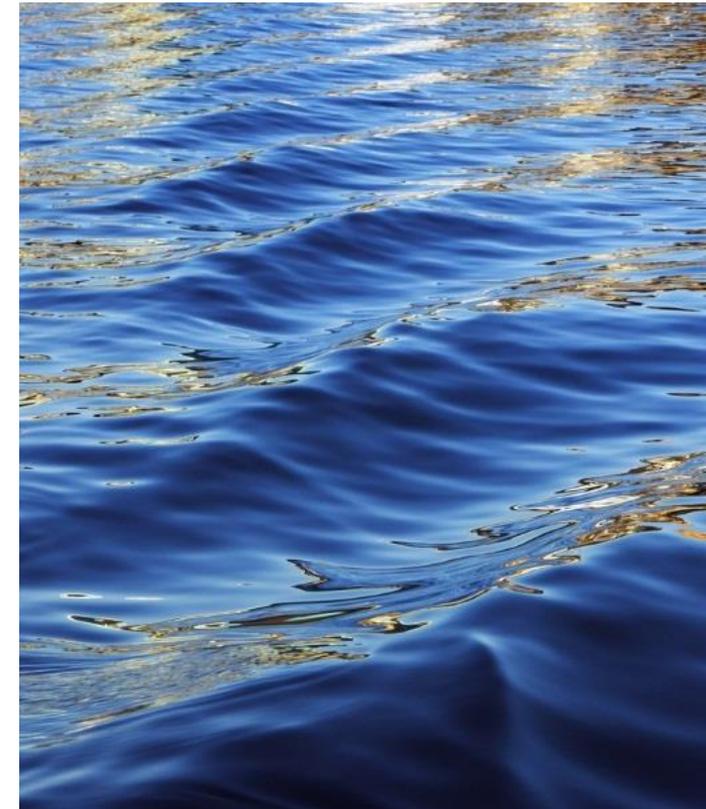




# North Texas Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

March 11, 2022 Virtual Survey



RISE Coalition Website: <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/development-excellence/rise-coalition>

RISE Coalition Committee Page: <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/committees/regional-integration-of-sustainability-efforts-ris>

# March 11<sup>th</sup> Virtual Sustainability Survey Results

- NCTCOG and the RISE Coalition conducted a virtual survey on March 11, 2022, examining the state of sustainability in North Texas.
- The goals of the survey were to:
  1. Assess the current state of sustainability in North Texas communities.
  2. Foster discussion between communities on shared goals and challenges.
  3. Explore opportunities for future initiatives and collaboration between partners.
  4. Identify regional priorities for integration into the RISE FY2023 Work Plan and topics for future NCTCOG-hosted webinars.
- Survey participants represented **13 cities, 3 utility providers, and 1 school district.**
- Conducted using MURAL, a collaborative online whiteboarding tool.

# Question 1: Goals & Targets

Does your community have any official environmental/sustainability-related goals? What are they? (i.e. climate and emissions reduction goals, zero waste, more greenspace, etc.) Be as specific as possible.

City of Dallas CECAP codifies the environmental commitments. 8 Goals, 97 Objectives.

Not that I'm aware of. In this respect, I'm speaking as a citizen instead of an employee, as I work for a K-12 school district. As a school district, our goal is to lower our usage and cost by >20%

City of Denton has proposed adoption of SBT for GHG reduction, solid waste diversion goals and numerous other goals in our Sustainability Framework.

City of Lewisville has multiple goals across 7 different broad categories, covered in our Sustainability Action Plan (includes access to green space, emissions reduction, energy and water efficiency, health and wellness outcomes in the community, etc.)

Reduction in litter

Plano has a CARE strategy with a focus to lower emissions. We also have several goals in our Department Strategic plan and are working to finalize our City Waste Minimization Plan.

yes city of Dallas CECAP has 8 topic areas with metrics  
Zero waste

Dallas to continue to be a leader in efforts to reduce emissions and improve our air quality.

