1.068 deaths per hundred million vehicle miles traveled. This is a decrease from the 2021 fatality rate.
2. The North Central Texas (12-county) Region experienced a decrease in the number of motor vehicle traffic fatalities. The 2022 death toll of 864 was a decrease of 5.78% from the 917 deaths recorded in 2021.
3. There were 3,852 serious injury crashes in the North Central Texas (12-county) Region in 2022 with 4,518 people sustaining a serious injury.
4. Fatalities in traffic crashes in rural areas of the North Central Texas (12-county) Region accounted for 19.21% of the region's traffic fatalities. There were 166 deaths in rural traffic crashes.*
5. Single vehicle, run off the road crashes resulted in 266 deaths in 2022. This was 31% of all motor vehicle traffic deaths.
6. In 2022, there were 197 people killed in crashes occurring at or related to an intersection.
7. There were 77 people killed in head-on crashes in 2022.
8. Based on reportable crashes in 2022:
 - 1 person was killed every 10 hours and 9 minutes.
 - 1 person was injured every 16 minutes 26 seconds.
 - 1 reportable crash occurred every 4 minutes 11 seconds.
9. Of all persons killed in vehicles where restraint usage was applicable and usage was known in 2022, 18.48% were reported as not restrained when the fatal crash occurred.
10. 59,708 persons were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2022.
11. There were 126 motorcyclists (operators and passengers) killed in 2022. About 29% of motorcyclists killed were not wearing helmets at the time of the crash.
12. Pedestrian fatalities totaled 206 in 2022. This is a 0.48% decrease from 2021.
13. Pedalcyclist fatalities totaled 23 in 2022. This is a 76.92.46% increase from 2022.
14. In 2022, there were 237 people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes where the use of alcohol was cited by police as a crash contributing factor. This is 29% of the total number of people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes.
15. During 2022, 52% of alcohol-related crashes were reported from between 10:00 PM and 3:59 AM. Also, 46.8% of alcohol-related crashes occurred on weekends.
16. In 2022, there were 71 people killed in crashes involving distracted driving. This is a 31.48% increase from 2021.

*Rural is defined as a geographical location having a population of less than 5,000.



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

2022 Safety Program Performance Measures

NCTCOG's Support of Federal Safety Performance Targets

- NCTCOG Aspirational Safety Goal: Even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable. Staff will work with our partners to develop projects, programs, and policies that assist in eliminating serious injuries and fatalities across all modes of travel.
- On February 9, 2023, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) adopted new Highway Safety Improvement Program Performance Targets (i.e. PM1) as established by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in collaboration with statewide stakeholders.
- The updated performance measures target a 50 percent reduction in the number of fatalities, fatality rates, and bike and pedestrian fatalities by target year 2035. This goal is in line with both TxDOT and RTC's goals of zero fatalities by 2050. Serious injuries, serious injury rates, and bike and pedestrian serious injuries now target a two percent reduction from the five-year trendline each year.
- Targets are based on a five-year rolling average and are revisited annually.

Safety Performance Targets	2021 TxDOT Targets	2021 NCTCOG Targets	2022 TxDOT Targets	2022 NCTCOG Targets	2023 TxDOT Targets	2023 NCTCOG Targets
	1.6% Reduction		2% Reduction		Fatalities - See Note	
No. of Fatalities	3,687*	3,687*	3,563*	579.5	3,628.0*	590.4*
Fatality Rate	1.33*	1.33*	1.27*	0.755	1.38*	0.767*
No. of Serious Injuries	17,151	17,151	16,677	3,032.9	17,062.0	3,711.5
Serious Injury Rate	6.06	6.06	5.76	3.939	6.39	4.615
No. of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	2,316.4	2,316.4	2,367	594.7	2,357	637

*Fatality and fatality rate targets represent a 50 percent reduction by 2035, while serious injury related measures target a two percent reduction from the trendline each year.

Actual Safety Performance Reporting for 2021 Targets

Safety Performance Measures	Original 2021 Target	PY2021 Actual Performance	PY2015-2019 Baseline Performance	Met Target?	Better than the Baseline?	Met or Made Significant Progress?
Number of Fatalities	572.4	614.2	557.2	No	No	No
Rate of Fatalities	0.762	0.814	0.781	No	No	
Number of Serious Injuries	3,375.3	3,647.6	3,663.1	No	Yes	
Rate of Serious Injuries	4.485	4.843	5.2	No	Yes	
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	592.3	617	569.8	No	No	

- Actual Performance reporting of Safety Performance Targets is completed on a two-year delay.
- Reporting of 2021 Actual Performance was conducted in January of 2023.
- Reporting of the 2022 Actual Performance will be conducted during the first quarter of 2024.
- An agency is determined to have met or made significant progress toward meeting its targets when at least four of the five established performance targets are either: a) met or b) the outcome for a performance measure is less than a five-year rolling average baseline. The baseline performance is established as the five-year period of data available at the time the target was established. For Performance Year (PY) 2020, that data period was 2015-2019.
- 2021 was the first year that NCTCOG failed to meet roadway safety performance targets due to the high number of fatal and serious injury crashes recorded during COVID in 2020 and 2021.

NCTCOG's 12-County MPA Crash and Fatality Data 2018-2022

NCTCOG receives regional crash data from TxDOT's Crash Records Information System annually. The performance measures below highlight reportable crashes and fatalities that occurred in the NCTCOG 12-county Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) from 2018 to 2022. The data below indicates that in 2022 the NCTCOG region experienced **one crash every five minutes** and **one fatality every 12 hours**. The fatality rate for the region for 2022 was 1.031.

2018-2022 Crashes						
County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-2022
Collin	13,215	13,950	10,271	12,380	13,820	11.63%
Dallas	49,733	55,261	48,294	55,367	54,551	-1.47%
Denton	11,770	12,188	9,554	11,403	11,957	4.86%
Ellis	2,811	2,798	2,841	3,302	3,228	-2.24%
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Hunt	1,470	1,364	1,362	1,781	1,604	-9.94%
Johnson	2,367	2,393	2,193	2,776	2,737	-1.40%
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Total	121,920	127,954	108,972	126,174	125,530	-0.51%

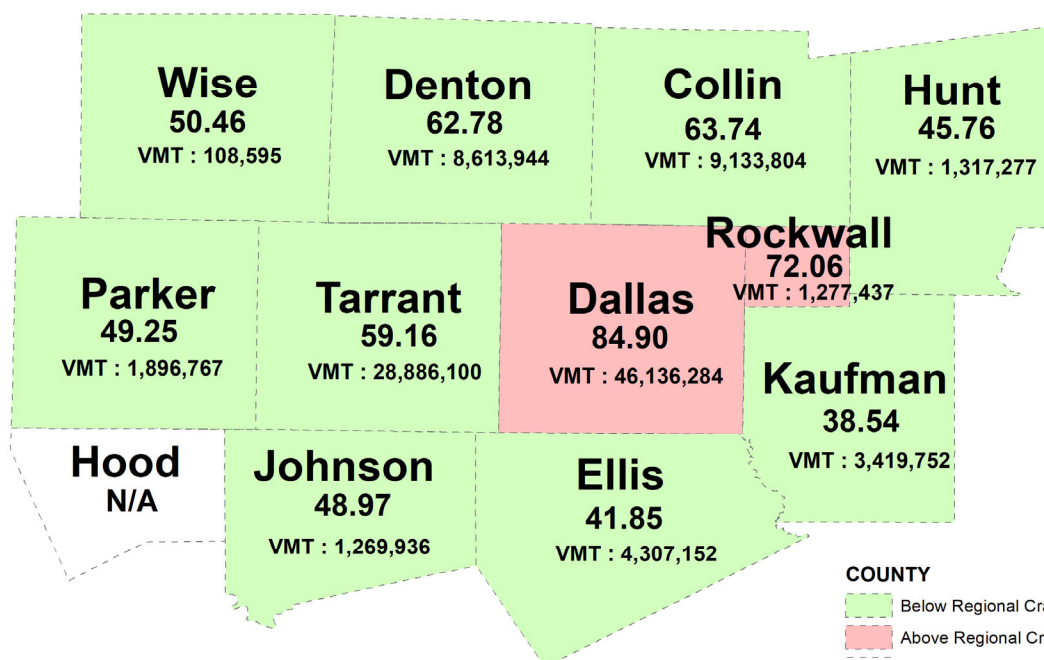
2018-2022 Fatalities						
County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-2022
Collin	45	53	64	51	77	50.98%
Dallas	295	271	333	354	355	0.28%
Denton	51	52	59	67	51	-23.88%
Ellis	16	27	49	36	33	-8.33%
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Hunt	17	25	26	38	15	-60.53%
Johnson	23	39	20	39	37	-5.13%
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Rockwall	8	2	7	10	7	-30.00%
Tarrant	169	171	189	228	215	-5.70%
Wise	16	14	11	21	23	9.52%
Total	699	724	822	921	864	-6.19%

Data Source: TxDOT Crash Records Information System (CRIS) current as of 4/12/2022 - All TxDOT disclaimers apply to this information.

Note: A reportable motor vehicle crash is defined by TxDOT as: "Any crash involving a motor vehicle in transport that occurs or originates on a traffic way, results in injury to or death of any person, or damage to property of any one person to the apparent extent of \$1,000."

2022 Crash Rates by County

NCTCOG calculates crash rates on limited access facilities for counties within the NCTCOG 12-County MPA. The map below displays these crash rates by county in comparison to the regional crash rate of 69.33. This represents a decrease from the 2021 rate of 111.83 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Dallas and Rockwall Counties were the only counties with a crash rate above the regional average in 2022.



COUNTY

- Below Regional Crash Rate
- Above Regional Crash Rate
- No Limited Access Facilities

Crash Rates calculated for limited access facilities: IH, SH, and US mainlanes

2022 Regional Crash Rate = 69.33



2022 Contributing Factors for Serious Injury and Fatality Crashes

	Top Ten Contributing Factors — Limited Access Facilities Only	2021	2022
1	Speeding (Overlimit / Unsafe Speed / Failed to Control Speed)	32.21%	30.56%
2	Driver Related (Driver Inattention / Distraction in Vehicle / Drove Without Headlights / Road Rage / Followed Too Closely / Cell/Mobile Device Use (Talking / Texting / Other [0.28%])	13.96%	16.24%
3	Impaired Driving (Intoxicated: Alcohol/Drug / Had Been Drinking / Taking Medication / Fatigued or Asleep)	12.10%	11.89%
4	Failed to Drive in Single Lane	10.45%	10.33%
5	Faulty Evasive Action	8.35%	8.05%
6	Changed Lane When Unsafe	7.10%	7.34%
7	Pedestrian Related (Failed to Yield Right of Way to Vehicle)	5.24%	5.56%
8	Disabled in Traffic Lane	5.60%	3.63%
9	Wrong Way Driving (Wrong Way - One Way Road / Wrong Side - Approach or Intersection / Wrong Side - Not Passing)	1.42%	1.78%
10	Ill (Explain in Narrative)	0.99%	1.14%

Note: The Contributing Factor Analysis above includes Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Contributing Crash Factors on limited access facilities in the NCTCOG 12-County MPA only. Speeding has been the number one contributing factor for all analysis done from 2010-2022.

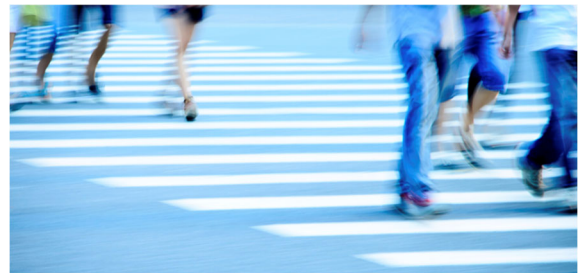
NCTCOG Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

In 2021 NCTCOG completed a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) for the 12-county metropolitan planning area to address the steadily increasing number of reported crashes across North Texas involving pedestrians resulting in serious injuries and fatalities.

The PSAP serves as a guide for State, regional, and local governments for improving overall pedestrian safety across the MPA. The PSAP includes goals, action items, and policies, all aimed at supporting the safety position adopted by the Regional Transportation Council, which states that “even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable,” and the action taken by the Texas Transportation Commission, who ordered TxDOT to “develop strategies for reducing traffic deaths by 50 percent by 2035 and to zero by 2050.”

Additional analysis of crash data occurred in 2022 including an environmental justice analysis and an added section related to annual monitoring and outcomes. Minor edits were also made to Appendix B to remove duplicative tables and to add Environmental Justice information to the Safety Corridor and County maps. The 2022 Update was approved by the Surface Transportation Technical Committee on July 22, 2022, and the Regional Transportation Council on August 18, 2022.

One of the PSAP action items is to conduct Roadway Safety Audits (RSA) for the designated primary pedestrian safety corridors that have a high number of crashes and serious injuries. In collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), RSAs were conducted and reports finalized for Belknap St. in downtown Fort Worth and for W. Spring Valley Rd. in Richardson. Using the approach developed by FHWA, an RSA core team made up of independent and multi-disciplinary members assessed the roadways over several days and provided an official report with recommendations and proposed safety solutions to the Cities of Fort Worth and Richardson. Additional RSAs are expected to be conducted on other primary pedestrian safety corridors throughout the region identified in the PSAP.

