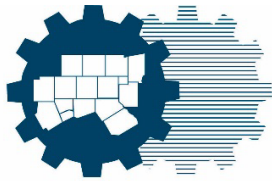


# **Public Participation Plan for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area**

**2025 Update**



**North Central Texas  
Council of Governments**



**Regional Transportation Council**

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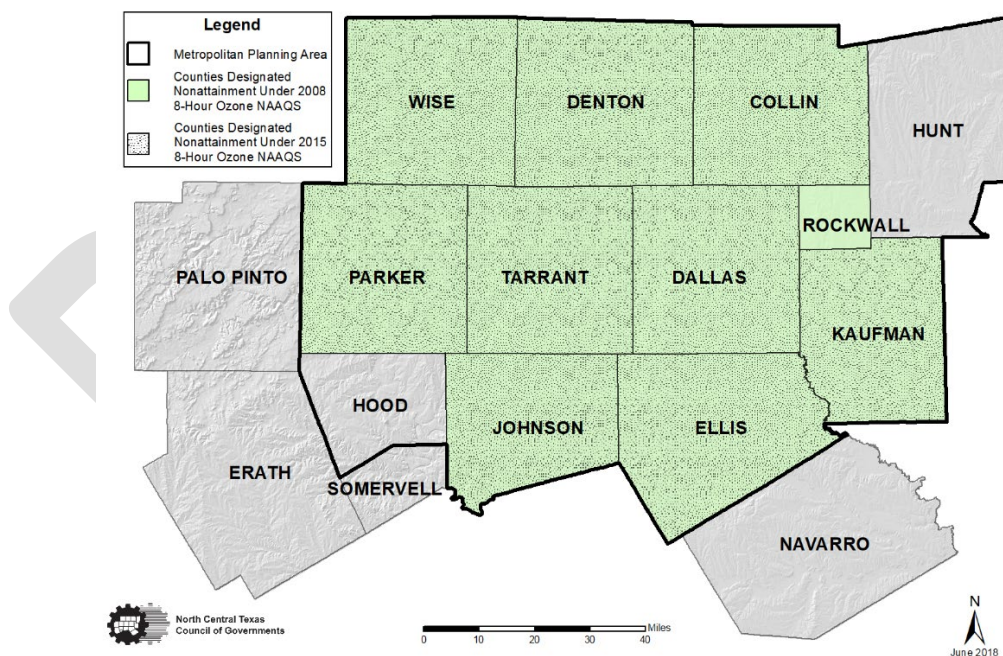
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# 1. About the Metropolitan Planning Organization

## North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department and Regional Transportation Council

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Transportation Department works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing region. The 12-county region includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise counties. This area is urbanized or expected to be urbanized in the next 20 years. North Texas is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, adding about 1 million people every 10 years. More than 8 million people live in the region today, and that is expected to increase to over 12 million by 2050. NCTCOG works with its transportation partners and all levels of government, as well as the public, to address traffic safety and congestion by developing a multimodal transportation system that includes highway, passenger rail, bus and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

In addition to serving as the MPO for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, NCTCOG also coordinates public transportation planning for the 12-county region and four additional counties: Erath, Navarro, Palo Pinto and Somervell.



The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the independent policy body of the MPO, oversees the work of the MPO, establishes priorities and guides the development of multimodal transportation plans, programs and partnerships. The RTC consists primarily of local elected officials and representatives from the area's transportation providers, and the RTC determines how to allocate federal, state and regional funds to transportation improvements. Committees and advisory groups lend expertise and develop recommendations for the RTC to consider.

## **2. Guiding Principles for Public Participation**

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This Public Participation Plan outlines the MPO's responsibility to inform and involve individuals, families and communities and discusses the principles, goals and strategies it employs to broadly engage the many different audiences living and working in North Texas.

NCTCOG adheres to federal requirements for public involvement and strives to go beyond these requirements by finding new ways to engage the public in the transportation planning and programming process. Appendix A outlines the laws and legislation relevant to public participation and how NCTCOG meets these standards.

### **Consistent and Comprehensive Communication**

Transportation policies and programs affect every individual, family, group and community in North Texas; therefore, the MPO employs a collaborative public involvement process to identify transportation needs and solutions for the region. Clear and continuous communication with the public through multiple channels is the cornerstone for building a transportation system that helps preserve the region's quality of life while moving people and goods safely, efficiently and reliably.

Additionally, the MPO must ensure regional transportation planning is consistent with federal goals to improve air quality because some counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area do not meet the ozone standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The map on page 3 outlines the current county classifications under each ozone standard as of the date of this publication. Therefore, the MPO develops and implements programs to reduce ozone-causing emissions from transportation-related sources. To accomplish the mobility and air quality goals of the entire region, the MPO actively seeks to hear from people who live, work and travel in North Texas and have varying transportation needs and priorities.

### **Commitment to Balanced Engagement**

NCTCOG values the full range of voices in North Texas and is committed to listening to and seeking input from the many individuals, families and communities that reside in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. As such, NCTCOG seeks to both meet federal requirements for participation and actively increase meaningful participation of North Texans in the planning process.

Consistent with federal requirements outlined in Appendix A, NCTCOG is committed to incorporating fair access elements and Title VI considerations into its Public Participation Plan. It is the responsibility of all staff to consider the needs of all North Texas communities during planning, project selection and project implementation. As the Public Participation Plan is implemented, special consideration is given to ensure all residents have meaningful access to information and opportunities to give input. Furthermore, demographic data is analyzed to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of public engagement efforts by selecting appropriate locations for public meetings and outreach events as well as to identify opportunities to better target outreach efforts.

The Language Assistance Plan (LAP) in Appendix B outlines NCTCOG's efforts to make information available to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. The LAP outlines demographic information, analysis of department activities, language assistance provided and communication to LEP persons about the availability of assistance.

Title VI states that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or religion. Title VI prohibits discrimination, whether intentional or where the unintended effect is unduly burdensome.

The Title VI Complaint Procedures outline the NCTCOG Title VI policy and explain the process by which complaints may be submitted by individuals, investigated and potentially resolved. This document may be accessed at [www.nctcog.org/titlevi](http://www.nctcog.org/titlevi).

The Public Participation Plan outlines principles and strategies through which NCTCOG seeks to include all the region's communities in the planning process. NCTCOG will work to establish and maintain relationships and channels of communication with individuals and organizations that serve North Texans. By working with communities, NCTCOG will better reach individuals and understand their transportation needs, resulting in relationships that lead to consensus building.

Communication and outreach strategies that specifically aim to increase the number of people reached through the planning process include, but are not limited to:

- **Media Outreach:** Regularly research newspapers, online publications and blogs serving many groups in North Texas and update the media contact database as needed
- **Paid Advertising:** Continue to advertise public input opportunities in a variety of publications and through social media and identify opportunities to place paid advertisements in strategically selected media and organizational publications to encourage individuals to sign up for NCTCOG Transportation Department email updates
- **Language Translation:** Advertise public input opportunities in multiple language newspapers with instructions for requesting additional translation; translate key NCTCOG Transportation Department documents and work with program areas to identify opportunities for bilingual outreach in Spanish and other languages; provide translation into Spanish or other languages upon request
- **Community Networks:** Establish and facilitate a network of individuals and organizations who will share information and notices of input opportunities in their communities and through their own networks
- **Business Outreach:** Evaluate how to expand outreach to the business community, including chambers of commerce throughout the region
- **Nonprofit Coordination:** Identify and develop opportunities to better coordinate with nonprofit organizations already effectively reaching segments of the North Texas population

## Collaboration with Audiences and Stakeholders

Collaboration with the region's many audiences and stakeholders helps build the consensus needed to develop transportation plans, policies and projects that accomplish the mobility, quality of life and air quality goals of the region. NCTCOG strongly encourages involvement and input from individuals, families, groups and organizations who live, work or travel in North Texas and may be affected by transportation and air quality decisions. Individuals and families exist in communities, and often in networks of communities, both formal and informal, so listening to and informing individuals and families is an important way the NCTCOG Transportation Department implements its communications and outreach plans. Further developing connections in communities will expand the reach of NCTCOG information and involve more people in transportation decision-making.

In accordance with the federal laws and legislation in Appendix A, and using the communications and outreach strategies detailed in this plan, NCTCOG seeks to reasonably inform and involve the following parties in the planning process:

#### **Audiences Required for General Public Participation and Outreach**

- Individuals
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Public ports
- Freight shippers
- Providers of freight transportation services
- Private providers of transportation
- Intercity bus operators
- Employer-based commuting programs
- Carpool program
- Vanpool program
- Transit benefit program
- Parking cash-out program
- Shuttle program
- Telework program
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Representatives of the disabled
- Low-income households
- Minority households
- Other interested parties

#### **Audiences Required for Metropolitan Transportation Plan and TIP Outreach**

- Agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) that are affected by transportation
  - State and local planned growth
  - Economic development
  - Tourism
  - Natural disaster risk reduction
  - Environmental protection
  - Airport operations
  - Freight movements
- Indian Tribal governments
- Federal land management agencies when the MPA includes Federal public lands

#### **Audiences Required for Metropolitan Transportation Plan Outreach**

- State and local agencies responsible for land use management
- State and local agencies responsible for natural resources
- State and local agencies responsible for environmental protection
- State and local agencies responsible for conservation
- State and local agencies responsible for historic preservation

### **Audiences Required for Congestion Management Plan Outreach (if developed in the future)**

- Employers
- Private and nonprofit providers of public transportation
- Transportation management organizations
- Organizations that provide job access reverse commute projects or job-related services to low-income individuals

### **Audiences Required for Housing Coordination Plan Outreach (if developed in the future)**

- State and local entities responsible for land use
- State and local entities responsible for economic development
- State and local entities responsible for housing
- State and local entities responsible for management of road networks
- State and local entities responsible for public transportation
- Appropriate public or private entities

## **Consultation with Committees**

Standing and ad hoc committees, subcommittees, task forces and working groups provide valuable input, insight and coordination in planning for transportation and air quality issues in the region. The RTC is the forum for cooperative decision-making by the elected officials of local governments and representatives of local transportation providers in the MPA. The RTC meets on the second Thursday of each month.

