



June 2022

Welcome to the Local Motion, a monthly email newsletter from the North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department. This publication may look familiar, but it has been reimagined to deliver the same transportation news you are used to directly to your inbox. Thank you for reading.



N. Texans encouraged to #HopOn public transit

With employers welcoming back their workers to offices, North Texans can ease back into their pre-pandemic routines by leaving the driving to someone else. The region's three major transit authorities – Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the Denton County Transportation Authority and Trinity Metro – have been providing service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on, they were a lifeline to healthcare, pharmacy,

grocery store and other “essential” employees responsible for keeping people healthy and safe.

As the pandemic has evolved, transit providers have continued to serve riders as those riders were ready to come back. Data shows people have been steadily returning to transit, a mode of transportation hit especially hard by the pandemic. Bus and train ridership climbed each quarter last year, and weekday ridership made steady gains throughout 2021 after being down by more than 50% at the outset of the pandemic.

Work schedules are not the same as they were pre-pandemic. Transit providers can serve workers across the region, regardless of their hours. For example, it may be helpful to people doing shift work, running errands after school or traveling to social gatherings.

The region's public transportation providers have maintained strict cleaning protocols to keep customers and employees safe. This is a practice that continues, even as people in North Texas and beyond have begun to resume their pre-pandemic routines.

With gas prices remaining high, now might be a good time for people to board the bus or train again. North Texans may not be able to control gas prices, but they can choose how they get around and commute. In addition to saving money by filling the gas tank less, leaving the driving

to someone else is less stressful and allows people to use their time wisely. For some, public transit can be a chance to decompress while commuting, leaving more time for people to get work done, answer emails, prepare for their day or just relax.

Not only can transit be less stressful than fighting traffic, but it could also improve the health of customers, especially if they walk or bicycle from the transit stop to their destination. Bicycles are permitted on all DART, DCTA and Trinity Metro buses and trains.

Flexibility is also key coming out of the pandemic. Those who do not live or work next to a transit stop may choose to combine traditional service with on-demand micro-transit options. DART (GoLink) or Trinity Metro (ZIPZones) and DCTA (Via) all offer on-demand services.

Wherever you need to go in North Texas, leave the driving to someone else and #hopon transit.



Spotlight: Electric Vehicle website revamped

Did you know that there are almost 50,000 Electric Vehicles in North Texas? These clean-burning, fun-to-drive vehicles have grown in popularity across Dallas-Fort Worth and the state.

With manufacturers introducing new models and more federal funding available to boost infrastructure, this growth is poised to continue. Electric Vehicles North Texas, an initiative led by

the Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition, seeks to help reduce the barriers to EV adoption through resources and technical assistance. One issue that may be preventing people from making the switch to electric is range anxiety. A resource is available to answer this and other questions from North Texans and fleet operators thinking about transitioning to electric.

EVNT launched an upgraded webpage in May that includes a map of the charging locations across Dallas-Fort Worth as well as basic information about owning an EV. The expanded webpage provides easy access to new site resources such as:

- Electric Vehicles 101
- Regional and state EV registration dashboards
- Charging infrastructure locations and resources
- Hydrogen fuel cells
- Important information for fleets and consumers

The new site also provides information on incentives and future events. For the latest on EV resources, data and incentives, check out the new site for yourself at www.dfwcleancities.org/evnt.



RTC approves process to certify innovative transportation solutions

The Regional Transportation Council has adopted a policy that establishes a process for coordination with transportation technology companies interested in coming to the region.

The policy outlines a fair, transparent process by which the RTC can coordinate with transportation infrastructure providers wishing to certify capitol-intensive innovative transportation technology to

move people and/or freight in the region. The policy also allows pilot applications of these particular technologies that may not need to be formally certified before implementation.

With this policy in place, the RTC can now guide a consensus-building path to innovative solutions that includes interested local governments and transportation providers of emerging technology. The goal of such an arrangement is a commercial application that serves a long-range transportation need.

This is a follow-up to a policy adopted in February to advance high-speed rail in the Dallas-Fort Worth High-Speed Transportation Connections Study along the Interstate Highway 30 corridor into the Phase 2 National Environmental Policy Act process.

In recent months, NCTCOG has been approached by hyperloop companies and others interested in proving their innovative transportation technologies for the first time. With the new policy, the RTC can coordinate with these transportation technology companies to find mutually beneficial opportunities as the region continues to push the boundaries on using innovative transportation solutions to meet increasingly complex transportation needs.

By the Numbers

50,000

The approximate number of Electric Vehicles in North Texas.