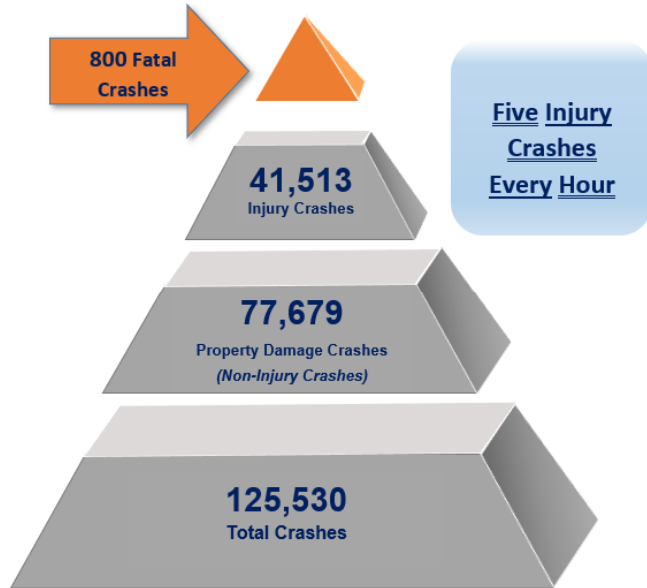


The PSAP, including all appendices and RSAs completed to date, can be viewed at www.nctcog.org/pedsafetyplan.

NCTCOG Traffic Incident Management Program

2022 Regional Crash Pyramid — NCTCOG 12-County MPA

The crash pyramid represents the high volume of crashes in the region, equating to four injury crashes every hour. There is an obvious need for highly effective training for those agencies responsible for managing and clearing traffic incidents. Traffic incident management training promotes consistency among agency responders, significantly improves responder and motorist safety, and reduces the duration of traffic incidents.



On average, each injury crash requires
 2 Law Enforcement
 4 Fire/Rescue
 2 Emergency Medical Services
 1 Towing and Recovery
 9 Responders

Potentially 45 responders “working in or near moving traffic” every hour 24/7/365.

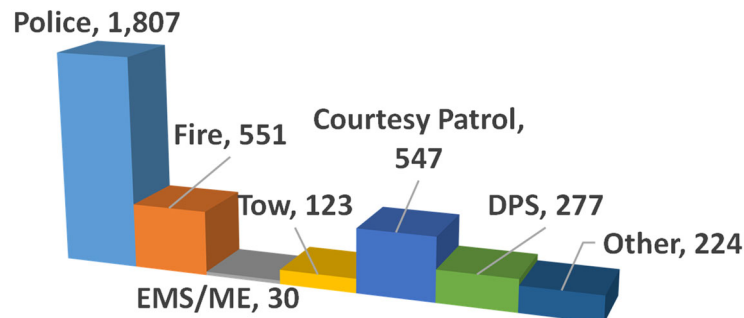
**Crash pyramid does not include “Unknown Injury Crashes”*

NCTCOG TIM First Responder and Manager’s Course

The Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training series was developed in February of 2003 and first offered in December of 2003. The goal of the TIM training course is to initiate a common, coordinated response to traffic incidents that will build partnerships, enhance safety for emergency personnel, reduce upstream traffic accidents, improve the efficiency of the transportation system, and improve the air quality in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The **First Responder and Manager’s Course**, geared towards those with daily involvement in responding to traffic incidents, is offered six times per year. The training is eligible for TCOLE Credits, Fire Commission Credits, and Emergency Medical Services Continuing Education Units.

NCTCOG First Responder and Manager’s Course Attendance		
2003 - 2021	2022 — June 2023	Total
3,458	101	3,559

NCTCOG First Responder and Manager’s Course Attendance - Breakdown By Discipline



NCTCOG TIM Executive Level Course Attendance

The **Executive Level Course** was introduced in 2005 and is geared towards agency decision and policy makers and provides a high-level overview of the topics discussed in the First Responder and Manager’s Course. The Executive Level Course is offered twice a year.

Police	Fire	City Staff	Elected Officials	Public Works/Strategic Services Transportation	Medical Staff	Other	Total (February 2005 - May 2023)
483	232	40	15	66	23	314	1,173

NCTCOG Traffic Incident Management Program

NCTCOG First Responder and Manager's Course Attendance — Breakdown By Agency

Cities and Counties Represented (93): August 2013 - June 2023

Allen	Cross Roads	Hickory Creek	Oak Point
Alvarado	Dallas	Highland Park	Pantego
Argyle	Decatur	Hurst	Plano
Arlington	Denton	Irving	Ponder
Aubrey	DeSoto	Joshua	Princeton
Azle	Duncanville	Keene	Prosper
Balch Springs	Ennis	Keller	Reno
Bedford	Euless	Kennedale	Richardson
Benbrook	Farmers Branch	Krum	Richland Hills
Bridgeport	Flower Mound	Lake Cities	Rio Vista
Burleson	Forest Hill	Lake Worth	Roanoke
Caddo Mills	Forney	Lavon	Rockwall
Carrollton	Fort Worth	Lewisville	Sachse
Cedar Hill	Frisco	Little Elm	Seagoville
Celina	Garland	Mansfield	Springtown
Cleburne	Glenn Heights	Maypearl	Sunnyvale
Colleyville	Granbury	McKinney	Terrell
Coppell	Grand Prairie	Melissa	University Park
Corinth	Grapevine	Mesquite	Venus
Cresson	Greenville	Midlothian	Waxahachie
		N. Richland Hills	Weatherford
		Northlake	Willow Park
			Wilmer

Counties: Collin, Dallas, Erath, Hunt, Johnson, Rockwall, Tarrant, Wise

Notes:

1. Agencies shown in **bold text** have attended both the First Responder and Manager's Course and the Executive Level Course.
2. The last major course update was done in August 2013.
3. A complete list of Agency Attendance from 2003 is available upon request.

First Responder Struck-By 'Fatality' Stats (2021-2022)

Every day, firefighters, EMTs/paramedics, state troopers, police officers, sheriff's deputies, tow operators, and department of transportation responders are exposed to the grave hazards inherent in emergency responses on the nation's highways and roadways. Below is a breakdown of the fatality statistics at the regional, statewide, and national level, broken down by discipline.

Discipline	2021 National	2022 National	2021 Statewide	2022 Statewide	2021 Region	2022 Region
Police	30	17	1	3	1	1
Fire/EMS	9	11	0	0	0	0
Towing	22	18	3	3	1	0
Roadside Assistance Patrol	2	1	0	0	0	0
Total Responder Fatality Struck-bys	63	47	4	6	2	1

"Between January—July 2023, nationwide **eighteen** responders have been struck and killed by vehicles (2 in Texas)."

www.ResponderSafety.com

NCTCOG Roadside Assistance Patrol Struck-By 'Non-Fatality' Stats

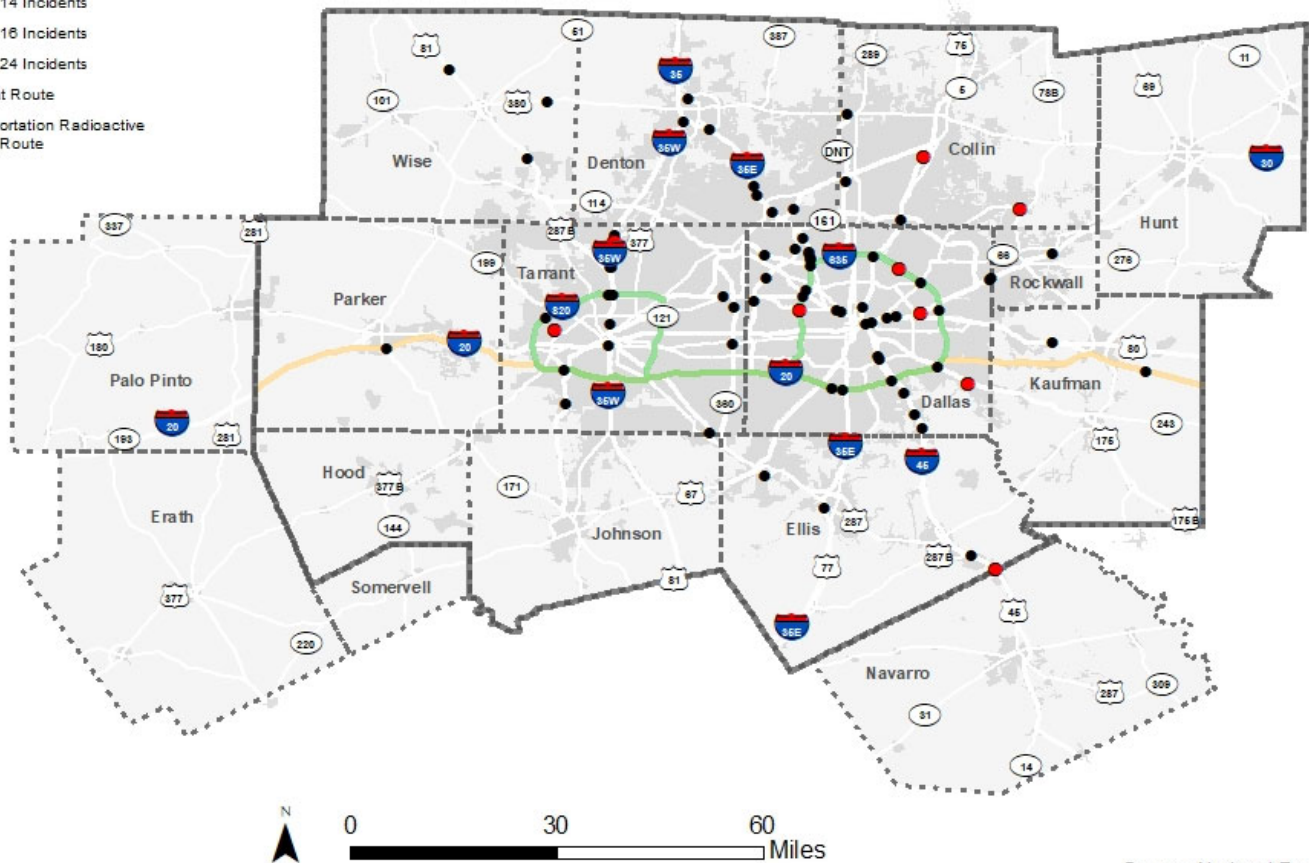
Roadside Assistance Patrol	Dallas County	LBJ Express	NTE Express	NTTA	Tarrant County	NCTCOG Region
2019	1	7	4	9	0	21
2020	23	0	1	15	2	41
2021	18	0	10	19	2	39
2022	34	3	0	16	0	50

The Regional Roadside Assistance Patrol Program struck-by data was collected directly from regional mobility assistance patrol providers.

2022 NCTCOG 16-County HazMat Incidents

NCTCOG continues to monitor major hazardous material spills on limited access facilities using data obtained from the National Response Center. This analysis helps identify roadway corridors which have been impacted by incidents involving a hazardous material. Currently, the IH 20 corridor and the regional loops IH 820 and IH 635 are designated as radioactive waste routes. In 2022, there were nine significant HazMat spills within the 16-county region. This is down from the previous year, which had 15 such incidents.

- 2022 - 9 Incidents
- 2021 - 15 Incidents
- 2020 - 14 Incidents
- 2019 - 16 Incidents
- 2018 - 24 Incidents
- Hazmat Route
- Transportation Radioactive Waste Route



Source: National Response Center
Data current as of January 25, 2023

County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Collin	0	0	0	2	2	4
Dallas	11	8	8	6	4	37
Denton	4	1	2	0	0	7
Ellis	1	2	0	0	1	4
Erath	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hood	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hunt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Johnson	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaufman	1	1	0	0	0	2
Navarro	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parker	0	0	1	0	0	1
Palo Pinto	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rockwall	2	0	0	0	0	2
Somervell	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tarrant	3	3	3	7	2	18
Wise	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total	24	16	14	15	9	78

Roadside Assistance Program

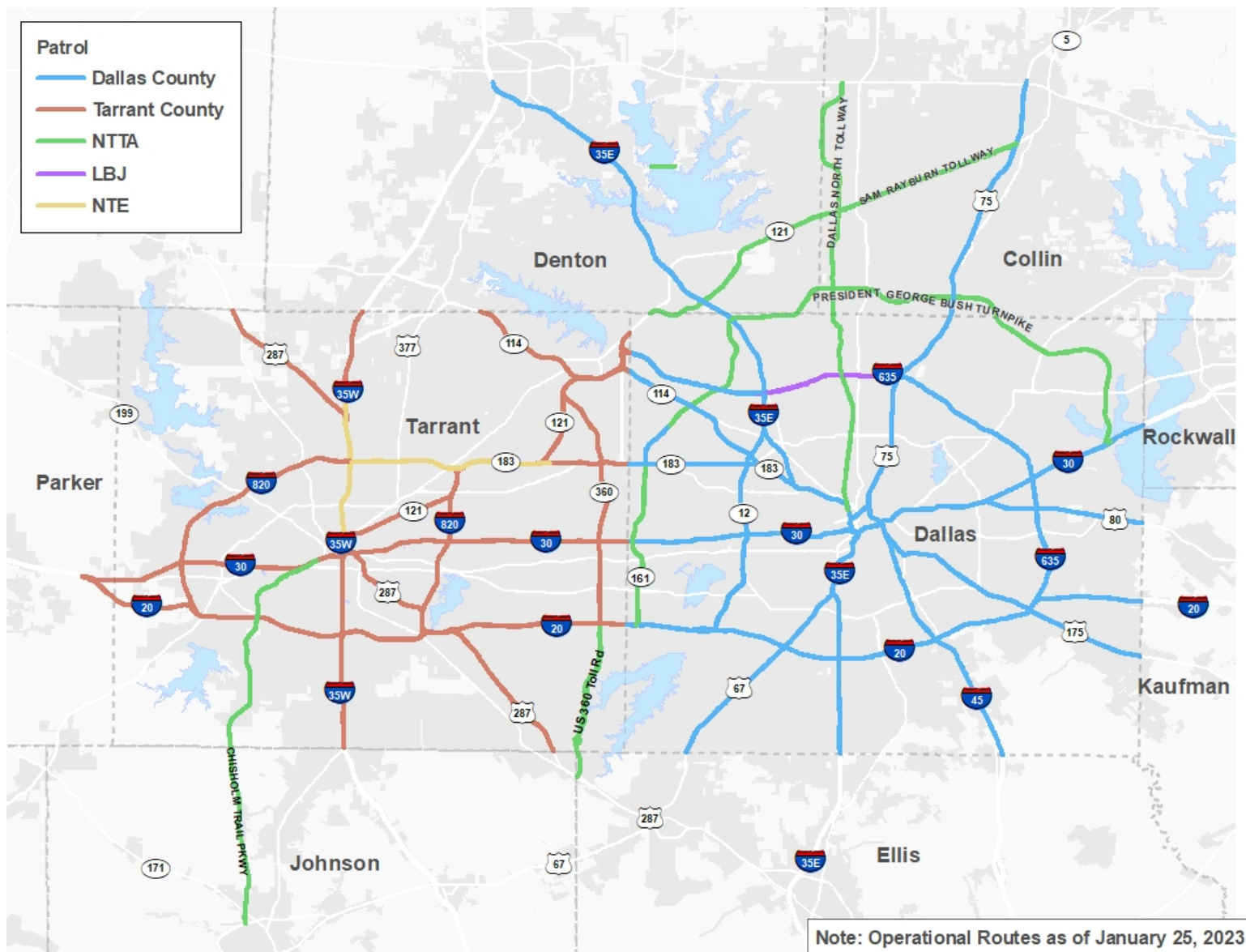
The Roadside Assistance Program (RAP) is a crucial part of incident response and traffic safety efforts in North Texas. Area RAP programs help alleviate congestion and prevent secondary crashes on busy highways/freeways and toll roads by providing free assistance to stalled and stranded motorists by either getting the vehicles operating again or moving them off the facility completely. Patrols also provide protection to other first responders, and give advance warning to motorists approaching the scene of a crash. Patrol coverage has focused on congested highways in Dallas and Tarrant Counties but also extends into portions of Collin, Denton, and Johnson Counties. Further expansions into Parker, Ellis, Johnson, and Rockwall Counties are in development.