The Surface Transportation Technical Committee provides technical review and advice regarding the surface transportation system to the RTC. Other technical committees, determined as needed by the NCTCOG Transportation Director, provide technical review and advice for the regional transportation planning process.

Meetings of the RTC and the standing technical, policy and strategic committees are open meetings. Visit [www.nctcog.org/trans/about/committees](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/about/committees) to learn more about the committees, their members, past and upcoming meetings and other information.

## **3. Public Participation Goals**

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NCTCOG implements an integrated communications and outreach program to engage North Texans in planning for transportation and improving air quality. Making content relevant, removing barriers to participation, stating information simply and using visualization techniques facilitates understanding and meaningful input. NCTCOG not only seeks to inform and educate, but also to empower and improve opportunities for the public to share their ideas, perspectives and priorities for transportation. When the public has been informed and has had an opportunity to provide input, sufficient consensus building can take place, providing support for whatever transportation decisions are made. Finally, monitoring, evaluating and refining communications and outreach strategies will ensure NCTCOG's efforts to inform and gather input are balanced effective, transparent and meet its desired outcomes for the public participation process.

Public involvement goals and the strategic priorities for accomplishing each are outlined below.

### **Goal 1: Inform and Educate**

- Increase awareness and understanding of the MPO among North Texans

- Connect with organizations and community leaders who can help reach more people and engage those individuals and families in the planning process
- Make information accessible and understandable
- Develop visuals to illustrate and enhance communications
- Provide timely public notice of information, resources and opportunities to comment on plans, policies and programs
- Ensure transparency and accessibility for open meetings, including for the RTC and the standing technical, policy and strategic committee meetings
- Provide language translation and alternate formats upon request

#### **Goal 2: Engage Comprehensive Audiences and Encourage Continued Participation**

- Identify the affected public and other stakeholder groups with respect to the plans, programs, projects, policies and partnerships under development
- Clearly define the purpose and objectives for public dialogue on transportation plans, programs, projects, policies and partnerships
- Encourage input to be submitted in various ways, including flexible, creative and innovative approaches
- Eliminate barriers to participation by hosting public meetings at accessible locations and convenient times and posting video recordings, information and public comment opportunities online for ease of access
- Document and respond, as needed, to comments from public meetings, outreach events, mail, email, web forms and social media
- Share public input with policy and technical committees
- Use input to develop policies, plans and programs, making the final versions easily accessible

#### **Goal 3: Evaluate Public Participation Strategies and Efforts**

- Review quantitative and qualitative data for outreach and communications efforts
- Review how public input influenced transportation decision-making
- Inform the public about outreach and communications efforts and outcomes through reporting

## **4. Procedures for Public Comments and Specific Plans and Programs**

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NCTCOG strives to continuously inform and involve the public and encourages North Texans to submit comments and questions at any time. A summary of NCTCOG's procedures for gathering and documenting public input and presenting it to the RTC and other committees is outlined below.

In addition, when developing and updating major plans and programs there are several specific outcomes and milestones that especially benefit from public input. Staff seeks to align the outcomes and milestones to outreach efforts and opportunities for public involvement. It is important that local governments, transportation partners, community groups, businesses, nonprofits, stakeholders and interested residents who have a stake in these outcomes have opportunities to be involved in determining the future of transportation in the region. As such, the opportunities for public input described below meet legislative regulations for participation while aiming to provide early notification and a process that is efficient, accessible and transparent.



## **Public Comment Compilation, Consideration and Response**

NCTCOG compiles, summarizes and responds to substantive comments submitted on plans, programs and policies. Public input provides NCTCOG and the RTC with community insight that can be balanced with professional expertise and technical analysis to reach informed decisions. In the event that more than one public meeting is scheduled for a given topic, the public comment period for that topic begins the day of the first meeting. When a specific comment period is stated, comments must be received by 11:59 pm CT on the date specified as the deadline. This includes any comments received on NCTCOG Transportation Department social media platforms.

Comments relevant to and received during specific public comment periods are provided to the RTC in advance of any meetings where they are scheduled to take action on the relevant policy, plan or program. All comments received outside these formal public comment periods, regardless of the topic, are compiled into a monthly report and presented to the RTC in advance of its next regularly scheduled meeting. These comments are accessible to the public in the RTC meeting agendas, public meeting minutes and monthly comment reports on the NCTCOG website.

As a matter of course, the RTC gives greater weight to the voices of impacted residents, businesses, governments, transportation partners and other agencies and organizations in the region. Therefore, when providing comments to the RTC, NCTCOG may distinguish between local comments and comments submitted from outside the region or a project corridor.

With an increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent action, such as modification of the Transportation Improvement Program, due to funding requirements or timelines. In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated comment period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least 72 hours. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible. As with comments received during longer comment periods, staff will compile, summarize and respond to substantive comments received during the abbreviated comment period. Staff will provide these comments and their responses at the next RTC meeting.

Following the request of emergency funds to provide assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in 2017, NCTCOG may also choose to utilize an abbreviated comment period to seek public input on assistance requested from the state or local governments experiencing an emergency. Use of a comment period in such instances is at NCTCOG's discretion and depends on the amount of assistance requested. NCTCOG may not provide funds to either state or local governments in any instance without securing approval from the RTC. Notification will be provided to the public of such actions at the next public input opportunity.

## **Additional Comment Opportunities for Changes to Final Plans**

If any of the final plans or programs differ significantly from the draft that was made available for public comment and raise new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available. At the minimum, the format of the additional comment opportunity will be the same as the initial opportunity and have a minimum 14-day comment period, unless provisions for an expedited comment period apply as outlined above. In the case of public meetings, the number and location of the subsequent public meeting(s) may vary, but at a

minimum one public meeting will be held at NCTCOG, and a video recording of that meeting will be posted online.

Minor changes to a final plan or program, or changes that could have been reasonably foreseen, can be made without further opportunities for public involvement. As such, recommendations presented during public comment periods are understood to be contingent on the outcomes of the public involvement process. Changes made to a final draft plan or program as a result of public comments received during the comment opportunity will not require a further opportunity for public comment; notification of such changes will be provided at the next public input opportunity. This is consistent with CFR § 450.316 (a)(1)(viii) included in Appendix A.

## **Inclement Weather and Public Comment Periods**

Specific public comment periods are given for the transportation planning actions and outcomes outlined, and these are initiated either by a public meeting or posting information online for public review. Should inclement weather lead to the cancellation of one or more public meetings, NCTCOG will first notify the public of the cancellation through email, webpage updates and social media. In most cases, if another public meeting in the series can be hosted as planned and/or a video recording made available at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input), the deadline for public comments will remain as if weather were not a factor. However, based on the topic, staff may determine it is necessary to reschedule the meeting or meetings and adjust the public comment period. If action initiating a public comment period, such as posting information to [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input) for review, is delayed by inclement weather, staff will communicate the delay by email and social media and again when the information becomes available for comment. If the delay is less than seven calendar days, the deadline for public comments will remain as if weather were not a factor.

## **Public Participation Plan Development and Updates**

The Public Participation Plan describes the public involvement responsibilities of the MPO and outlines goals and strategies for broadly engaging North Texans in the transportation planning process. Staff monitors and evaluates communication and outreach strategies and reviews federal legislation and guidance for public participation. As communications trends and transportation planning requirements change, staff will determine the level and timing of changes needed to the Public Participation Plan. Staff will align input opportunities with the extensiveness of proposed changes.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Development or update of the Public Participation Plan	One public meeting shall be held at least 45 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a>	45 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li><li>• NCTCOG publication article</li><li>• Social media</li><li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li><li>• News release</li></ul>

	Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.		
Update to one or more Public Participation Plan appendices or legislative references in the document	Proposed changes posted online for public review and comment at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> .	45 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Typographic or grammatical correction	None	Not applicable	Not applicable

## Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program for Regional Transportation Planning provides a summary of the transportation and related air quality planning tasks conducted by the MPO. It is developed every two years and serves as a guide for transportation and air quality planning activities to be conducted over the course of specified fiscal years. Included in the UPWP are detailed descriptions of the transportation and air quality planning tasks with a summary of the amount and source of funds to be used. The UPWP is developed in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, transportation authorities, toll authorities and local governments in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. Specific planning needs for the region are identified through requests solicited from representatives of these agencies. This information is combined with regional needs identified by NCTCOG, and after allocating funds from available resources, presented as a proposed Work Program for the upcoming fiscal years. The UPWP is modified periodically to reflect new initiatives, project modifications and funding adjustments.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Development of the UPWP	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Modifications	A summary of RTC-approved modifications will be accessible from <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> for informational purposes.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information available at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/upwp">www.nctcog.org/upwp</a></li> <li>• Availability of information included biannually on</li> </ul>

			public input opportunity notice
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## Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Updated at least every four years, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the long-term, financially constrained, multimodal transportation plan for the region. It includes policies, programs and projects for development that respond to adopted goals, and it guides expenditures of state and federal funds during the next 20 or more years. It is the product of a comprehensive, cooperative and continuous planning effort. Transit, highway, local roadway and bicycle and pedestrian projects are among projects included in the MTP. During its development, transportation investment priorities and major planning-level project design concepts are established. Broad regional impacts of transportation and the environment are addressed. This is an early and important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to help define and influence transportation choices in the region. As such, numerous outreach and communications strategies are implemented to engage North Texans in public input opportunities. Strategies may include but are not limited to print and online surveys, stakeholder workshops, website content, media outreach, email and mail notices, presentations to community groups and public meetings for both the development of the MTP and review of its final recommendations prior to Regional Transportation Council consideration. Public comments regarding the MTP will be included in the plan's documentation or by reference to the Transportation Conformity documentation.

