

# MEETING SUMMARY

## **Public Works Council (PWC)**

Thursday, May 15, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (CST)

**Virtual Via Microsoft Teams**

**Chair:** Matt Leppla, Assistant Director of Public Works, City of Weatherford

**Vice Chair:** Glenn Barker, Director of Public Works, City of Corinth

**Welcome and Introductions.** Chair, Matt Leppla (Weatherford), welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Meeting Summary Approval.**

A motion was brought forward by Joseph Cotton (Allen) and seconded by James Gaertner (Waxahachie) to vote on approval of the February 15 meeting summary. All voted for approval, none opposed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **2. Regional Public Works Draft FY26 Work Program.**

Erin Blackman (NCTCOG) introduced the draft FY26 Work Program for the Regional Public Works Program. The draft was posted to the PWC webpage 30 days prior to this meeting to allow time for review. The draft is a continuation of general regional public works activities, Public Works Construction Standards, Sustainable Public Rights of Way, integrated Stormwater Management (iSWM) program, hydrologic and flooding technical assistance, regional training and presentation opportunities, promotion of Public Works labor force/career paths, cooperative purchases, and cross training and networking opportunities. Erin indicated that the PWC will not vote on the final Work Program until the August meeting and requested feedback or questions on the draft; none were provided.

### **3. Private Seats on the PWC.**

Erin Blackman began a discussion on how private seats are nominated to serve on the PWC. The five private seats represent the Texas Council of Engineering Labs/Geoprofessionals (1 seat), Associated General Contractors (2 seats), and the Council of Engineering Companies (2 seats). PWC Bylaws state: “representatives on the PWC must have the support and/or documented authorization of the member organization represented,” and “representatives of interests not otherwise serving on the PWC may be invited to serve in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity to provide advisory assistance to the PWC.” Erin requested clarification if these organizations nominate someone to serve or can an individual from a private company indicate interest in serving.

Chris Rowland (Texas Concrete Products Association), Chris Cha (Westwood), and Reece Taylor (Braun Intertec) provided insight and feedback that, in their experience the organizations themselves nominate an individual to represent them on the PWC. They were not entirely certain about their process of doing so and recommended that Erin reach

out to them for details. Chris Rowland added that he has contacted AGC leadership and plans to coordinate with Erin to confirm the internal process within their organization.

Matt Leppla asked if the Bylaws needed to be updated to reflect this clarification. Erin mentioned that the Bylaws should be reviewed every five years and this could be added at that time. This process is due to take place this fiscal year. Erin will add this to the August PWC meeting agenda and will suggest a similar low-commitment review process to that which occurred in FY24 on cost shares. Matt acknowledged the suggestion and invited any final comments on the private seats discussion item.

#### **4. Construction Standards Drawings: Expansion Joints.**

Kate Zielke (NCTCOG) reported that an engineering consulting firm raised concerns about missing expansion joint callouts in standard drawings, despite being noted in the specifications. This may be due to specs and drawings being updated on different cycles. The consultant also relayed the issue to several public works directors and NCTCOG brought it to the PWC for feedback.

Chris Cha noted omissions in older drawings, particularly around manholes, were likely due to missing graphic callouts. Erin Blackman added that the consultant also referenced structures like gate valves and vaults lacking expansion joint details.

Matt Leppla proposed that any revision requests include marked-up drawings to clarify the issues, allowing the group to review and vote on them. Michael Owen (Fort Worth) supported this, emphasizing that many cities use their own standards and marked-up submissions make evaluation easier. He recommended this as the standard approach. Tim James (Olsson) explained that the vagueness in some drawings is intentional, due to wide variation in how cities handle these elements. Matt acknowledged that not all changes would apply universally and suggested NCTCOG staff vet and circulate proposed revisions for group review.

To avoid meeting overload, James Gaertner (Waxahachie) recommended reviewing changes every six months and sharing proposals in advance. Michael added that reviews could be handled by the Construction Standards Subcommittee and do not need immediate responses, encouraging a slower, collected approach.

Matt suggested adding an agenda item on this topic at the August PWC meeting to define a standard approach for receiving input and how and when to address that input.

#### **5. Legislative Tracking.**

Erin Blackman presented 12 bills from the 89th Texas Legislative Session that may be of interest to the PWC (SB 253, HB 23, HB 2559, HB 3572, SB 673, HB 4272, SB 2858, HB 4283, HB 4582, HB 950, SB 2523, HB 1998). Erin asked the PWC if there were questions on these bills or if there are others not on the list that NCTCOG should track.