Our target is to reduce methane emissions in our natural gas distribution system by 50 percent from 2017 to 2035.

Broad conservation "goals". None official.

Environmental Master Plan: <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/files/assets/public/code-compliance/env/documents/code-environmental-emp-environmental-master-plan-2021.pdf>

Mesquite does not have any official goals but my work program has been approved by City Manager.

# Question 2: Measuring Success

How does your community or organization measure the success of its sustainability initiatives? How do you quantify sustainability?

We use EnergyCAP to audit bills and calculate usage changes and cost avoidance against a baseline year. This software also calculates drops in emissions, kgal's, and KBTUs.

GHG Inventory every 3 years

I'll say what we're not measuring as far as I can tell is how the community (co's and citizens) participate and act to achieve results

Annual Progress Reports to Council

GHG Inventory (annually, but may change)

Solid Waste and Recycling Waste Characterization and Diversion programs  
Diversion Rate, Contamination position

STAR rating for the community - Jaime Bretzmann, Plano

Municipal Natural Resource Conservation Programs (Tracking and Reporting)

Fleet fuel usage and vehicle emissions

Online Dashboard for public to track progress of CECAP

Annual updates to council on major milestones; tracking energy and fleet fuel usage metrics

City of Plano: GHG Emissions Inventory

# Question 3: Successes Achieved

List some successes (projects, programs, policies) that your community has achieved related to your environmental and sustainability goals.



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## **Sustainability Goals and Reporting**

- Six participating cities had public plans around sustainability, the environment, and air quality.
  - E.g. Dallas's CECAP; Plano's CARE strategy; Lewisville's and Farmers Branch's Sustainability Action Plans
- Six respondents had public emissions reduction goals and initiatives.
- The most common sustainability reporting methods were internally tracking energy, water, and fuel usage, and conducting or participating in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories.
- Several tied sustainability goals to public health and wellbeing.

## **Successes Achieved in Sustainability**

- Recognition from third-party rating agencies for sustainability projects and metrics.
  - E.g. Mansfield ISD achieved recognition from TCEQ and EPA's ENERGY STAR division; Plano has increased LEED benchmarking and CDP and STAR scores; Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD) has two ENVISION-certified projects (one with a platinum rating)
- Increasing institutional and public buy-in through Board/Council recognition and citizen sustainability councils.

# Question 4: Challenges

What have been the biggest challenges or barriers you've faced in achieving your sustainability goals?