Changes to the MTP are incorporated through an update, amendment or administrative modification, and public input opportunities correspond to the level of proposed changes.

The most comprehensive set of changes, an update, is a complete review of the MTP that addresses new demographics or changes to the overall timeframe for the plan. Project changes, additions or deletions may also be part of an update, requiring a new transportation conformity determination.

An amendment incorporates a significant change to one or more projects included in the MTP, but it does not modify the demographic assumptions or overall timeframe for a plan. The addition or deletion of a project is completed through the amendment process. Other examples of changes to projects requiring an amendment include a major change in project cost, project or project phase initiation dates or a major change in design concept or design scope, e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes. An amendment requires public review and comment and redemonstration of fiscal constraint. Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes outside of the financially constrained section of the plan do not require an amendment.

The purpose of the public comment and review period in all cases is to solicit feedback regarding the recommendations and information documented in the MTP. As a result, it is sometimes necessary to make minor modifications to the MTP documentation and coded transportation model networks. These modifications may include updating existing project data, correcting erroneous information or clarifying text. In the event these changes are necessary during the public comment and review period, revised documentation will be posted online at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input) and the associated MTP website. Notification of these revisions will be provided to the public involvement contact list and through social media.

Administrative modifications are minor changes to project/project phase costs, funding sources of previously included projects and minor changes to project or project phase initiation dates. An administrative revision is a revision that does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint or a conformity determination. This could also include project clarifications or technical network coding/reporting corrections consistent with NCTCOG review, public comments and conformity partner comments.

Finally, changes to the section of non-regionally significant projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan may be incorporated through the Transportation Improvement Program modification process to ensure consistency between the two documents. The action to make modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program will also modify the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan	A public meeting shall be held at least 60 days prior to requesting RTC approval. A second public meeting will be held at least 30 days prior to RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days following each meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update	A public meeting shall be held at least 60 days prior to requesting RTC approval. A second public meeting will be held at least 30 days prior to RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days following each meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Summary of modifications accessible from <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a>	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of information included on next notice for a</li> </ul>

administrative revisions	for informational purposes.		public input opportunity
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## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

As projects listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan move closer to implementation, they are added to the Transportation Improvement Program, a comprehensive, multi-year list of funded transportation projects. The TIP lists projects with committed funds from federal, State and local sources. To maintain an accurate project listing, this document is updated on a regular basis, according to the Transportation Improvement Program Modification Policy in Appendix C. The modification policy defines types of TIP modifications and the related procedures. Every two to three years, NCTCOG, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies, develops a new TIP. Public comments on the TIP will be included in the documentation of the TIP or by reference to the public meeting minutes on the NCTCOG website. With an increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be very rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent modification of the Transportation Improvement Program due to funding requirements or timelines. In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated comment period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least 72 hours. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Development of the Transportation Improvement Program	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
TIP Revisions requiring Regional Transportation Council approval	Recommendations posted online for public review and comment at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> .	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
TIP Administrative Amendments	Summary of modifications accessible from <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> for informational purposes.	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of information included on next notice for a public input opportunity</li> </ul>
Project changes not requiring TIP modification (i.e.	None	Not applicable	Not applicable



staff action) and modifications supporting previous RTC action			
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## Transportation Conformity

The region's long- and short-range transportation plans, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, must comply with federal air quality regulations because the Dallas-Fort Worth area is designated by the EPA as nonattainment for the pollutant ozone. The Transportation Conformity analysis documents that the total ozone-causing pollution expected from all of the region's planned transportation projects is within limits established in the State Implementation Plan. The analysis incorporates, among many factors, the expected completion date of transportation projects. The draft conformity determination of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program and supporting documentation shall be made available at the related public meetings.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Proposed Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Transportation Conformity determination draft related to development of the Transportation Improvement Program or Metropolitan Transportation Plan	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Transportation Conformity determination draft related to update or amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Transportation Conformity draft related to changes to the transportation system	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> .	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> </ul>

	Whenever possible, a News release livestream will be provided as well.		•
Transportation Conformity draft related to changes in the emissions budget of the State Implementation Plan and/or nonattainment area boundary changes	Draft conformity determination and supporting data posted online for public review and comment at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> .	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Transportation Conformity approval by federal partners	None, final approval available at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/conformity">www.nctcog.org/conformity</a>	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News release announcing federal approval</li> </ul>

## Federal Transit Administration Funding

Local public transportation providers receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds through the Urbanized Area Formula Program. The providers request Urbanized Area Formula Program funds through their annual Programs of Projects (POPs). The POPs are included in the Transportation Improvement Program following public comment and approval by the Regional Transportation Council. The public involvement procedures outlined below satisfy the federal public participation requirements associated with development of POPs, and this is stated on public meeting notices. Additionally, up to 2 percent of the Urbanized Area Formula Program funds are awarded through a competitive Call for Projects for the Transit Strategic Partnership Program. NCTCOG follows the same public involvement procedures when recommending the award of funds through a Call for Projects. Local public transportation providers may also receive funds from other FTA formula programs, and the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations. Changes to POPs will be addressed through the Transportation Improvement Program modification process.

<b>Transportation Planning Action</b>	<b>Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity</b>	<b>Length of Comment Period</b>	<b>Minimum Notification of Opportunity</b>
Draft Programs of Projects for Urbanized Area Formula Program funds	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
Funding recommendations	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> </ul>



for other Federal Transit Administration formula programs, e.g., Bus and Bus Facilities, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and State of Good Repair	prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
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## Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

Federal regulations require NCTCOG to develop an annual listing of obligated projects, including investments in roadways, transit, maintenance, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which federal funds were obligated in the preceding fiscal year. NCTCOG, in consultation and coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation and public transportation agencies, compiles the information and publishes the annual listing of projects at [www.nctcog.org/annual](http://www.nctcog.org/annual).

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Publishing of Annual Listing of Obligated Projects	Review only at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/annual">www.nctcog.org/annual</a> .	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>

## Congestion Management Process

The Congestion Management Process outlines lower-cost projects and programs for the effective management of transportation facilities and systems, maximizing the benefit of available resources and improving reliability of the system. A transportation system as large as Dallas-Fort Worth's needs more than just capital improvements to run smoothly. The CMP includes quick-to-implement, low-cost strategies to better operate and manage the travel-demand system. These strategies complement costly infrastructure improvements. This plan is required for metropolitan areas with populations exceeding 200,000 people, and it is updated periodically.

Transportation Planning Action	Minimum Public Involvement Opportunity	Length of Comment Period	Minimum Notification of Opportunity
Development of the Congestion Management Process	One public meeting shall be held at least 30 days prior to requesting RTC approval. At a minimum, the meeting	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sent to public involvement contact list</li> <li>• NCTCOG publication article</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>

	will be recorded and posted online at <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/input">www.nctcog.org/input</a> . Whenever possible, a livestream will be provided as well.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper ad, including minority publications</li> <li>• News release</li> </ul>
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## Environmental Studies

Whenever NCTCOG is involved in the development of environmental documents, including those pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the public involvement requirements of implementing agencies; and when applicable, the Texas Department of Transportation Environmental Manual, will be met. During this process, NCTCOG will continuously coordinate with the implementing agency.

## 5. Public Participation Strategies

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NCTCOG offers information in a variety of formats to include as many people as possible in the planning process. In today's media and communications environment, a comprehensive approach to outreach will rely on multiple streams of information to engage people repeatedly at different times and through different media. Upon request, any NCTCOG Transportation Department information will be converted into alternative formats or languages.

Efforts to inform and gather input from the public include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

### NCTCOG Transportation Department Website

The internet allows NCTCOG to reach a large cross section of people at times convenient to their personal schedules. People can access NCTCOG's web-based information 24 hours a day, seven days a week on their personal or public computer or mobile devices. Websites, email lists, online video, webinars and social media can all be used to inform, educate and dialog with people about transportation planning.

NCTCOG maintains [www.nctcog.org/trans](http://www.nctcog.org/trans), a website that provides easy access to information about the plans, programs and policies of the MPO. Following a major redesign in 2018, the website employs responsive design features and includes a calendar of events; committee activities and actions; requests for proposals, qualifications or partners; and electronic versions of plans, reports, policies and program information. The site includes a search feature that allows users to find specific documents or other information using key words, and the Google Translate widget embedded on every webpage provides an option to instantly translate information into more than 100 languages.

When information is released for public review, it will be available at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input). This webpage provides the latest information on public meetings, media releases, public surveys and the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan. Public meeting presentations, handouts, schedules, flyers and minutes are made available on this site as well. Interested parties may also directly access all NCTCOG Transportation Department staff members via email, phone, fax or postal mail; contact information for all staff members is easily accessible on the website.