Jennifer Roberts (Fort Worth) inquired about HB 23, stating she received a recent alert from Fort Worth representatives that the bill is dead in the Senate and may be replaced by two similar bills. Erin responded that her latest update still showed HB 23 as referred to the Senate Local Government Committee but acknowledged the replacement possibility and said she would note the development. Jennifer added that builders appear to be pushing alternative legislation now that HB 23 is inactive, highlighting similar active bills

still in play. Erin confirmed that SB 2354 (identical bill) has been referred to the Senate and the last action on HB 2977 (duplicate bill) was recorded on March 20.

Matt Leppla noted he is not tracking the bills closely but has heard local government concerns about potential impacts. He invited others to share insights on specific bills they are monitoring. Erin added that updates are ongoing, and bills are being amended in committee, so continued monitoring is necessary.

Michael Owen discussed HB 4272. The bill proposes shifting the cost of relocating utilities in public right of way from utility companies to cities—a major change from long-standing precedent. Representatives from Fort Worth, Irving, and a coalition of cities spoke against the bill, and although it is currently pending in subcommittee, it may resurface. Michael and others also met with Charter, a supporter of the bill, to express concerns.

Jennifer mentioned that SB 1883 and HB 2225 propose significant changes to impact fee programs. One key concern is that the bills eliminate the City Plan Commission's role in overseeing transportation impact fees, requiring the creation of a new committee. Additionally, the bills mandate a two-thirds vote from the City Council to approve or modify impact fees, which could allow a minority of dissenting members to block changes. Another major issue is the removal of stepped fee increases, which Fort Worth currently uses to gradually raise rates. This approach was developed with input from the development community to avoid sudden hikes, but these bills would eliminate that option. These changes could undermine Fort Worth's infrastructure funding strategy, and while attempts to amend the bill were unsuccessful, there is still hope for further adjustments.

Jennifer also brought up that SB 2427 removes land costs from impact fee reimbursements, which has significant consequences for both the development community and the city. Currently, developers can receive credits against their impact fees if they dedicate land for rights of way, but this bill eliminates that benefit. This change would also hurt the city's ability to fund and acquire land for capital projects.

Another concerning bill is House Bill 5489, which proposes a four-year moratorium on collecting impact fees. While it does not address how the fees are spent, not collecting them would deplete funding for crucial infrastructure projects, severely hindering progress in Fort Worth. These bills present serious challenges for the city's impact fee program. Michael said HB 4348, along with its Senate companion, has raised major concerns due to its significant overreach into municipal authority. Initially intended to address concerns over bike lanes reducing vehicle lane capacity, the bill removes the term "exclusive control" and replaces it with "delegated" when referring to a municipality's control over its streets and highways. This change limits local control and imposes strict penalties, such as loss of state funding, for implementing certain transportation changes like adding bike lanes. It also proposes that municipalities seek approval from a state transportation committee for related plans, which would severely hinder local decision-making.

Erin made note of these additional bills not included in the original list for future tracking.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **6. PWC Representative Terms Expiring.**

Erin Blackman provided an overview of the PWC's seat structure, divided into three categories: standing seats, sub-region seats, and private seats. Standing seats are

designated for specific entities above a certain population, with representatives from those entities. Cities like Dallas and Fort Worth have two seats each, while others have one. Sub-region seats can be filled by representatives from any community within that sub-region. Private seats represent three organizations and as discussed previously.

As terms expire for FY25, an email will be sent to those whose terms are ending, asking if they wish to continue. An email will also be sent out to contacts in each subregion to identify interest in serving. If standing seat representatives decide to step down, it would be helpful for them to assist in finding a replacement within their organization. Six standing seats, six subregion seats, and four private seats have terms expiring this year. The turnover is balanced across years, with half of the PWC's terms expiring annually. Matt Leppla suggested nominating Manny Palacios for the vacant DFW North seat.

## **7. FY2025 Public Works Program Update.**

Erin Blackman provided an update on FY25 participation, noting that 59 communities have paid their voluntary cost share, covering about 99 percent of the budget. Erin also mentioned a new approach for FY26, where estimated cost share amounts were emailed to communities to assist with planning. Cost shares for FY26 will also be sent via email, and not mailed, around October.

