

MINUTES

Regional Transportation Council PUBLIC MEETING

Mobility 2050: The North Central Texas Metropolitan Transportation Plan

2023 Air Quality Transportation Conformity

Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

Proposed Administrative Amendments to Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update

Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting Monday, Oct. 9, 2023, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone or view the live stream at www.publicinput.com/nctcogOct23. Chris Klaus, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting attended by 58 people.

Public Meeting Purpose and Topics

The public meeting was held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the metropolitan planning organization, and amended on November 8, 2018. Staff presented information about:

- Mobility 2050: The North Central Texas Metropolitan Transportation Plan – **presented by Amy Johnson**
- 2023 Air Quality Transportation Conformity – **presented by Jenny Narvaez**
- Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program – **presented by Savana Nance**

The public meeting was held to educate, inform and seek comments from the public. Comments were solicited from those attending who wished to speak for the record. The presentations made during the meeting as well as a video recording were posted online at www.publicinput.com/nctcogOct23.

Summary of Presentations

Mobility 2050: The North Central Texas Metropolitan Transportation Plan presentation:
<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/f1749610-07f1-4df3-8885-0ad021efc65e/Mobility-2050-The-Metropolitan-Transportation-Plan-for-North-Central-Texas.pdf>

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) defines a long-term vision for the region's transportation system and guides spending of federal and State transportation funds. This includes funding for highways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other programs that reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Mobility 2050 replaces the current MTP, Mobility 2045- 2022 Update, and includes population and employment forecasts, goals and performance measures, a financial plan and an air quality

analysis. The financial plan will include new financial forecasts, comprehensive updates to policies, programs, and projects and will build on the performance measures framework from the current Plan.

The Plan will undergo a baseline analysis, financial assessment, and a non-discrimination analysis to ensure it meets air quality and social equity impact targets. The RTC is expected to take action on Mobility 2050 in 2025. Additionally, staff are aiming to achieve federal Air Quality Conformity determination by June 2025.

Public comment periods will occur throughout the development process, and the draft Plan will be posted online in early 2025. For additional information, including ways to provide input, visit www.nctcog.org/planinprogress.

2023 Air Quality Transportation Conformity presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/7d9c841c-1fa5-4436-b3f4-5789948a06ec/2023-Air-Quality-Transportation-Conformity.pdf>

2023 Transportation Air Quality Conformity is required by federal legislation and demonstrates that projected emissions from transportation projects are within emission limits established by the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity also ensures federal funding is applied to transportation projects consistent with air quality planning goals.

Effective May 24, 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved new Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets, and Conformity must be performed within two years of the effective date. NCTCOG staff are testing the existing plan against these new budgets and ensuring all projects within Mobility 2050 meet air quality limits.

The RTC will take action on 2023 Air Quality Transportation Conformity on Nov. 9, 2023.

Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/d07f0759-818e-4774-8283-fb847c4d617f/Environmental-Protection-Agency%e2%80%99s-Climate-Pollution-Reduction-Grants.pdf>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has introduced the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program to address greenhouse gases and harmful air pollutants. The initiative aims to develop and implement regional plans for reducing emissions and is divided into two phases. The first phase offers approximately \$250 million in planning grants. The second phase provides approximately \$4.6 billion in competitive grant implementation funding. NCTCOG was awarded \$1 million in CPRG planning grant funds to develop a regional plan to improve air quality in the 16 counties in North Texas. By participating in the CPRG, NCTCOG aims to improve air quality and mitigate the health impacts associated with pollutants for the region.

The EPA requires NCTCOG to collaborate with local governments and the public to create a priority climate action plan (PCAP) and a comprehensive climate action plan (CCAP), both of which will be incorporated into the comprehensive, multipollutant, Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan (DFW AQIP). These plans will include a current inventory of emissions in the region, potential measures/projects to reduce emissions, and more. A list of local governments who have expressed support for the regional plan is available at www.publicinput.com/nctcog-cprg, but NCTCOG is still accepting letters of support from local governments who would like to

be involved in the development of the regional plan.

NCTCOG is seeking community input on projects to include in the PCAP. NCTCOG plans to host virtual and in-person meetings to engage the public, seek input on projects and provide updates on plan development. For more information on the CPRG program, visit www.publicinput.com/nctcog-cprg.

Summary of Online Review and Comment Topics

Proposed Administrative Amendments to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update handout:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/1d4a563e-3a02-4aa8-a0b3-af5df9c74b42/Proposed-Administrative-Amendments-to-Mobility-2045-The-Metropolitan%20Transportation%20Plan%20for%20North%20Central%20Texas-2022%20Update.pdf>

NCTCOG staff are proposing to add three road projects to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update. Adding the projects will aid TxDOT in advancing planning and design activities.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING

Mobility 2050: The North Central Texas Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Gary Hennessy, Citizen

A. Rail development

Comment: I know it takes a long time to build any rail, but I would like to suggest looking at putting rail between DFW Airport and the Arlington Entertainment District or running it through the Arlington Entertainment District down to wherever the high-speed rail terminal is going to be. Arlington Entertainment District is about 300 yards away from existing rail. The connection between the Arlington TRE terminal and the rail in Grand Prairie would only take about two or three miles of rail.

Summary of Response by Amy Johnson: From the planning perspective, we engage in different studies on different things, especially on the transit and rail side. Those studies are kind of separate from the Plan, but they feed into what is recommended in the Plan. In previous studies, we have looked at various options for connecting the north and south ends of the airport and in terms of the overall system. If we have potential for high-speed rail, we can connect it into the overall picture. We have also looked at various technologies that might be able to be implemented. I will gather what I can find on those studies I just mentioned and send you more information.