Finally, website visitors can easily subscribe to NCTCOG email and mailing lists and submit comments and questions. If a person does not have internet access, he or she can request staff to make items on the website available by calling 817-695-9240.

## **Social Media**

The NCTCOG Transportation Department maintains a social media presence to inform North Texans about programs, projects, policies and opportunities for them to give input and be involved in the decision-making process. This currently includes the use of Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo, but other social media platforms may be added in the future.

NCTCOG staff will post information on NCTCOG Transportation Department accounts and monitor and respond to questions and concerns as warranted. To reach the widest audience possible, NCTCOG also posts engaging and entertaining content that focuses on transportation and air quality issues. Additionally, staff actively seeks to build relationships with transportation partners, local governments, agencies and other groups by sharing their posts and occasionally submitting suggested social media content to cities, chambers of commerce and other organizations.

## **Video**

Video is one of several visualization techniques and is used to increase the understanding of complex transportation plans, policies and programs. Video recordings of public meetings, including livestreams, are posted online at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input). Regional Transportation Council meetings are available online at [www.nctcog.org/video](http://www.nctcog.org/video).

Additionally, short, informational videos are posted at [www.youtube.com/NCTCOGtrans](http://www.youtube.com/NCTCOGtrans) and may be shared on NCTCOG's other social media accounts. As needed, video will complement materials available for public review and comment at [www.nctcog.org/input](http://www.nctcog.org/input).

## **Print and Digital Publications**

The NCTCOG Transportation Department develops publications designed to educate the public on transportation issues and encourage their active involvement. Many of the publications are sent to the public involvement contact list and made available at public meetings, community events and Regional Transportation Council and subcommittee meetings. All are available on the NCTCOG website or by contacting NCTCOG at [transinfo@nctcog.org](mailto:transinfo@nctcog.org) or 817-695-9240. Upon request, any NCTCOG Transportation Department publication will be converted into alternative formats or languages. Publications include, but are not limited to:

- *Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning and Programming in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area*
- Educational pieces, such as topic-specific *Fact Sheets*
- Local Motion (a newsletter for local elected officials and transportation decision-makers)
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan Executive Summary
- *Mobility Matters* (a newsletter mailed and emailed to the public involvement list)
- Notices of public meetings, opportunities for public review and comment, workshops and open house events

Various planning documents and other publications are available upon request. Most can also be viewed via the NCTCOG website. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Congestion Management Process
- Transportation Conformity Analysis
- Technical Report Series
- Unified Planning Work Program

Finally, staff occasionally submits suggested article content to cities, chambers of commerce and other organizations for inclusion in their communications.

## **Public Meetings, Workshops, Roundtables, Forums and Other Events**

For large, complex or extensive transportation planning efforts, special public involvement projects, public meetings, open houses, workshops, roundtables, conferences, forums and other events enable and foster in-depth discussion. Typically, these events are reserved for development of plans, programs and policies and significant changes to those as well as more project- or study area-specific discussions. As needed, the NCTCOG Transportation Department will host these events to gather input and build consensus among various transportation stakeholders.

To facilitate greater participation in public meetings specifically, the following criteria are considered when selecting meeting locations. These criteria also ensure a meaningful public involvement process.

- Meetings will be held in accessible locations, preferably near transit lines or routes.
- Meetings will be held in buildings that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Presentations and supporting documentation, as needed, will be available at meetings.
- An informal meeting environment will be cultivated, allowing attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- For meetings on a specific project, an effort will be made to hold the meeting(s) in the corridor(s) directly affected by the project.
- The NCTCOG Transportation Department will make every effort to accommodate attendees with special needs if they provide sufficient notice. Upon request, language translation, including sign and foreign language interpreters and handouts in large print or Braille, will be available. Additionally, staff will make every effort to accommodate requests from persons with disabilities. A minimum of 72 hours advance notice is required for these arrangements to be provided as outlined in the Language Assistance Plan in Appendix B. Public meeting notices will provide the telephone number and email address to request special arrangements.
- At a minimum, meetings will be audio taped. Video recording and livestreaming, however, are increasingly offered, and these recordings are subsequently posted to the website.

The NCTCOG Transportation Department will, on occasion, provide other informational items at public meetings. Any additional information or materials may be requested at public meetings, and NCTCOG can assure that information is mailed upon request.

All public meeting notices are sent to selected newspapers, including minority publications, as necessary, to ensure regional coverage. Staff coordinates with non-English newspapers to provide translated notices to their readers. All public meetings are posted on the [Texas](#)

Register website as part of the Open Meetings requirement. Public meeting notices are mailed to public libraries and city and county offices for posting. Additionally, notices are mailed and emailed to individuals, elected officials, transportation partners and organizations on the public involvement contact list, which is constantly growing. To be included, individuals may subscribe at meetings and events, on the website or by contacting NCTCOG. Staff coordinate with public information officers of the cities in which meetings are scheduled to request assistance in sharing information via email, websites and social media accounts.

## **Community Events**

In an effort to educate the public and increase public awareness of transportation plans and programs, NCTCOG distributes information and engages in discussion at a variety of community events throughout the year, such as events organized by local governments and school districts, Earth Day celebrations, bike rallies, etc. To request NCTCOG's participation in an event or for more information, email [transinfo@nctcog.org](mailto:transinfo@nctcog.org) or call 817-695-9240.

## **Mail and Email**

The public involvement mail and email lists are the most direct forms of communication used by NCTCOG to inform and engage the public and partners. Together, they represent a comprehensive way to reach member governments, state agencies, neighborhood associations, civic organizations, transportation advocacy groups, social service organizations, freight companies, transit providers, chambers of commerce (including minority chambers), houses of worship, representatives of tribal governments, individuals and families.

Subscribers receive public meeting notices, information about public review and comment opportunities, announcements of workshops or open houses, educational brochures, newsletters and other material suitable for mass mailings.

The lists are continually maintained and expanded based on sign-up sheets at public meetings and community events, requests sent through the NCTCOG Transportation Department website, returned mail and requests for additions and deletions from various other sources.

## **Advertising**

Paid advertising is used to announce public meetings, opportunities for public review and comment and other initiatives. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations emphasize the importance of public involvement, including public meetings and the opportunity for public comment, in the transportation planning process and require adequate notice be given to the public of these activities. As such, paid advertising complements other outreach and communications efforts. Ads are placed in select newspapers, including minority publications, to ensure regional coverage. Online advertising, including on Facebook, may be used to complement traditional print advertising.

## **Speaking Opportunities**

Staff often speak to organizations and groups, such as neighborhood associations, Kiwanis and Rotary groups, chambers of commerce, professional associations, universities, schools, businesses and nonprofits, among others. Presentations provide staff with the opportunity to build relationships with organizations and actively involve them in the planning process. To schedule a speaker or for more information, visit [www.nctcog.org/speakers](http://www.nctcog.org/speakers) or call 817-695-9240.

## **Media Relations**

Proactive media outreach efforts include distributing news releases on major projects and programs and opportunities for public input to more than 250 reporters at local media outlets and community news sources, including minority news media. The extensive media list includes all major local television stations and newspapers as well as several radio stations. The media contact list is continuously updated, and staff are committed to coordinating with local editors and news directors to provide timely and accurate information. Staff participate in interviews with local and national print, radio and television media. The goal of furthering these relationships with local media is to foster greater public awareness and understanding among Dallas-Fort Worth area residents regarding transportation issues. NCTCOG posts its news releases on its website in an online newsroom that is accessible to the public.

## **Visualization**

Maps, charts, diagrams, illustrations, photographs, infographics, video and the use of color aid in visualizing ideas, concepts, plans, projects and programs. These elements are integrated in presentations, publications, website and social media content.

## **Surveys and Polling Technology**

The NCTCOG Transportation Department may conduct print and/or electronic surveys to determine public awareness and/or sentiment towards certain planning issues. Surveys may be relatively small endeavors designed to shed light on a single issue or may be related to large-scale planning endeavors.

Polling technology is another tool used to gather input on community preferences and priorities. Polling questions can be integrated into a presentation and attendees respond online, via a phone application or with keypads provided by NCTCOG. Results can be immediately shown in the presentation or captured and reviewed later.

## **Stakeholder Interviews**

Meetings with regional transportation stakeholders, such as community and business leaders, nonprofit representatives and other individuals helps staff understand local communities. For example, information about the most effective communications and outreach strategies for a particular area or group of people helps staff to better engage stakeholders in the transportation planning process.

## **Online Public Engagement Platform**

A comprehensive online public engagement platform is utilized to host hybrid meetings. These input opportunities are announced through NCTCOG Transportation Department communications, and interested individuals can attend in person, participate via phone or watch online and provide input in real time. An audio recording is also posted online and shared with members of the public who are not able to participate. The platform offers a wide array of engagement formats, making it flexible and useful for various public outreach needs.

## **Community Networks**

The population of the Dallas-Fort Worth area is more than 8 million people and growing. Therefore, in an effort to reach as many people as possible, staff is increasingly seeking to engage people of influence who are willing to use their connections in their communities to help raise awareness of NCTCOG; share information and notices about plans, programs and projects; facilitate meetings and organize events that allow NCTCOG to interact directly with

community members and groups; highlight NCTCOG on social media; and publicize NCTCOG meetings and events. By cultivating a network of key individuals and organizations, NCTCOG will leverage existing community networks to provide information to the widest possible audience.

In the coming years, NCTCOG is planning to engage local community-based organizations (CBOs) to carry out public involvement activities related to transportation issues; possible activities could include surveys, community events or focus groups. The CBOs will then facilitate interactions between NCTCOG and community members and provide NCTCOG with data and information related to their contracted public involvement activities. The program's goal is to help NCTCOG access community networks by opening doors to meaningful engagement and ensuring a comprehensive public involvement process.