- **PWC Marketing.**

Erin played the marketing video put together by NCTCOG intern, Lai Hoang. Erin opened up the floor for feedback. Lai explained the concept, which starts with someone showing interest in public works, followed by B-roll footage of public works activities, including meetings, inspections, and training. Lai asked for help from cities willing to provide footage of public works activities, particularly construction or inspector training, to enhance the video. He also mentioned that the narration for the video is still in progress and that a script is nearly finalized.

Kate Zielke added that the focus should be on showcasing the benefits of the PWC, especially for communities that aren't yet participating. She highlighted construction standards and the new inspectors training as key areas of interest. Erin is also working on scheduling the next new inspectors training, which will provide further opportunities for filming.

Jennifer Roberts suggested that the video might benefit from highlighting legislative support for small cities, as many struggle to dedicate staff time for legislative sessions. This could appeal to smaller cities and show how the PWC supports them in that area.

Matt Leppla encouraged cities to volunteer for filming, suggesting that engineering teams or field activities could be filmed to help with the project. Dane Stovall (Frisco) and James Gaertner both offered assistance.

- **New Inspectors Training.**

Erin shared an update on the upcoming new inspectors training. While the date and location have not been finalized, the classroom portion will be led by Olsson and Pape-Dawson. The training will likely follow the traditional half-day format: classroom instruction from 8:00 to 10:30 a.m., followed by a construction site visit until noon.

Erin outlined two hosting options. One is to hold the classroom portion at NCTCOG offices, coordinating a nearby site visit—possibly with Arlington or Grand Prairie. The other option is for a community to host both components, providing a meeting room and facilitating the site visit. Erin noted they would handle refreshments and could

share a list of classroom topics for cities interested in contributing to instruction. She welcomed any questions or volunteers.

Matt Leppla suggested sending out a list of topics for the new inspectors training. Matt proposed that by sharing the topics ahead of time, communities could evaluate if they have relevant activities or spaces to offer. This way, communities could volunteer to host the training more easily, knowing exactly what Erin is looking for. Matt emphasized that the training has been popular in the past and beneficial for participants.

Erin explained that the goal is to provide information on key aspects of inspection preparation, including pre-construction meetings, communication plans, site reviews, construction standards, documentation, bid items, and various inspection items such as safety, traffic control, stormwater, construction materials, ADA compliance, storm drains, sanitary sewers, water lines, and paving/repair. She mentioned that Olsson and Pape-Dawson would cover these topics in the training. Erin also clarified that communities could contribute by providing examples of how they handle specific aspects, like safety.

- **Social Media Presence.**

Erin shared that a LinkedIn account titled “NCTCOG Public Works Council” has been created in response to previous discussions about improving the PWC’s social media presence. The account aims to keep users updated on regional and PWC activities, connect with students and job seekers, promote the public works field, and facilitate communication among members. Matt added that while he is not very active on LinkedIn, he followed the page and appreciated seeing the meeting agenda shared there. He praised the effort, noting it is a great way to raise awareness and encourage engagement.

- **Public Works Roundup.**

Erin mentioned that the Public Works Roundup is scheduled for Thursday, September 4 at the Hurst Conference Center. She shared that the call for sponsors was sent out in April, and the call for presentations was issued in late April. Registration for the event will open in June. She encouraged the PWC to review the call for presentations and to consider submitting abstracts by June 2 that the PWC expressed interest in, noting that even those who don’t feel like experts can still contribute valuable insights.

Taner Ozdil (UTA) asked if ecological topics like street trees and biodiversity could be included in public works presentations. Erin confirmed that while the call for presentations lists specific topics, broad topics like green infrastructure are welcome. Matt Leppla also encouraged Taner to submit a presentation on these issues.

- **Sustainable Public Rights of Way (SPROW) Subcommittee.**

Kate shared an update on the SPROW subcommittee, noting that Erin has returned to lead the PWC following Carl Singleton’s resignation. Due to staffing shortages, the SPROW meeting for this quarter has been delayed. However, the team managed to gather valuable research and references for the guidebook they are working on. They plan to resume work as soon as they are fully staffed and are excited to continue with the project.

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

Ranjan Muttiah (Fort Worth) provided updates on the iSWM subcommittee during the meeting. The subcommittee had an in person meeting on April 30 with good attendance. One of the key topics was the SWPPP training, currently offered by Lee



Stimpson on behalf of NCTCOG. Lee is looking to pass on the responsibility, and NCTCOG's training institute is seeking a replacement. The ideal candidate would have an engineering background along with experience in inspection and design. A position description will be posted on the iSWM website.