Patrols are currently operated by the Dallas County Sheriff's Office, Tarrant County Sheriff's Office, North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA), LBJ Express, and North Tarrant Express (NTE) Mobility Partners. Each agency's coverage area is shown in the map below.

Roadside Assistance Program Performance Measures

Agency	2021 Assists	2022 Assists
Dallas County Operations	60,843	54,301
Tarrant County Operations	23,206	25,638
NTTA	43,368	49,372
NTE Express	4,298	4,261
LBJ Express	4,179	3,602

Patrol Routes



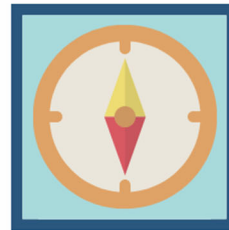
In 2022, Dallas/Fort Worth Area Roadside Assistance Patrols

provided:



68,416

Driver Assistance /
Stalled Vehicle



29,081

Courtesy Check /
Directions



5,219

Crash
Assistance



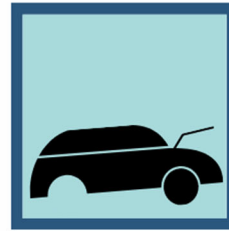
14,641

Debris
Removal



15,969

Protection to
First Responders



8,564

Abandoned
Vehicle Check

Total Combined Assists: 144,371

Notes:

Data includes Dallas County, Tarrant County, NTTA, and LBJ/NTE motorist assists combined.
2,481 assists were either not found or were cancelled before a patrol vehicle arrived.

		Hours of Operation	Phone Number
Dallas County		Mon - Fri 5 AM - 9:30 PM Sat - Sun 11 AM - 7:30 PM	(214) 320-4444
Tarrant County		Mon - Sun 6 AM - 10 PM	(817) 884-1213
NTTA		Mon - Sun 24 Hours a Day	(214) 224-2203 or #999
NTE and LBJ TEXpress		Mon - Sun 24 Hours a Day	(972) 661-8693 or #789



Highway Safety Improvement Program

The TxDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Call for Projects (CFP) is a funding opportunity for highway safety projects that decrease the number of fatalities and serious injuries on all public roadways. Funds are provided for construction and operational improvements that address crash types outlined in the Texas Strategic Highway Safety Program. TxDOT updated the 2022 HSIP CFP for FY2023-FY2025. The 2022 TxDOT HSIP CFP resulted in the following projects for our region:

- The Dallas District received approval on 73 projects for a total of \$53,037,219.
- The Fort Worth District received approval on 13 projects for a total of \$15,347,208.

NCTCOG Drive Aware North Texas Campaign



Drive Aware North Texas is an educational effort that focuses on improving the negative driving behaviors identified as the leading contributing factors in fatal and serious injury crashes in the region. The campaign website, www.driveawarentx.org, focuses on four main causes of serious and fatal traffic incidents: speeding, impaired driving, distracted driving and wrong-way driving. It examines data over the past five years related to each category, including crashes by time of day and gender, presenting the data in easy-to-read graphs. Speeding traditionally has been the top contributor to fatal and serious-injury crashes on the region's roadways, playing a role in 31 percent of such crashes in 2022.

Statewide TxDOT and Metropolitan Planning Organization Task Force

The Texas Transportation Commission established a new task force comprised of representatives from TxDOT and the state's metropolitan planning organizations to further identify and fund safety projects throughout the state with a relentless focus on reducing the number of fatalities on Texas highways. The TxDOT/MPO Safety Task Force kicked off in November 2021 for an initial two-year term.

The Task force has developed a five-year proposal to identify best practices, recommendations, and new ideas in an effort to reduce highway fatalities, injuries, and traffic crashes. The Task Force also developed a short-term plan to immediately invest funding on current ongoing safety initiatives to reduce speeding and impaired driving, improve bicycle, pedestrian, and motorcycle safety, increase awareness for occupant protection (seatbelts), and implement safety efforts in work zones. Annually, TxDOT and MPOs will report on previous years' performance measures, implemented activities and achievements as well as identify priorities for the next year. TxDOT has committed \$50,000 to each MPO across the state to support safety efforts and document safety activities to help reduce fatalities in the state of Texas. In addition, a long-term plan will be created to identify funding sources, establish metrics to measure effectiveness, and describe incentives for the partnership based on the reduction of deaths on Texas roadways.

As the TxDOT/MPO Safety Task Force wraps up, a new committee will carry this initiative forward that includes both public and private sector agencies working to implement innovative ideas to reduce fatalities and serious injury crashes, the Friends of the Safety Committee.

The following table identifies performance measures that TxDOT and MPOs will report on annually. NCTCOG Safety staff will survey partners once a year to collect information on regional safety-related & safety education related programs and efforts, in order to better report on and support the safety efforts within the region. Updates will be provided in future reports.

Annual Performance Measures	Statewide Safety Task Force	Located in NCTCOG Safety Report
No. of Fatalities	TxDOT/MPO	Page 2
Fatality Rate	TxDOT/MPO	Page 2
Number of Law Enforcement Encounters During Grant-Funded or MPO Funded Activities	TxDOT/MPO	Future
Number of Safety Related Programs	TxDOT/MPO	Survey in Progress
Number of Education Related Programs	TxDOT/MPO	Survey in Progress

Regional Roadway Safety Plan

Approved by the Regional Transportation Council in March 2023, the NCTCOG Regional Roadway Safety Plan is the first region-wide plan developed to eliminate all fatalities on our roadways by 2050. The Roadway Safety Plan includes region-wide safety analyses to identify which crash types produce the most fatalities and serious injuries and then recommends countermeasures to prevent these crashes or reduce crash severity. The following eight emphasis areas were identified as part of the plan: speeding, distracted driving, impaired driving, intersection safety, bicyclist and pedestrian safety, roadway and lane departures, occupant protection (seatbelts), and motorcycles.

The plan also identifies roadways with the highest history of fatal and serious injury crashes and scores those roadway segments as candidates for engineering upgrades or other safety countermeasures. The regional Roadway Safety Plan will serve as a guide for the implementation of future systemic safety projects and programs throughout the NCTCOG region as we work towards a goal of zero fatalities on our region's roadways by 2050.

Regional Roadway Safety Plan Goals:

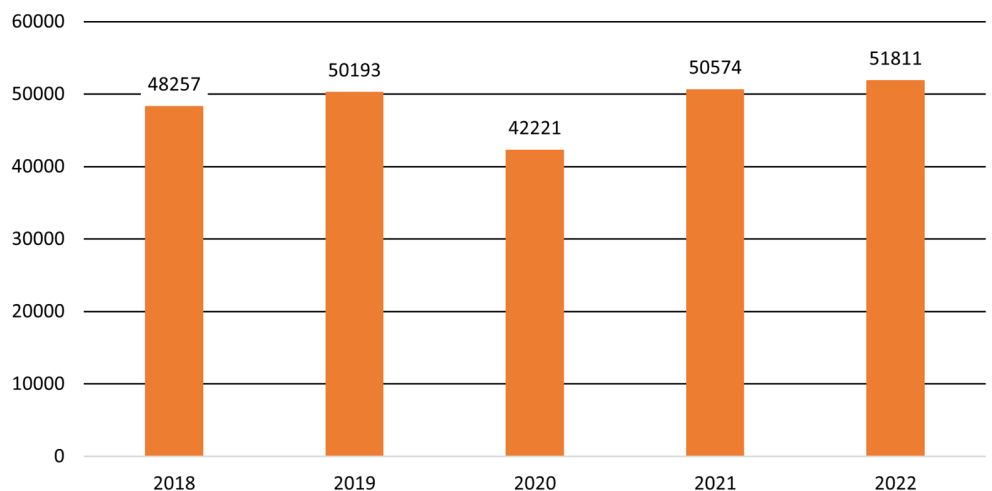
1. Eliminate fatal crashes from all modes of travel by 2050.
2. Prioritize safety in roadway project selection and provide guidance on countermeasure development to partner agencies.
3. Work with partners to foster a culture of safety that utilizes the safe systems approach; and develop behavioral and educational countermeasures to address dangerous driving behaviors.
4. Fund and implement safety projects and policies equitably to ensure safe transportation access for all road users.
5. Implement a proactive approach to roadway safety to identify problems before they occur.
6. Work with police to effectively enforce traffic rules and traffic management professionals to improve quick clearance strategies.

The following data analyses is highlighted in the Regional Roadway Safety Plan.

<https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/safety/transportation-safety/roadway-safety-plan>

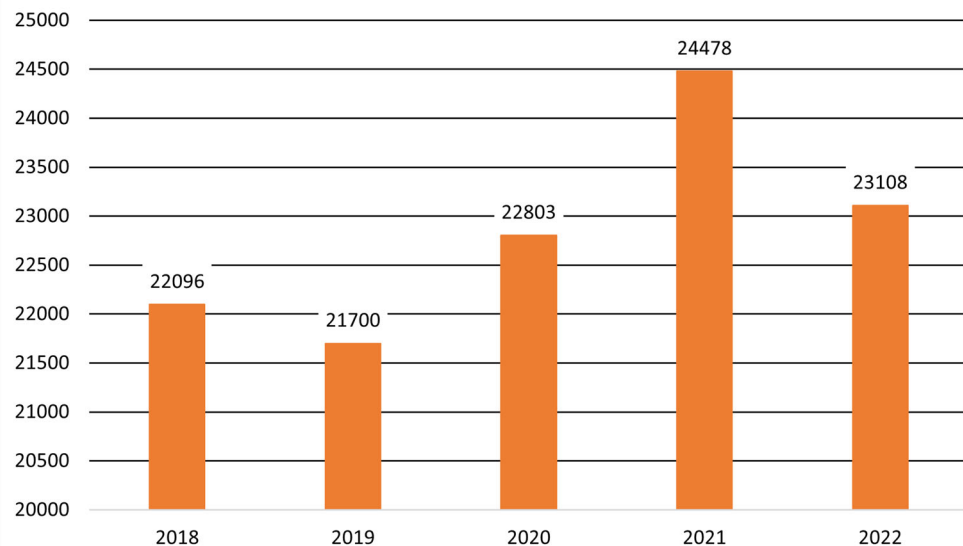
12-County MPA - Intersection Related Crashes: 2018-2022

Intersection related crashes are those that occur within the boundaries of an intersection or at an approach to or an exit from an intersection. Intersection related crashes increased by 2.4 percent from 2021 to 2022 with an increase of 1,237 crashes in 2022.