## **6. Evaluation of Public Participation**

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The NCTCOG Transportation Department will regularly evaluate its measurable public participation strategies to help determine whether the Public Participation Plan is achieving desired outcomes for public involvement in the transportation and air quality planning process. Performance metrics and reporting for public participation utilize both quantitative and qualitative measures to tell the story of how public involvement is informing the planning process and helping meet goals for public involvement. Other public participation strategies are also reviewed, evaluated and discussed in the context of the measurable strategies, the desired outcomes of the Public Participation Plan and the goals for NCTCOG's public involvement process, more generally.

Evaluation helps staff understand how to better engage the public and more effectively allocate time and resources. In addition, staff will produce reports for the public that clearly explain and illustrate how public participation strategies are working toward the desired outcomes NCTCOG has identified for its public involvement processes. Evaluation of these strategies and the overall Public Participation Plan is ongoing, and efforts improve communication with the public.

The table on the following pages outlines the measurable public participation strategies, the performance metrics and reporting data for each and desired outcomes for public participation.

### **Evaluation of Project-Specific Outreach**

Some or all of the strategies outlined in the Public Participation Plan may be used for project-specific outreach, and the corresponding evaluation criteria and outcomes apply. Additional outcomes, however, may also be established to complement measureable public involvement goals for public involvement specific to each project. At the beginning of a project requiring public involvement, staff will outline strategies and expected outcomes so the public knows what to expect from the process. The results of the public involvement process for each project are communicated throughout the project and documented in final reports as applicable.

## Evaluation Matrix for Public Participation Strategies

Outreach Strategy	Performance Metrics and Reporting	Desired Outcomes
<b>NCTCOG Transportation Department Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of visits</li> <li>Average time spent on significant webpages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of trends and changes for website usage</li> <li>Prioritization of and increased accessibility of information and public input opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media and Video</b>	<p><i>Facebook</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total reach</li> <li>Average engagement rate per post</li> </ul> <p><i>YouTube</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of subscribers</li> <li>Number of views</li> </ul> <p><i>LinkedIn</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total reach</li> <li>Average engagement rate per post</li> </ul> <p><i>Next Door</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of impressions</li> <li>Number of likes and shares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad distribution of information and public input opportunities through engaging, shareable content and personalized interactions</li> <li>Increased feedback and public input</li> <li>Development of an engaged online base of followers that helps disseminate information and public input opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Print and Digital Publications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of print copies of each publication distributed</li> <li>Number of unique views for each digital publication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information in multiple formats accessible to all communities in the region</li> <li>Informed understanding of planning process</li> <li>Sustained awareness of public input opportunities</li> </ul>



Outreach Strategy	Performance Metrics and Reporting	Desired Outcomes
<b>Public Meetings and Community Events</b>	<p><i>Public Meetings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of public input opportunities (online and hybrid)</li> <li>• Total number of participants per hybrid meeting and/or online public input opportunity</li> <li>• Accessible locations for individuals with disabilities</li> <li>• Notification of how to request language interpretation or special accommodations</li> <li>• Number of contacts receiving public meeting notifications</li> </ul> <p><i>Public Meeting Advertising</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average reach for each Facebook ad</li> <li>• Average engagement for each Facebook ad</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Events</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of events distributing NCTCOG Transportation Department information</li> <li>• Geographic representation in event locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about policies, programs and projects accessible in multiple formats to all communities throughout the region</li> <li>• Greater awareness of policies, programs and projects</li> <li>• Timely notification through multiple strategies about opportunities to provide input and engage with staff</li> <li>• Increased feedback and public input</li> <li>• Planned opportunities for the public to interact directly with staff</li> <li>• Increased accessibility of staff to communities and partners</li> <li>• Transparency in public involvement efforts and the planning process</li> </ul>
<b>Public Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total number of comments received</li> <li>• Most common comment topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency in public involvement efforts and the planning process</li> <li>• Identification of trends and changes in public attention and concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of presentation requests</li> <li>• Number of presentations given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of the planning process and specific plans, programs and projects</li> <li>• Increased accessibility of staff to communities and partners</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater participation by communities and organizations in the planning process</li> </ul>
<b>Media Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of news releases</li> <li>• Number of media requests</li> <li>• Number of media mentions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency in public involvement efforts and the planning process</li> <li>• Proactive media relations to communicate public input opportunities, policies and programs</li> <li>• Understanding of local, regional, statewide and national media coverage of transportation and air quality issues</li> <li>• Understanding of the NCTCOG Transportation Department's public image</li> </ul>

# Public Participation Plan

## Appendix A: Laws and Legislation Relevant to Public Participation

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### Federal Legislation and Executive Orders

#### **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**

The IIJA, the most recent federal transportation legislation, and the associated implementing regulations emphasize the importance of public involvement and contain specific language outlining requirements for public participation processes and procedures. In general, IIJA legislation and regulations maintained requirements of previous transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21 and the FAST Act). While the FAST Act added a requirement to provide a reasonable opportunity for public ports and specific types of private providers of transportation to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process, IIJA added language encouraging the use of technology and web-based tools for public participation in developing a long-range transportation plan.

Elements of the Public Participation Plan that specifically respond to requirements:

- Notices of public input opportunities, including public meetings, will be sent to newspapers to ensure regional coverage. Translated notices will also be sent to non-English newspapers. Notification is also sent to local libraries, city halls, county court houses, chambers of commerce and representatives of tribal governments. NCTCOG will maintain a comprehensive contact list of individuals and organizations that wish to be notified of all public input opportunities as well as stakeholders outlined in federal requirements.
- Information is disseminated through NCTCOG's publications, reports, public meetings and other outreach events, the NCTCOG website, social media pages, local media sources and open meetings.
- To the maximum extent possible, NCTCOG will employ visualization techniques such as maps, charts, graphs, photos and computer simulation in its public involvement activities.
- Reports, plans, publications, recent presentations and other information are available on the NCTCOG website. Public comments may also be submitted on the NCTCOG Transportation Department website and via email and social media. Interested parties may subscribe to receive topic specific email correspondence. Additional web-related communication tools are evaluated continuously for implementation.
- Public meetings are held in locations throughout the region, accessible to individuals with disabilities, preferably near transit lines or routes, at both day and evening times. Hybrid public meetings are recorded and archived on the NCTCOG website; when multiple public meetings are held on the same topic(s), at least one meeting in the series is recorded and archived on the NCTCOG website. In addition, public meeting materials and summaries are archived online and hard copies can be mailed upon request.
- Public input opportunities will be held during development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Unified Planning Work Program. All public comments will be reviewed and considered by the Regional Transportation Council and standing technical, policy and strategic committees. Public comments received on the TIP and the MTP shall be included in documentation of the TIP

- and the MTP or by reference to the public meeting minutes (for the TIP) or Transportation Conformity documentation (for the MTP).
- If the final TIP or MTP significantly differs from the draft made available for public review and public comment and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment will be provided. Recommendations presented during public comment periods are understood to be contingent upon the outcomes of the public involvement processes for these plans; therefore, it is understood that the final TIP or MTP may reflect changes resulting from the outcome of these processes. In addition, when NCTCOG can reasonably foresee alternative outcomes based on circumstances or events coincident with its public involvement processes for these plans, NCTCOG may present alternative recommendations for public comment alongside its final recommendations; in this case, it will be understood that decisions about these recommendations are contingent upon both the public involvement process and the resolution of these circumstances or events.
- When possible, public meetings will be coordinated with the Texas Department of Transportation.
- NCTCOG regularly reviews its Transportation Public Participation Plan. If modified in a more restrictive fashion, a 45-day comment period will be held following the public meetings at which proposed revisions are discussed.

**23 CFR §450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.**

- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
  - (1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
    - (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
    - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
    - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
    - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

- (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
  - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
  - (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
  - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
  - (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
  - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
- (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
  - (2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other

- (3) than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
- (4) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.
- (c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs**

Title VI states that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. Title VI prohibits discrimination: whether intentional or where the unintended effect is unduly burdensome.

Title VI Complaint Procedures (Appendix D) outline the NCTCOG Title VI policy, how an individual may submit a complaint, how the complaint will be investigated and potential resolution scenarios.

# Public Participation Plan

## Appendix B: Language Assistance Plan (Updated 2025)

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NCTCOG values public involvement and feedback and encourages participation by all communities. To ensure all communities have meaningful access to information and opportunities to participate in the planning process, the NCTCOG Transportation Department analyzes department activities and demographic information for the region in order to:

- Identify limited English proficiency (LEP) persons who need language assistance and determine how these individuals are served or likely to be served by NCTCOG Transportation Department programs.
- Outline how language assistance will be available.
- Train staff to interact with and consider the needs of LEP persons.
- Provide notice to LEP persons.
- Monitor and update plans and strategies that address how LEP individuals have access to information and opportunities for program participation.

Spanish-speaking LEP individuals can voice their concerns about the transportation system via the Spanish-language version of Map Your Experience, NCTCOG's online, interactive mapping tool.

Because transportation planning and services provided by NCTCOG can be both a benefit and a burden to economic development, employment, housing, education, healthcare and social opportunities, NCTCOG staff is dedicated to assessing the location and needs of LEP communities and, consequently, the services NCTCOG provides to these communities.