Ranjan mentioned that Jennifer Rovezzi (Denton) gave a presentation on inlet protection and the challenges surrounding it, particularly sediment transport control. She discussed different alternatives for managing this issue, and those facing similar challenges were encouraged to reach out to Jennifer or NCTCOG staff.

Ranjan also discussed the ongoing efforts by Halff to update the iSWM program. They are working on nine tasks, some of which will extend into the next fiscal year, focusing on updating the program to better meet end-user needs. Additionally, Ranjan urged everyone to visit the iSWM webpage and provide suggestions for improvement.

The next subcommittee meeting will be held on July 15, where they will discuss both long-term and short-term goals and continue updating the program manuals. Ranjan then went over Halff Associates Work Program deliverable updates and what tasks will move over to the next year's work program.

## **8. Other Program Updates.**

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

Justin Stoker (Waxahachie) provided an update on PWERT's recent activities. On April 30, the team partnered with the Texas Division of Emergency Management to participate in Operation Freeze Frenzy, a large-scale disaster exercise. The exercise, which simulated a response to a winter storm similar to Winter Storm Uri, involved multiple municipalities, the National Weather Service, and the State Emergency Response Team. It offered a valuable opportunity to assess current preparedness and identify areas for improvement.

In addition to the exercise, PWERT has been reviewing the list of participating members and auditing available resources. This includes verifying operational status and updating contact information to ensure readiness. PWERT is also evaluating the emergency hotline and data storage systems to prevent technical issues and maintain effective communication and access to essential information. This update PWERT's ongoing efforts to strengthen emergency response capabilities.

Matt Leppla asked if PWERT still had access to a GIS-based mapping tool that displayed resource locations along with primary and secondary contact information. Justin responded that he has not recently checked the status of that tool. If it is still active, it would need updates, as they've identified discrepancies while reviewing documents—such as equipment still marked as "pending" even though it has been delivered.

- **Integrating Transportation and Stormwater Infrastructure (TSI).**

Kate Zielke provided an update on the TSI study, focusing on local government outreach efforts rather than technical details. She shared that the study team has been conducting community site visits to gather input from city, county, and town staff. These meetings have surfaced various strategies and concerns related to flooding and development.

Kate also mentioned the creation of a Local Government FAQ, available on the TSI website, which outlines the study's purpose and the benefits of community participation. Kate announced an upcoming workshop scheduled for the afternoon of July 31. This hybrid event—held at the NCTCOG offices and available via Microsoft Teams—is targeted specifically toward county staff working in transportation, floodplain management, and stormwater. The workshop will cover topics such as state, local government, and water codes, with a focus on what these legal frameworks enable counties to implement and enforce. The event will also revisit outcomes from a related 2017 county floodplain-focused workshop. Additionally, there is still space for another county staff speaker, so those interested are encouraged to contact Kate.

- **Community Rating System (CRS) Users Group.**

Erin Blackman shared several updates related to CRS. A four-day CRS training course is scheduled at NCTCOG offices August 11 to 14, 2025, with only a few spots remaining. Those interested are encouraged to complete an unofficial registration via SurveyMonkey. She will then follow up to confirm availability or placement on a waitlist, after which formal registration will occur through FEMA.

Additionally, NCTCOG is exploring the development of a multi-jurisdictional Program for Public Information (PPI). The CRS Users Group would serve as the official committee for this effort, providing participating communities with the opportunity to earn bonus CRS points and potentially improve their CRS class rating.

Finally, Erin mentioned that a seminar for elected officials is tentatively planned for late fall, with scheduling details to come.

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

Gabby Proce (University Park), President of the Texas Chapter of APWA, was unable to attend. Jody Byerly (Carrollton), who serves on the board, provided the updates. Jody highlighted that the general meeting will be held in Carrollton on June 17, with lunch sponsors lined up. There is also an FC Dallas event open for registration, and plans are underway to purchase a block of tickets for the August Rangers game against the Yankees. Lastly, the annual golf tournament is scheduled for October 6, with registration beginning June 17. Sponsorships are available for individual holes, breakfast, and lunch.

Jody mentioned the Texas Chapter state conference in McAllen, taking place June 9 to 11, with registration still open. The national APWA Public Works Expo will be held in Chicago this August, and next year's national event will be hosted in Houston.

## **OTHER BUSINESS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

### **9. Future Agenda Items.**

No future agenda items were suggested.