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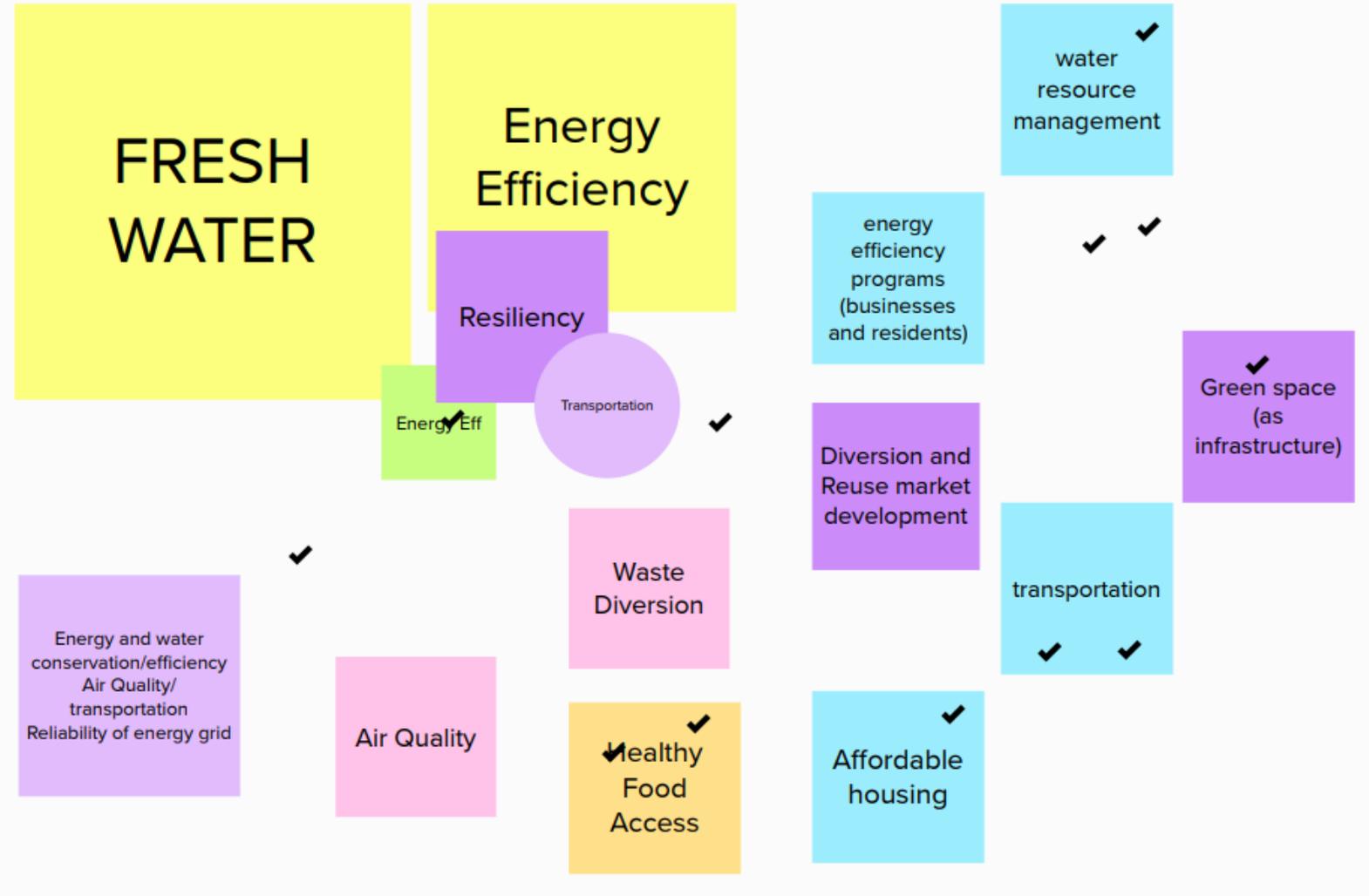
## Major Challenges Faced

- The #1 challenge faced by participants was staffing constraints.
  - 80% of participants have 5 or fewer staff members working specifically on sustainability either full- or part-time, and 45% have one or fewer.
- Another major challenge was securing buy-in on sustainability initiatives, both vertically (from organizational leadership), and horizontally (from other departments within the organization).
  - Collaboration between departments would help increase buy-in from leadership
- Other challenging questions:
  - How do we fund new and existing sustainability projects on a limited budget?
  - How do we navigate political barriers to increasing sustainability?
  - How do we generate the stamina to continue pursuing long-term goals/actions/plans?
  - We have no sustainability goals organization-wide; where do we even begin?

## Question 6: Regional Needs

What do you see as the most pressing sustainability needs in North Texas?

After participants have added their stickies, we will vote on the top three "priority" responses.