Roadway and Lane Departure Crashes: 2018- 2022

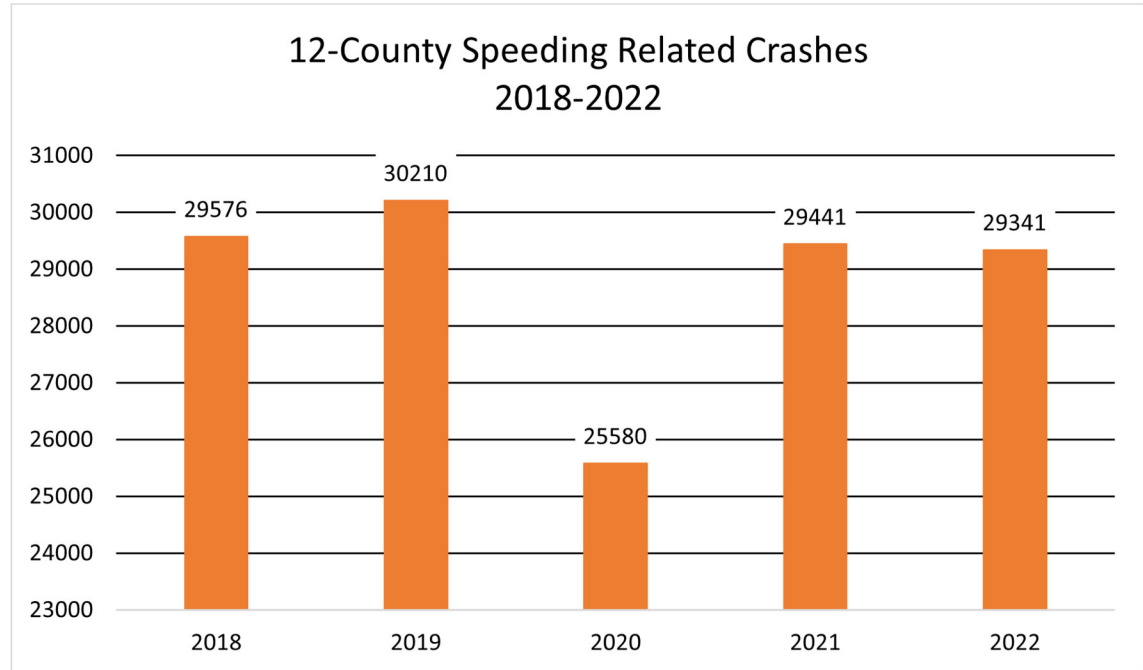
Roadway and Lane Departure crashes are those that occur either off the road, on the shoulder, or in the center median and only involved one motor vehicle. There was a 5.5 percent decrease in Roadway and Lane Departure crashes from 2021 to 2022 and 1370 fewer crashes in 2022.



12-County MPA - Speeding Related Crashes: 2018-2022

Speeding related crashes are those where at least one driver was travelling well above the posted speed limit or too fast for current roadway conditions. Vehicle speed is proven to have a direct correlation to crash severity. From 2021 to 2022, the number of crashes on all roadways where speeding was cited as a contributing factor decreased by 100 crashes.

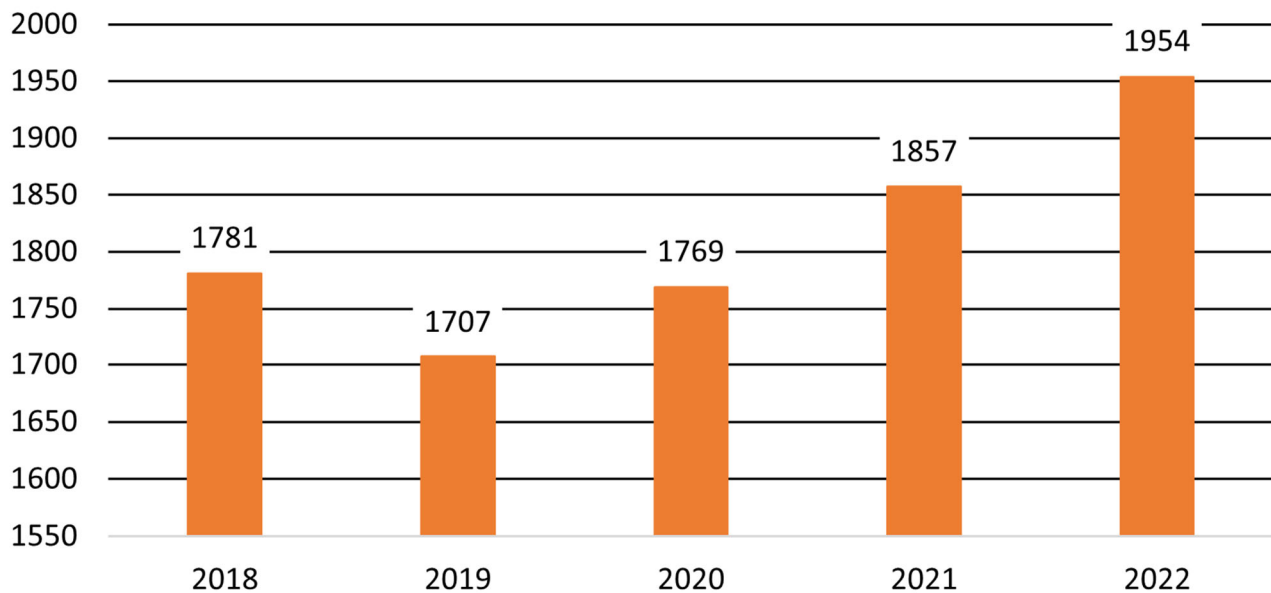
Note: Speeding Related crashes include those where speeding were cited either as a primary, secondary, or tertiary contributing factor to the crash.



Motorcyclist Involved Crashes: 2018- 2022

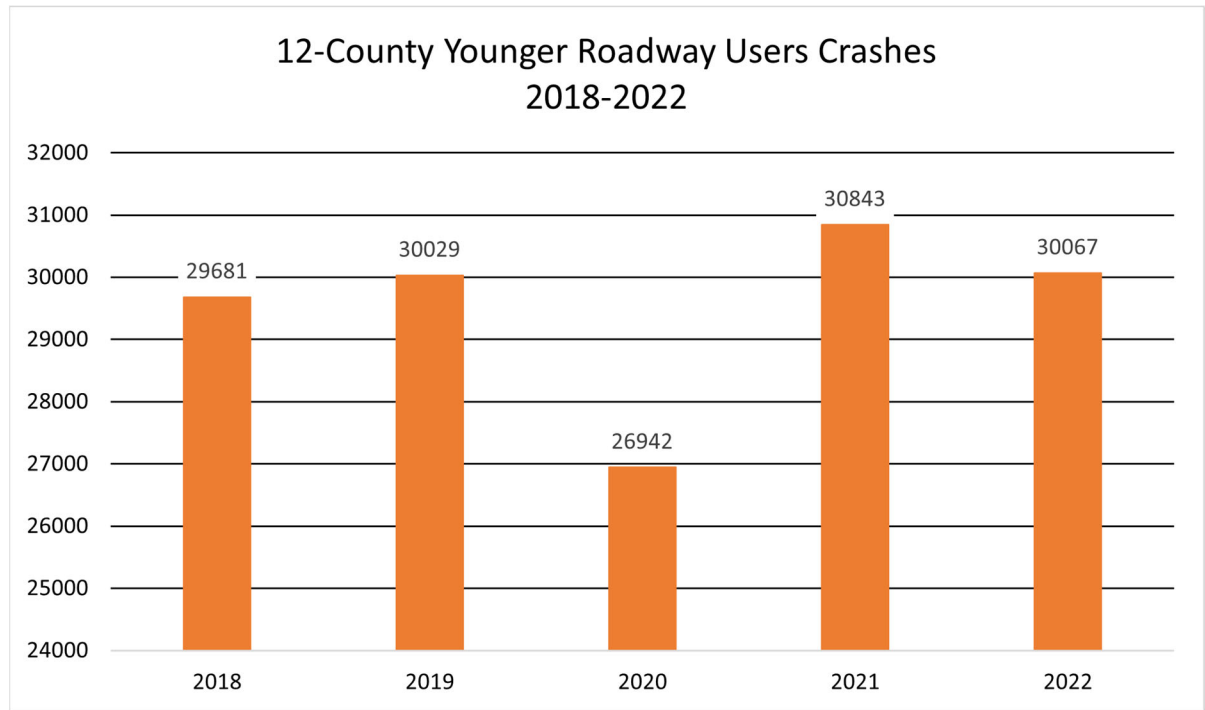
Like bicyclists and pedestrians, motorcyclists are vulnerable roadway users due to the lack of protection provided by a vehicle. Helmet usage for motorcyclists, like restraint usage has a significant impact on injury severity. There was an increase of 5 percent of crashes involving motorcyclists from 2021 to 2022 with an increase of 97 crashes in 2022.

12-County Motorcyclist Involved Crashes 2018-2022



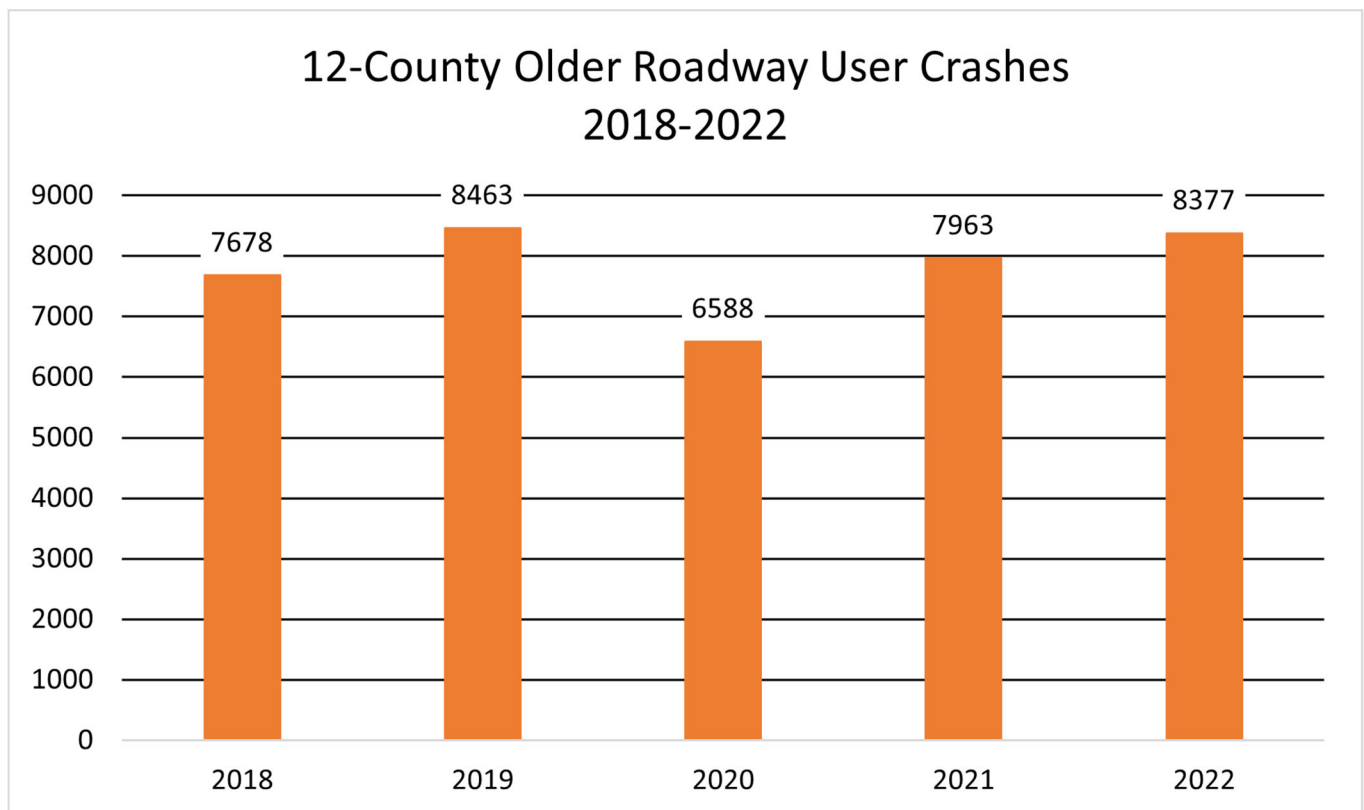
Younger Roadway User Crashes: 2018-2022

Younger roadway users are drivers who are 24 years of age and younger. From 2021 to 2022, Younger Roadway User crashes decreased by 2.5 percent, with a decrease of 776 crashes in 2022.



Older Roadway User Crashes: 2018- 2022

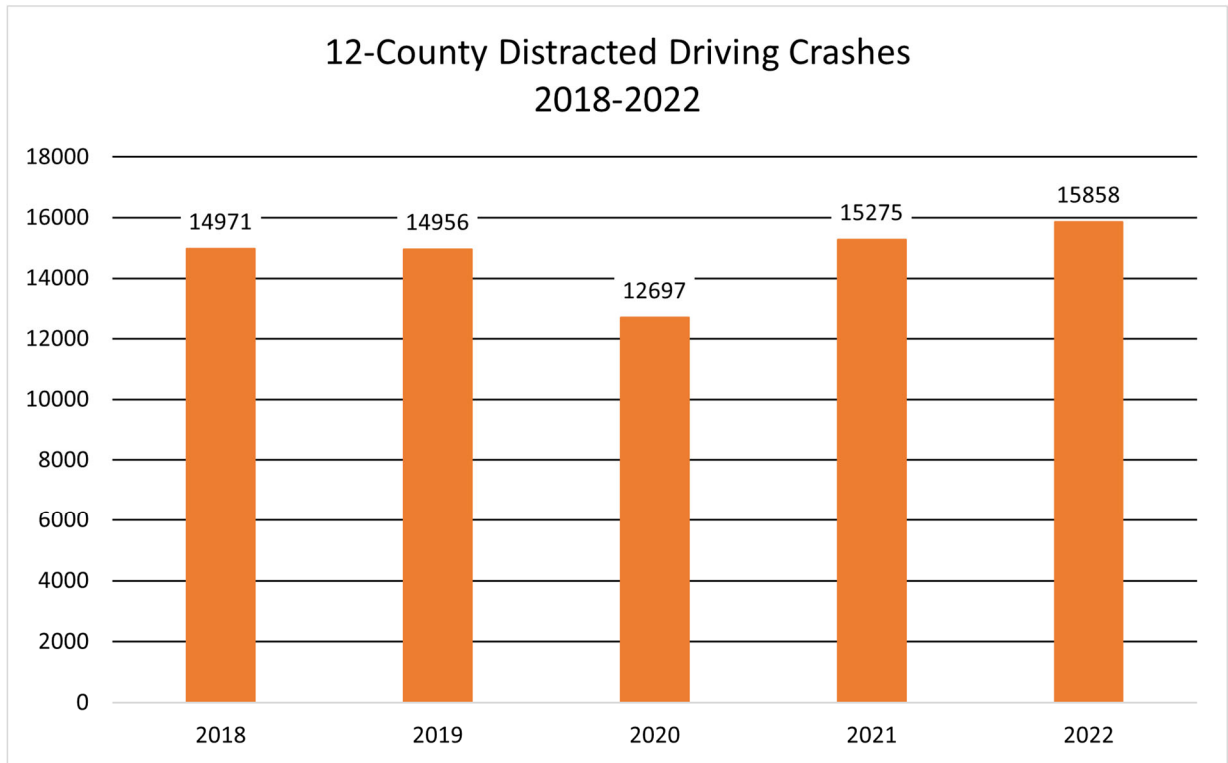
Older Roadway Users are drivers that are of the age 65 and older. From 2021 to 2022, Older Roadway User crashes increased by 5.2 percent, with an increase of 414 crashes in 2022.