RTC approves partnership to advance transit projects

The RTC approved a funding partnership with Trinity Metro and the City of Fort Worth last month calling for the addition of \$62 million in federal funding to help move four transit and roadway projects forward. Here are the details:

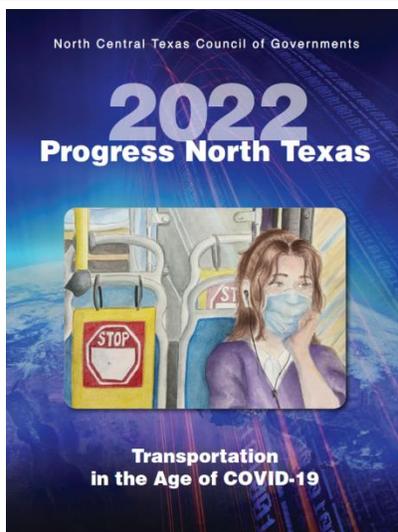


- The 2.1-mile extension of the TEXRail commuter rail line to the Hospital District will receive \$51.36 million in new federal funding in addition to the previous RTC commitment of \$20 million. With funding from Fort Worth, Trinity Metro, leftover Federal Transit Administration funds from the original TEXRail project, and private sector, the project now has \$167 million.
- The Trinity Lakes Station, planned for the intersection of Interstate Highway 820 and the

Trinity Railway Express, will receive \$20.05 million in additional federal funding. This investment gives the project a total of \$26.74 million.

- The RTC programmed an additional \$2.01 million to guaranteed transit along IH 35W, which now has a total of \$16.01 million.
- NCTCOG has applied for \$100 million in federal grant funding to help with the construction of the East Lancaster Avenue project, for which the RTC has previously committed \$40 million. The Texas Department of Transportation has pledged \$30 million, to the project, with Fort Worth (\$16 million) and the private sector (\$2 million) also providing funding to the project to reconstruct East Lancaster Avenue from Dottie Lynn Parkway to downtown as a multimodal corridor that includes pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, enhanced transit, broadband and other features.

Another project, the Katy Lofts, will be funded by the private sector, allowing the RTC's previous commitment of \$11.36 million to be used on other projects.



Progress North Texas 2022 available online

The North Central Texas Council of Governments' annual transportation state of the region report, Progress North Texas, is now available online. This year's report is organized around the theme of Transportation in the Age of COVID-19, which highlights the many ways North Texans have shifted their mindsets to navigate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the transportation system.

Congratulations to Vianney Medellin, the winner of the 2022 art contest, whose artwork appears on the cover. Vianney was among the many talented Dallas ISD students asked to illustrate how COVID-19 has influenced the way they travel. Other top finishers in this year's competition are Penelope Levings, Marlene Posada, Xitlali Martinez, and Kimberly

Avalos. All of the art submitted was outstanding, and it was difficult to select a winner. Read this year's report and request copies at www.nctcog.org/ourregion.



NCTCOG to share updates, community initiative goals at public meeting June 13

NCTCOG will host a hybrid public meeting this month to provide an update on funding recommendations for the Regional 10-Year Plan, emerging transportation technologies and goals for goals for disadvantaged businesses.

The meeting will take place at NCTCOG's Arlington offices, 616 Six Flags Drive, at noon on Monday, June 13. Residents may attend the meeting, watch it online at www.nctcog.org/input or participate via phone by dialing 855-925-2801 then code 2682.

The Regional Transportation Council updates and approves the Regional 10-Year Plan annually, offering North Texans a preview of approximately \$6.9 billion worth of projects developed with congestion, development, air quality and socioeconomic effects taken into consideration. Staff will present proposed changes to funding sources and an updated project list for the plan at the meeting.

NCTCOG is required by federal law to periodically update participation goals for the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, which encourages transportation-specific contracting opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged businesses in the region. Staff will also provide a draft update of DBE participation goals for review and comment.

In 2021, work began on NCTCOG's regional planning exercise to prepare communities for new transportation technologies within the region—AV2.1: Planning for Local Partners. NCTCOG staff will present a project status update, including information about early scenario development efforts, and public outreach and education initiatives. More information on the project can be found at www.connectntxfutures.org.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Regional Transportation Planning is developed by NCTCOG biennially and serves as a guide for planning activities to be conducted over the course of specified fiscal years. Proposed modifications to the Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 UPWP will be posted online for review and comment after the meeting.

Staff will also highlight resources such as the Mobility 2045: 2022 Update, the Regional Smoking Vehicle Program, a list of alternative fuel funding opportunities, and the RTC-adopted Innovative Transportation Technology Infrastructure Certification Program.

A recording of the presentations will also be posted at www.nctcog.org/input, where residents can comment through July 12.

For special accommodations due to a disability, language translation, printed copies of information discussed or to request a free roundtrip ride between NCTCOG and the Trinity Railway Express CentrePort/DFW contact Thao Tran at 817-704-2510 or tctran@nctcog.org at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

Fact Sheet: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

NCTCOG has published a fact sheet explaining the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was signed into law in November. The law funds federal-aid highways, highway safety, transit and other transportation programs with \$567.5 billion through Fiscal Year 2026. This five-year bill replaced the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or the FAST Act, which expired in 2020 and was extended through FY2021.

Texas is projected to receive \$32.9 billion over five years for highways, transit and other related transportation projects.

This new legislation provides Texas with almost \$28 billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$537 million for bridge replacement and repairs over five years. The legislation authorizes more than a 40% increase over the FAST Act for public transportation. Texas

expects to receive \$3.3 billion over five years to improve public transportation options across the state.

To learn more about the legislation, read the fact sheet at: www.nctcog.org/factsheets.

*For more information about Local Motion topics, contact Brian Wilson at 817-704-2511 or bwilson@nctcog.org. Visit www.nctcog.org/trans for more information on the department.
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Sent on behalf of North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) by
PublicInput.com