2023 Air Quality Transportation Conformity

Gary Hennessy, Citizen

A. Types of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Question: Are the VOCs you reference in your presentation similar to VOCs in paint?

Summary of response by Jenny Narvaez: Yes, it's the same chemical. VOCs are emitted from multiple sources. VOC emissions from transportation systems are monitored, but the ratio of nitric oxides (NOx) and VOCs is crucial for understanding their impact.

B. Effects of population growth on pollutants

Question: When we expanded our population by 20 or 30 percent, we still saw a reduction in the number of volatile organic compounds emitted per day?

Summary of response by Jenny Narvaez: Yes, the number was lower. We have a lot of cars and trucks on the road, but many vehicles are now cleaner and emit less pollutants. NCTCOG has helped implement air quality programs and worked closely with the EPA to review new standards. NCTCOG conducts an emissions inventory for the region, which is part of our partnership with the EPA.

Zachary Bell, Citizen

A. Conformity plan

Question: Why is there a new conformity plan if we're below the new standard line?

Summary of response by Jenny Narvaez: The region is in nonattainment for ozone due to excessive traffic on roadways. The Mobility Plan, as Amy mentioned, focuses on reducing the number of cars and trucks on the roads. Analyzing NOx and VOCs helps determine the necessary levels for transportation plan development. NCTCOG is responsible for maintaining these analyses, as ozone emissions are not emitted from any single source.

Summary of response by Chris Klaus: The ozone standard, developed by the federal government and reviewed every six years, has varied since the 1990 Clean Air Act. Implementing a strategy focused on VOC reductions is not enough to reduce ozone due to other factors. The State suggests focusing on NOx reductions, which could potentially prevent VOC reactions and ozone formation. The State has a budget or cap for compliance, and if emissions exceed the cap, the plan must be modified. This means that emissions must be below the dotted lines. By implementing these measures, the State should be able to lower ozone formation. The hope is to have answers in the coming months to determine the direction of the ozone standard and how to reach attainment.

Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

Councilmember Crystal Chisolm, City of Desoto

A. Air quality project submission deadline

Question: I was very excited to hear about the funding available for air quality control. Is there a deadline for cities to submit their projects for consideration?

Summary of response by Savana Nance: This is a regional plan, and it is open to input from all local governments. A working group for local governments has been formed to ensure their involvement in planning and providing input, and the plan encourages feedback and implementation measures that make sense for the region. Public meetings are also currently being planned to take place over the course of the next few months, and our goal is to obtain a

final list of recommended strategies by early 2024.

Summary of response by Chris Klaus: We plan to take final strategy recommendations to the RTC for action in spring 2024.

Other

Gary Hennessy, Citizen

A. Air quality programs and pollution improvement impacts

Comment: NCTCOG does a lot of studies and presents some of them. For example, in 2008 when we had the recession, we had a buyback program that was mostly implemented in 2009 and 2010, and it took a lot of cars off the road. Is there any way to tell if that provided long-term pollution improvement or did it just kind of peak right there and then numbers went back down because we didn't maintain our vehicles? Did you see any improvement in the numbers that were associated with that?

Summary of response by Chris Klaus: The annual vehicle registration shows the turnover of vehicles, including retired ones. The Department of Motor Vehicles and annual registration data show the turnover rate, which may have been faster in 2008 due to newer cars and older eligible vehicles. The emissions analysis includes 2008 as part of the 24-year window of vehicle registration, and all vehicles beyond that are associated with the vehicle inspection program. The EPA uses a test to assess the overall performance of the region, showing improvement and decreased emissions and ozone formation. However, since 2016, there has been a slight plateau and a continued downward trend in ozone readings.

Question: Would that lead you to look at another buyback program?

Summary of Response by Chris Klaus: NCTCOG offers numerous incentives to encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles, including federal and State incentives to turn over fleets. NCTCOG previously ran a vehicle replacement and assistance program for lower-income individuals, which was funded by the legislature and local fees. However, the program was deemed ineffective six or seven years ago. If someone suggests NCTCOG should implement similar programs, staff will consider whether the State or EPA might be willing to pay for them to encourage fleet turnover. NCTCOG is open to exploring other options to encourage continued fleet use.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD VIA WEBSITE, EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA & MAIL

Website

Other

Cheri Miller, Citizen

The worst roads are in Texas. I drove from Rockwall County to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the worst roads are in Texas. Fact! The people planning and fixing the roads should go to Michigan to take courses in how to plan and repair the roadways. Driving over railroad tracks was a pleasure. I hardly knew I was driving over them. In Texas, one has to almost stop

completely to drive over a railroad track because they are so rough. One example is Kingsley Road in Garland between Shiloh and Jupiter. Check that road out. Texas roads are full of potholes and the patches make it even worse because the people don't know how to patch. I saw someone the other day using their feet. They just throw the cement on and don't smooth it out which leaves a bump. I've resigned my car two times in six months. Anyone reading this knows how terrible the roads are. On my trip I had one incident on my way back. Coming into Sherman from OK. Construction, uneven traffic pattern, for months. A tractor trailer in front of me hauling steel plates. Two steel plates fell off into the roadway into the path of the cars. Luckily, I had noticed there were unstable and had moved into the next lane. And luckily someone with emergency lights was able to stop the truck after a few miles of his shifting load. Not enough police patrolling the freeway for speeders. Not enough semi safety checks. Inspection stations closed. Drivers' education is lax. Fines are too low. Playing on the phone with no consequences is rampant. Reduce speed limit. People do not respect life when they are driving. It's just a big raceway and miles of entertainment for many.

Mail

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

Please see Attachment 1 for comments submitted via postal mail.