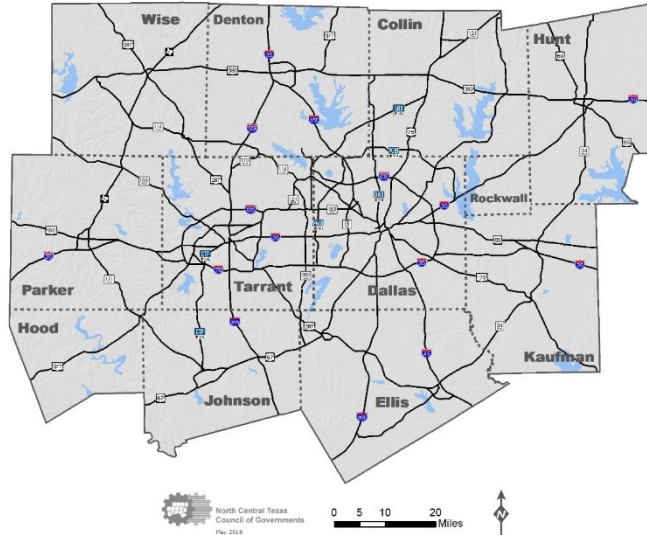
### **Identification of LEP Populations and Determination of How These Individuals are Served or Likely to be Served by NCTCOG Transportation Department Programs**

The U.S. Department of Transportation issued Policy Guidance to federal financial assistance recipients regarding Title VI prohibition against national origin discrimination affecting LEP persons. In this guidance, the U.S. Department of Transportation provided the four-factor analysis as an approach to evaluate the extent to which language assistance measures are required to ensure meaningful access to LEP persons.

*Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient grantee.*

The Metropolitan Planning Area boundary encompasses 12 counties (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise).

## Limited English Proficiency Service Area



Data for the 12-county Metropolitan Planning Area was gathered using the 2012-2016, 2015-2019, and 2019-2023 American Community Survey datasets. LEP persons were classified as anyone age five or older who described their ability to speak English as less than 'very well' (i.e., 'well,' 'not well,' or 'not at all'). The aggregate LEP population decreased by 1.78 percentage points between 2016 and 2023 and by 5,621 people. Due to changes in the Census Bureau's coding of language data, it is not possible to compare current language group data to data preceding 2016 estimates.

In 2023, the LEP population was 873,499, which was 11.86 percent of the region's 7,365,458 residents age five or older. Spanish was the largest language represented among the LEP population, with 8.81 percent of the region's total population age five or older.

## LEP Population for the 12-County Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area

	2012-2016 American Community Survey		2015-2019 American Community Survey		2019-2023 American Community Survey	
	Region Aggregate (Population Age 5 and Older)	Percentage of Total Population Age 5 and Older	Region Aggregate (Population Age 5 and Older)	Percentage of Total Population Age 5 and Older	Region Aggregate (Population Age 5 and Older)	Percentage of Total Population Age 5 and Older
<b>Total Population Age 5 Years and Older</b>	6,446,768		6,866,398		7,365,458	
<b>Spanish: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	694,804	10.78%	707,165	10.30%	648,735	8.81%



	2012-2016 American Community Survey		2015-2019 American Community Survey		2019-2023 American Community Survey	
<b>Other Indo-European Languages: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	37,081	0.58%	42,571	0.62%	46,814	0.64%
<b>Vietnamese: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	41,086	0.64%	41,222	0.60%	43,768	0.59%
<b>Other Asian and Pacific Island Languages: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	26,677	0.41%	32,745	0.48%	36,713	0.50%
<b>Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese): Speak English less than "very well"</b>	22,953	0.36%	24,557	0.36%	25,709	0.35%
<b>Other and Unspecified Languages: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	15,461	0.24%	19,914	0.29%	22,804	0.31%
<b>Korean: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	13,363	0.21%	13,191	0.19%	14,622	0.20%
<b>Arabic: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	8,918	0.14%	11,729	0.17%	13,095	0.18%
<b>French, Haitian, or Cajun: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	6,130	0.10%	8,279	0.12%	8,208	0.11%
<b>Tagalog (incl. Filipino): Speak English less than "very well"</b>	5,432	0.08%	6,112	0.09%	6,124	0.08%

	2012-2016 American Community Survey		2015-2019 American Community Survey		2019-2023 American Community Survey	
<b>Russian, Polish, or other Slavic Languages: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	5,326	0.08%	5,352	0.08%	5,804	0.08%
<b>German or other West Germanic Languages: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	1,889	0.03%	1,534	0.02%	1,103	0.01%
<b>Total LEP Population</b>	879,120	13.64%	914,371	13.32%	873,499	11.86%

**Source: 2012-2016, 2015-2019, and 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C16001**

Limited English proficiency (LEP) is classified as any person whose primary language is other than English and who answered that their ability to speak English was "well," "not well," or "not at all."

In 2016, the US Census Bureau changed the way it codes language data. Consequently, language groupings cannot be compared between American Community Survey estimates developed before and after 2016.

Recognizing that low literacy regardless of native language could also result in the need for language assistance, data from the National Center for Education Statistics was analyzed. The center's Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies includes data on adult literacy skills. The assessment used population estimates for persons aged 16 to 65 from 2011 to 2017. The assessment defines literacy as "understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written text to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."<sup>1</sup> People whose literacy skills were at or below Level 1 may not be able to understand the structure of sentences or paragraphs or make use of other text features. In the NCTCOG region, only Dallas County had a percent of residents below Level 1 literacy that was higher than the state average of 28 percent.

### Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area Results from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

Location	Population Size Age 16-74*	Percent Below Level 1 Literacy
<b>Texas</b>	<b>19,698,535</b>	<b>28%</b>
Collin County	664,152	12%
Dallas County	1,839,032	33%
Denton County	578,297	14%
Ellis County	117,488	23%
Hood County	39,207	16%
Hunt County	65,414	24%
Johnson County	114,766	22%
Kaufman County	81,450	22%
Parker County	91,526	15%
Rockwall County	64,473	14%
Tarrant County	1,426,715	24%
Wise County	45,891	22%

\*2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The Census Bureau's method of reporting age data prevents reporting a population size that matches the study group, age 16 to 65.

This Language Assistance Plan outlines how the needs of the LEP population in the Metropolitan Planning Area will be addressed, how language services will be made available and how LEP persons will be notified of these services.

*Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.*

The nature of the programs associated with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) dictate that the majority of contact with the public and LEP persons is through inquiries submitted to the MPO, public input opportunities, public outreach events, the MPO website and program implementation activities.

In order to better inform the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with MPO programs, a staff survey of LEP encounters was updated in 2022. Department staff members were asked if they had encountered an LEP individual in the past three years, and if so, what languages they had encountered, the frequency and what type of work activity they were

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, What PIAAC Measures, <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/measure.asp>

conducting. Of the approximately 200 department staff members who received the survey, 25 indicated they encountered LEP individuals speaking four total languages in a period of three years. Spanish was the most common, followed by rare encounters of Vietnamese, Arabic and an unspecified language. The most frequent work activities in which staff encountered LEP individuals were phone calls, community outreach events and public input opportunities, including in-person meetings.

As a result of this survey, NCTCOG maintains a voluntary directory of employees who are able to communicate in languages other than English and are willing to provide assistance to LEP individuals. If an employee encounters a LEP individual with whom it is difficult to communicate, they may be able to refer the individual to an employee who can better assist them in another language. At present, 18 languages are represented in this language assistance directory.

*Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient to people's lives.*

NCTCOG is the agency responsible for the regional transportation planning process; in this capacity, NCTCOG must ensure that all segments of the population are involved, or have the opportunity to be involved in, the decision-making process. As required by federal guidelines, NCTCOG produces a Metropolitan Transportation Plan that outlines long-range transportation investments, a Transportation Improvement Program that provides short-range planning for transportation investments, a Unified Planning Work Program that outlines tasks to be performed in the upcoming year and a Congestion Management Process for developing and implementing operational and travel demand strategies that improve transportation system performance.

Consistent with the Public Participation Plan, planners seek public input on these products, which influence quality of life and mobility options in the region. Public input opportunities, conducted both virtually and in person, represent one way for North Texans to be informed and involved. Public input opportunity notices are provided in English and Spanish. Notices include the telephone number and email address to request special accommodation for language translation or disability. Public input opportunities are posted online and advertised in newspapers, and staff interact regularly with local reporters, some of whom contribute to minority publications. Translated ads are placed in the major Spanish and Vietnamese newspapers.

*Factor 4: The resources available to the recipient and costs.*

NCTCOG currently has bilingual staff who assist with translation needs and/or translation review. NCTCOG also has agreements with translation services that cover many languages, as well as American Sign Language. Since 2017, NCTCOG has received one request for translation at a public input opportunity, one request for a sign language interpreter at a public input opportunity, and one request for a meeting transcript for a hearing-impaired person. NCTCOG staff regularly work with community stakeholders to determine translation needs in advance of formal public input opportunities.

To translate documents, NCTCOG currently utilizes both a translation service and department staff. The average cost for the outside translation service is \$0.18 per word, although the rate varies by language. At no cost, the Google Translate tool was added to the NCTCOG Transportation Department website, making information more readily accessible in more than 120 languages. Each year a portion of the community outreach budget is proactively allocated to translation services. Visualization tools such as animations, maps, renderings, photos and

others are also used, when possible, to increase understanding among all audiences. These tools can also be especially beneficial for LEP persons. All language assistance is provided at no charge to LEP individuals.