12-County MPA - Distracted Driving: 2018-2022

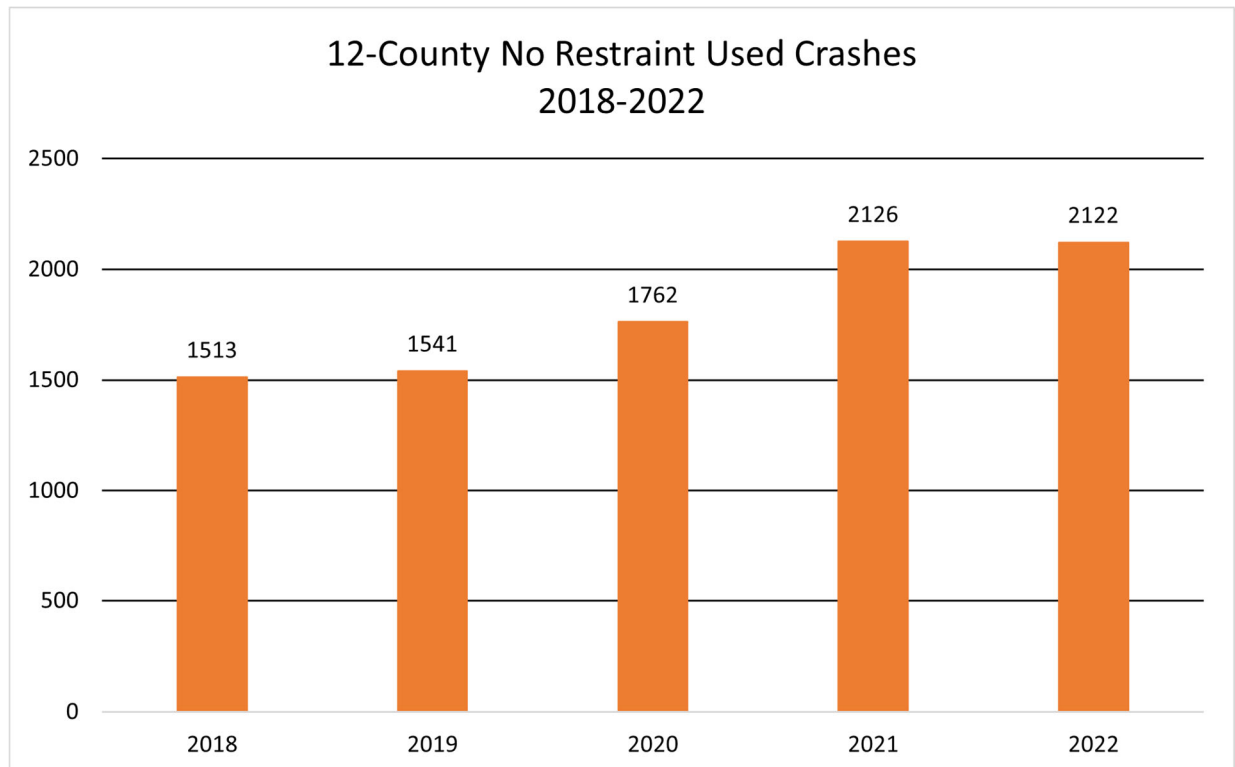
From 2018 to 2022, the number of crashes on all roadways caused by a distracted driver increased 6 percent within the 12-county MPA. The total number of crashes caused by a distracted driver increased by 583 from in 2022 compared to 2021.

Note: Distracted Driving crashes include those where driver inattention, distraction in the vehicle, or cell phone/mobile device use were either a primary, secondary, or tertiary contributing factor



No Restraint Used Crashes: 2018- 2022

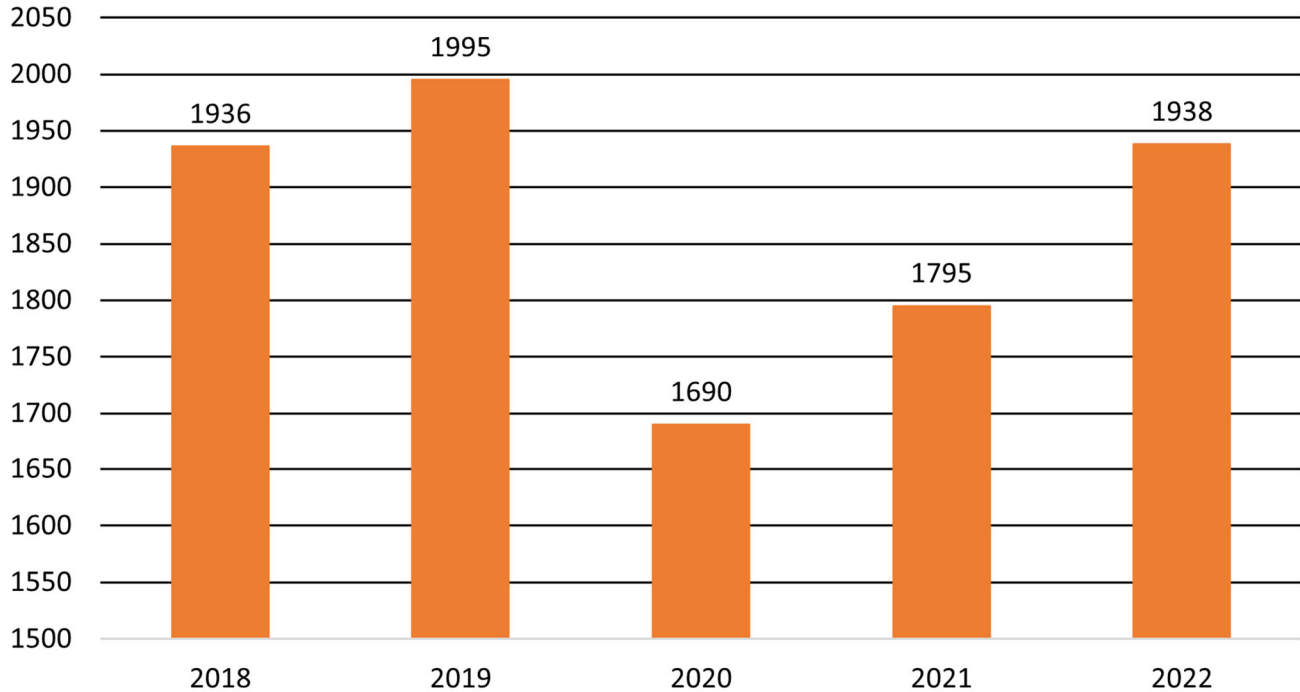
No Restraint Used crashes involve drivers or occupants of the vehicle who were not wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash. These crashes are characterized as dangerous crash types and usually tend to result in more severe injuries for the persons involved.



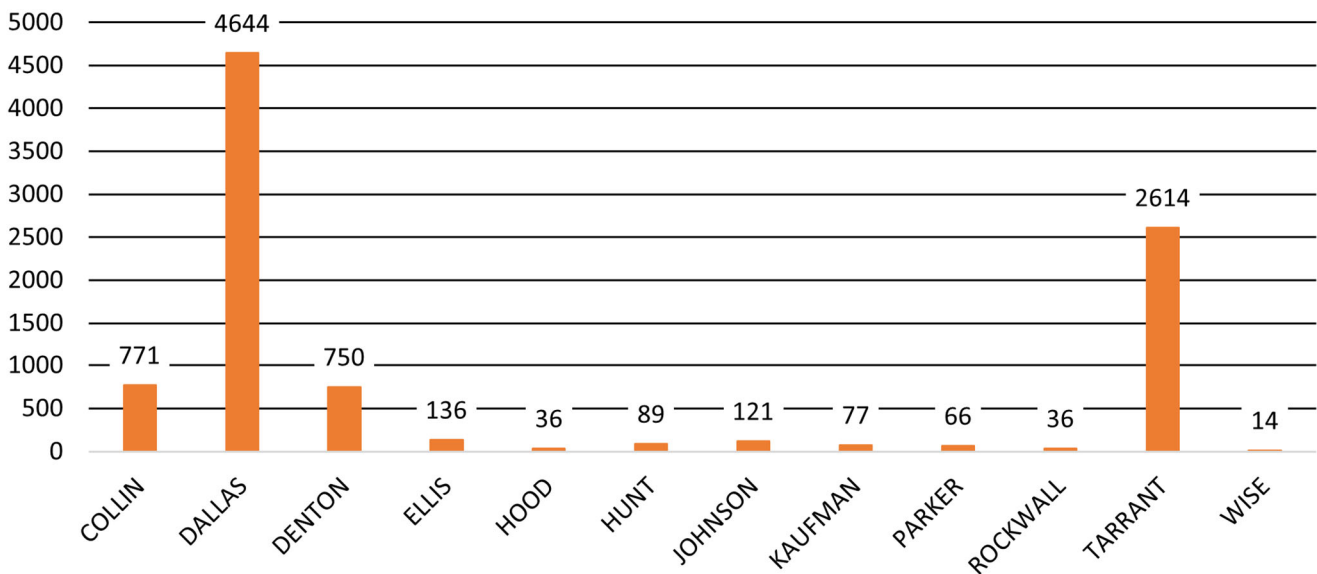
12-County MPA - Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crashes: 2018-2022

A bicyclist and pedestrian crash involves a crash where a vehicle strikes either a bicyclist or a pedestrian. From 2018 to 2022, the number of crashes involving a bicyclist or a pedestrian increased by eight percent from 2021 to 2022 with an increase of 143 crashes. Crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians typically tend to have more severe injuries.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crashes 2018-2022



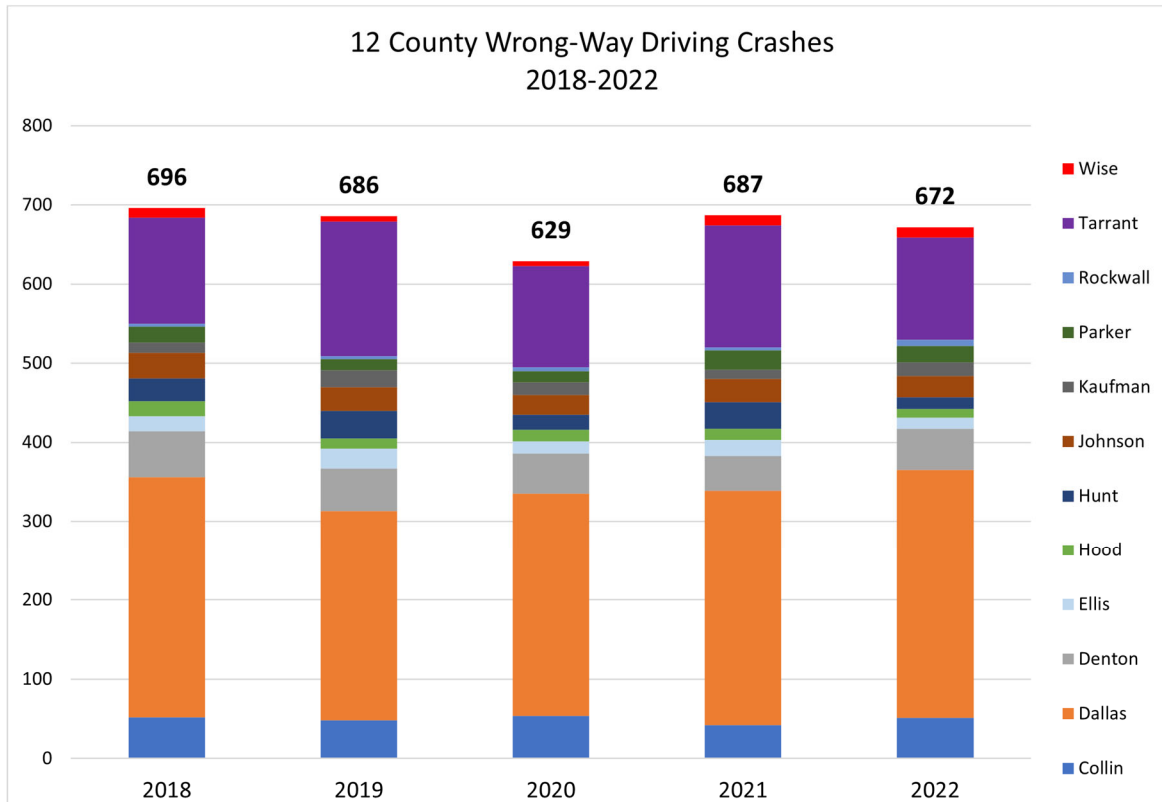
Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crashes By County 2018-2022