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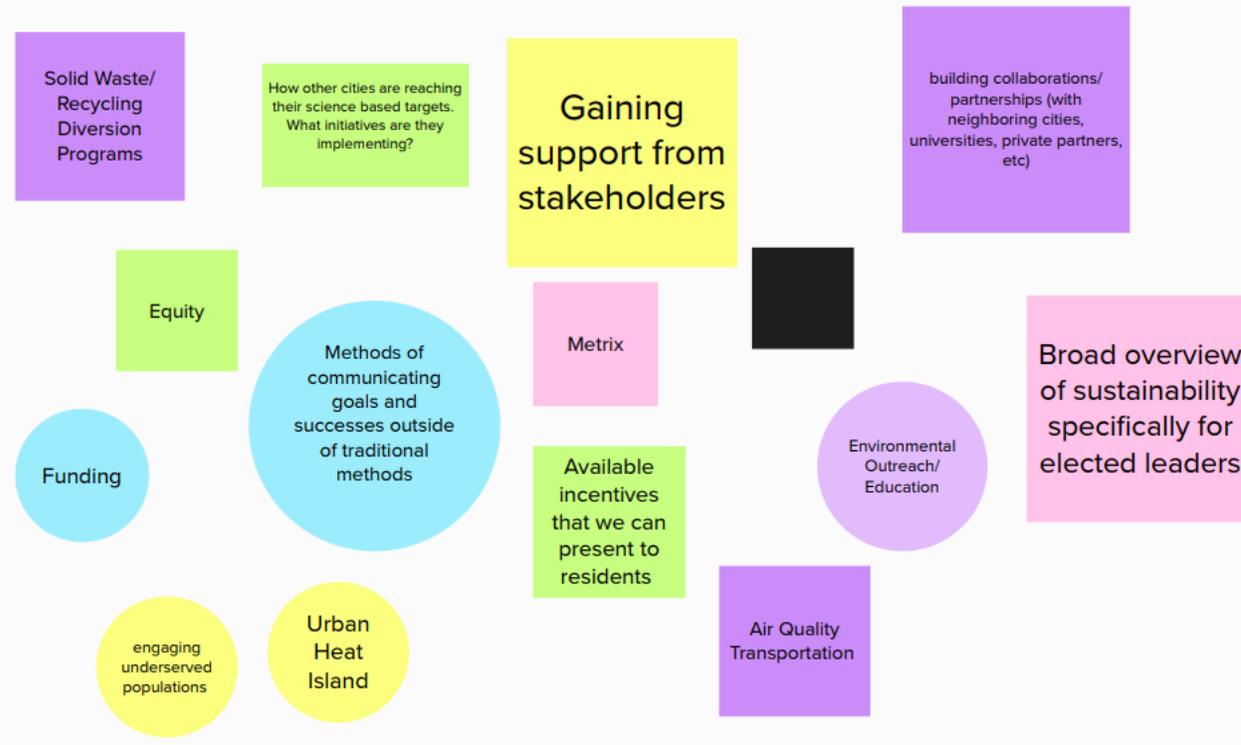
## Sustainability Needs in North Texas

- The #1 most pressing sustainability need identified was related to transportation.
  - Broad category encompassing: vehicle emissions and air quality, road and bridge infrastructure, public/alternative transportation access, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, future development
- Other primary responses included:
  - Energy efficiency and energy resilience
  - Water resource management and water conservation
  - Waste diversion and beneficial reuse
- Current FY22 RISE Work Program focus areas:
  - GHG Emissions Inventory and Impact Mitigation (vehicle emissions and air quality, energy efficiency)
  - Urban Heat Island Mitigation
  - Food Diversion and Waste Reduction (waste diversion and beneficial reuse)