### **Guidelines for Making Language Assistance Available**

The four-factor analysis will be used as a tool for analyzing to what extent and how the needs of LEP communities are addressed during transportation planning and program implementation. For example, the four-factor analysis will be used to determine initial translation or alternative format needs for documents and the website. Department reports, newsletters, brochures, other publications and website information include instructions about how to request information in other formats. Translators and interpreters used by the NCTCOG Transportation Department will be evaluated to ensure accurate, high-quality language services are available to LEP persons.

Increased use of visualization tools will be used to make information more understandable and improve communication..

Plans, projects and programs for areas with a high number of LEP persons will have materials that address the needs of the population in those areas. Communities are mapped whenever possible to provide plan- or project-specific data.

The NCTCOG Transportation Department will make every effort to accommodate language translation needs, if provided sufficient notice. A minimum of 72 hours advanced notice is required for these arrangements to be provided for a public input opportunity.

NCTCOG Transportation Department staff will consistently seek input and involvement from organizations and agencies which serve LEP populations to complement other language assistance and outreach efforts.

### **Staff Training for Interacting with and Considering the Needs of LEP Persons**

The NCTCOG Transportation Department hosts quarterly committee meetings to provide in-person training on the requirements and techniques for providing meaningful access to services for LEP persons. The committee comprises members of every department program area, and these employees serve as liaisons to their teams, ensuring that LEP persons are considered at every stage of the planning process. Training materials and resources continue to be available for review by all staff, including new employees.

### **Notice of Assistance Available for LEP Persons**

Public input opportunity notices, which are available in English and Spanish, include the telephone number and email address to request special accommodations for language translation or disability. On each notice, this information is included in English and Spanish.

Notice of the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department Title VI Complaint Procedures is accessible online and in a brochure made available online, at public meetings and outreach events. Title VI complaint forms are available in both English and Spanish.

Language assistance can be obtained by contacting the NCTCOG Transportation Department:

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Transportation Department  
P.O. Box 5888  
616 Six Flags Drive (76011)  
Arlington, TX 76005-5888  
**Phone:** (817) 695-9240  
**Fax:** (817) 640-3028  
**Email:** [transinfo@nctcog.org](mailto:transinfo@nctcog.org)  
**Website:** [www.nctcog.org/trans/](http://www.nctcog.org/trans/)

**Monitoring and Updating Plans and Strategies that Address How LEP Individuals Have Access to Information and Opportunities for Program Participation**

This Language Assistance Plan is intended to be reviewed and updated in conjunction with the NCTCOG Transportation Public Participation Plan.

# Public Participation Plan

## Appendix C: Transportation Improvement Program Modification Policy – Policies and Procedures to Streamline Project Delivery (Updated March 2013)

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### TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM MODIFICATION POLICY Policies and Procedures to Streamline Project Delivery

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a staged, multi-year program of projects approved for funding with federal, State, and local funds within the Dallas-Fort Worth area. A new TIP is approved every two to three years by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which serves as the policy board for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Due to the changing nature of projects as they move through the implementation process, the TIP must be modified on a regular basis.

Please note certain project changes require collaboration with our State and federal review partners. This collaboration occurs through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) revision process. Therefore, modification of the Dallas-Fort Worth TIP will follow the quarterly schedule established for revisions to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

This policy consists of four sections:

General Policy Provisions: Overall policies guiding changes to project implementation

Project Changes Not Requiring TIP Modification: Changes related to administration or interpretation of Regional Transportation Council Policy

Administrative Amendment Policy: Authority granted to the MPO Director to expedite project delivery and maximize the time the RTC has to consider policy level (vs. administrative) issues

Revision Policy: Changes only the Regional Transportation Council can approve or recommend for State and federal concurrence

#### **General Policy Provisions**

1. All projects inventoried in the Transportation Improvement Program fall under this modification policy, regardless of funding source or funding category.
2. Air quality conformity, Mobility Plan consistency, congestion management process compliance, and financial constraint requirements must be met for all TIP modifications.
3. Project modifications will only be made with the consent of the implementing/impacted agency.

4. The Dallas-Fort Worth MPO will maintain a cost overrun funding pool. Program funds must be available through the cost overrun pool or from other sources in order to process modifications involving project cost increases.
5. All funding from deleted projects will be returned to the regional program for future cost overruns or new funding initiatives, unless the deleted funds are needed to cover cost overruns in other currently selected projects. However, it is important to note that funds are awarded to projects, not to implementing agencies. Therefore, funds from potentially infeasible projects cannot be saved for use in future projects by implementing agencies. MPO staff will manage timely resolution of these projects/funds. In addition, if a project was selected through a particular “program,” such as the Sustainable Development or Regional ITS Funding Program, funds from deleted projects may be returned to those programs for future “calls for projects” in those areas.
6. For projects selected using project scoring methodologies, projects will no longer be rescored before a cost increase is considered.
7. Cost increases for strategically-selected projects fall under the same modification policy provisions.
8. As a general policy, new projects are proposed through periodic regional funding initiatives. However, the RTC may elect to add new projects to the TIP, outside of a scheduled funding initiative under emergency or critical situations. Projects approved under this provision must be an immediate need.
9. Local match commitments (i.e., percentages) will be maintained as originally approved. Cost overruns on construction, right-of-way, and engineering costs will be funded according to original participation shares.
10. Additional restrictions may apply to projects selected under certain funding initiatives. For example, projects selected through the Land Use/Transportation Joint Venture (i.e., Sustainable Development) program are not eligible for cost increases from RTC-selected funding categories.
11. Cost overruns are based on the total estimated cost of the project, including all phases combined, and are evaluated once total project cost is determined to exceed original funding authorization.
12. Cost indicators may be evaluated on cost overruns to alert project reviewers of potential unreasonable cost estimates (examples include cost per lane-mile, cost per turn lane). The cost indicators are developed by the MPO, in consultation with TxDOT, using experience from the last several years. If a project falls out of this range, the MPO may either:  
(a) require a more detailed estimate and explanation, (b) require value engineering, (c) suggest a reduced project scope, or (d) determine that a cost increase will come from local funds, not RTC funds.
13. For a project change to be considered, implementing agencies must submit modification requests for their TIP projects through the online TIP modification system. Project change requests must include complete information by the deadline. Incomplete requests will be sent back to agency for re-submittal in a future cycle.



14. Implementing agencies must identify one or two official points of contact for TIP project modifications. The point of contact is responsible for entering complete project modification requests into the online TIP modification system on time. The point of contact must be capable of collecting and entering accurate project information. Points of contact will be sent reminders leading up to submittal deadlines.

### **Project Changes Not Requiring TIP Modification**

In certain circumstances, changes may be made to TIP projects without triggering a TIP modification. These circumstances are outlined below:

1. **Changes that do not impact the overall purpose of a project:** Changes to MTP reference, CSJ's, or other clerical edits do not require a TIP modification.
2. **Changes to TxDOT's Design and Construction Information System (DCIS):** The DCIS is a project tracking system, therefore, simply updating the DCIS to match previously approved TIP projects or project elements does not require TIP modification. MPO staff maintains the official list of projects and funding levels approved by the RTC.
3. **Carryover Funds:** At the end of each fiscal year, unobligated funds are moved to the new fiscal year as carryover funds. For example, if a project receives funding in a specific fiscal year, but the project is not implemented by the end of the fiscal year, staff will automatically move the funds for that project into the next fiscal year. These changes do not require a TIP modification.
4. **Cost/Funding Increases:** Staff will update cost increases in the information system for changes of less than \$400,000.
5. **Increases in Local Funds:** Staff will adjust with concurrence of local agency.
6. **Changes in RTC Funding Categories:** Staff adjustments permitted.
7. **Emergency:** This provision includes emergency changes that need approval quickly, but timing is not aligned with the RTC Meeting schedule. These changes would come to the RTC for ratification at the next scheduled meeting.
8. **Cost/Funding Decreases:** Staff will update the information system with cost decreases.
9. **Funding Year Changes:** Staff will update the information system for changes that advance project implementation. Once projects are ready for construction (i.e., all federal and State requirements and procedures have been met), staff will advance the project to construction if funds are available.
10. **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revisions Consistent with Previous RTC Action** (e.g., Staff will place a project or changes previously approved by the RTC in the appropriate information system and documents.)
11. **Addition of Noncapacity, Conformity-Exempt Projects:** Staff will place projects in the appropriate information system/document.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Sign refurbishing  
Landscaping  
Preventive maintenance  
Bridge rehabilitation/replacement  
Safety/Maintenance

Intersection Improvements  
Intelligent Transportation System  
Traffic Signal Improvements

12. **Changes to Implementing Agency:** Staff will process after receiving a written request/approval from the current implementing agency and the newly proposed implementing agency.
13. **Increased Flexibility for Traffic Signal, Intersection Improvement, ITS, and “Grouped” Projects:** Staff will use best practices to advance this category of projects.
14. **Addition and Adjustment of Phases:** Includes engineering, right-of-way, construction, etc.
15. **Administrative Scope Changes:** Minor clarifications to the type of work being performed, physical length of project, and project termini/limits. For example, changing the limits of a project from “.25 miles west of” to “west of,” or changing the limits from “point A” to “.5 miles east of point A,” or clarifying limits due to a change to the name of a roadway when there is no physical change to the limits (the name of the roadway just changed from one name to another, etc.
16. **Funding Year Changes:** Can be moved by staff if project is being moved less than one year.

Please note that a STIP revision may be required to make these changes in the statewide funding document. In all cases, MPO information systems will be updated and changes will be noted in project tracking systems.