12-County MPA - Wrong Way Driving Crashes: 2018-2022

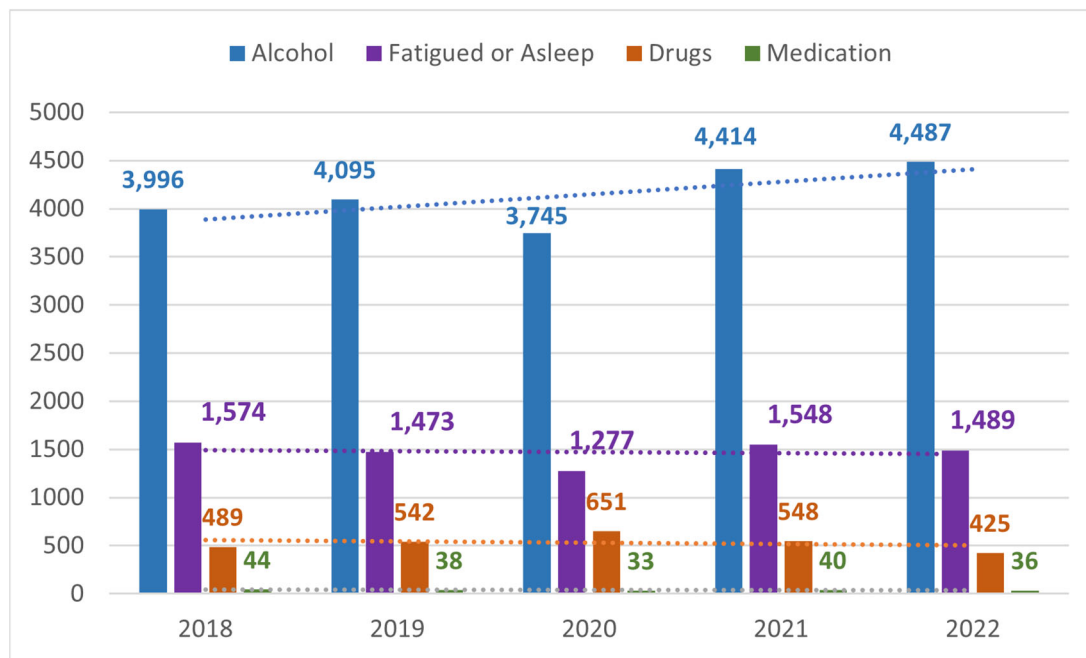
From 2018 to 2022, the number of crashes on all roadways caused by a wrong way driver decreased 3.4 percent within the 12-county MPA. The total number of crashes caused by a wrong way driver decreased by 15 from in 2022 compared to 2021.

Note: WWD crashes include those where wrong way driving was identified as either a primary, secondary, or tertiary contributing factor to the crash.



Crashes Involving Impaired Drivers: 2018- 2022

Crashes involving a driver impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, legal medication, or fatigue have remained one of the top ten contributing factors in both the state of Texas and NCTCOG region. The graph below highlights these crashes in the North Central Texas 12-county region from the past five years. During this time period, the number of crashes involving an impaired driver has increased close to 5.5 percent overall.



Note: The Impaired Driving Analysis includes TxDOT crash records where the primary, secondary, or tertiary contributing factors were cited as "Had been drinking", "Taking medication", "Under influence—alcohol", "Under influence—drugs", or "Fatigued or Asleep". Motor vehicle crash within the NCTCOG 12-County area are included.

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North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation Department

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
September 2022 - August 2023

RTC MEMBER	Entity	9/8/22	10/13/22	11/10/22	12/08/22	1/12/23	2/9/23	3/9/23	4/13/2023	5/11/2023	6/8/2023	7/13/2023	8/10/2023
Daniel Alemán Jr (01/22)	Mesquite	P	P	E	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	P	E
Arfsten, Bruce (07/23)	Addison	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P
Steve Babick (06/22)	Carrollton	A	A	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	A
Dennis Bailey (02/21)	Rockwall County	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P
Rick Bailey (07/22)	Johnson County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Adam Bazaldua (09/21)	Dallas	E(R)	A	E(R)	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P
Elizabeth M. Beck (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Gyna Bivens (08/21)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alan Blaylock (03/23)	Fort Worth	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P
J. D. Clark (07/22)	Wise County	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	E(R)	P	A	P
Ceason Clemens (10/22)	TxDOT, Dallas	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dianne Costa (10/19)	DCTA	P	P	P	E(R)	A(R)	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P
Michael Crain (06/22)	Fort Worth	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
Theresa Daniel (11/18)	Dallas County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeff Davis (11/19)	Trinity Metro	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P	P	A	E	E	P	P
Andy Eads (1/09)	Denton County	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	E	P
Michael Evans (2/23)	Mansfield	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	P	P	P	E(R)
Gary Fickes (12/10)	Tarrant County	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E(R)	P
George Fuller (07/17)	McKinney	E	A	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P
Raul H. Gonzalez (09/21)	Arlington	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P
Barry L. Gordon (12/20)	Duncanville	E	P	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Rick Grady (09/18)	Plano	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lane Grayson (01/19)	Ellis County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E
Mojy Haddad (10/14)	NTTA	E(R)	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Clay Lewis Jenkins (04/11)	Dallas County	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	E(R)	P	P	P
Ron Jensen (06/13)	Grand Prairie	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	A	P	P
Brandon Jones (05/21)	Lewisville	E	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
John Keating (12/19)	Frisco	P	P	A	E	E(R)	A	A	P	A	E	A	A
Brad LaMorgese (07/22)	Irving	P	E	E	E	P	E(R)	E	P	P	E	P	A
Cara Mendelsohn (07/20)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)
Ed Moore (07/22)	Garland	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E(R)	P
John Muns (6/23)	Plano	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	A	P
Raj Narayanan (03/23)	DFW Airport	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	E	E
Omar Narvaez (09/21)	Dallas	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	E	E(R)	P	E	P
Manny Ramirez (1/23)	Tarrant County	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P	P	E(R)	P	P
Jim R. Ross (07/21)	Arlington	P	P	A	P	P	E(R)	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P

P= Present

A= Absent

R=Represented by Alternate

--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Regional Transportation Council Attendance Roster
September 2022 - August 2023

RTC MEMBER	Entity	9/8/22	10/13/22	11/10/22	12/08/22	1/12/23	2/9/23	3/9/23	4/13/2023	5/11/2023	6/8/2023	7/13/2023	8/10/2023
David Salazar (10/22)	TxDOT, FW	-	P	E(R)	P	E(R)	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P
Chris Schulmeister (07/20)	Allen	A(R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P	A(R)	P
Jeremy Tompkins (10/19)	Eules	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
T. Oscar Trevino Jr. (6/02)	Nrth Rch Hills	P	P	P	P	A(R)	P	P	P	P	A(R)	A(R)	P
William Tsao (3/17)	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	P
Watts, Chris (12/22)	Denton	--	--	--	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	P
Duncan Webb (6/11)	Collin County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E(R)	E(R)
Chad West (11/22)	Dallas	-	-	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	A	E	P
Michele Wong Krause	DART	P	P	E	P	E(R)	P	P	P	E	E(R)	P	P

Note: Date in parenthesis indicates when member was
1st eligible to attend RTC meetings

P= Present
A= Absent
R=Represented by Alternate
--= Not yet appointed

E= Excused Absence (personal illness, family emergency,
jury duty, business necessity, or fulfillment
of obligation arising out of elected service)

Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
August 2022 - August 2023

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	8/26/22	9/23/22	10/28/22	12/02/22	01/27/23	2/24/23	3/24/23	4/28/23	5/26/23	6/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23
Joe Atwood	Hood County	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	A
Melissa Baker	Irving	P	P	A	P	P	P	E	P	R	P	P	P
Micah Baker	Dallas County	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
David Boski	Mansfield	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	P	P
Shon Brooks	Waxahachie	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	A	P
Tanya Brooks	DART	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	R	A	P	A
Daniel Burnham	Arlington	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	R	R	P	P
Travis Campbell	TxDOT Dallas	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P
Layne Cline	Coppell	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	A	P	P	P
Robert Cohen	Southlake	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
John Cordary, Jr.	TxDOT FW	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	E	E	A	E	P
Jackie Culton	Duncanville	A	A	P	A	P	R	P	P	P	A	R	P
Clarence Daugherty	Collin County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R
Chad Davis	Wise County	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P
Arturo Del Castillo	Dallas	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	E	E	P	P	P
Pritam Deshmukh	Richardson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	R	P	P	P
Caryl DeVries	Grand Prairie	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P
Greg Dickens	Hurst	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	R	P
Rebecca Diviney	Denton	P	P	P	E	P	A	P	P	P	E	P	P
Phil Dupler	FWTA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chad Edwards	Trinity Metro	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Claud Elsom	Rockwall County	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A
Eric Fladager	Fort Worth	A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	P
Chris Flanigan	Allen	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A
Ann Foss	Arlington	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ricardo Gonzalez	TxDOT FW	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gary Graham	McKinney	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	P
Tom Hammons	Carrollton	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	P
Ron Hartline	The Colony	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	A
Barry Heard	Kaufman County	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	A	A	P
Shannon Hicks	Addison	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	R	R	P	A
Matthew Hotelling	Flower Mound	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	R	P	P	P
John Hudspeth	TxDOT Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jeremy Hutt	Cleburne	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A
Thuan Huynh	McKinney	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Joseph Jackson	Tarrant County	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Joel James	NTTA	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
William Janney	Frisco	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	R	P	A	P

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Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster

August 2022 - August 2023

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	8/26/22	9/23/22	10/28/22	12/02/22	01/27/23	2/24/23	3/24/23	4/28/23	5/26/23	6/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23
Kelly Johnson	NTTA	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	A
Major L. Jones	Eules	--	--	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gus Khankarli	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alonzo Liñán	Keller	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P
Eron Linn	DART	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	E	P
Clay Lipscomb	Plano	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Paul Luedtke	Garland	A	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Stanford Lynch	Hunt County	P	A	P	E	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P
Chad Marbut	Weatherford	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alberto Mares	Ellis County	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Wes McClure	Mesquite	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	R	P	P
Brian Moen	Frisco	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Mark Nelson	Richardson	A	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	R
Jim O'Connor	Irving	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Cintia Ortiz	Parker County	--	--	--	--	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Eric Oscarson	Burleson	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Kevin Overton	Dallas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P
Tim Palermo	DCTA	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dipak Patel	Lancaster	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P
Martin Phillips	Fort Worth	--	--	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	R
John Polster	Denton County	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	P
Kelly Porter	Fort Worth	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P
Tim Porter	Wylie	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lauren Prieur	Fort Worth	--	--	P	P	A	E	P	P	A	P	P	P
Elizabeth Reynolds	Grapevine	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P
Jahor Roy	Mesquite	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	P
Greg Royster	DFW Int. Airport	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P
Kathryn Rush	Dallas	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A
David Salmon	Lewisville	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	R	P
Ryan Sartor	Farmers Branch	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P
Brian Shewski	Plano	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Walter Shumac, III	Grand Prairie	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P
Randy Skinner	Tarrant County	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Cheryl Taylor	Bedford	--	--	--	--	--	P	A	P	P	A	A	A
Caleb Thornhill	Plano	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A
Press Tompkins	Greenville	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jennifer VanderLaan	Johnson County	--	--	--	--	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	A
Gregory Van	Haltom City	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Daniel Vedral	Irving	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	R	P
Caroline Waggoner	North Richland	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A
Jana Wentzel	Arlington	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	P	R	P
Robert Woodbury	Cedar Hill	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P

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Surface Transportation Technical Committee Attendance Roster
August 2022 - August 2023

STTC MEMBERS	Entity	8/26/22	9/23/22	10/28/22	12/02/22	01/27/23	2/24/23	3/24/23	4/28/23	5/26/23	6/23/23	7/28/23	8/25/23
Larry Wright	Colleyville			A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Jamie Zech	TCEQ	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

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MINUTES

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

June 23, 2023

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) met on Friday, July 23, 2023, at 1:30 pm, in the Transportation Council Room of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The following STTC members or representatives were present: Joe Atwood, Melissa Baker, Bryan Beck, David Boski, Chris Funches (representing Daniel Burnham), Lane Cline, Clarence Daugherty, Chad Davis, Arturo Del Castillo, Pritam Deshmukh, Caryl DeVries, Phil Dupler, Chad Edwards, Eric Fladager, Chris Flanigan, Eric Gallt, Ricardo Gonzalez, Tom Hammons, Ron Hartline, Wilson Kakembo (representing Shannon Hicks), Matthew Hotelling, John D. Hudspeth, Joseph Jackson, William Janney, Kelly Johnson, Major L. Jones, Gus Khankarli, Eron Linn, Clay Lipscomb, Paul Luedtke, Chad Marbut, Alberto Mares, Justin Stoker (representing Wes McClure), Mark Nelson, Jim O'Connor, Tim Palermo, Dipak Patel, Martin Phillips, Kelly Porter, Tim Porter, Lauren Prieur, Greg Royster, David Salmon, James Ryan Sartor, Brian Shewski, Walter Shumac III, Randy Skinner, Caleb Thornhill, Jennifer VanderLaan, Gregory Van Nieuwenhuize, Daniel Vedral, Caroline Waggoner, Jana Wentzel, and Robert Woodbury.

Others present at the meeting were: Julie Anderson, Martin Bate, Natalie Bettger, Joslyn Billings, Jason Brown, Jackie Castillo, Aaron Cedar, Lori Clark, Brian Dell, Cody Derrick, Olivia Dugger, Brian Flood, Rebekah Gongora, Christie Gotti, Delaney Hankins, Lynn Harris, Bill Ische, Vercie Pruitt-Jenkins, Amy Johnson, Dan Kessler, Ken Kirkpatrick, Chris Klaus, Dan Lamers, Mark Mathis, James McLane, Michael Morris, Vickie Morris, Jeff Neal, Donald Parker, Trey Pope, Ezra Pratt, Moosa Sagkian, Robert Saylor, Bill Smith, Toni Stehling, Shannon Stevenson, Nick VanHaasen, Brendon Wheeler, Amanda Wilson, Brian Wilson, Patricia Wodsack, Hsa Woodberry, and Susan Young.