### **10. Roundtable Topics/Other Business.**

Michael Own requested that the PWC contact him if they have information on agreement templates or pricing structures for leasing space to private utilities and spare conduits owned by municipalities, particularly when placed on a bridge or in the right of way.

Erin Blackman shared a link to the department's events calendar to stay updated on upcoming meetings. Erin also recommended the PWC sign up for emails from the department on topics that interest them.

**11. The Next PWC Meeting**

Matt Leppla indicated that the next meeting is scheduled for August 21 at 9:30 a.m. at NCTCOG offices.

**12. Adjournment.**

Matt Leppla adjourned the meeting.

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

*This meeting summary was drafted with assistance from artificial intelligence and was reviewed by NCTCOG staff.*



Public Works Council Meeting Attendance  
May 15, 2025

**Public Sector Standing  
Member**

Allen

☒ Joseph Cotton

Arlington

☐ Keith Brooks

☒ Christopher Funches

Carrollton

☒ Jody Byerly

Collin County

☒ Wayne Anderson

Dallas

☒ Ahmed Alqaisi, represented  
by Cameron Anderson

☐ Raheel Khan

Dallas County

☒ Cecelia Rutherford

Denton

☒ Michael Linder

Denton County

☒ Stephen Belknap

Fort Worth

☐ Teanna Thompson

☒ Michael Owen

Frisco

☒ Dane Stovall

Garland

☒ Mike Rozelle

Grand Prairie

☐ Brister Merritt

Irving

☐ Walter Thomas

Lewisville

☒ Aaron Russell

McKinney

☐ Paul Sparkman (retired),  
replaced by Tahmidur Rahman

Mesquite

☒ Victor Hou

Plano

☒ Erik Ferner

Richardson

☒ Eric Robison

Tarrant County

☐ Joseph Jackson

**Public Sector Subregional  
Representative**

Denton/Lake Cities Subregion

☒ Glenn Barker, City of Corinth

DFW North Subregion

☐ Vacant

East Subregion

☐ Chris Harris, City of  
Greenville

Mid-Cities Subregion

☒ Boe Blankenship, City of  
North Richland Hills

Northeast Subregion

☒ Andrew Figueroa, City of  
Celina

Northeast Dallas Subregion

☐ Frank New, Rockwall County

Northeast Tarrant Subregion

☒ Keith Miertschin, City of  
Grapevine

Northwest Subregion

☒ Dillon Luna, Town of  
Northlake

Northwest Dallas Subregion

☒ Danielle Rix, City of Farmers  
Branch

Northwest Tarrant Subregion

☒ Larry Hoover, City of White  
Settlement, represented by  
Corina Molinar

Southeast Subregion

☒ James Gaertner, City of  
Waxahachie

Southeast Dallas Subregion

☐ Brooks Williams, City of  
Ferris

South Tarrant Subregion

☒ Raymond Coffman, City of  
Mansfield

Southwest Subregion

☒ Colt Friedrich, Johnson  
County

Southwest Dallas Subregion

☐ Robert Woodbury, City of  
Cedar Hill

West Subregion

☒ Matt Leppla, City of  
Weatherford

**Private Sector  
Representative**

Associated General  
Contractors

☐ Sam Davis, TexasBit

☐ Connor VanSteenberg, AGC  
of Texas

Council of Engineering  
Companies

☒ Chris Cha, Westwood

☐ Ted Sugg, Cobb-Fendley

Texas Council of Engineering  
Labs / Geoprosessionals

Serving Texas

☒ Reece Taylor, Braun Intertec

Public Works Council Meeting Attendance  
May 15, 2025

**NCTCOG Staff**

Erin Blackman  
Lai Hoang  
Kaitlin Hunter  
Kate Zielke

**Guests**

Travis Attanasio (Burleson)  
Alan Brown (Duncanville)  
Glenn Caldwell (Terrell)  
Mandy Clark (TNP)  
Jillian Giles (Quiddity)  
Ali Hatefi (Halff Associates)  
Mark Holliday (Quiddity)  
Jeremy Hutt (Cleburne)  
Tim James (Olsson)  
Stephen Moore (Denton County)  
Randy Morrison (Burleson)  
Ranjan Muttiah (Fort Worth)  
Taner Ozdil (University of Texas at Arlington)  
Jennifer Roberts (Fort Worth)  
Caleb Robbins (Atmos Energy)  
Chris Rowland (Texas Concrete Products Association)  
Justin Stoker (Waxahachie)  
Steve Templer (Quiddity)