## Question 7: Sustainability Topics

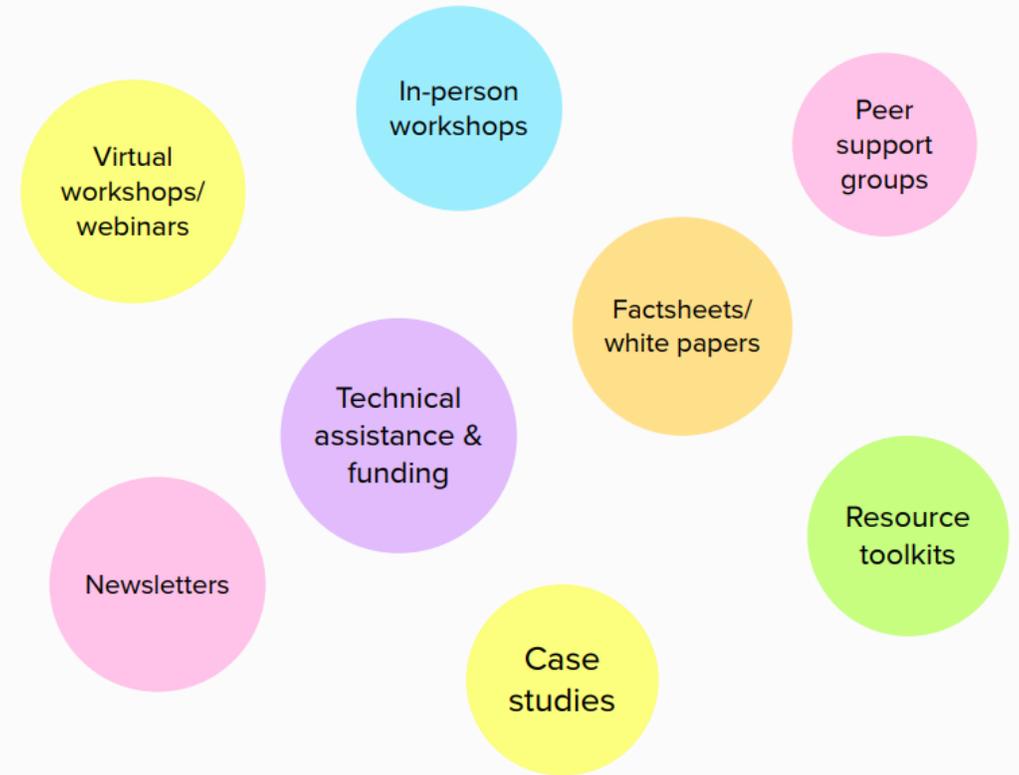
What topics are you most interested in learning more about, or would be most helpful in supporting your community's sustainability initiatives?

After participants have added their stickies, we will vote on the top three "priority" responses.



## Question 8: Resources

What types of resources are you most interested in for diving further into sustainability topics? Select your top three preferences, or add additional ideas in the Teams chat.



# March 11<sup>th</sup> Virtual Sustainability Survey Results

## Topics for Further Learning

- Most participants were interested in learning more about setting science-based sustainability targets and how other cities are making progress towards targets.
- Several participants were interested in communicating sustainability to different audiences, such as city or organizational leadership, elected officials, and residents.
- Other responses included:
  - Engaging underserved populations in project planning and implementation
  - Building collaborations and partnerships, such as with neighboring cities, educational institutions, and private entities

## Preferred Resources

- Most indicated virtual workshops and webinars as their preferred learning resource.
- Other priority resources included in-person workshops and resource toolkits.

# Question 9: RISE Membership

If you are a RISE member, what do you see as the biggest benefits to membership? If you are not a member, what benefits would you like to see RISE membership provide?



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## Perceived Benefits to RISE Coalition Membership

- Most participants liked that RISE provides a forum for cities and organizations to share best practices in setting and achieving sustainability goals or implementing sustainability initiatives.
- Participants recognized that RISE membership allows them to collaborate with others and to receive peer support around sustainability.
- Other benefits mentioned:
  - Regional focus addresses North Texas-specific challenges not always prioritized by national sustainability organizations.
  - GHG Cohort allows cities to access resources and software to undertake a GHG inventory.
  - Increases awareness of funding opportunities and existing regional programs.

## Perceived Barriers or Desired Benefits to Membership

- Need for increased visibility: some participants had never heard of RISE or had little awareness of the group and its goals.
- Desire for more support for cities early in their sustainability process or with little to no resources/staff for sustainability programs.

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