1. **Approval of May 26, 2023, Minutes:** The minutes of the May 26, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted in Electronic Item 1. Daniel Vedral (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Consent Agenda:** The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:
 - 2.1. **August 2023 Transportation Improvement Program Revisions:** A recommendation was requested for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of the of revisions to the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was requested, along with the ability to amend the Unified Planning Work Program and other planning documents with TIP- related changes. August 2023 revisions to the 2023-2026 TIP were provided as Electronic Item 2.1. These modifications were reviewed for consistency with the mobility plan, the air quality conformity determination, and financial constraint of the TIP.
 - 2.2. **Federal Functional Classification System Amendments:** A recommendation was requested for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of ten amendments to the currently approved Federal Functional Classification System (FFCS). While inclusion in the FFCS is based on a roadway's purpose and functioning capabilities, it is also used to determine eligibility for federal funding. Amendments to the FFCS occur as the function of an existing roadway changes, or as roadways need to be added due to construction, new developments, and shifts

in demographic trends. Staff are currently working with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on 10 proposed FFCS amendments within the Dallas and Fort Worth TxDOT districts. These amendments involve the construction of new roadways and improvement of existing roadways and improvement of existing roadways resulting from a project development process involving NCTCOG staff, local governments, and external partners. Maps and tables detailing the proposed functional class changes were included in Electronic Item 2.2

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of Items 2.1 and 2.2 on the Consent Agenda. Kelly Porter (M); Robert Woodbury (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Endorsement of Contingency Emergency Item - Amtrak:** Michael Morris provided background regarding the request for the Surface Transportation Technical Committee to endorse emergency funding authorization of \$700,000 in Regional Toll Revenue (RTR) funds for Amtrak's Heartland Flyer Passenger Service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City. RTC Policy P20-02 authorizes the Transportation Director to take emergency funding actions up to approximately \$5,000,000 due to necessity of time or consequence. The policy requires the emergency action to be placed on the next scheduled RTC meeting for ratification. Texas' share of funding for Amtrak's Heartland Flyer passenger service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City has a current funding shortfall of approximately \$700,000. The State's Supplemental Budget for the biennium ending August 31, 2023, did not include funding to address this shortfall. Michael took emergency action to allocate \$700,000 in RTR funding for the Heartland Flyer Passenger Service to avoid service disruption. The staff is meeting with legislative officials to determine if other means of funding are available for the service. Additional details were provided in Electronic Item 3.

A motion was made to endorse the Regional Transportation Council's approval of the emergency funding authorization of \$700,000 in Regional Toll Revenue funds, if needed, to ensure Amtrak's Heartland Flyer Passenger Service from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City will continue. Kelly Porter (M); Daniel Vedral (S). The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Critical Transit Funding for Areas in Collin County:** Shannon Stevenson presented a request to provide funding for the Collin County Rides Program to support the transition of transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the Cities of Allen, Fairview, and Wylie, and introduce new transit service in the City of Anna. Staff was seeking to utilize up to \$1,800,000 total funds to support the transition of transit services in the cities of Allen, Fairview, and Wylie. The recommendation for funding includes \$300,000 in RTC Local funds for the first year and subsequent operations to be funded with existing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Senior and Individuals with Disabilities program funds. Participating cities will provide the local match. The current provider is Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART); transit service was previously provided by Texoma Area Paratransit Systems (TAPS). DART's contract expires September 30, 2023, initial contract expired September 2022, but DART Board granted one year extension while cities looked for other options with the risk of threat for suspension of transit service leaving gaps in coverage with an anticipated service start-date of October 1, 2023, with evaluation of service and to possibly incorporate into existing transit authority service area. In addition, NCTCOG staff has been working with the City of Anna to introduce transit services; however, due to final US Census designations, the City of Anna is not eligible for urban funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and must utilize rural FTA funding through the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), which requires a Rural Transit

District. A Rural Transit District (RTD) will need to be established by the Collin County Commissioner's Court to access federal rural funding through TxDOT. The City of Anna's classification falls under "rural" by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) because the population is under 50,000. While NCTCOG continues working with Collin County and TxDOT to establish an RTD, staff requested STTC recommendation for RTC approval to implement new transit service utilizing up to \$1,200,000 total funds from either the Congestion Mitigation and Quality Improvement Program or Carbon Reduction Program funds, with local match to be provided by the City of Anna. Electronic Item 4 contained additional details.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval to utilize up to \$1,800,000 total funds (RTC Local: \$300,000; Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program funds: \$600,000; local match from the Cities of Allen, Fairview, and Wylie: \$900,000) for the Collin County Rides Program to continue transit service in the cities of Allen, Fairview, and Wylie, and up to \$1,200,000 total funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program or Carbon Reduction Program funds: \$600,000; local match from the City of Anna: \$600,000) for the City of Anna to implement transit service within its city. The motion also included direction to staff to revise administrative documents as appropriate to incorporate the projects. Bryan Beck (M); Gus Khankarli (S). The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Automated Transportation System Initiative and Modernization Pilot:** Brendon Wheeler requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval of \$500,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding for engineering design of a Las Colinas modernization pilot and an additional \$500,000 in STBG funding for staff efforts to support all Automated Transportation System (ATS) pilot projects through Fiscal Year 2026. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG's) review of emerging technology innovations focuses on future proofing infrastructure, providing users with demand-responsive transportation, reducing long-term risks of obsolescence of infrastructure and utilizing solutions that do not require custom guideways to operate. The RTC has already funded two pilot ATS projects – \$10,000,000 for a people movement application at the Dallas International District and \$11,000,000 for a cargo movement application between the Arlington General Motors Plant and the Union Pacific railhead – as well as \$375,000 for an ATS feasibility study in the Legacy Area in Plano. Based on the successful results of the ATS Development Study, Dallas County Utility and Reclamation District (DCURD) accepted NCTCOG's proposal to modernize a pilot segment of the existing Las Colinas guideway. The recommendation for today's action is only for the engineering design; retrofitting the existing guideway and operating the pilot would be future phases to be considered by RTC at a future date. Electronic Item 5 included a presentation summarizing the project.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of proposed funding for engineering/design of Las Colinas APT, staff time to support advancement of Las Colinas modernization pilot, International District ATS (People), GM/Arlington ATS (Goods), and general ATS planning, including procurement/management of consultant services, coordination with project stakeholders, and other project development activities for FY2025 – FY2026. The motion also included direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program, and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved projects and funding. Daniel Vedral (M); Jim O'Connor (S). The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Federal Performance Measures Condition Targets for National Highway System Pavement/Bridge Access:** Jeff Neal requested a recommendation for Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approval to support new statewide pavement and bridge condition targets for National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge assets, in accordance with existing and updating rulemaking for required Federal performance measures (PM2). While target-setting activities were codified through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the context of NCTCOG's regional strategy guiding this activity is based on addressing national performance via state of good repair to ensure safety of traveling public and effective long-term operation of transportation infrastructure using asset management, supporting TxDOT targets as much as possible, and setting regional performance goals included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that can effectively "tell our story" through project outcomes. Recent upcoming committee actions for PM2 for pavement and bridge conditions with six number of measures, setting action in July 2023 with a four-year performance periods biennially (beginning, middle, and end of performance periods). Jeff noted target analysis includes review of National Highway System (NHS) facilities within the NCTCOG region, as TxDOT is required to establish PM2 targets representing the full NHS extent statewide, regardless of ownership. There are a total of 70,976 NHS lane-miles in Texas and 12,448 in the NCTCOG region. The NHS comprises 14 percent of the region's total roadway lane-miles but carries 63 percent of total vehicle-miles of travel (VMT), and NCTCOG's analysis further subdivides non-Interstate NHS into additional classifications: non-Interstate freeways, on-system arterials, off-system arterials, and off-system toll roads. For this new four-year performance period (starting in 2022), condition measurements for non-Interstate NHS segments are now identical to Interstate NHS, as a result of the inclusion of cracking, rutting, and faulting metrics with the International Roughness Index (IRI). Though pavement roughness had often been judged as a critical link between user satisfaction (comfort/safety) and performance, roughness (IRI) alone had resulted in overestimation of poor condition pavements. The revised methodology creates substantial positive condition differences for non-Interstate NHS pavements, but the ultimate integration of these metrics will enable more holistic lifecycle assessments of pavement assets over time compared to using roughness alone. Jeff then presented charts comparing statewide pavement/bridge good and poor condition observations and targets during the first performance period with the most recent observations and new 2024 and 2026 targets for the second performance period. Similar charts were also presented describing regional observations and trends but were further broken down among the additional non-Interstate NHS classifications mentioned above (for pavement assets only). While some important distinctions were noted between the statewide and regional data values, no significant divergences in performance were recognized requiring the region to set its own quantifiable targets. Jeff reminded the Committee since NCTCOG neither owns nor maintains any roadway pavement/bridge assets, it would be unrealistic and disadvantageous to assert such control over regional on-/off-system asset owners as a strategy to improve performance. Continued collaboration on planning and project development to help attain collective pavement/bridge condition goals is a more effective strategy, and the legacy of that support had already generated results, particularly for bridges when the extent and status of poor condition structures had been analyzed last summer ahead of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Bridge Investment Program (BIP). Of the 49 regional NHS bridges in poor condition (including 37 bridges in the TxDOT Dallas District and 12 in the TxDOT Fort Worth District), treatments for all but three structures had either been funded and scheduled for construction, under construction, or completed. This included outcomes from the North Central Texas Strategic NHS Bridge Program INFRA Grant (2019) which had supported implementation of four bridge projects (three – West

subregion; one – East subregion) totaling \$28.5 million. Due to this information, staff's proposed RTC's action would likely be to affirm NCTCOG support for new TxDOT statewide "Good Condition" NHS pavement and bridge targets for 2024 and 2026. It would also affirm NCTCOG support for new TxDOT statewide "Poor Condition" NHS pavement and bridge targets for 2024 and 2026 by collaborating to plan/program projects contributing toward accomplishment of pavement and bridge goals via the following actions: NCTCOG will continue to work with local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS Off-System Arterials in "Poor Condition", and continue to work with TxDOT/local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS bridges in "Poor Condition". The schedule for PM2 target decision making was highlighted; RTC action will be requested at the July 13, 2023, meeting, and RTC action will be requested at its July 13, 2023, meeting. The deadline for MPOs to report whether they will agree to plan/program contributing to affirmed TxDOT PM2 targets or commit to new quantifiable PM2 targets for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is August 9, 2023. Additional details were presented provided in Electronic Item 6.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval to support new statewide "good condition" and "poor condition" National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge targets in accordance with existing and updating rulemaking for required federal performance measures (PM2) for 2024 and 2026, collaborate to plan/program projects contributing toward accomplishment of pavement/bridge goals via the following actions: North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will continue to work with local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS Off-System Arterials in "poor condition", and continue to work with TxDOT/local governments on annual monitoring and expediting improvements for identified NHS Bridges in "poor condition". Kelly Porter (M); Tim Palermo (S). The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program:** Dan Kessler presented information on the draft Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Development of the UPWP is a cooperative effort between the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and its transportation partners. The UPWP inventories NCTCOG staff work activities to be performed between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2025. A draft of the document was provided to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for review in early June, with a copy provided concurrently to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC). The final document is due to TxDOT on July 31, 2023. The UPWP, required by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), summarizes annual Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) funding, addresses regional and local projects, inventories planning and programming activities, and allocates available funds to specific tasks. Included in the document are five major tasks under which NCTCOG's work activities will be carried out: Task 1 – Administration and Management; Task 2 – Transportation Data Development and Maintenance; Task 3 – Short-Range Planning, Programming, and Operations; Task 4 – Metropolitan Transportation Plan; and Task 5 – Special Studies. Dan noted that there are 34 subtasks in the UPWP, and 28 active program area teams in the Transportation Department that represent 175 to 200 programs and projects with funding through 17 revenue sources and an estimated 170 federal grants. A funding summary of the federal formula Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) for FY2024 and FY2025 was presented. Available TPF are estimated to be around \$33.2 million, and expected expenditures for the two years is estimated at approximately \$28.5 million, leaving an approximate \$4.7 million to carry over to FY2026. In addition to Transportation Planning Funds, the UPWP also contains funding

from numerous other grants and agencies, totaling about \$179 million in funding. Approximately 33 percent of the funding is pass through to other transportation agencies. Electronic Item 7.1 contained the Work Program policies that guide the allocation of these federal Transportation Planning funds. Electronic Item 7.2 contained additional information on the draft FY2024 and FY2025 UPWP. A draft of the document is available at www.nctcog.org/trans/study/unified-planning-work-program.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval of the FY2024 and FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), including the UPWP Policies contained in Exhibit I-8 (Electronic Item 7.1) of the Work Program. The motion also included direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program, and other administrative/planning documents, as appropriate, to reflect the approved projects. Kelly Porter (M); Melissa Baker (S). The motion passed unanimously.