### **Administrative Amendment Policy**

Administrative Amendments are TIP modifications that do not require action of the RTC for approval. Under the Administrative Amendment Policy, the RTC has authorized the Director of Transportation, or his designee, for the Dallas-Fort Worth MPO to approve TIP modifications that meet the following conditions. After they are approved, administrative amendments are provided to STTC and the RTC for informational purposes, unless they are merely processed to support previous RTC project approval.

1. **Changes in Federal/State Funding Categories that Do Not Impact RTC-Selected Funding Programs:** RTC-Selected funding programs include: CMAQ, STP-MM, RTR, Category 2M - Metro Corridor (in coordination with TxDOT), Texas Mobility Funds, Urbanized Area Formula Program - Transit Section 5307.
2. **Potentially Controversial Projects** - The administrative amendment policy does not restrict the Transportation Director from requesting Regional Transportation Council (RTC) action on potentially controversial project changes.

3. **Change in funding share due to adding funding from one program to another:** For instance, if adding Thoroughfare Assessment Program funds (80% federal and 20% state/local) to a project that is 56% federal and 44% local, an administrative amendment is permitted. The revision policy applies to all other instances.

### **Revision Policy**

Revisions are modifications that require approval of the Regional Transportation Council. A revision is required for any project modification that meets the following criteria or that does not fall under the Administrative Amendment Policy.

1. **Adding or Deleting Projects from the TIP:** This provision includes all projects not covered previously in this Policy. All new projects regardless of funding source need to be approved under this Revision Policy.
2. **Cost/Funding Increases:** A revision is required on any cost/funding increase over \$400,000.
3. **Substantive Scope Changes:** This provision includes major or substantive changes that may have citizen interest or policy implications. For example, limits change to a brand new location, limits are extended or shortened substantially, the number of lanes changes, etc.
4. **Funding Year Changes:** A revision is required to move a project more than one year into a fiscal year that would delay project implementation.
5. **Changes in the Funding/Cost Shares:** A change to the percentage of the total project cost paid by each funding partner requires a revision (with the one exception noted in the administrative amendment policy).

Approved by the RTC on March 14, 2013

# Public Participation Plan

## Appendix D: Regional Transportation Council Rules for Public Comments

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The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) hereby establishes reasonable rules regarding the public's right to address the Council at open meetings consistent with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The intent of these rules is to hear the views of the public prior to the RTC considering items. These rules also promote an orderly and fair process through which public comments may be received by the RTC.

### Public Attendance and Conduct at RTC Meetings

The public is encouraged to attend meetings of the RTC in person or to view meetings via a livestream. Members of the public shall observe the same rules of civility, decorum and respectful conduct applicable to members of the RTC. Any person addressing the RTC or attending the RTC meeting should refrain from making personal, impertinent, profane, hostile, vulgar, obscene or slanderous remarks or becoming boisterous. Audience members should refrain from unauthorized remarks, stamping of feet, applauding, whistles, yells and other similar demonstrations.

### Public Comment

At every open meeting of the RTC, opportunity will be provided at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to address the RTC regarding any item(s) on the agenda for consideration. This comment period will last a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. The RTC has the discretion to extend this time period upon motion and majority vote. Persons are permitted up to three (3) minutes to speak. A person addressing the RTC through a translator will be provided up to six (6) minutes. A timer will be visible to the speaker and indicate the amount of time remaining. Speakers shall conclude their comments prior to or upon expiration of the time. In the event a large number of speakers are present, the RTC may encourage large delegations to have one person speak for the group or impose reasonable time limits per individual that are more restrictive; if a delegation chooses to select a spokesperson to represent the entire delegation, the spokesperson will be provided up to five (5) minutes to speak or ten (10) minutes if the spokesperson is addressing the RTC through a translator. Subject to the comment period maximum, the RTC Chair will provide a notice to a speaker whose time has expired. The RTC has the discretion to modify or extend the public comment period upon a motion and majority vote.

Persons requesting translation services, to be provided by the RTC, must do so at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the posted meeting time.

When an RTC meeting is held in person, members of the public must attend in person to provide verbal comments at the meeting. For RTC meetings held virtually, a virtual option will be provided for members of the public to provide comments.

Speakers will be called in the order they were registered. Speakers should address their comments to the RTC Chair rather than individual RTC members or the audience. Remarks

must be limited to the specific subject matter of the agenda item on which the person is speaking. These rules do not prohibit public criticism of the RTC.

#### Speaker Registration

Persons who wish to speak must complete and return to staff a registration card prior to the start of the RTC meeting. Registration cards are printed on yellow paper, available in the RTC meeting room and must, at a minimum, include the following information:

1. Speaker's name;
2. City of residence;
3. Zip code;
4. Agenda item(s) on which the speaker plans to speak;
5. Indication of whether speaking on/for/against agenda item(s); and
6. Any other information requested by RTC staff.

#### Enforcement

The RTC reserves the right to have speakers or audience members removed from the meeting room in the event they become disruptive or make threatening, profane or otherwise inappropriate remarks in violation of the rules of conduct. The RTC Chair may direct a uniformed police officer to remove any disruptive audience member. Any RTC member may move to require the disruptive audience member to be removed following an affirmative vote of a majority of the RTC. Following a successful vote, the RTC Chair will direct a uniformed police officer to remove any disruptive audience member.

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL**

### **Normas para los Comentarios Públicos**

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC, por sus siglas en inglés) establece por la presente normas razonables con respecto al derecho del público a dirigirse al Consejo en reuniones abiertas consistentes con el Texas Open Meeting Act. La intención de estas normas es de escuchar las opiniones del público antes de que el RTC considere los temas. Estas normas también promueven un proceso ordenado y justo a través del cual el RTC puede recibir comentarios públicos.

#### **Participación y Conducta Pública en las Reuniones de RTC**

Se anima al público que asista a las reuniones de RTC en persona o ver las reuniones a través de una transmisión en vivo. Los miembros del público deberán observar las mismas normas de civismo, decoro, y conducta respetuosa aplicables a los miembros de RTC. Toda persona que se dirija al RTC o que asista a la reunión de RTC deberá abstenerse de hacer comentarios personales, impertinentes, profanos, hostiles, vulgares, obscenos, calumniosos o de volverse bullicioso. Los miembros del público deben abstenerse de hacer comentarios no autorizados, de pisotones, aplaudir, silbar, gritar, y de otras manifestaciones similares.

#### **Comentario Público**

En cada reunión abierta de RTC, se proporcionará la oportunidad al inicio de la reunión para que los miembros del público se dirijan al RTC acerca del tema(s) incluido en la agenda para su consideración. Este periodo de comentarios durará un máximo de treinta (30) minutos. El RTC tiene la discreción de extender el periodo de tiempo a través de una moción y votación por mayoría. Se concede a los participantes un máximo de tres (3) minutos para hablar. La persona que se dirija al RTC a través de un traductor tendrá hasta seis (6) minutos. Un temporizador será visible para el orador e indicará la cantidad de tiempo restante. El orador concluirá sus comentarios antes o al finalizar su tiempo. En caso de que se presente un gran número de oradores, el RTC podrá animar las delegaciones de gran tamaño a que una persona hable en representación del grupo o imponer límites de tiempo razonables por individuo que sean más restrictivas; si una delegación decide elegir a un portavoz para representar a toda la delegación, el portavoz tendrá hasta cinco (5) minutos para hablar o diez (10) minutos si el portavoz se dirige al RTC a través de un traductor. Dentro del plazo máximo de comentarios, el presidente del RTC avisará al orador cuyo tiempo haya expirado. El RTC tiene la discreción de modificar o extender el periodo de comentarios del público mediante una moción y votación por mayoría.

Personas que soliciten servicios de traducción, que serán facilitados por el RTC, deberán hacerlo al menos con setenta y dos (72) horas antes de la hora de la reunión publicada.

Si la reunión de RTC se celebra en persona, los miembros del público deben asistir en persona para hacer sus comentarios verbales en la reunión. En el caso de que las reuniones de RTC

se celebren virtualmente, se ofrecerá una opción virtual para que los miembros del público puedan aportar sus comentarios.

Los oradores serán llamados en el orden de registro. Los oradores deberán dirigir sus comentarios al presidente del RTC y no a los miembros individuales del RTC o a la audiencia. Los comentarios deben limitarse al tema específico del punto en la agenda acerca del cual la persona está hablando. Estas normas no prohíben las críticas públicas hacia el RTC.

### **Registro para el Orador**

Las personas que desean hablar deben de completar y regresar al personal una tarjeta de registro antes del comienzo de la reunión de RTC. Las tarjetas de registro son imprimidas en papel amarillo, están disponibles en la sala de reunión del RTC, y como mínimo, deben incluir la siguiente información:

1. Nombre del orador;
2. Ciudad de residencia;
3. Código postal;
4. Tema(s) de la agenda sobre el cual el orador planea hablar;
5. Indicación si habla a favor/en contra del punto(s) de la agenda; y
6. Toda otra información solicitada por el personal de RTC.

### **Ejecución**

El RTC se reserva el derecho de expulsar los oradores o miembros del público de la sala de reuniones en caso de que se conviertan en perturbadores o hagan comentarios amenazantes, profanos, o inapropiados en contra de las normas de conducta. El presidente de RTC puede dar instrucciones a un agente de policía uniformado para que retire al miembro del público que cause perturbaciones. Los miembros de RTC podrán solicitar la expulsión del miembro del público que perturbe el orden, tras una votación afirmativa por parte de la mayoría de RTC. Tras la votación afirmativa, el presidente de RTC ordenará a un agente de policía uniformado que retire al miembro del público que cause perturbaciones.