8. **South Dallas Inland Port Transit Funding:** Shannon Stevenson presented a request for approval to provide funding to Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) to support transit services with the Southern Dallas Inland Port area. Service began through a partnership between the Inland Port Transportation Management Association (IPTMA), STAR Transit, and DART Mobility Service Local Government Corporation (LGC) with funding approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). The \$1.5 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant was planned to help fund the GoLink services while IPTMA grew membership. The grant funding is delayed and not scheduled to start until the first or second quarter of Fiscal Year 2025 at the earliest leaving a federal funding gap of 15-18 months. IPTMA requested bridge funding, which will be a one-time request, to support increased demand while the LGC is established and the IPTMA restructures to secure more sustainable funding. The intent of the IPTMA and the Inland Port GoLink services was to provide workforce transportation to jobs throughout the Inland Port. With ridership increasing year after year, employers and staffing agencies are beginning to incorporate GoLink information for job fairs, new hires, and new employees reliant on public transportation to call IPTMA for routing. Since the UberPool integration, average weekday ridership has increased to 301 in March of 2023 with a temporary decline in UberPool ridership as a result of improper geofencing while working to add capacity to reduce reliance on UberPool. More details were provided in Electronic Item 8. Eron Linn of DART expressed DART's support of the funding partnership. Clarence Daugherty of Collin County asked what is being done to fund this project on a long-term basis. Michael explained the transportation management association (TMA) was a one-time, three-year deal. The TMA is being folded into a local government corporation to capture tax increment financing either through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district or a Public Improvement District (PID) because there is lot of growth that is occurring in an unincorporated county and small cities that have no money; therefore, revenue is being captured through the LGC. Transit cannot transition into the LGC now because there is no revenue; there has not been enough time to capture any of tax increment finance benefits from the growth of those companies. NCTCOG's interest is to become a financial partner of the LGC and create a new infrastructure program that could carry the transit load either through direct payments from the local governments, county government, or the tax increment finance process. Michael noted that due to the magnitude of the unincorporated area, he believes the best option for the future will be to create a transit capability through the local government corporation. Staff will bring additional information on the local government corporation at future meetings.

A motion was made to recommend Regional Transportation Council approval to utilize up to \$3,500,000 in federal funds (Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program or Carbon Reduction Program funding) for the Silver Line Rail Project for a two-year period with 700,000 in Transportation Development Credits (TCDs) in lieu of local match as one-time bridge gap funding. Dallas Area Rapid Transit to transfer \$3.5 million in local funding to support transit in the Southern Dallas Inland Port area, and direction for staff to administratively amend the Transportation Improvement Program and other planning/administrative documents, as appropriate, to incorporate this project. Robert Woodbury (M); Gus Khankarli (S). The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Director of Transportation Report on Selected Items:** Michael Morris briefly highlighted several items for the Committee. The Texas Legislature Testimony: Number 2, was not discussed under this item (see the Legislative Report in Item 11). A link was provided to the testimony ([Transportation - S/C Discretionary Funding Allocations - May 18th, 2023 \(granicus.com\)](https://www.granicus.com/publication/28222/Transportation-S-C-Discretionary-Funding-Allocations-May-18th-2023.html)). Regarding the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and local government lighting agreements, implementation will be moving forward a few months instead of September, NCTCOG and the TxDOT Dallas District are in negotiations regarding incentives as part of the safety initiatives. Michael briefed the Committee on the City of Dallas/Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Silver Line Rail mediation; the City of Dallas approved the particular agreement, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments will receive \$10 million dollars as part of a revolver to help pay for projects in June and \$5.3 million in July. He also provided draft policy agreement that the Regional Transportation Council will be requested to approve that strongly encourages all parties to work collaboratively in a professional manner to expeditiously resolve the advancement of the Silver Line Regional Rail Project. In addition, Michael noted that Ken Kirkpatrick of NCTCOG is making progress with the mediations with Burlington Northern Santa Fe and transit authorities regarding the Trinity Railway Express and advancement of the BUILD grant. Michael announced that the Irving Transportation Summit will not be held in August 2023 and that the RTC's August meeting will be held on August 10, 2023, the usual second Thursday meeting day. Michael highlighted that Natalie Bettiger completed the 66,800-traffic signal inventory so the status of every signalized intersection with INRIX is known. The City of Dallas approved TxDOT's recommendation to advance a hybrid Interstate Highway 345. In addition, Michael noted that STTC member attendance has been lacking at monthly meetings. He reminded members that monthly meeting attendance is tracked and sent to city managers, mayors, and county judges of all agencies represented on the Committee. Dan Kessler also noted that the North Central Texas Council of Governments works with a lot of local governments that want to be included as STTC members but aren't able due to their population, and he encouraged those members that are attending meetings to remind their fellow colleagues to attend the STTC meetings. At Michael's request, Jeff Neal of NCTCOG announced that the US Department of Transportation asked if \$20 million was awarded for the East/West Lancaster project in Fort Worth rather than the \$25 million requested, would it be possible to implement the project. NCTCOG responded that the project could still be implemented.
10. **Federal and State Legislative Update:** Nick Allen provided an update on federal and State legislative actions related to transportation and air quality issues affecting the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Transportation issues continue to be a focus for both the United States Congress and the Texas Legislature. Regarding the Debt Ceiling, – the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 was approved by Congress on June 1, 2023; The Act suspends the Federal government's debt ceiling through January 1, 2025; imposes two-year discretionary

spending caps, Federal Highway Programs are exempt; rescinds some unobligated COVID-19 funds, transit not affected, and streamlines environmental review processes. Nick noted Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) reauthorization provides more than \$107 billion for the FAA for fiscal years 2024 through 2028. The last stage of Nextgen will be completed by December 31, 2025, FAA must establish a pathway for beyond visual line-of-sight operations, and new safety certification of advanced air mobility powered-line aircraft. Governor Abbott declared a Special Session on border security and property taxes. State's budget plan for House Bill (HB) 1 House and Senate approved total funding of \$321.3 billion and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) funding of \$37.2 billion with Riders of Interest: Southern Gateway Deck Park matching funds if federal grant is awarded and TxDOT task force to evaluate medium-and heavy-duty charging infrastructure and capacity. Nick provided information on Bills of interest regarding transportation funding: Senate Bill (SB) 505 creates a \$200/\$400 annual electric vehicle fee, Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 2 extends proposition 7 expiration date to 2042 (State sales tax portion) and 2039 (motor vehicle sales tax portion), HB 2230 extends Proposition 1 expiration date from 2034 to 2042. Bills of Interest on the topic of General Transportation include HB 3444 Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) to prescribe criteria for the classification of each district as metropolitan, urban, or rural. Bills of interest on the topic of safety include HB 898 harsher penalties for the Move Over, Slow Down Law. HB 1885 Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) authority to establish a variable speed limit program to lower speed limits by 10 mph in certain situations. HB 3297 would eliminate vehicle safety inspections for noncommercial vehicles. HB 4797 Training on the treatment of tollways during inclement weather. Bills of Interest on the topic of temporary tags include HB 718 ends temporary paper tags and requires the issuance of metal plates by dealers. HB 914 increases penalties for temporary tag tampering. HB 2195 increases penalties for fictitious and altered plates. Bills of interest on the topic of unmanned aircraft, SB 1308 prohibits drones over airports and military installations. Bills of interest on the topic of broadband HB 9/HJR 125 creates the Broadband Infrastructure Fund, allocates \$1.5 billion, requires voter approval. SB 1238 revises existing Broadband Development Program. Bills of interest on the topic of air quality and electric vehicles include SB 1397, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Sunset bill continues the agency for 12 years, SB 1732, creates standards for electric vehicle charging stations requiring a widely compatible connector or plug. HB 3014 exempts EV from emission inspection. HB 4885 creates the Hydrogen Infrastructure, Vehicle, and Equipment Grant Program under TERP. Bills of interest on the topic of water include SB 28/SJR 75, which creates the Texas Water Fund and the New Water Supply for Texas Fund, requires voter approval.

11. **2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) and Regional 10-Year Plan Update:** Brian Dell updated the Committee on the proposed changes for the Regional 10-year plan, including a funding exchange to advance the IH 30 Canyon project. Texas House Bill (HB) 20 requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) develop 10-Year Plans using performance-based planning and project selection methods that includes projects funded with Category 2 (MPO selected), Category 4 (Texas Department of Transportation [TxDOT] District selected), and Category 12 (Texas Transportation Commission [TTC] selected). The Regional 10-Year Plan was originally approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in December 2016. This plan is updated annually in conjunction with the development of TxDOT's UTP. Since the approval of the last 10-Year Plan in summer of 2022, TxDOT began developing the 2024 UTP. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOGs) staff has been coordinating with the TxDOT Districts regarding project updates (e.g., costs/funding, environmental clearance and let dates), and potential new projects. This includes 2023 projects that need additional funding to cover cost

overruns at letting. To satisfy a February 21, 2023, deadline set forth by TxDOT, a draft project listing was developed that included project revisions and potential new projects. Principles for the development of the 10-Year Plan were highlighted: Projects should be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, focus on “system” versus new, stand-alone projects, fully fund existing projects before funding new projects (with a focus on projects letting in the next 2-3 years), ensure equity of county allocations, maintain toll lanes/toll managed lanes on selected corridors, re-fund previously unfunded projects, ensure all RTC projects are approved in 2024 UTP (including “placeholders”), and projects must be scored and should have a score sufficient to qualify for funding. Historical allocations of Category 2, 4, and 12 funds since 2017 were provided. A proposed Category 2/Category 12 funding exchange was introduced. There is currently too much Category 12 funding slotted statewide in the first few years of the UTP. To help resolve this issue, the region has been asked by TxDOT Headquarters to trade out Category 12 funds on the IH 30 Canyon project in 2024 and replace that funding with Category 2 and 4 funds. An initial trade was proposed by the State, but NCTCOG staff is proposing the following: Category 2 funding would be removed from four projects (SH 199 in Tarrant County [\$70 million], State Highway 360 at Randall Mill in Tarrant County [\$70 million], and United States 380 [\$150 million] and Spur 399 [\$100 million] in Collin County) and placed on the IH 30 Canyon project. Category 12 funds would replace Category 2 removed from those projects. Brian highlighted work that is being done to track Category 2 and non-formula funds in each subregion and noted that more details on the region’s latest Category 2 carryover balance and non-formula tracking will be provided once coordination with TxDOT and funding decisions have been finalized. Maps showing the 10-Year Plan projects, their statuses, as well as other major capacity projects in the region were presented. Next steps in the process were covered. The 10-Year Plan will be provided for information at the July 13, 2023, RTC meeting, public involvement during July 2023, will be brought for action at the July 28, 2023, STTC meeting and the August 10, 2023, RTC meeting, TxDOT Public Involvement for 2024 UTP during July 2023 and August 2023, and anticipated TTC approval of 2024 UTP during August 2023. Electronic Item 11 included additional information about the process.

12. **Census Bureau Boundaries:** Ken Kirkpatrick provided a status report on recent Census Bureau update to urban area boundaries impacting the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region: 1) recent discussions with the Cities of Frisco and McKinney on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Designated Recipient designation; and 2) latest on Transportation Management Area (TMA) implications. Federal actions for the US Census Bureau updates to Urban areas was based upon 2020 Census of Population and Housing, McKinney-Frisco Urban Area was expanded and renamed on December 29, 2022. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) updated transportation management areas on June 5, 2023, for McKinney-Frisco (New), Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, and Denton-Lewisville. The McKinney-Frisco urbanized area needs to select a designated recipient by September 30, 2023, for apportionments beginning Fiscal Year 2024, that will be selected by Governor, or designee (TxDOT) in cooperation with transportation providers and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The duties of the designated recipient will have principal authority to administer and provide oversight of FTA funds and making FTA funds available to eligible projects and entities. Staff recommends North Central Texas Council of Governments to serve as the designated recipient. As of 2022, the designated/direct recipients by urbanized areas: Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington – NCTCOG, DART, and Trinity Metro/Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Mesquite; Denton-Lewisville – NCTCOG and DCTA/no direct recipients; and McKinney – TxDOT/McKinney Urban Transit District (MUTD). The anticipated schedule: Frisco City Council on July 3, 2023; information at the RTC meeting on July 13, 2023; McKinney City

Council on July 18, 2023; action will be requested at the STTC meeting on July 28, 2023; RTC meeting on August 10, 2023; and Executive Board meeting on August 24, 2023.

13. **Surface Transportation Technical Committee/Regional Transportation Council**

Officers: Dan Kessler announced the new Surface Transportation Technical Committee officers for the 2023-2024 term: Walter Shumac, III, P.E., Director of Transportation Services, City of Grand Prairie (Chair); G. "Gus" Khankarli, P.E., Director of Transportation Department, City of Dallas (Vice Chair); and Ricardo Gonzalez, Director of Transportation Planning and Development, Texas Department of Transportation, Fort Worth District (Secretary). The STTC officers were approved by the NCTCOG Executive Board at its June 22, 2023, meeting. In addition, the new Regional Transportation Council officers for the 2023-2024 term are Gyna Bivens, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fort Worth (Chair); Clay Lewis Jenkins, County Judge, Dallas County (Vice Chair); and Rick Bailey, Commissioner, Johnson County (Secretary).

14. **Fast Facts:** Staff presentations were not given. Information was provided to members electronically for the following items.

1. *Amy Johnson* – Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 Policy Bundle (www.nctcog.org/policybundle)
2. *Nicholas Vanhaasen* – Chair Niermann Correspondence Response ([Electronic Item 14.1](#))
3. *Nicholas Vanhaasen* – 2023 Ozone Season Update ([Electronic Item 14.2](#))
4. *Nicholas Vanhaasen* – Annual Report: Most Ozone Polluted Metro Areas ([SOTA-2023.pdf \(lung.org\)](#))
5. *Trey Pope* – Local Clean Air Project Spotlight ([Electronic Item 14.3](#))
6. *Joslyn Billings* – Air Quality Funding Opportunities for Vehicles (www.nctcog.org/aqfunding)
7. *Joslyn Billings* – Upcoming Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Events (<https://www.dfwcleancities.org/events>)
8. *Brian Wilson* – Progress North Texas (Handed out at the meeting)
9. *Jackie Castillo* – July Public Meeting Notice ([Electronic Item 14.4](#))
10. *Taylor Benjamin* – Public Comments Report ([Electronic Item 14.5](#))
11. Written Progress Reports:
 - Partner Progress Reports ([Electronic Item 14.6](#))

15. **Other Business (Old or New):** There was no discussion on this item.

16. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Surface Transportation Technical Committee is scheduled for 1:30 pm on July 28, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.